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Discourses about audiences: spatial strategies and public programming in the Barbican Centre's foyers

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Abstract

Audience research has become a central focus in UK arts institutions' policy and practice in the last two decades, often carried out to fulfil a variety of different agendas. This study focuses on the relationship between audiences and arts institutions against the backdrop of both the 'participatory turn' and of an increasing process of neoliberalisation of culture. Using the Barbican Centre's foyers as the primary lens of analysis, the thesis investigates how certain discursive conceptions of audiences are constructed, challenged and re-assessed in the specific setting of a large urban multi-arts centre.

Notions and practices of audience development, engagement and participation have been widely discussed in the field of arts management and cultural policy, drawing upon disciplinary areas such as arts marketing, audience and reception studies, theatre and performing arts studies, and museum studies. However, whilst the work in this area is voluminous, very little scholarly research has focused on the intersection of discursive, spatial and programmatic conceptions of audiences in institutional contexts. Particularly, limited attention has been given to foyers and public spaces, except for recent contributions on museum thresholds. Taking a whole-institution approach, the study does not look at audiences in the conventional mode – as bums on seats in an auditorium. Instead, by bringing the foyers to the fore, the originality of this thesis is to look at expanded modes of 'audiencing', rebalancing the exclusive auditorium model.

Combining critical discourse analysis and institutional ethnography, the study discusses shifting conceptions of audiences and spaces in the context of the Barbican Centre. The fieldwork draws primarily on institutional documents and interviews with staff members across the organisation, from senior management to front-of-house – the Audience experience hosts. The key finding of this study is that social spaces and non-ticketed audiences are becoming central in institutional agendas, yet there are conflicting understandings of how to manage both. In particular, there are tensions between ideas of inclusivity and participatory processes, and maximising income for the sake of financial sustainability. The thesis draws conclusions on alternative methods in visitor and audience studies, discussing the changing nature of public spaces in arts institutions, the role of mediators – such as front-of-house staff - in audience research, and the rise of public programming.

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DECLARATION

This is to certify that:

- The thesis has been composed by the candidate

- It has not been accepted in any previous application for a degree

- The research work has been done by the candidate

- All direct quotations have been distinguished by quotation marks or indentation and the sources of information specifically acknowledged.

Signed   Stefania Donini

Date   30th March 2021

PART I – FRAMING AUDIENCES

Chapter 1. Introduction

The nature of audiences in the 21st century arts institution is constantly shifting. Upon entering a cultural venue such as the Barbican Centre, the Southbank Centre or the National Theatre, one would notice that people are present in their spaces, but not necessarily as audiences seated – as the etymological assonance suggests - in an auditorium. Whilst the marketing and box office metrics conventionally measure audiences by numbers and transactions on tickets sold, the everyday experience shows how contemporary audiences populate spaces in more active, nomadic and dispersed ways: their relationship with an arts institution going beyond the transactional dimension of purchasing a ticket. Audiences, ticketed and non-ticketed, use the spaces of arts institutions to socialise, work, read, meet friends and much more. What they do in such spaces might not necessarily relate to the artistic programme offered by the cultural venue they're in. These new modes of engagement speak of different and evolving uses of buildings, of access and participation, and of activating spaces, which have all been recurrent themes of the last 25 years of cultural governance.

We live in an 'age of participation': digital technology, the experience economy, creative industries and networked cities have transformed the way we consume and produce culture, paving the way to new participatory paradigms whereby 'audiencing' (Fiske, 1992; Livingstone, 2013; Reason and Lindelof, 2016) becomes a condition of everyday life. This blurring of the boundaries between production and consumption has particular resonance in the arts and cultural sector, given that audiences are necessarily involved in artistic processes and performances, in theatre (Freshwater, 2009) and beyond. In the performing and visual arts, which most often require the presence of an audience in a specific space, there has been a shift from a conception of audiences as passive recipients, or consumers, to active participants. Arts institutions are also increasingly expected to become more participatory (Simon, 2010) and audience-centric (Walmsley, 2019a).

In the context of this contemporary shift towards participatory models, this study investigates how a major multi-arts centre sees, and responds to, its multiple audiences, across different spaces and programmes. Particularly, how such institution understands its audiences outside of core venues, for example in the spaces known as the foyers. If, over the last few decades, arts institutions have been pressured to consider their impact in

communities by providing so-called outreach work, they often jumped the liminal spaces of the foyers; my work is highlighting this dimension that had been skipped over. In doing so it also shows how multiple discourses are evident in the framing of audiences and cultural participation across institutional communications, spatial strategies and cultural programming. How are these discourses practised, or mediated 'on the ground' by both audiences and staff is one of the questions at centre of this research. The doctorate was undertaken as part of the Barbican-Guildhall joint studentship, co-funded by the Barbican Centre and Guildhall School of Music and Drama. The research setting is the Barbican Centre, a major multi-arts centre located in the City of London. Often referred to as 'Europe's largest arts centre', the Barbican includes a concert hall, two theatres, two art galleries, three cinemas, a public library, a conservatory as well as many other spaces such as large foyers, conference facilities and exhibition halls. As such, it provides an important case study to look at audiences in non-ticketed venues and at modes of cultural participation afforded by a large urban arts centre through its spaces.

In order to inform their policies and practices, most arts institutions today commission and develop audience research, drawing upon arts marketing, market research and visitor studies. In institutional contexts, this research is usually developed 'to increase the number of attenders, broaden their base or enrich their experiences' (Kawashima, 2000, p. iv), as well as for evaluation purposes. However necessary and useful, such studies are more likely to capture the nature of existing or potential audiences, and their experiences, rather than analysing the methods and discourses through which audience engagement is understood, segmented and constructed. Furthermore, normative conceptions of audiences and cultural participation can be exclusionary of a variety of modes of engagement that are not usually captured or measured in policy frameworks and evaluation reports. These reinforce existing practices and frameworks whereby audiences and participation are defined and measured within the boundaries of institutional programmes and activities. In counterpoint to that, critical approaches to audience research, both from scholars and practitioners, highlight the contested and context-specific nature of notions of audience and participation. For example, some scholars study everyday participation outside of the orbit of funded culture, looking at everyday activities like gardening, dance classes and the pub quiz (Miles and Gibson, 2016) and others reflect on the discursive construction of non-participation as a problem in cultural policy (Stevenson, Balling and Kann-Rasmussen, 2017). These studies question normative notions of cultural value and their attribution within the dominant deficit model of art provision (Jancovich, 2017; Miles and Gibson, 2017) by democratisation of culture. Only limited work has attended to the materiality and governance of audiences, and arguably the

interaction between the governance structures (and their assumptions about the 'objects of governance') and the audience is not dualistic, but co-constitutive. However, to address such concerns the audience has to be 'de-centered' and a whole-institution perspective has to be adopted. This is the line of enquiry explored here.

The conceptual starting point of the study, grounded in a social-geographical approach, proposes a radical shift of focus from the core venues, programmes and knowledge-producers, to the thresholds and in-between spaces such as the foyers of the arts centre, to explore new ways of understanding audiences and cultural participation. These are spaces where a multitude of diverse publics exists, which can be variously understood by the arts institution as existing or potential audiences, as viewers, as participants, as customers, as visitors, as users or clients. By looking through the foyers of the Barbican Centre, the broad aim of this thesis is to interrogate notions of audiences and cultural participation and how they are practised 'on the ground'[1] in the material spaces of the arts centre. Foyers are spaces where people have a higher degree of agency and the arts institution has the least control over people's behaviours. The study shows how notions of audiences and participation are practised in these spaces, producing emergent modes of engagement that sit outside of the normative spectrums and of existing models. This focus on 'practised spaces' such as the foyers is the unique contribution of this thesis to the growing interdisciplinary field of arts management and cultural policy concerned with audiences.

Taking a unique institutional perspective, the research focuses on the perspectives of the arts centre's staff to examine how audiences and cultural participation are constructed and managed across institutional communications, spatial management and cultural programming, and highlighting varying practices, competing discourses and existing tensions between different agendas. Using a novel discursive-ethnographic methodology, it investigates the interplay of discourses and their mediation through practice. From this focus, the thesis discusses the limitations of normative conceptions of audiences and participation and proposes a re-conceptualisation of audiences as emergent publics. Beside this, I also suggest that my experimental approach involving front-of-house staff as knowledge producers in relation to audiences, offers an important methodological contribution to audience research. While the study is limited to the Barbican Centre, my conclusions suggest that its conceptual framework and key theoretical and methodological findings are transferable to other arts institutions and cultural venues, as well as having significant wider

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[1] The phrase 'on the ground' refers to the embodied, situated knowledge developed by someone who has everyday experience of the practiced materiality of a space.

implications for further academic investigations in audience engagement and cultural participation. In the next section I outline the aims and focus of my research, the limitations encountered during the fieldwork and the decisions made to complete the study.

Research journey: from proposal to fieldwork

Rather than performing audience research, this study focuses on discourses about audiences. As it was clear from the outset of my PhD proposal, I was not going to be carrying out audience research in conventional terms. Given this, I had not envisaged to be interviewing audiences directly about their experience of a theatre show, musical performance or art exhibition. I was interested in looking at how the institution understands audiences in discursive and spatial terms, and in order to do so my intention was to interview managers across different departments (Appendix 1). As I reviewed the literature my plan began to change, having identified a lack of perspectives from the mediators and staff working front-line with audiences in the everyday. Front-of-house workers have a potential to act as ethnographers in audience research (Walmsley, 2018). Moreover, based on my experience of working front-of-house, as Barbican Customer/Audience Experience host, provided initial insights into the everyday 'cultural ecology' (Holden, 2015) of foyers which I proposed to investigate further. These were the rationales that led to my decision to interview hosts who work in the foyers, rather than starting from interviews with managers. The decision to interview hosts led to one of the significant contributions of my research, the ethnographic study on the Barbican Foyers (Chapter 6). Since my initial proposal, I had planned to look at the foyers, conceptualised as the in-between-spaces that connect the core venues of the arts centre and the outside world. My initial study interviewing hosts led not only to an ethnography of the foyers, but also highlighted a set of themes that linked to wider institutional discourses.

While the hosts' study gave a rich insight into the 'practised' spaces of the arts centre, it became clear that understanding the ways in which spaces and audiences were discursively produced would offer an important complementary perspective. This led me to embark on a critical-historical study of the Barbican Centre's annual reports and archival materials. However, having started my PhD as the archive project itself was starting, there was only limited availability of documents ready for consultation. It became clear that delving into the archive would have taken a large portion of my time given the scope of the three-year project, and so I chose to limit my focus to the annual reports. Institutional frictions also played a part: I initially expected to be able to have both formal and informal access and contacts with

different professionals across departments, and as the study went on, repeated access issues revealed this wasn't going to be granted. That led to my decision to look at documents that are publicly available, and to try and understand through those documents what kinds of discourses about audiences and spaces are communicated by the arts institution and how that links to foyers. The annual reports are also the public-facing documents that bridge internal institutional practices and the funders, partners, and wider public.

These institutional frictions became one of the key challenges encountered during the fieldwork. The need to negotiate the tensions between my position as both a casual worker and as researcher, funded by the same institution that I was critically analysing, had a marked impact on the research. To some extent I was positioned as an insider, yet I was not really inside the institutions' offices and operations because my location of work were the public venues and foyers. There was never a point at which I entered the field or started the fieldwork, because I had been already in the field since my first internship with the Barbican in 2014. Moreover, being invited to conduct research by a large institution that, as many others, tends to be quite siloed, proved complex to navigate. Since the inception of my doctoral project, there was a lack of shared expectations on what my research would offer to the institutions involved and what it would impact. The annual reports became a meaningful way of accommodating these tensions at a key moment of the study.

Once the annual reports study was finished, at that point I had developed enough contacts in the institution to overcome the resistance to carrying out multiple interviews with managers. Although this was my intention from the start, having gone through the previous two studies, it now felt like the right time to gain the managerial perspective. This allowed the PhD to develop three complementary perspectives on the audience discourse: through the reports, how the institution broadcasts its public facing audience discourse; through the managers, how the institution actually spatialises discourses about audiences; and through the hosts, how discourses play out 'on the ground' making visible a rich ecology of 'audiencing' often out of sight to the institution. My research questions were aimed at exploring these three complementary perspectives.

Research questions

The thesis investigates how certain discursive conceptions of audiences are constructed, challenged and re-assessed in a particular research setting, the Barbican Centre, focusing on the foyers as the primary lens of analysis. The research project explores the key question:

- How are discourses of audiences and participation produced, challenged and re-assessed, through institutional policies, spatial strategies and public programming?

This overarching question is articulated in more specific terms across the three main studies:

RQ1. How do certain discourses about audiences gain institutional prominence?

RQ2. How are audience policies, strategies and programmes mediated 'on the ground' by front-of-house staff and audience members in the material spaces of the foyers?

RQ3. How are they confirmed, challenged and re-assessed in managerial terms?

Summary of methodology

Taking a discursive-ethnographic methodological approach (Krzyzanowski, 2011), this thesis integrates ethnographic and critical discourse methods through fieldwork in institutional spaces, and critical analysis of discourses shaping those spaces to provide a situated analysis. In this respect, the notion of positionality is important, which considers the non-neutral role of the qualitative researcher in collecting and analysing data. At the stage of defining the research questions, I drew on my own personal experience of having worked in the field setting. Using multiple lenses – annual reports and institutional communications, the foyers through the eyes of hosts, and interviews with managers, but also the researcher's direct experience of working front-of-house – the study aims to provide a set of different perspectives on discourses and practices of audiences in a specific arts centre.

On the one hand, it draws on Foucauldian concepts of discourse and governmentality to illustrate the ways in which specific discourses of audience development, engagement and participation intersect with the practices and policies of audience experience and spatial management which these discourses sustain and legitimate, and how they might also be

contested on the ground. Following Foucault and his interpreters, 'discursive and non-discursive practices should be regarded as strictly interconnected, because it is through discourse that practices are prepared, promulgated and legitimised' (Colombo and Quassoli, 2016, p. 324). On the other hand, to analyse the 'practised spaces' of the institution, the research took inspiration from Georgina Born's understanding of fieldwork as a tool 'to explore the differences between what is said in publicity or in the boardroom and what happens on the ground in the studio, office or cleaning station. It is by probing the gaps between principles and practice, management claims and ordinary working lives – between what is explicit and implicit – that a fuller grasp of reality can be gleaned' (Born, 2004, p. 15).

The fieldwork involved analysis of institutional documents and strategies, interviews with staff members across the organisation, as well as the researcher's participant observation as a casual member of staff in the Audience Experience department. Combining critical discourse analysis and institutional ethnography, the analysis built on these main datasets:

- a first interview study on the foyers and their uses, based on 12 semi-structured interviews with Barbican audience experience hosts (Study 1 – Chapter 6);
- key strategic documents, including Barbican annual reports between 2002/03 and 2017/18 and the Barbican Business Plan 2017/18 to provide a critical-historical examination of discourses (Study 2 – Chapter 5);
- a second interview study based on 18 interviews with managers across different organisational departments involved in audience and foyer strategies, including Marketing, Creative Learning and the Barbican Incubator (Study 3 – Chapter 7);
- the researcher's journal based on site and fieldwork observations and reflections.

Main research findings

The key findings of this study stem from the ethnography of the Barbican foyers and the critical analysis of Barbican annual reports and managerial strategies. The ethnographic study shows that public spaces and foyers within arts institutions are becoming 'cultural ecologies' in urban areas, where non-ticketed audiences can engage in a variety of informal modes of everyday participation that complement the formal programming on offer. Even though theatre and museum foyers have previously been described as sites of social display and communicative spaces, within changing urban conditions such spaces are assuming even more importance. These findings contribute to an emerging body of scholarly research on everyday cultural participation in place, by demonstrating the value of freely accessible foyers within arts centres. Yet foyers and in-between-spaces are also shown to be sites of

institutional struggles, in that they are planned and managed to perform a set of different, sometimes conflicting, agendas. Their multiple functions highlight tensions between discourses of engagement and participation, income generation and commercial uses of space, as well as destination marketing. These findings emerge from the analysis of institutional communication and managerial strategies, which illuminate the existence of different discourses about audiences and spaces within institutions. These different discourses (audience-customer; audience-participant; audience-visitor-consumer) highlight an increased blurring of the boundaries between the artistic, commercial and urban branding function that arts institutions are called to play. My argument is that the blurring of these boundaries between art, culture and commerce in the spaces of the foyers is mirrored in institutional discourses. This provokes a crisis of purpose for art institutions, in that all these dimensions are merged into one another and need to be mediated. The identification of these conflicts in their spatialised dimension is an important contribution to the field of arts management and cultural policy, particularly adding to discussions on the role of cultural intermediaries. By taking into account new demands for everyday creativity and participation in public spaces, institutions have the opportunity to rethink their public provision in terms of publicly shared cultural infrastructure that allows for non-commercial forms of participation to take place, rather than strictly as structured artistic programming.

Overview of thesis

To build my argument for a new conceptualisation of audiences in arts centres through a whole-institutional perspective, this opening chapter has introduced the research questions, both situating the work in the field of arts management and cultural policy and providing an explanation for the chosen methodological approach in relation to the research setting. Interspersed between chapters, there are also a number of site-writings: inspired by architectural historian Jane Rendell (2006), site-writings are grounded in a critical-spatial practice and written as short auto-ethnographic takes on the spaces of the arts centre as experienced by myself, the researcher-host. The purpose of this is to bring my embodied perspective of the spaces into the writing.

Chapter 2 presents the literature review, discussing the so-called 'participatory turn' across different literatures, from audience and visitor studies to cultural policy and museum studies, to highlight theoretical variations in understanding of audiences and participation. The literature also introduces the debate on the neoliberalisation of culture and its implications for the management of arts institutions. Following a discussion about different

epistemological approaches in audience research, the review of the literature shows how normative conceptions of audiences remain dominant in this area. It points to an existing gap on analysing the discourses about audiences produced by arts institutions and the politics of practices about audiences and participation. The literature also identifies a research gap of empirical research about audiences in public spaces within institutions, such as foyers in arts centres, except from a limited range of recent studies in museum literature.

Chapter 3 introduces the research setting of the Barbican Centre, its origins and development as part of the Barbican residential estate. It starts by tracing an overview of the arts centres' movement in post-war Britain, to situate the arts centre in the broader UK cultural policy landscape and identify its specificity as a centre founded and funded by the City of London Corporation.

Chapter 4 focuses upon methodological issues to show how the research study has been undertaken and to detail the choice to use a mixed discursive-ethnographic approach across the sub-studies to gather documentary and interview data. The chapter also reflects on the issues raised by the positioning of the researcher in the field, and it provides methodological insights into the challenges and promises of joint research projects that aim to bridge research and practice.

Chapter 5 draws on the annual reports from 2002 to today to trace the key evolutions of discourses about audiences, particularly with regard to foyers and programmes within such spaces, occurred in the context of the Barbican over the last two decades. It contextualises these discourses in relation to themes discussed in the literature, and against the background of cultural policy shifts.

Chapter 6 presents findings from the study that looked at the foyers through the eyes of hosts, highlighting the richness of the cultural ecology of the foyers and the cultures of participation afforded by them. In this chapter, I discuss issues of spatial management and tensions between different institutional agendas against the backdrop of recent studies on museum spaces. I also formulate an argument on the multi-faceted role of hosts and their role in performing 'the affective side' of the institution, which is discussed under the light of critiques of the experience economy.

Chapter 7 investigates these institutional tensions further and considers how audiences are differently conceptualised within the organisation, across various departments. In this

chapter, I consider how discourses from the annual reports are mediated at senior and 'middle-management' level, producing a set of competing understandings of audiences and spaces.

Chapter 8 reflects on the research process, drawing conclusions on the relationship between the researcher and the arts institution, against the backdrop of the social impact agenda.

Chapter 9 completes the thesis by drawing conclusions on the strengths of presenting three different facets of institutional practice in relation to audiences. It summarises and extrapolates the key research findings, reflecting on the implications for organisational practices at the Barbican Centre and for the wider arts sector, and finally presenting suggestions for further research to be carried out.

<u>Site-writing 1 - 'Welcome' to Silk Street</u>

Projected on a digital screen, these seven letters stand in a colourful panel on top of the main entrance of the Barbican Centre, on Silk Street, City of London. If you're walking at street level, this is your way into the concrete temple. You are faced with a glass door, sometimes security guards standing outside, sometimes 'door ambassadors' in Barbican-branded uniforms saying 'Hello' to you with a smile on their face. Often, you ask questions regarding how to find such and such venue: 'How do I get to Cinema 1?', 'I'm going to the concert…where do I collect my ticket?' or 'I'm here for my graduation, where's the registration desk?' are some of the most recurrent. You visitor, you customer, you audience member, you global tourist, you international student, you citizen of this endless metropolis. 'Welcome' is what this building, this arts institution says to you, in bold digital letters on top of its doors. 'If you don't know where you're going… welcome[2], we are here to direct you. We are the Door Ambassadors, the Barbican Audience experience hosts, the Architecture tour guides. 'We are here to make sure you have an excellent audience experience, exceeding your expectations at any time'.

From 2014 to 2019, I worked front-of-house at the Barbican Centre. First as a Customer experience host, and then as Architecture tour guide. I can recall a number of shifts I did as a door ambassador on the main door at Silk Street, standing there and welcoming people in, smiling at them, directing them to where they're heading to. Giving instructions on how to get to level -1 or elsewhere inside the building. The people coming through Silk Street could be arriving for their graduation, for a classical music concert, to look for the public library, to attend a commercial launch, to celebrate a wedding, to visit the Conservatory. When working as hosts, the operational notes we're given in the brief at the start of the shift are our compass for the day: tucked inside the pocket of our branded 'Barbican' fleeces, they remind us about what happens everywhere around the arts centre. Standing there, often smiling or turning towards someone who looks a bit lost, we approach, or are approached by members of the public mainly to help them navigate the spaces around the centre and get where they want to go. There are so many people coming through those doors every day, that we might even recognise some of them, the regulars, for example those who come pretty much to every single LSO concert. Or the homeless person coming in to find a seat hidden away in the foyers. Or the child-carers, or the Barbican estate residents. Many familiar faces, but also a constant flux of new people coming in. 'Over a million people come through our doors every year' recites the 2018 Barbican Centre Annual report. The official messages in publicity and management, compared with the embodied, daily experience of working at the doors, and on the ground floor, made me aware of the knowledge and experience of front-of-house staff, that often goes largely ignored by institutions. The stimulus for this piece of research came as I was working as a host at the Barbican Centre, in 2016, when the Barbican-Guildhall studentship call was published.

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[2] From Paul Haworth's poem 'Welcome' for the 35th anniversary of the Barbican.

Chapter 2. Audiences and arts institutions: a review of the literature

Introduction

This study focuses on the changing role of arts institutions in relation to their audiences. How have audiences come to be such a central concern in arts institutions in recent times? Supposedly, audiences have always been there in one form or another. Why then are arts institutions so concerned about their audiences, especially at a time of increasing participatory culture? Arts institutions are concerned about audiences in different ways: they need more tickets sold to put bums on seats and generate income; they want higher appreciation rates for their services and programmes to satisfy the requirements of audit culture; they also need to demonstrate to their funders that their activities have a social impact and that they can attract more diverse demographics, more representative of the wider population. In order to demonstrate that audiences find value in what they do, evaluation frameworks and measures of public value need to be put in place; but arts institutions are also moving towards governance models that supposedly allow power to be devolved to their audiences and in doing so become more participatory and co-produced. However, the question is why do these different concerns and discourses about audiences emerge and circulate at different times? And the corollary question is whose interests are these discourses serving, and what are the rationales as to why they are reinforced, ignored or challenged at different levels and in different spaces of the arts institution?

First of all, given that this study was developed in response to a brief built under the general heading of 'Understanding audiences' and of examining the concept of "audience experience" (Appendix A), I will start from a consideration of the field of audience research in the arts, and of the changing relationships between audiences and arts institutions, against the backdrop of British cultural policy shifts. In order to trace a critical overview of current debates in the scholarly field of audience research in the arts, I draw upon a range of relevant disciplinary areas: arts marketing and management, audience and reception studies, theatre and performing arts studies, cultural policy, and museum studies. In the spirit of this journey, the aim of this study is not to evaluate, measure or understand what audience members think of a specific arts programme or institution, but to explore 'how (arts) institutions think' (Douglas, 1986) about, and conceive of their audiences. I argue, with Lindelof (2015), that: 'The way in which arts institutions perceive their audiences affects how they imagine the relationship between the art form, the audience and the institution' (p. 201). Therefore, I point to the importance of examining how certain discourses are adopted, circulated and

used by arts institutions over time, providing the bases and justifications for institutional practices.

Within this trajectory, I will identify two wider cultural processes that have changed the relationship between audiences and arts institutions: neoliberalisation of culture (McGuigan, 2005; Hesmondhalgh *et al.*, 2014; Alexander, 2018) on the one hand, and the 'participatory turn' (Livingstone, 2013; Jenkins, Ito and Boyd, 2016; Virolainen, 2016; Keltie, 2017; Bonet and Négrier, 2018) on the other. By employing these two processes, widely discussed in cultural policy, as frames to contextualise the emerging discourse of 'audience-centricity' in arts institutions (Walmsley, 2019a), the literature points to a lack of critical investigation of the different discourses about audiences and participation circulated and incorporated within institutions. I discuss cultural policy changes that are intertwined with processes of neoliberalisation of culture, whereby publicly funded arts institutions are increasingly under pressure to transform themselves into managerial and business-oriented organisations (Alexander, 2018). This shift, setting out normative conceptions of audiences in arts institutions as for example in arts marketing (Hill, O'Sullivan and O'Sullivan, 2003), explains the redefinition of audiences as customers and consumers. In relation to which, I also discuss the prominent discourse of audience development born out of the democratisation of culture tradition and the deficit model of cultural engagement (O'Brien, 2014). Drawing on contributions from arts management and cultural policy researchers who have discussed the rise of audience development and its problematics (Kawashima, 2000, 2006; Bjørnsen, 2010; Lindelof, 2015), the review introduces a set of questions on the relationships between audiences and arts institutions.

Particularly, I have focused on how the participation agenda has become central in arts institutions and could be traced back to a set of different processes: 1970s identity politics and calls for greater democracy; critical investigations of the potential of/for cultural institutions (i.e. museology); the commercial/arts marketing dream of larger audiences, and rising inequality with the exclusion of people from participating in the public sphere under neoliberalism. I also introduce the so-called participatory turn as a discursive shift away from the understanding of audiences as recipients and passive consumers, to a broader reconceptualisation of new modes of engagement and participation (Radbourne, Johanson and Glow, 2013). However, by highlighting the various discourses of audiences and participation that arise from the literature, I also critically point to those that tend to reinforce normative understandings of participation and audience development (Novak-Leonard and Brown, 2011). I highlight some of the discourses that contextualise participation as an artistic

practice that, due to its radical beginnings, inherently challenges the relationships between spectators, performers and institutional hierarchies (Bishop, 2012; Stevenson, Balling and Kann-Rasmussen, 2017). I then introduce critical understandings of everyday participation as situated outside of the orbit of funded culture (Miles and Gibson, 2017), hence creating potential spaces for cultural democracy. But I also suggest a problematisation of this discourse within the arts institution, where it might be employed at the service of neoliberal agendas such as destination marketing.

A wide variety of methods, across quantitative, qualitative and bioscientific traditions, are employed by researchers in audience and visitor research, with a shared tendency to focus on audiences' responses to a performance, exhibition or programme. As an organising principle for this critical review, I am taking an epistemological approach, in order to highlight different traditions of audience research in the arts, the range of methods they employ, and the different types of knowledge they can produce. Considering the entanglement of discourses and spatial dimensions in arts institutions, an aspect that has been under-examined in the literature is the mediation of audience experience through staff and spaces. With the exception of a set of contributions in museum studies that shifted the focus from the core venues – the white cube, the concert hall, the theatre – to the thresholds and foyers (Laursen, Kristiansen and Drotner, 2016; Parry, Page and Moseley, 2018), I identify the lack of studies in this area. Finally, I suggest that the foyers have the potential to function as both a lens and a mirror to highlight key dynamics in the relationship between arts institutions, their audiences, and diverse modes of participation.

To conclude, the literature points to the existing dilemma between the Liberal Humanist discourse of audiences as citizens to be educated as opposed to, and entangled with, the neoliberal discourse of audiences as customers and consumers. Beyond this binary distinction, I use the foyers to outline the new hybrid of the participant-citizen-consumer and the rise of emergent publics in a changing cultural economy. Departing from the citizen versus consumer binary, the chapter points to the importance of situated research that combines discursive and ethnographic analysis in order to explore the complexity of how these apparently contrasting discourses are mediated within the spaces of the arts institution, at the policy and strategic levels as well as 'on the ground'. Aiming to provide a contribution to the field of audience research in the arts, the study focuses on the discursive-spatial dimensions through which audiences are constructed and cultural participation made possible. These discursive-spatial dimensions are seen as effecting the ways in which institutions 'understand audiences' and, ultimately, their relationship with them.

The changing nature of audiences

This literature review tries to understand what the notion of audience in the specific context of an arts centre means. To be called an audience member is to be considered as being listening and/or looking at something. Historically, 'audiencing' would happen in a concert hall, a theatre, an art gallery, or a public space where a performance takes place. Increasingly, as we live in the participatory age, we are 'audiencing' (Livingstone, 2013) not only when sitting in front of a TV or in a concert hall, but also on our daily commute, looking at our phones and in many similar everyday contexts. This expansion of the condition of 'audiencehood' has been defined by some as 'dispersion' particularly in relation to the emergence of new media (Carpentier, Schrøder and Hallett, 2015). It is important to understand the connected histories of audience and reception research across media studies, performing arts and across other fields of scholarly research.

Audience and reception studies started in the early 20th century looking at audiences of mass media such as television and film, and to investigate the relationship between audiences and other institutions providing media content. In the area of media audience and reception studies, research is usually conducted to understand how and why audiences engage with media content, with a 'focus on the interpretative relation between audience and medium' (Livingstone, 1998, p. 2). In media and cultural studies, different models have been produced to understand the role and agency of the audience in relation to a message. For example, the Spectacle/Performance (SPP) paradigm outlined by Abercrombie and Longhurst (1998) anticipates many aspects and shares similarities with Livingstone's model. Building and expanding on an appraisal of audience theories developed in the post-war period, Livingstone theorises the 'participation paradigm' in audience studies, whereby in an increasingly mediated society 'audiencing' has become a vital condition of engaging with all aspects of everyday life.

Audiences are nowadays being re-conceptualised as users, prosumers, co-creators. In audience studies, the relevance of the notion of audience itself is discussed, pointing to an increasing 'fragmentation or hybridity of the audience' particularly in the context of new media, whereby the term audience is increasingly substituted by alternative terms like 'user' (Carpentier, Schrøder and Hallett, 2015). Certainly the notion of audience developed in the early or mid-20th century has shifted in relation to new media and new technology that allow active production and participation, like user-generated content. However, Livingstone

argues, it is hardly the case that each paradigm replaces the previous one: passive, inter-active, active. Instead, she argues, these different paradigms co-exist as different roles for the audience continue to be possible: from roles seen as more passive to roles conceived as more active. Furthermore, each of these audience roles:

> raises particular questions, each instantiates a different conception of power, and each conjures a different vision of the audience – as an aggregate of individual consumers, as social collectives stratified by class, generation, gender, etc., or as individualised but not individual performers socially constituted through the shared performance of self (Livingstone, 2013, p. 6).

Much of this tradition of audience and reception studies, it is important to note, is based on media consumer behaviours, such as TV watching, and not on live performance. Therefore, the core focus is on the relationship between the viewer and a set 'message'. In the context of live performance venues, this is complicated, given that the viewer or audience becomes an active agent who has to be in a specific place, and has the potential to interact or change the performance with their behavioural responses. Furthermore, within the tradition of public art and participatory performance, the 'active role' of people encountering the artwork is stressed in the language. In this sense, the spaces in which audiences exist, and the spatial dimensions of audience participation become important variables in audience research. This is particularly investigated in theatre and performing arts studies, as well as museum studies, as discussed in the next section.

Theatre and performing arts studies

> Theatre can exist without makeup, without autonomic costume and scenography, without a separate performance area (stage), without lighting and sound effects, etc. It cannot exist without the actor-spectator relationship of perceptual, direct, "live" communion. (Grotowski and Barba, 1969, pp. 18–19)

It is commonly understood that there cannot be an artistic event without an audience. Referring to theatre director Jerzy Grotowski, who saw the relationship between actor and spectator as the necessary bare minimum for theatre to exist, Freshwater (2009) reminds us that the presence of an audience is the 'conditio sine qua non' for the performance to take place. The same could be said of music, visual arts and other visual and performing arts events that usually rely on the physical presence of audiences. Artists, and indeed arts institutions, simply need audiences. Audiences can exist across media, spaces, and modes of engagement, but audiences always exist in relation to something to listen to, to look at, to watch, to spectate. The term has a broad meaning, and relates to a constellation of other words: spectators, viewers, readers, public(s), users (Butsch and Livingstone, 2014). Ways

and modes of spectating have changed across cultures, geographies and historical eras. Presently, there can be audiences for mass media like radio, tv, and digital media, or audiences to live performances or lectures, or audiences in a museum, or simply as readers of books. Spectatorship, viewership and audiencehood are therefore not fixed, but constantly shifting. To keep with Livingstone's concept, different paradigms co-exist over time rather than replacing each other. The participatory turn has expanded the notion of arts attendance, with new modes such as immersive theatre. However, conventional 'audiencing' as seated spectators or listeners in a theatre or concert hall remain the dominant mode of live attendance in the performing arts. Moreover, arts institutions need to expand and diversify their audiences to fulfil agendas set by government policy and by funding bodies, for example to demonstrate their public value and therefore justify public subsidy, but they still also need to put 'bums on seats'. As expressed in normative terms by a popular creative arts marketing manual:

> 'For most artists the audience is an integral part of an artistic experience. Only when the public experiences what the artist wishes to communicate is the creative process complete. The audience is vital for more practical purposes too. Art which does not generate audiences will seldom generate revenues, whether from box office receipts or funding bodies and sponsors. The development of audiences is therefore a fundamental responsibility of the marketing function. In practice, this means that the main task of arts marketing is to motivate people to attend performances or exhibitions or purchase art works or crafts, encouraging them to share in the artistic experience being provided' (Hill, O'Sullivan and O'Sullivan, 2003, p. 36).

Audience research in the arts as a growing field

In the last decade, the focus on audience research in the arts in the UK has come to the fore to an extent unprecedented, in terms of both scholarly and industry research. To name but a few of the new entities that have appeared on the scene during this period, The Audience Agency, 'an independent not-for-profit helping put the public's voice at the centre of arts and culture' was founded in 2012; the Sheffield Performer and Audience Research Centre (SPARC) was founded in 2010; the UK/Australian-led International Network for Audience Research in the Performing Arts (INARPA) was launched in 2017. This proliferation of research centres, networks and freelance researchers culminated in the Audience Research in the Arts conference in July 2019, co-organised by the Audience Agency, INARPA and SPARC. The conference also saw the launch of a Special Issue of 'Cultural Trends' dedicated to 'Audience Data and Research: perspectives from scholarship, policy, management and practice' (Hadley *et al.*, 2019).

As pointed out in the Editorial of this Special Issue (Hadley *et al.*, 2019), audience research in the arts is a relatively new field of scholarship that draws upon and is rooted in many different disciplinary traditions – two key areas are media audience and reception studies on the one hand, and performance, theatre or music studies on the other. It has been argued that Audience Research in the Arts is lacking a defined scholarly home and that by virtue of drawing on many different disciplinary fields, it is by nature interdisciplinary (Walmsley, 2019a). In scholarly research, audiences have been variously studied across a range of research domains, such as performance and theatre studies, arts marketing and management, cultural policy, audience and reception studies, museum studies and museology, sociology of culture, critical and curatorial theory, leisure and urban studies. One of the key journals in the field, 'Participations', launched in 2003, states that audience and reception studies have problematic histories in that, until recently, 'journals across the fields of media and culture, the humanities and social sciences were unsympathetic, even sometimes plain hostile, to work on audiences' (Participations Journal, 2018). This has changed over the last few decades, with arts institutions, funding bodies and academic researchers putting an increasing focus on the question of understanding audiences, in response to changes in consumer culture, cultural policy requirements and shifts in artistic practices.

Audience, reception and visitor studies developed in parallel to other 20th century developments in media studies and market research, cultural policy and arts management. Alongside and beyond scholarly research about audiences, therefore, a variety of research centres, arts organisations, governmental and arts funding bodies, consultancy firms and service organisations, private foundations and think tanks are also producing research about audiences:

- Marketing and box office departments in arts organisations
- Governmental and funding bodies (e.g. ACE), local authorities
- Arts organisations (e.g. IRO), individual artists
- Academic scholars and research centres (e.g. AHRC-funded projects such as INARPA)
- Independent sector support agencies (e.g. The Audience Agency)
- Private consultancy agencies or service organisations (e.g. CultureCounts, Morris Hargreaves McIntyre)
- Private foundations (e.g. Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation)
- Membership organisations (e.g. Arts Marketing Association, Visitor Studies Group).

Such a broad area of knowledge production with a variety of agents and organisations involved, produces different methods, develops into different strands and adopts radically different epistemological approaches. As evidenced by the list of these different agents, it becomes clear that audience research can be conducted from a wide range of methodological and disciplinary approaches and with different social strategic aims. Research can be produced as instrumental research by arts organisations or consultants, but also as more critical research by academic scholars, sometimes with overlaps. For example, there are cases of academic scholars being employed as consultants to produce audience research for institutions to a tightly defined brief or to develop evaluation frameworks. The different rationales and approaches, and the attendant methods and techniques employed to produce knowledge about audiences, are manifold and reflect different epistemological positions. Arguably, understanding these positions can tell us more about the wider implications of audience research in the arts and in arts institutional settings, and can help us better examine the relationships between arts institutions and audiences, or society at large. This is the reason why a key organising principle of this literature review is the epistemological approach taken by scholars, academic journals and research centres. They all come with different epistemologies and produce multiple discourses. The key distinction is between empirical research, market research and critical research approaches.

By epistemological approach I mean what a given 'theory of knowledge' is understood to be, what a scholar considers as valid data, and how the roles of the researcher and research 'subjects' are understood. Providing a summary of different epistemological positions in arts management and cultural policy, Paquette and Redaelli (2015, pp. 92–111) contend that a productive way of resolving epistemological debates in this field is to understand them as co-existing positions within a shared area of knowledge production. I will come back to epistemological questions in the literature review's conclusions, where I also introduce the conceptual framework informing the study and the chosen methodology. Within the 'epistemic field' of arts management and cultural policy, audience-focused research, especially when commissioned in the context of arts institutions or funding bodies, tends to be aimed at informing evaluation processes, institutional funding or operational strategies, for example in marketing or programming. Although it should not immediately or systematically be equated with positivism and positivist research (Paquette and Redaelli, 2015, pp. 98–99), it tends to be approached from a positivistic lens in order to produce data for performance evaluation, marketing campaigns or statistical audience surveys. Whether quantitative or qualitative, research in these contexts often takes an instrumental approach,

in that it is evidence-led and designed to measure specific pre-defined impacts. Despite this being a widespread practice of audience research, there is limited scholarship on audience survey and evaluation practices in arts institutions from a critical standpoint except from a number of limited studies (Gilmore, Glow and Johanson, 2017; Oman and Taylor, 2018).

Possibly as a result of processes of neoliberalisation of culture, much audience research in arts institutions is increasingly conducted to provide instrumental knowledge - evidence of engagement, understood within policy frameworks in terms of levels, motivations and forms of involvement, or in terms of quality metrics (Gilmore, Glow and Johanson, 2017). Artists and art institutions are required to statistically prove their capacity to attract and engage diverse audiences, in order to demonstrate their accountability and justify public funding towards their projects. The focus can be either on measuring economic and social impact, or on trying to capture artistic excellence and intrinsic quality (Arts Council England, 2016). However, the limitations of value measurement approaches have been discussed and reassessed (Merli, 2002; Selwood, 2002; Belfiore and Bennett, 2007, 2008; Belfiore, 2014; Hewison, 2014). Evidence-based audience research applied to the arts is particularly problematic, as impacts of arts projects cannot be easily reduced to a set of measurable attributes (Belfiore and Bennett, 2008). This area of audience research can be defined as "value and impact" research (Walmsley, 2019a) and an examination of the contributions in this area need to be considered in relation to discussions on cultural value and ways of measuring it (Holden, 2015; Crossick and Kaszynska, 2016; Walmsley, 2018; Belfiore, 2020).

Academic research on audiences in the performing arts has pointed to the need to shift the understanding of 'audience experience' from a marketing focused analysis measured simply by box office data, to an investigation of new modes of arts participation (Johanson, Glow and Kershaw, 2014), variously understood as 'active spectatorship', 'participation', 'collaboration' and 'co-creation'. In this next section, I am going to provide an overview of the field identified as audience research in the arts, its disciplinary origins and dominant epistemological positions, and identify key debates on the relationship between arts institutions and audiences. Ironically, despite the turn to audience experience in institutions, many scholars in the performing arts highlight how audience voices have systematically been silenced in theatre (Freshwater, 2009), arts and music audience research, given the tendency of theatre or music research to read the 'text' of the artwork in a manner more aligned/similar to art, music or theatre critics. Theatre studies scholars have pointed to the lack of 'serious investigation' on the role of audiences as co-protagonist of theatrical performances (Bennett, 1997) and highlighted the need for advanced theories of production and reception with a

focus on changing modes of spectatorship. In the field of performing arts studies concerned with audiences, there are studies looking more specifically at theatre audiences (Reason, 2004; Freshwater, 2009; Sedgman, 2016), classical music (Burland and Pitts, 2014) or audiences across different art forms (Gross and Pitts, 2016). One of the challenges of looking at different art forms is precisely to do with understanding differences in approaches across theatre, music and performance studies scholars. To better understand the diversity of approaches in audience research, I will outline different audience research methods.

Audience research methods and discourses

In audience studies applied to the arts, one of the key questions is about cultural value and its measurement. Although even within this field scholars adopt different epistemological approaches that vary across time, they share a concern with 'aesthetic experience' of individuals to generate theories about audiences more generally. Scholars in audience studies have tended to focus on questions associated with aesthetic quality and value as perceived by audience members, developing an understanding of audience experience as multiple and subjective, as well as articulating differing understandings of cultural value. Arguably, researchers in this area tend to share an epistemological[3] approach that sees as acceptable knowledge audiences' responses to a proposed content, such as a music performance, a play, or an art exhibition. A central debate in audience research is around different methodologies and methods used by arts organisations and funding bodies to track value for audience members. This debate is particularly crucial because policy or funding requirements might define in advance proxies for what is to be measured as cultural value, and arts organisations in many cases would produce evidence of value to fit the funding requirements. Many scholars have pointed to the limits of cultural indicators used by funding bodies, whereby 'the qualities of measurement risk also become the qualities valued in the activities that are being measured' (Johanson, Glow and Kershaw, 2014).

In the field of audience research in the arts, a range of methods are in use by scholars, with both quantitative (i.e. surveys or large-scale statistical studies) and qualitative approaches (i.e. interviews and focus-group based studies). These can all be understood as different ways of seeing, understanding and measuring audiences, their experiences and levels of engagement. Arguably, the qualitative approach is dominant in scholarly audience research, employing methods that range from interviewing audience members, to questionnaires, but also new

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[3] Epistemology is what counts as acceptable knowledge. I will return on this in my Methodology chapter.

methods such as post-show talks, or semi-ethnographic methods such as 'deep hanging out' with audience members (Walmsley, 2018). These studies tend to take phenomenological approaches, whereby the research focus is on the subjective experience of audience members, used to develop conceptions of cultural value, variously understood as aesthetic and social. Often, the aim of these studies is to develop tools to measure levels of engagement, appreciation, motivations of attendance:

> Using methods that are most commonly associated with the social sciences to gather and analyse a range of spectatorial reactions, this field has historically sought to explore the ways audiences find meaning, value, pleasure, frustration and disappointment in their cultural encounters (Sedgman, 2018a).

In 'The Audience Experience' (Radbourne, Johanson and Glow, 2013), Katya Johanson's final chapter presents a critical overview of the existing and most used methods employed in audience research. Johanson argues that in performing arts scholarship there has recently been a turn to 'audience experience', which reflects an interest not just in a critical examination of the 'text' of the performance (what critics do in reviews, or academics in articles), but on the audience responses to the performance. Audience responses have been all too absent from past scholarly performing arts studies and, when they have received attention, such research has been biased by the cultural interests of researchers (Radbourne, Johanson and Glow, 2013, p. 168). Recent shifts, Johanson notes, recognise that the actual audience is more complex than the ideal audience (ibid., p.170) and, she points out, the interest in audience reactions interestingly comes at a point when there has been a disintegration of the boundaries between performer and audience member.

Qualitative studies of audiences, it is pointed out, are often framed by discourse analysis and borrow heavily from reception theory, methods 'regarded as giving the researcher the capacity to elucidate the subjective and elusive concepts associated with the audience's experience' (ibid.). Alternatives to social science methods are customised technology or ethnographic observations given that they could be understood as more representative of a 'whole body' experience. Other post-performance methods include collecting affective reactions through creative activities. A recurring theme of these debates has been the difficult act of interpretation in many of the qualitative methods being discussed, including the conventional social science 'talk-based' techniques, the use of written accounts, ethnographic and observational techniques and the collection of creative responses to a performance (Radbourne, Johanson and Glow, 2013, p. 168). Ethnographic study, as Johanson notes, resembles informal information-collection habits of experienced theatre employees.

One of the primary limitations of qualitative research employing social science methods such as interviews and focus groups, is that it runs the risk of reproducing or reinforcing inequalities of representation. There is a tendency for researchers rich in cultural capital to study audience members who are equally rich in cultural capital. One of the main critiques to the tradition of audience studies comes from scholars within the field, pointing to the risk of positive bias in research conducted as evaluation (Johanson and Glow, 2015). Especially when a study is designed to produce evidence of impacts for an arts organisation or funding body, the risk is to measure and show only the positive outcomes and successes, not the potential failures. The limits of cultural indicators used by funding bodies influencing audience research have also been pointed out (Johanson, Glow and Kershaw, 2014). The complexity of the performing arts audience, Johanson notes, lies in the fact that their experience includes both cognitive and affective responses, varies through the course of a performance as well as from one audience member to the next, begins before they enter the theatre and continues long after they leave. This complexity makes the appropriate research method for studying the audience an important issue. Johanson suggests the use of an appropriate combination of techniques.

Finally, and more importantly, I would argue, alongside other scholars (Johanson, Glow and Kershaw, 2014), that audience research is limited in that it is conducted with audience members who are already attending the arts and not with those 'who are not there', therefore it risks reproducing existing inequalities. As has been said, however important it is to understand the audience member's views or responses to an artistic object or event, this research is usually conducted on existing, often highly educated audience members who are more likely to take part because they can afford it, or they have the knowledge and cultural capital necessary. This praxis risks reproducing inequalities and embedding them in the research process and fails to address more pressing political questions. If in the area of audience research, the key question is how to understand audiences, this could be approached using different methodologies, each with its own potentials and limitations. There has certainly been a recognition of the need for exploring methodological avenues that combine quantitative and qualitative methods, expanding the possibilities of phenomenology with ethnography and discourse analysis. The employment of ethnographic methods and discourse analysis in theatre studies offers new perspectives and complicates the relationship between audiences and institutions. However, audience research methods are not neutral, they are themselves discursive constructions, with the potential to tell different stories and reflect different vested interests.

It is important to understand the context of arts funding in which audience research is carried out, and how particular concerns with audience data are born out of cultural policy agendas. For example, in the UK, there is a distinction between publicly funded and commercial arts institutions and venues. With public funding comes an expectation that the artistic programme would be appealing to, or representative of, the whole population. Based on this, the deficit model of arts provision assumes that institutions have to put efforts in developing audiences, from which arises the long tradition of democratisation of culture and audience development. However, cultural policy also is developed as a top-down policy and tends to privilege ways of cultural engagement that are seen as more legitimate than others. To introduce this section, I will start with a consideration of the history of arts institutions in Western modern nation-states.

Cultural policy, arts institutions and democratisation of culture

Historically, cultural policy studies have focused on the relationship between citizens and the state, government, corporations or other bodies such as arts institutions developing public policies. Scholars in this academic area take different epistemological approaches, generally based on social science methods (using qualitative and/or quantitative methods). They tend to focus on questions of cultural value at a societal level, using policy documents, public discourse, strategies produced by media and art institutions as valid data to understand the governance of institutions and the public. Arts institutions such as major museums, opera houses and symphony orchestras are a product of the nation-state and were designed and built to sustain and be sustained by national cultures: from the first British public museums in 17th century (the Ashmolean Museum Oxford was opened in 1683) to the post-war idea of the arts centre, these public arts institutions are seen as performing a civilising role in society. As Gielen argues:

> The art institution also carries this twofold meaning. On the one hand, it consists of theater buildings, museums, concert halls, and the people and art works that populate them; on the other hand, it also represents the totality of artistic and cultural values that it promotes within society, such as those of individuality, authenticity, creativity, etc. (Gielen, 2010, p. 280).

Particularly in post-war Europe, the idea of democratisation of culture was at the core of the arts institutions' role, in that public funding for the arts was aimed at making high art accessible to everybody in society. Following a process of globalisation and neoliberalisation of culture, whereby the idea of the nation-state loses its centrality on the one hand and public culture is increasingly under the pressure of market logics on the other hand, institutions are

increasingly in need of expanding their audiences. The last few decades have arguably seen a translation of the democratisation of culture model into the audience development discourse, based on the same principle of the arts institution as the distributor of valid knowledge and content, and the audience as an external entity that requires being developed (Lindelof, 2015, p. 203). Undoubtedly, institutions need audiences as their life-blood. However, in an increasingly participatory culture and with new technology to an extent democratising creative processes, the role of the contemporary arts institution in relation to their audiences is called into question.

Nevertheless, large institutions such as major museums, opera houses and arts centres were built by modern states as architectural spaces that would have to accommodate large audiences: therefore, their need to put bums on seats remains crucial. As aptly noted in the title of a recent study: 'The problem with permanence is that you're stuck with it' (Glow and Johanson, 2017), which points to the challenges faced by building-based institutions such as arts centres as they adapt to new modes of artistic engagement and participation. If, as statistics and studies show, the model of seated audiences in a concert hall is at risk given the aging of the most assiduous audiences and the limited interest shown by new audiences (Dobson, 2010; Kemp and Poole, 2016), then a whole sector might be at risk. This is also complicated by data showing that only a minority of the population, in the UK regularly attends the subsidised arts (Hewison, 2014; Warwick Commission, 2015). The participation gap has been identified as a 'problem' across Europe, with the European commission's Eurobarometer showing that fewer Europeans are engaging in cultural activities as measured by cross national cultural participation surveys: these are largely activities funded as 'official arts and culture'. To counter these assumptions, Stevenson, Balling and Kann-Rasmussen (2017) question the existence of the problem, which they propose to reframe instead as a 'shared problematisation'. They argue that institutions have a vested interest in reproducing the idea of 'non-participation' because it helps them legitimise funding toward their own existence.

A way in which institutions have reframed questions of value beyond increasing audience numbers or expanding demographics, which were the main aims of audience development, is by demonstrating their social impact and public value to funders. In this sense, it is clear that the question of audiences and the question of value are deeply intertwined, in that the numbers of people attending an institution, and what these people think of the institution, and how the institution represents the value that people found in it, ultimately play a role in maintaining and reproducing the power of arts institutions. It is also apparent that the

importance of audience research has increased in parallel with institutional and policy concerns about demonstrating relevance to a wider audience and being highly rated in audience evaluations.

Whist these changes have on the one hand contributed to a process of democratisation of the arts institutions, the need to demonstrate increasing audience numbers and impact data also risks putting institutions under pressure within a market logic, undermining the public role that institutions were designed to have in post-war Europe. The question of publicness and how to re-imagine the role of institutions at a time when the welfare state has been dismantled and public space itself is increasingly controlled by commercial players and neoliberal forces, might be the key challenge faced by institutions in the decades to come. An important aspect in respect to this challenge would be about how institutions adapt their spaces to accommodate participatory cultures and increasing demand for diversification and individualisation, whilst also maintaining a public role shared by the majority of the population. The long tradition of audience development is born out of the democratisation of culture model. This section explores the trajectory and discourses that led to this model, which was further complicated with the advent of arts marketing and within the experience economy, as I will explain later.

Audience Development

The need to better understand and to expand and extend audiences has been a concern for many arts institutions over the last few decades. This is due to changing requirements from governments and funding bodies to provide more evidence of audience numbers, data on demographics of attendance, measures of engagement levels and social impact. It is also due to an increased need to generate income through ticket sales and commercial activities, to substitute for lack of public funding. In the British arts sector, ideas and practices of audience development have become more widespread, generating policy documents, strategic plans and new organisational initiatives[4]. The idea of audience development, as Bjørnsen (2010) argues, cannot be separated from the post-war idea of democratisation of culture, based on the principle of making cultural and arts activities available to as many people as possible, across geographical and social dividing lines. This imperative reflects the belief of the democratic function that public arts institutions play in society, especially within a welfare-state understanding of cultural provision as a public service aimed at every citizen. Within

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[4] ACE ran an audience development research programme in 2003 called Not for the Likes of You (Morton Smyth Limited, 2004) (Stevenson, 2016)

this framework, audience development is seen as a positive mission taken on by arts institutions, given its assumed potential to democratise culture, and to make it accessible to all citizens. However, the discourse of audience development itself can be seen as instrumental for arts institutions to reinforce their own understandings of arts and culture, and ultimately as a way to reinforce their existence and their own understanding of cultural value.

As a term, audience development became prominent in British cultural policy and arts management in the 1990s, and is linked to the New Labour government's focus on the social inclusion agenda (Kawashima, 1999, 2000, 2006). One of the first scholars to pay attention to this rising discourse, and to analyse its origins and its problematics, was Kawashima, who noted:

> The need for cultural organisations and projects to reach out into wider communities and involve a range of people in cultural activities now crops up both in the discourse of cultural policy and on the arts and cultural management agenda (Kawashima, 2006, p. 55).

Increasingly, arts institutions are requested to demonstrate that they are expanding their audience base as well as demonstrating how they are tackling social exclusion and promoting social inclusion. In trying to disentangle and explain the relationship between audience development and social inclusion, Kawashima identifies some underlying assumptions:

> Audience development is still dominated by the tradition of Liberal Humanist ideology, based on a belief in the superiority and autonomy of the arts transcending class and other divisions in society. Such an idealistic view of culture is opposed by the sociological view that culture in practice is a means for marking and reproducing social distinction. These two views of culture and society compete within the field of audience development (Kawashima, 2000, p. 3).

By Liberal Humanist ideology, Kawashima is referring to the British and European tradition of cultural policy, based on a belief that culture has a universal value and can benefit all individuals in society, transcending social, political and cultural divisions. Kawashima challenges the key assumptions upon which a view of cultural universalism is built, whereby culture can and should be made accessible to all people, and education is seen as key in allowing this access. This assumption is problematic, Kawashima contends, in that it takes the content of culture for granted instead of recognising that the culture promoted by national cultural policy is representative of specific social groups, often the 'elite'. Kawashima also challenges the idea that by removing the physical, geographical, economic and psychological barriers, culture will become accessible, and currently under-represented segments of the population will have a higher profile in the audience. This seems to obscure

the complexities of the relationship between culture and social inequality as articulated in sociological studies, particularly by Bourdieu (1984) who sees culture as a means used for social distinction to retain not only cultural capital but also economic capital. Kawashima argues that institutions taking this challenge seriously might embark in target-led strategies aimed at changing their audiences, and inevitably incur the problem that existing audiences might feel 'excluded' by new programmes. For this reason, a change in audience demographics has to be weighed against the possible decline in ticket incomes and other sources of funding. Furthermore, Kawashima critiques the idea that culture can contribute to the combating of social exclusion, predicated upon the assumption that museums and other arts institutions are neutral in their value judgements. As opposed to this, Kawashima argues that what these institutions choose to preserve and how to display it are sites of cultural politics (Kawashima, 2000, p. 19). Kawashima develops a grid mapping four main typologies of audience development: as extended marketing, as taste cultivation, as audience education, as outreach/social inclusion.

TABLE 1
Different types of audience development.

	Target	Form	Purpose[a]
Extended Marketing	Potential attendee, Lapsed attendee	The same product offered, but with improvement to cater for the target	Financial, artistic
Taste Cultivation	Existing audience	Introduction to different art forms and genres	Artistic, financial (and educational)
Audience Education	Existing audience	The same product offered with extensive education	Educational (and financial)
Outreach	People unlikely to attend (e.g., in deprived communities)	Bringing arts projects (often participatory) outside	Social

Note: [a]Only refers to the main one(s), but not excluding others.
Source: Adapted from Kawashima (2000, p. 8).

Table 1 - Different types of audience development

The policy of diffusion, Kawashima argues, is nothing new in cultural policy, but 'the latest emphasis has been given weight to an extent unprecedented, at least in the last ten to fifteen years' and she says this is manifest 'in a variety of policy documents published by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) (e.g. DCMS 1999, 2000) – the ministry of the British government responsible for cultural affairs – and also by its agencies such as the Arts Councils for England and Scotland (Arts Council England 2004; Scottish Arts Council 2004), the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) and its predecessors (e.g. Dodd & Sandell 1998)' (Kawashima, 2006, p. 55). Kawashima also distinguishes between a product-led and a target-led approach; in the former approach, the stress is on the quality of the arts being presented (the product), whereas in the latter, the focus is on the

people (the audiences). For example, when audience development is deployed as outreach/social inclusion, the approach is on targeting groups that are usually seen as excluded from arts engagement. These two approaches, product-led and target-led, Kawashima argues, can be ascribed to the traditions of aesthetic universalism, on one hand, and social relativism, on the other. In the tradition of aesthetic universalism, based on a Liberal humanist view, the assumption is that art (the product) is an autonomous area and that arts institutions, such as museums, are the vehicles of the universal value of the arts. This view facilitates an understanding of art as autonomous from society, but the risk is that it supports conceptualisations of arts institutions as authorities, whereby those in positions of power establish what is to be deemed as art and what is not.

This view has been historically challenged by, and contrasted with, the sociological interpretation of culture and arts as means of reproduction of social distinction and inequalities. The target-led approach to audience development, adopting a sociological understanding of the arts, problematises ideas of artistic quality and value, as well as institutional practices. The risk embedded in this option, though, is that arts institutions are requested to operate within territories where they are expected to achieve goals of a non-cultural nature, such as tackling social issues like poverty or unemployment. Problems arise with both views, and Kawashima points out that

> whilst these pragmatic issues are pertinent and need to be tackled, it is equally important for cultural organisations to realise that Inclusive Organisation strategies, which may at first sight look familiar (recall its closeness to Extended Marketing), reasonably manageable and unthreatening, may well have far more painful effects on their very existence (Kawashima, 2006, p. 68).

Such discussion becomes ever more timely, as arts institutions, arts centres, museums and other cultural institutions face a 'crisis of legitimacy' (Möntmann, 2006) and rethink their role in society. Kawashima doesn't contextualise the discussion on audience development against the backdrop of neoliberalism or new public management under the Conservative and New Labour governments (1979 – 2010), but policy shifts during this period might have accelerated the normative assimilation of the discourse of audience development into that of arts marketing. Nevertheless, her contribution is particularly relevant as it provides a discussion of the complex relationships and tensions between discourses of access, audience development and social inclusion, and points out some of the contradictions and paradoxes in these areas. These points that Kawashima touches upon remain highly relevant today, as evidenced by recent discussions in cultural policy (Jancovich, 2011; Lindelof, 2015; Stevenson, Balling and Kann-Rasmussen, 2017). Ultimately, Kawashima is addressing key

questions: how institutions conceive of their relationships with audiences as a one-way relationship; whether there are inherent hierarchies of power/knowledge in this relationship in terms of who established what has cultural value and how this should be measured. However, Kawashima excludes key arguments that challenge these hierarchies. Although she provides a detailed and extensive analysis of audience development as a policy and management issue, Kawashima omits a discussion on how the audience development agenda gained prominence in New Labour's cultural policy at the same time as discourses of participation (Matarasso, 1997) did. A more nuanced discussion of how the two discourses interrelate, develop and are incorporated by arts institutions is initiated by Lindelof (2015). Discussing the discourse of audience development, Lindelof contends that:

> the discourse itself remains monological to a certain extent as it repeats the one-way, top-down perspective in its discussion of performance arts institutions from an organizational and institutionalized perspective (2015, p. 207).

Withing this frame, Lindelof (2015) argues, relationships are characterized by uneven power dynamics, whereby the decision-making authority is handed over to professionals, leaving audience-citizens with no formal influence on institutional activities or priorities.

In his forthcoming book, Steven Hadley (2021) argues that the polysemous nature and conceptual ambiguity of the term audience development was key to it becoming a sectoral mantra and sees normative practices of audience development as a tool for arts marketing management as obscuring its relationships to the democratic mandate implicit in cultural policy. The process-based conceptualisation of audience development, in Hadley's view, both denies the ideological agency of cultural practitioners in the subsidised cultural sector and occludes significant features of the practice itself. By identifying two traditions of audience development - the Arts Lover Tradition and the Social Justice Tradition - and three dilemmas (marketisation, social inclusion and failure), Hadley provides an understanding of the ideological base of audience development.

These ideas are discussed by others: audience development cannot be separated from the project of democratisation of culture, which implies that arts institutions are the authorities and that the arts and culture they promote is good for the population; but also implies the deficit model, which sees a lack of engagement from the side of the population as a problem to resolve. Arguably, the concepts of audience development and diffusion of culture are generally based on a deficit model (Jancovich, 2011; O'Brien, 2014; Miles and Gibson, 2016) of engagement and participation, whereby arts institutions need to reach out to so-called 'hard to reach' audiences, and non-participation in the 'funded arts' is constructed as a

'policy-problem' to be solved (Stevenson, Balling and Kann-Rasmussen, 2017). Publicly-funded and national arts institutions have historically been seen as agents performing democratisation of culture, so having an educational and civilising function, as part of the long tradition of social amelioration in cultural policy, which is based on the principles of educating and bringing great art to the masses.

Ultimately, the discourse and practice of audience development are instrumental for arts institutions to justify their own existence and demonstrate their value by providing numbers of new audiences that have been attracted. Therefore, it is important to understand the discursive rationales of how audience development is supported, challenged, and of how it exists in relation to other discourses. With the widespread use of arts marketing tools, audience development has become a synonym of arts marketing. The problem with this is that marketing has an inherent tension with the democratic mandate implicit in audience development. Within a marketing paradigm, audiences are segmented and targeted as customers, using methods and tools drawing from market research. In this way a kind of cultural democratisation happens: 'culture became more "democratic", but the democracy was the unequal democracy of the marketplace' (Hewison, 2014, p. 33). What needs to be questioned is whether within this discourse the public is in any way involved in defining the tools, methods and techniques of audience research, or whether the public have any agency in the segmentation process. Some academic research has investigated the potentials of audience agency in defining the frames of assessment (Walmsley, 2018). However, through my literature review I have found limited evidence of arts institutions themselves undertaking participatory audience research and audience-led segmentation. It is notable that within a sector that has such an active discourse of audience participation, this avenue has not been more widely explored.

However, it is most important to understand the different underlying rationales of all these practices. Given the proliferation of discourses and practices of audience development, arts marketing and management, and manual and policy guidance on how to do it, or questions around the myth of participation (Jancovich, 2017), what is lacking is a critical-historical analysis of these discourses and how they play out within specific institutions (Stevenson, 2016). This is what Lindelof is addressing when she frames audience development from an institutional perspective, provocatively adding that it is institutions that need developing, not audiences (Lindelof, 2015). One of the questions of my study is how certain discourses of audiences are developed and how they proliferate and exist in a larger constellation of discourses, like audience and customer experience, participation, engagement (Walmsley,

2019a). Taking a unique institutional perspective on the Barbican provides a way of testing and highlighting this mode of analysis, while trying to understand how such discourses are incorporated at institutional level. This is the subject of Chapter 5. In the next section I discuss the process of neoliberalisation of culture undertaken by arts institutions over the last few decades.

Neoliberalisation of culture and the influence of New Public Management

Cultural institutions in the UK have historically gone through many different systems of funding and operation, from museums in the Victorian era as patrician expressions of the nation state, to the post-war settlement enveloping cultural institutions into the welfare state. The Keynesian 'arts council' model of government funding for the arts and cultural sector was based on the aim that all citizens would enjoy the benefits of state funding for the arts (Upchurch, 2016). However, since the 1980s much of this context has changed, with the emergence of neoliberal paradigms for arts funding and, consequently, the management of cultural institutions. Scholars, including McGuigan (2005), identified three ways in which contemporary cultural policy might be characterised as neo-liberal:

- the increasing corporate sponsorship of culture that might previously have been funded by public subsidy;
- an increasing emphasis on running public sector cultural institutions as though they were private businesses;
- a shift in the prevailing rationale for cultural policy, away from culture, and towards economic and social goals: 'competitiveness and regeneration' and 'an implausible palliative to exclusion and poverty' (Hesmondhalgh *et al.*, 2015, p. 30).

Increasing demands, particularly in the Anglosphere, are made on publicly funded arts institutions to operate following the logic of corporate businesses and market mentality (Möntmann, 2006; Alexander, 2018; Ekström, 2020). Given that publicly-funded arts institutions continue to be seen as public cultural services fulfilling a civic role, the process of neoliberalisation, whereby institutions need to become more market-oriented, customer-focused and profit-oriented, is in direct tension with this public role.

McGuigan (2005) provides a detailed historical trajectory of neoliberalism throughout the 20th century in the UK cultural context. He argues that a process of neoliberalisation of culture has taken place, leading to a market-oriented mentality that promotes consumer sovereignty. McGuigan also makes a connection between this process of neoliberalisation of culture and New Public Management (NPM). These two processes are key to my study, and so I will now address them more fully. A very influential scholar on neoliberalism is David

Harvey, who describes neoliberalism as a doctrine that has become dominant in both thought and practice throughout much of the world since the 1970s, according to which 'market exchange is an ethic in itself, capable of acting as a guide for all human action' (2005).

New Public Management (NPM) is understood as a theory of government which started being developed under the Thatcher and Major administrations (1979 – 1997) 'to bring greater accountability to the management of public services by establishing measures of performance and contractual relationships between departments and agencies based on the principles of Value for Money, which would be judged by the three "Es" of Efficiency, Effectiveness and Economy' (Hewison, 2014, p. 15). According to Hood (1991), who coined the term to describe developments in public administration since the 1980s in the UK, NPM's main characteristics are:

> - unbundling the public sector into corporatised units organised by product;
> - contract-based competitive provision, with internal markets and term contracts;
> - stress on private sector management styles;
> - more stress on discipline and frugality in resource use;
> - visible top down management;
> - explicit formal measurable standards and measurements of performance and success;
> - greater emphasis on output control (Lapsley, 2009, p. 3).

New Public Management is often linked to neoliberal public policies, whereby 'a set of ideas for managing all institutions in the public sector and involving devices such as internal markets, contracting out, tendering and financial services' are adopted (McGuigan, 2005). The ideological discourse and language of 'managerialisation' (Clarke *et al.*, 2007) and marketisation became prominent within NPM, supporting the logic that management is the driving force of a successful society. The basis of NPM is the assumption that public agencies should function like private businesses in order to work efficiently. In the NHS, for example, the linguistic shift from 'need' to 'demand' for health care can be seen as the manifestation of such an ideological shift. The spread of NPM in the publicly funded cultural sector and its stress on measurement of impact are closely linked to the instrumental shift in British cultural policy, whereby the value of art and culture is based on calculations of their economic and social impacts (Belfiore, 2004). NPM can be seen as a result of the wider political project of Thatcherism, that involved the privatisation of nationalised services, the erosion of state power and the dismantling of the welfare state. Scholars (e.g. Hesmondhalgh *et al.*, 2014; Alexander, 2018) have argued that New Labour's cultural policies, despite their focus on cultural participation and social inclusion, solidified the Thatcherite neoliberal shift to an understanding of the value of culture often measured on economic grounds. This has

arguably affected the ways in which arts institutions conceive of their audiences, not just as citizens but increasingly as customers and consumers.

In their analysis of the case of New Labour - 'Were New Labour cultural policies neo-liberal?' - Hesmondhalgh, Oakley, Nisbett and Lee (2014) question this assumption. Given the increase of public funding for the arts under the Blair and Brown administrations (1997 – 2010), the discussion of neoliberalisation of culture becomes more complex, as there are contradictions to come to terms with. New Labour's cultural policy resulted in increased funding for the arts: if they were truly neoliberal, how could this happen? The answer to the question posed by the title is that

> neoliberalism can only be part of any adequate sociological explanation and evaluation of Labour's cultural policies. It was the coming together of neoliberal, conservative and economistic conceptions of policy with the crisis of aesthetic value associated with "postmodernism" which shaped UK cultural policy under New Labour (Hesmondhalgh et al., 2014, p. 15).

What is most important for this discussion is that Hesmondhalgh, Oakley, Nisbett and Lee (2014) explore the issue of neoliberalisation of culture across three dimensions: corporate sponsorship and cuts in public subsidy; the running of public sector cultural institutions as though they were private businesses; and a shift in prevailing rationales for cultural policy, away from cultural justifications, and towards economic and social goals. New Public Management is seen as one of the ways in which this process occurred. Hesmondhalgh et al. (2014) go on to argue that neoliberal developments in the public sector are not confined to culture, but they often translate issues of social policy into cultural policy. Thus, 'the predominant rationale for cultural policy today is economic, in terms of competitiveness and regeneration, and, to a lesser extent, social, as an implausible palliative to exclusion and poverty' (Hesmondhalgh et al., 2014, p. 238).

The three dimensions of neoliberalisation of culture identified by Hesmondhalgh et al. (2014) and the key shift to customer sovereignty noted by McGuigan (2005) have important implications for the relationships between audiences and arts institutions. Within neoliberalism, audiences are necessarily redefined by arts institutions as customers and consumers, and artistic offerings become increasingly commodified. Two key signals of this neoliberalisation of culture are the birth of arts marketing and the rise of the experience economy. Both are simultaneously integral to the maintenance of this system, and so I will explore them further. In the next sections I'm going to discuss the extent to which neoliberalism and its logics have had an impact on developments of audience practices in the

arts. The most visible example of this is the rise of arts marketing and the increasing adoption of an experience economy paradigm in arts institutions.

From arts marketing to engagement

The very British phrase 'putting bums on seats' is generally used to mean 'selling tickets for a gig' or 'filling an auditorium'. In simplistic terms, it could be said that in popular understanding the basic aim of arts marketing is to 'put bums on seats' which can be measured in terms of ticket sales. As a relatively recent field of scholarly research and of professional practice (O'Reilly, Rentschler and Kirchner, 2013), arts marketing uses methods from marketing theories developed in the commercial and for-profit sector, but applied to the arts. It is described in arts industry manuals as an 'integrated management process which sees mutually satisfying exchange relationships with customers as the route to achieving organisational and artistic objectives' (Hill, O'Sullivan and O'Sullivan, 2003, p. 31). Even practical textbooks aimed at arts marketeers acknowledge that arts marketing is not as straightforward as commercial marketing, given that what it promotes is not simply a commercial product but an artistic object, production or experience. The complex nature of arts marketing is captured by the 'exceptionalism' argument (Walmsley, 2019a).

According to the 'exceptionalism' argument, the performing arts are tangibly different from the products and services of profit-based industries and by virtue of this they challenge the concept of marketing itself:

> the live and interactive nature of the performing arts, the mystique surrounding their creative processes, the sociological complexities of cultural capital and taste, the diversity of the rapidly developing subgenres, and the complex psychology behind the audience experience actually make the performing arts one of the hardest "products" to market at all (Walmsley, 2019a, p. 149).

The product offered by the performing arts – seeing a theatre show, attending a concert, take part in a performance - can be described as symbolic, intangible or experiential and whose consumption is a 'non-utilitarian endeavour to fulfil personal wishes, feelings and fantasies'. Many scholars (Hirschmann 1983, O'Sullivan 2013, Belfiore and Bennett 2008 in: Walmsley, 2019a) have therefore highlighted the gap between the normative framework of arts marketing which is based on the idea of consumer demand, and the creative drivers of artists, programmers and arts institutions.

As a relatively recent scholarly field and professional practice, arts marketing evolved from the 1960s and 70s with Philip Kotler in North America (Rentschler, 2002; Colbert, 2017). Based on an examination of academic literature, Rentschler (2002) describes three periods of arts marketing history: the Foundation period (1975 – 84), the Professionalisation period (1985 – 94) and the Rediscovery period (from 1995 onwards). During the Foundation period, institutions were aiming to diversify their offer, engage in audience analysis and strategic marketing, but with only limited funding. Subsequently, in the professionalisation period, institutions started investing in marketing staff, as they strived to operate in a more tactical, strategic and viable way and respond to demands for stronger management and greater accountability, establishing marketing departments. This is the era of strategic audience research starting to be established and of arts marketing research emerging as an academic field. Rentschler defines the period from 1995 to around 2007 as the Rediscovery period, which was marked by a rediscovery of the aim of arts marketing at a point when artists and organisations started to collaborate, co-produce and co-create with audiences and wider communities. It is during this period that live streaming, immersive theatre and site-specific performances became hugely successful.

Within the so-called 'participatory turn' towards more collaborative approaches between arts institutions and their audiences, Walmsley (2019a) suggests that arts marketing scholarship has witnessed a paradigm shift from neoliberal processes of consumption to relational practices of engagement. Some of the reasons of such a shift, largely led by the US, are the evolution of customers' taste from goods to services to experiences, the rise of experiential consumption and the development of interactive digital communication. Highlighting a clear turn in the academic literature, Walmsley expands on Rentschler's chronology of arts marketing by identifying the period from 2007 onwards as the Enrichment period. Over the last 20 years, the arts marketing literature has witnessed an exponential rise in the deployment of the term 'engagement' (Walmsley, p.41). According to Walmsley, this provides further evidence of a paradigm shift from management-based interpretations of marketing towards a more relational and psychological approach (Walmsley, 2019b, p. 41). In Walmsley's proposition, the 'Enrichment' period is marked by a renewed focus on questions of cultural value and of subjective, intrinsic, co-created value, whereby the arts are intended more as an experience than a product.

Walmsley's article focuses mostly on arts marketing scholarship. Whilst, as asserted, marketing is now more about people than data, at least in the scholarly discourse about engagement, there is less available evidence of whether data has become less prominent in

actual marketing practice. The prevalence of data in marketing and evaluation reports produced by arts institutions suggests that numerical evidence and quantitative approaches to marketing largely remain the norm in marketing departments. The measure of value for marketing departments is mostly based on number of tickets sold, or evidence of increased income in the catering and bookshop. Therefore, although arts marketing theory is increasingly incorporating participatory and co-creation models and moving towards an engagement paradigm, marketing professionals in the arts are still using quantitative methods to measure the value of engagement. This shows the co-existence of different, often partly conflicting, value systems within arts institutions.

Within arts institutions, the rise of arts marketing from the 1970s onwards can be seen as an integral part to a larger process of neoliberalisation of culture, whereby arts institutions strive to operate in a strategic and financially viable way, increasingly within market logics. Whilst marketing departments are established, with audience research and segmentation models becoming the norm, marketing in the subsidised arts sector still remains interlinked with cultural policy, often seen as an audience development tool. This is partly driven by the new public management demand for quantifiable evidence of social impact, with arts organisations deploying marketing methods to attract audiences, but not necessarily to sell tickets. Further complicated by the rise of the experience economy, new paradigms of experiential consumption have expanded the range of offering by arts institutions beyond the traditional spaces: an example of this is public programming. Interestingly, with the death of arts marketing that has been theorised and the shift to engagement within the long trajectory of the experience economy, there is a shift to more audience-centric discourses in institutions. Walmsley notes that the implications of this are of urgent significance for both scholars and practitioners and advocates for a change across academia and the arts sector.

The Experience Economy and hospitality

In 1999, Pine and Gilmore publish 'The Experience Economy' describing a paradigm shift from a service to an experience economy, in which the key to success would be to stage consumer goods and services and increase the customer involvement in the consumption process: 'Whilst commodities are fungible, goods tangible and services intangible, experiences are memorable' (Pine and Gilmore, 2011, pp. 11–12). Pine and Gilmore argue that 'memory' becomes the product and, within the theatrical metaphor, consumers should be entertained, involved and drawn into participating in the drama of purchasing a product or experience. The ideas expressed in their book, which are summarised in the subtitle 'Work

is theatre and every business a stage: goods and services are no longer enough', constitute the main normative foundations for customer experience management. Pine and Gilmore's model was widely taken up and operationalised in many organisational settings and various industries. In some instances the experience economy definition easily comes to embrace the creative industries, leisure industries, entertainment industries and tourism, where the experience component is particularly strong if not completely central. This makes it harder to draw a clear division between companies and institutions that have the production of experience as their primary objective and another sector of the economy where experiences are add-ons to artefacts or services. Arts institutions are especially situated within this 'new economy' (Walmsley and Franks, 2011), given that they present aesthetic, theatrical and musical experiences as their core offer, but also provide audience experiences in terms of extended services:

> Notable developments from services to experiences include a focus on the personal, an expansion of distribution from short-term to long-term and a shift in demand from benefits to sensations. The implications of this semantic shift are far reaching and they highlight the need for today's organisations to create long-term, personal relationships with their "guests" by appealing to their senses and creating a sense of occasion (Walmsley and Franks, 2011, p. 2).

In arts institutions, the 'audience experience' encompasses many aspects: from the artistic experience of a performance, to the experience of a venue or space, of the front-of-house staff. As a result of the adoption of the experience economy paradigm, however, there is an increasing confusion between aesthetic experience (artistic product), central experience (i.e. branding, atmosphere, physical environment, staff attitudes) and extended experience (i.e. programmes, catering, workshops, ancillary products) as they are identified in creative arts marketing manuals (Hill, O'Sullivan and O'Sullivan, 2003). In many organisations in the early 2000s, the idea of 'total quality experience' encompassing all these different aspects starts to appear and the practice of cultural branding (O'Reilly, 2005) gains prominence. This shift is part of a process of 'marketisation of cultural institutions' (Ekström, 2020) within which:

> infused as they are with managerial spirit, marketized cultural institutions are acutely conscious of the need to offer to create around the customer an articulated "experience" in which cultural elements are kept in constant connection with consumer products and services especially in tourism-oriented heritage cities (Panozzo, 2020, p. 166).

With the expansion of the experience economy, large cities are increasingly capitalising on their many museums and visitor attractions, to embark on strategies of leisure-oriented growth (Lorentzen and Hansen, 2012). As part of these urban transformations propelled by the experience economy, London has developed into a global tourism destination through

the expansion of tourism into new spaces and new spheres (Smith and Graham, 2019). Perhaps the best example of this shift is the South Bank in London, which in the post-war period has been regenerated and transformed into a major global cultural destination (Jones, 2014). Within this wider trend, arts and cultural venues in London and many other cities are increasingly being transformed into destinations that should offer memorable experiences and overall contribute to the increase in visitor numbers and the perception of London as a creative city. Within the logic of destination marketing, there are many synergies between the experience economy and 'performing arts experiences, which are generally intangible, heterogeneous and perishable' (Walmsley, 2019a): performing arts organisations are therefore part of a service industry in which the focus has shifted from the exchange of 'goods' to meeting the needs of people. The implications of arts organisations functioning within the experience economy are manifold: from spatial planning to staff provision and training, to the more challenging questions regarding the division between the artistic experience and the service experience.

If the experience economy sees a shift from service to experience, in terms of spatial planning this means a passage from 'servicescapes' (Bitner, 1992) to experiential spaces or 'experiencescapes' (O'Dell and Billing, 2005), that are increasingly staged, curated and hosted spaces for the visitors. 'Servicescapes' are articulated as immaterial settings, where what counts is the environmental experience as perceived by both customers and employees, and how this can facilitate their social interactions. The concept of 'experiencescape' is based on a marketing perspective recognising experiences as:

> highly personal, subjectively perceived, intangible, ever-fleeting and continuously ongoing […] anchored [in] an array of specific places, such as stores, museums, cities, sporting arenas, shopping centers, neighbourhood parks and well-known tourist attractions (O'Dell and Billing, 2005, p. 15).

Experiences are organised spatially in sites of market production, they are staged and consumed in similar way to a stylised landscape that is strategically planned, laid out and designed – they are organised by producers (for example place marketeers, or destination management companies) but also actively sought after by consumers. O'Dell and Billing (2005) stress that the spatial production of experiences can play a function in creating certain kinds of social interactions. Spatial planning therefore comes to the fore as a key element in the experience economy.

Another important element, clearly identified by Pine and Gilmore, but also by Bitner, is the role of front-line staff as the human agents that can contribute, alongside other factors, to

transform a physical environment into a welcoming and hospitable space. To achieve an engaging experience, Pine and Gilmore (2011) even suggest that work should explicitly be staged for audiences as customers. In order to offer experiences, venues and organisations adopt methods and techniques of hospitality practice (Turner-King, 2018), yet there is only limited research on how front-of-house staff is trained in theatres and other venues in order to provide customer or audience experiences to the public. As Conner argues, arts organisations are adapting to 'the age of the hospitality economy' which require arts spaces to desacralize the normative etiquette in an attempt to feel welcoming and inclusive (Conner, 2016; Walmsley, 2019a). Highlighting the power of hospitality in audiences' meaning-making process, Conner (2016) provides different definitions of the term: as the 'reception and entertainment of guests or strangers with liberality and goodwill', as a form of law, economic exchange (as in the hospitality industry) and as a form of ethics in the Derridean definition.

Interestingly, hospitality itself could be seen as part of the experience economy and the customer service provided in arts institution as merging aspects of both those sectors. For this reason, there are many similarities between customer experience work in an arts centre, and customer experience work in commercial settings in that they employ similar techniques. Within the customer experience paradigm, arts audiences are treated as customers, expecting a certain 'world-class' experience. In the service industries, friendliness and a welcoming attitude are often of primary importance. Creative workers in need of extra income, with professional training as actors, dancers, singers and creatives, often find work in the service industry because of their transferable skills. This phenomenon is observed in the literature as 'multiple job-holdings of practising professional artists, namely their non-arts work' (Throsby and Zednik, 2011).

Within the experience economy, the experience before the artistic experience is now part of the 'total quality experience' which adds a new layer to agendas being performed by arts institutions. The theatrical experience, within the experience economy of work as a stage, expands to foyers and entrances. Many scholars say that it is important to distinguish between them, because although aspects of the service can impact on the artistic experience, the service experiences only define the surroundings or augment the product rather than the core aesthetic experience itself (Walmsley, 2019a, p. 148). Whilst I recognise the importance of this distinction, I would argue that new experience spaces and new cultural experiences, especially in public spaces, intentionally merge and blur those boundaries. This blurring and consequent confusion can be better understood in the light of literature on both the participatory turn and neoliberalisation of culture.

Within an accelerated neoliberalisation of culture, the assumed separation between the cultural and economic sphere is dismantled. According to the 'culturalisation' of the economy thesis (Lash and Urry, 1994; McRobbie, 2002; Lash and Lury, 2007), this distinction is no longer valid as cultural products proliferate in a variety of forms, as information, communication, branded products, transport and leisure services, so that cultural entities are not an exception, but the rule (Bell and Oakley, 2014, p. 32). Within this frame, the arts institution as a whole becomes a cultural brand, and the distinction between its core 'products' or 'experiences' (i.e. a concert, a theatre performance, an exhibition visit) and the 'extra' (i.e. cafè, shop, etc) becomes ever more blurred. In 1988 a V&A advertising campaign sparked outrage by promoting the museum as 'An ace caff with quite a nice museum attached'. This provides an early example of the blurring of the boundaries between different types of experiences and of the increasing focus on the arts institution as a cultural brand (Ekström, 2020). This shift is also connected to the wider societal shift towards more hybrid participatory modes of engagement with media, spaces, cultural objects and institutions.

The participatory turn: policy and practice

Increasingly, we are living in what has been conceptualised as the 'era of participation' and as a 'participative turn' (Livingstone, 2013; Bherer, Dufour and Montambeault, 2016; Jenkins, Ito and Boyd, 2016; Virolainen, 2016; Keltie, 2017; Bonet and Négrier, 2018). This study considers the relationship between arts institutions and their audiences within this so-called 'participatory turn' that has been theorised across different disciplines and is a key paradigm in audience research literature. Although the call to participate seems to have become a categorical imperative in both artistic practice and cultural policy at least since the 1990s, participation is used interchangeably with terms such as engagement, and it remains a slippery concept (Lindelof, 2015). There are multiple ways in which audiences are supposedly becoming participants. Audience participation per se is not new (Kattwinkel, 2003) but had already been anticipated in practices like participatory art, or political theatre, since the 1970s. Even before, 'traditional' cultures would have forms of participation at the core of religious celebrations and theatrical performance. Participation is not new, but the discourses produced about participation are. As a term that is very contextual, if it is understood within a post-war Western paradigm, participatory practice was mostly happening outside of the institutional norms, as for example with the Community Arts Movement opposing elitist cultural hierarchies (Bishop, 2012, p. 177). Its beginnings were radical, from the public space happenings of The Living Theatre to the open entry orchestras of Cornelius Cardew. Now

terms like co-creation and audience co-production have become mainstream and proliferate in institutional contexts.

The shift from audiences to participants in the performing arts has been advocated as a way of 'collapsing the distance between performers and spectators' (Markusen and Brown, 2014). To some extent, as evidenced by the terminology used, performance and theatre studies have identified the 'breaking down of the fourth wall' in theatre as one of the ways in which this distance is collapsed, supposedly to give more agency to audiences like in immersive theatre. Across different art forms, this distance has sometimes been collapsed by bringing art outside of conventional institutional spaces: the visual arts outside of the white cube, the theatre outside the auditorium or the black box, music outside of the concert hall. Examples of these practices are immersive theatre, public art presented in public spaces, festivals taking place in unconventional venues, socially-engaged practices. Often, these practices involve an added element of audience participation, and are sometimes referred to as participatory art (Bishop, 2012), which in many ways questions the position of the spectators or the politics of spectatorship. When thinking about the participatory turn, it is possible to think through categories of modes, spaces, cultures of participation. This has been a major shift in cultural studies, media and reception studies, and in arts practice. In charting the scholarly research about audiences, the aim is to unpick some of the assumptions around the so-called 'participatory turn' and conceptions of audience experience, engagement and participation.

In this section, I introduce the debate on cultural participation and the 'participatory agenda' in cultural policy in relation to audience strategies. At least since the 1990s, British cultural policy has put an increased focus on the 'participatory agenda'. However, despite a marked shift of policy rhetoric on the value of participation occurring in the last few decades in the UK context, 'targets to increase participation have been consistently missed and there remains a direct correlation between those taking part in cultural activity and their socio-economic status' (Jancovich, 2017). By providing an important critique of the 'participation myth', Jancovich (2017) argues that despite the increased focus on participation in political and policy discourse, official statistics on participation have shown that 'old barriers' remain in place. Thus, the 'participation agenda' failed to accomplish wider access to the funded arts, and participation in the 'official artforms' remains linked to socio-economics and education. Jancovich's work points in two directions: on the one hand, showing the inherent contradictions of the 'participation myth' but also, in connection with the Understanding Everyday Participation project, expanding the meaning of what we measure as participation.

Discussing cultural participation means discussing a concept that takes on different meanings depending on the settings in which it is played out. Discourses and practices of audience development, engagement and participation have shifted as a result of socio-political changes, academic discourses, cultural policy research, audience strategies developed by arts institutions. A crucial challenge at the heart of this study is distinguishing how these notions are differently understood, practised, and measured, within the context of arts institutions, from their articulations in official documents to perspectives from staff, both managers and front-of-house. Attending a classical music concert can be seen as engagement, as is co-producing a new artwork through crowdfunding, or as is socialising in an art gallery. Engagement, however, is a slippery term that can refer to a broad range of ways, activities, notions and spaces in which people interact with art. Similarly, participation can mean different things: widening access, outreach, community involvement, involvement in the decision-making process, physical interaction in a theatre performance. The risk, when using terms such as audience engagement and participation without specific contextualisation, is to generate muddled theoretical concepts (Lindelof, 2015). The terms are slippery and often interchangeable, as said, and scholars in the field are trying to make sense of a variety of 'participatory modes' (Jancovich, 2017; Miles and Gibson, 2017; Stevenson, 2019).

Attempts have been made to develop measurement tools and models that cover 'the entire spectrum of ways that people can be involved in the arts' (Novak-Leonard and Brown, 2011, p. 5) along which multiple modes of engagement are illustrated, considering criteria such as modes of production and participation, roles played by audience members and a broader scope of contexts and settings in which engagement occurs (ibid.). An example is 'The Audience Involvement spectrum' provided by Brown, Novak-Leonard & Gilbride (2011) - Fig. 1 – that highlights a separation between receptive involvement, such as attending as spectators, and participatory involvement, that ranges from crowd sourcing to 'the audience as artist'.

Figure 6. From "Getting In on the Act: How Arts Groups Are Creating Opportunities for Active Participation" (Brown, Novak-Leonard & Gilbride, 2011)

THE AUDIENCE INVOLVEMENT SPECTRUM

RECEPTIVE | PARTICIPATORY

SPECTATING
Spectating is fundamentally an act of receiving a finished artistic product. It is therefore outside the realm of participatory arts practice.

ENHANCED ENGAGEMENT
Educational or "enrichment" programs may activate the creative mind, but for the most part do not involve creative expression on the part of the audience member.

CROWD SOURCING
Audience becomes activated in choosing or contributing towards an artistic product.
• Youth mosaics
• Photography contests
• An opera libretto comprised of Tweets
• Virtual choruses

CO-CREATION
Audience members contribute something to an artistic experience curated by a professional artist.
• Participatory theater
• Pro/Am concerts
• Storytelling events
• Participatory public art

AUDIENCE-AS-ARTIST
Audience members substantially take control of the artistic experience; focus shifts from the product to the process of creation.
• Public dances
• Community drawing contests

Figure 1- The Audience involvement spectrum

Similarly, in 'The Five Modes of Art Participation', arts activities are categorised based on levels of creative control exercised by the people involved, ranging from what is identified as 'total control' in inventive participation such as composing a new piece of music to no control at all in ambient participation, for example when seeing architecture or public art (Brown, Novak-Leonard and Gilbride, 2011). Arguably, whilst attempting to go beyond the 'active – passive' binary, such a framework reproduces a very similar opposition creating a fixed polarity between 'total' and 'no' control (Lindelof, 2015). Another example is the Culture-based segmentation spectrum commissioned by Arts Council England that employs market research methods to understand behavioural patterns and motivations for attendance across a very broad spectrum of arts and heritage activities, from opera to knitting, museums to video art (The Audience Agency, 2017).

In terms of spectrums and scales of engagement models, although they can be valuable as 'catalogues of inspiration' and practical guidelines for institutional practices and marketing strategies, their tendency is to reiterate the normative distinction between attendance as 'passive' engagement, as opposed to 'active participation' (Lindelof, 2015). The idea that 'control' as defined by Novak-Leonard & Brown as only limited to creative aspects of art making is problematic and seems to suggest an implication that the only way to be 'engaged' is to physically take part in the art activity. The myth of emancipation of the audience member through physical interaction has been challenged by many scholars, discussing the

politics of participatory practices (Bishop, 2012) and debunking the myth of 'active spectatorship' (Rancière, 2011). Whilst very significantly identifying multiple modes of arts attendance and participation and how they often overlap, the framework conceived by Novak-Leonard and Brown is developed to directly inform policies or monitor their implementation, rather than providing a critical analysis of concepts of 'engagement' and 'participation': in this way, it tends towards simplification.

Critical discussions on the cultural participation agenda have questioned the assumptions on which the deficit model of participation is based, whereby arts institutions are expected to do more to reach out to people who are failing to engage and people who don't engage are told they should participate. In terms of governments' cultural policies, 'non-engagement in culture is a form of failing' (O'Brien, 2014) that the state, or arts institutions, need to correct. Stevenson (2016), drawing on primary data from policy texts, speeches and interviews in the Scottish arts sector, employs a discursive methodology to analyse the policy definition of cultural non-participation and the discursive logics upon which it is constructed as a problem. In so doing it seeks to answer the questions of what the problem is, why a problem exists, and what the existence of the problem does 'in the real' (Bacchi, 2009 quoted in Stevenson, 2016). Stevenson argues that cultural non-participation is discussed as a problem across the planes of politics and professional practice, around which social relations are organised and asymmetrical and unequal dynamics of power maintained and represented as inevitable.

Arguing that the Arts should be understood as a discursive institution, Stevenson proposes that that the subject identity of the non-participant is not only a necessary part of the discursive logic of the arts institution, but also provides the ideal boundary object around which the legitimacy of the relationship between the arts and the state could, in part, be based. Drawing on the work of Jacques Rancière (2011), Stevenson argues that the manner in which those labelled as non-participants are subjectified obscures their agency, and in so doing suppresses their capacity to have a voice within the field of cultural policy. As such, the field of cultural policy remains characterised by asymmetric relations of power and dominated by those who lay claim to the discursive identity of cultural professionals. Stevenson (2019) points to a consistent body of work that highlights the prevalence of everyday forms of participation, arguing that there is no 'problem' if we adopt an expanded version of participation that extends beyond the arts into spheres of everyday creativity (Belfiore, 2016). The findings from this research led to calls for redistributive policies that would support 'cultural democracy', but public funding is still mostly aimed at organisations that pursue audience development for activities that they have identified as 'worthy' of

participating in. It's important to note that despite a few decades of participation policies within the democratisation of culture model, there hasn't been an increase in participation in the subsidised arts (Jancovich, 2011).

Everyday participation in specific places

A relevant discussion on the theme of 'everyday participation' was recently undertaken by the AHRC funded project 'Understanding Everyday Participation – Articulating Cultural Values (UEP)' (Miles and Gibson, 2016), which proposes a radical overhaul of orthodox models of cultural value. Miles and Gibson (2016) argue that the current system for the support of culture as generally understood by cultural policy and state-funded cultural programming, promotes and privileges certain practices, activities and tastes that have historically been seen as more legitimate than others. In challenging dominant understandings of cultural value as associated with 'official' high culture such as orchestral music, theatre, museums, the UEP project demonstrated the existence of a rich variety of other cultural activities, the large majority of which lies beyond the orbit of State cultural support. Miles and Gibson suggest that

> by reversing the deficit model underlying official cultural policy and starting from what people themselves value about their own everyday participation practices, UEP's research raises both an epistemological and a political challenge to policy-makers (ibid., p. 155).

As compared with the Taking Part Survey which only measures participation within a limited set of cultural forms and traditional institutions, the researchers involved in the UEP study show and explore the value of informal practices and activities situated in everyday realms. Using the notion of situated participation, the UEP project investigated the value that people, across different UK locations, find in everyday culture and leisure activities such as going to parks or pubs, charity shopping, darts, community gardening. To do this, they use the concept of 'cultural ecosystem' defined as:

> a historically wrought, physically situated assembly of formal and informal cultural resources, participation contexts, practices and communities, which reflect the interplay of local structures of investment, supply and demand, and as such constitute distinct economies of participation (ibid., p.133).

Miles and Gibson (2017) argue that participation is a situated process: 'cultural practices and relations give meaning to, are impacted by, and shape the material spaces, environments and institutions in, and through, which they occur' (p.1). The UEP project highlights the importance that cultural activities in everyday realms can play in people's lives, but also points

out the lack of consideration for the spatial dimensions of participation. Many of the empirical studies that comprised the UEP project were aimed to address this gap in spatial understanding, by investigating forms of everyday participation in specific places and localities, often through ethnographic methods and in-depth interviews. For example, Gilmore (2017) shows the importance of public parks as vernacular spaces for everyday participation, recognised by people in Manchester-Salford as community assets allowing different communities to meet, become visible and shared distinct cultural identities. Another study shows that the charity shop can be a space for everyday participation, 'not simply a space of consumption but enmeshed within a set of relations between cultural and economic value, which have effects in the social sphere' (Edwards and Gibson, 2017, p. 70). These studies are important in that they highlight the limited available research on instances of everyday participation within the traditional spaces of culture, in that informal activities are not valued and measured as participation, and therefore not made visible or researched.

Through my empirical research, I propose to look at the variety of modes of participation afforded by those spaces that are not deemed as 'cultural venues' within an arts centre building. Similar to public parks and charity shops, other spaces such as libraries, cafes and community centres have been identified as specific sites for everyday social participation. These can all be sociologically understood as 'third places' (Oldenburg, 1989): neither home nor workplace, but essential public spaces where people can gather and interact informally. In some cases, third places can be spaces inside other spaces, like a café inside a theatre, museum or university campus. The concept of 'third place' stresses the social and public aspects, which are key in the area of social geography, a discipline concerned with the critical reassertion of space in social theory. There are three key concepts from this discipline which I've used in this research project: the notion of space as socially constructed, the idea of situated knowledge, and the investigation of in-between-spaces. In trying to bring the discourse of everyday participation into the arts institution, those spaces that are not the core venues, and are thus less tightly controlled by the intentions of the institution, become key sites where different discourses of audiencing and participation can be found.

Social-geographical approaches

The social production of space has been a focus of cultural geography, which understand spaces as playing a crucial role in producing social relations, as well as being shaped by them in a two-way relationship (Soja, 1989; Harvey, 2005; Massey, 2005). French philosopher Henri Lefebvre argued that space was produced through three interrelated modes – spatial

practices, representations of space and spaces of representation. Influenced by the work of Lefebvre, other geographers expand on the notions of space and place seen as carrying 'discursive and symbolic meaning well beyond the mere location' (Harvey 1996, p. 293) or as 'articulated moments in networks of social relations and understandings' (Massey 1994, p.7). Scholars in this area stress the importance of understanding the 'practised' element of spaces: the 'specifics of particular sites and places but only in relational terms as part of larger networks, systems and processes, physically and ideologically' (Rendell, 2006, p. 20).

The idea of social relations as both space forming and space contingent is revisited by Edward Soja, who develops a theory of 'thirdspace' (Soja, 1989), deconstructing the binary logic that has underpinned Western critical thinking for centuries, between 'one that is material and perceived and can be empirically mapped out, the other that is conceived and in mental form' (Redaelli, 2019, p. 11). Within the 'thirdspace' conception as a 'site of hybridity', these components coexist without one prioritised over the others. Using the idea of 'thirdspace' to bring into focus the 'relational, layered and dynamic connection between arts and place', Redaelli (2019) is a proponent of 'thinking spatially in cultural policy' (p. 191-195). Although the studies take different approaches, both the UEP project (Miles and Gibson, 2017) and Redaelli (2019) point to the need to incorporate spatial understandings in cultural policy, whether to study situated forms of cultural participation or to analyse the complexities of cultural planning in cities.

Within cultural geography, feminist scholars (Bondi, 1993; Rose, 1993; Massey, 2005) have been particularly attentive to the 'spaces-in-between' or liminal spaces. Challenging dominant understandings of space as fixed, feminist geographers propose an understanding of space as 'multiple, shifting, heterogeneous, situational and contested' (Wrede, 2015, p. 10). In her discussion of public spaces, Massey (2005) discussed the concerns about the decline of public space in the neoliberal city, its commercial privatisation and the advent of new enclosures regulated through non-democratically elected owners which often leads to exclusions of some groups. Massey criticises the tendency to romanticise public space as an emptiness which enables free and equal speech because it does not take on board the need to theorise space and place as the product of social relations which are most likely conflicting and unequal. The rhetoric around places being unproblematically open to all, obscures that their 'public' nature is the result of heterogenous and sometimes conflicting social relations:

> All spaces are socially regulated in some way, if not by explicit rules (no ball games, no loitering) then by the potentially more competitive (more market-like?) regulation which exists in the absence of explicit (collective? public? democratic? autocratic?) controls' (Massey, 2005, p. 303).

Liminal spaces or thresholds are spaces where boundaries blur and merge, where some kind of transformation takes place – spaces of becoming. Foyers in an arts centre, within this understanding, can be seen as liminal spaces in that the audience-to-be goes through the ritual of becoming-an-audience. People enter as individuals or distinct groups, and they become part of a temporary audience community in the arts centre's venues.

Conclusions

In the previous sections, I have discussed how arts impact evaluation is the subject of widespread criticism, ranging from detailed critiques of methodology to a wholesale rejection of the very purpose of the endeavour. Nevertheless, given the funding and policy frameworks in which arts institutions operate, it is necessary for them to undertake audience research as a means to attract ticket buyers, or to justify public and philanthropic funding (Johanson and Glow, 2015). Despite audience research in institutional contexts focussing on evaluating or measuring the appreciation, motivations of attendance, or perceived quality of artistic offerings, there is very little evidence of how and whether knowledge produced by audience studies informs spatial strategies, programming and wider cultural policies. What audience studies research does not address are the arguments for why institutions should reach a broader audience, leaving the question of how to use knowledge on attendance and motivation unanswered. Furthermore, there is only limited critical research on evaluation methods, technologies and rationales through which 'audience experience' models are understood and practiced by arts institutions (Meyrick *et al.*, 2016; Gilmore, Glow and Johanson, 2017).

As the literature has shown, the majority of audience research in the arts has been focussed on audiences in the performance space (theatre, concert hall, gallery), and on the aesthetic value of their experience. There is, however, a growing number of scholars that have expanded the notion of 'audience experience' and investigated it outside performance venues/situations, such as participatory art or in immersive performances. This has included audience experience of immersive theatre, community music, public art or so called 'participatory practices'. But these are still linked to an artistic offering to which the audience is expected to react. If audience engagement is to reach beyond extended marketing to become a vehicle for cultural democracy processes in the arts, institutional changes are necessary (Lindelof, 2015). Understanding how governmentalities are at play in various spaces and across different levels of an arts institution, can illuminate key questions about

the relationships between an arts institution, its audiences and the potential for civic engagement in public spaces.

In this section I explain my choice to look at institutional discourses about visitors and audiences in foyers, and the questions about them that motivate my three studies. In looking at the official documents and managerial perspectives, I have shown why I am interested in exploring how the institution constructs discourses about itself, particularly in relation to the spaces of the foyers. However, in the foyer study, I will look at the perceived reality of those in the space to see how the discourses of those occupying these spaces might differ from the official discourses. The radical framing of my study draws upon hosts as the 'eyes and ears' of the institution to capture the full richness of how visitors appropriate the foyer space, whether or not there is an artistic object to react to. I then compare that reality with the highly 'policy-laden' view from annual reports, and the discourses of middle management, receiving policy directives from above, and translating them in the context of constraints on the ground.

Audience interactions in the context of foyers have been under-studied, except in some scholarly research in museum (Laursen, Kristiansen and Drotner, 2016; Parry, Page and Moseley, 2018) and performing arts studies (Radbourne, Johanson and Glow, 2010; Heim, 2012; Burland and Pitts, 2014; Walmsley, 2018). Additionally, those working in such spaces have not been considered as knowledge producers. However, front-of-house staff members are crucial to the maintenance of institutions, and have a deep embodied knowledge of audiences. And whilst audiences have been increasingly listened to, there hasn't been a thorough investigation of how discourses about audiences develop in institutions. Particularly, how institutions label and speak about and with those who are not audiences. This study aims to look into these liminal areas. There is simply limited research carried out on/with/about audiences in front-of-house contexts, excepting all the audience research that is carried out in foyer spaces, but that relates to in-venue performances or exhibitions. Very few scholars have looked at activities in front-of-house contexts, and how these spaces are used by members of the public in the everyday.

There is an increasing amount of discourse produced about audiences, audience engagement, participation, and audience experience, in reports, industry studies, artistic practice. However, limited analysis of these discourses has been conducted. These tend to be normative discourses explaining what audiences do, how they behave, what they should do in artistic settings, whether they don't participate 'enough', or not in the 'right' way. Even

academic researchers, often because they conduct audience research in institutional contexts, tend to take on advocacy positions. A few scholars have focused on critically examining how these discourses come into place and are circulated within institutions. To reiterate, Lindelof (2015, p. 201) aptly argues that 'The way in which arts institutions perceive their audiences affect how they imagine the relationship between the art form, the audience and the institution'.

Chapter 3. The Barbican Arts Centre and its foyers as research setting

Introduction

This chapter presents the research setting for this study, the Barbican Centre in London, contextualising it within a brief historical overview of cultural policy in post-war Britain and identifying its uniqueness, seen particularly through the lens of the foyers. Within the welfare-state model of arts provision by democratisation of culture, since 1946 the Arts Council of Great Britain (ACGB) created the conditions for a variety of arts and cultural infrastructures to be financed and supported across the UK. The development of British arts centres was influenced by national cultural policies promoted by ACGB, but it also drew inspiration from the community arts movement that challenged institutionalised cultural policy and initiated the idea of cultural democracy from the late-1960s up to the early 1980s. An example of the post-war arts centre model is the Southbank Centre, which was part of the post-war reconstruction process in London and started with the Festival of Britain in 1951, to become an expression of the ideals of culture for all, incorporating the instances of both democratisation of culture and of cultural democracy.

This brief historical preamble is necessary to set the scene of my research journey, and to explain the specificity of the Barbican Centre. The Barbican Arts Centre was founded, is principally funded and owned by the City of London Corporation (CoL), a wealthy and powerful local authority that is a public governing body but with characteristics and special powers similar to those of a business-based organisation (Travers, 2004). The arts centre is located in Central London, at the heart of the City's financial district, and surrounded by the Barbican residential estate, 'unsubsidised council housing for the well off, built by a council determined to remain unlike any other' (Calder, 2016, p. 118). The centre's concept was born during the 1950s-70s and was influenced by national cultural policy agendas promoted by the ACGB. However, since its inception it occupied a particular place in the British arts sector, partly because it was founded and funded by the City of London Corporation. In this respect, the Barbican arts centre represents a unique and anomalous case of a national arts institution. Within the arts centre, spaces like the foyers become the lynchpin to consider ideas of publicness, as they represent a micro-expression of wider governance policies: quasi-public spaces, publicly accessible but privately owned and managed by the City of London. In the architectural vision of arts and cultural centres built across Europe in the post-war period, foyers were conceived as the spaces where multiple activities could take place, beyond

the core programming of music, theatre and visual arts. In the context of the Southbank Centre, the 'Open Foyers' policy introduced in the 1980s radically revolutionised the use of spaces by audiences and the wider public. Over time, the use and function of foyers in arts centres have shifted (Williams, 2020).

Post-war Britain, cultural policy and the welfare state

The beginnings of British cultural policy and arts funding were established with the foundation of the wartime Committee for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts (CEMA) set up by Royal Charter in 1940 for the '(w)idespread provision of opportunities for hearing good music and the enjoyment of arts generally' (Hewison, 1995, p. 32). CEMA would later become, in 1946, the Arts Council of Great Britain (ACGB). Democratisation of culture is the key idea promoted by ACGB, based on the assumption of a unified social body that needs to have access and appreciate 'excellent', 'cultivated' or 'high culture'. The provision of cultural infrastructures became part of the remit of the new Arts Council of Great Britain, and this would contribute to the development of arts centres across the country.

It is important to contextualise the Barbican against the backdrop of wider cultural policy and cultural infrastructure developments in post-war Britain. The International Journal of Cultural Policy defines cultural policy 'as the promotion or prohibition of cultural practices and values by governments, corporations, other institutions and individuals that can be either implicit or explicit' (2019). The history of cultural policy starts with the political attempt to create a shared public culture, so in this sense cultural policy is 'a site for the production of cultural citizens' (Lewis and Miller, 2003, p. 1). The idea of cultural policy has a long history and there are major conceptual and state rationales for it. Historically, cultural policies have developed alongside the formation of the modern European nation states and the foundation of national museums, theatres and opera houses. Governments attempted to manage populations by producing an ideal of shared national culture and identity. In the 18th and 19th century's theatres and other arts institutions were upheld as means for the moral amelioration and intellectual education of the citizenry: seen as having a civilising power (Duncan, 1995).

Only in the period since the Second World War, however, did cultural policy emerge as a distinct topic in national politics and international debates. At an international level, the post-war period has seen a direct manifestation of the relationship between culture and the state,

with the emergence of cultural policy 'as an identifiable mechanism for the assertion of the state's role in regard to culture' (Throsby, 2001, p. 142). In the 1950s and 60s with the rise of the welfare state, governments – particularly in European and Anglophone countries – embraced egalitarian notions of culture for all and started implementing specific policies for culture, using it as an instrument 'to shape active citizens who participate in democratic society' (Throsby, 2001). The underlying discourse of post-war national cultural policies is the ideal of democratisation of culture, whereby provision of great art and culture should be for all. This is, however, a perspective that has traditionally championed elite cultural forms funded from the public purse, for example opera, as worthy of public subsidy, despite only a minority of the population directly attending opera performances.

British arts centres and the community arts movement

The modern arts or cultural centre model is largely a post-war European model. As culture became an explicit domain of state policy across Europe, 'the modern architecture of cultural centres and culture halls became central to such policy' (Cupers, 2015). Tied into promoting programmes of democratisation of culture, the arts centre model was variously understood and realised across Europe. For example, in France, Malraux called for *maisons de la culture* to be built in regional cities and towns (Mulcahy, 2006, p. 323). Called *Kulturpaläste or Kulturhäuser* in the German Democratic Republic, such institutions would be aimed at both cultivating citizens through high culture and at accommodating new forms of mass recreation and popular culture (Cupers, 2015, p. 469). Although the flowering of the arts centre movement did not occur until the late 1960s in the UK, as early as 1945 the ACGB published a booklet: 'Plans for an Arts Centre'. The booklet identified a '(d)eplorable lack of suitable buildings' (ACGB, 1965, p. 3) throughout the country, leading the ACGB to actively promote the establishment of arts centres across Britain. The campaign bolstered the main principles of the time – the civilising mission and the democratisation of culture (Bennett, 1995). Despite CEMA and ACGB's focus on high art, there were also attempts to encourage amateur arts. The booklet argues that arts centres should be designed to accommodate local amateurs as well as visiting professionals; it underlines the importance of the physical environment offered not only to artists and performers but to the audience as well.

Inspired by examples from other countries, ACGB presented detailed suggestions for new arts centres, in the shape of architectural designs, room programmes with spaces for social interaction such as restaurants, site location and transportation guides, etc. The rationale behind this was to make potential decision-makers aware that '(s)uccessful practice and

enjoyment of the arts need happy and stimulating surroundings (...) not impaired by an institutional atmosphere of the sort of drab background of austerity that so frequently accompanies "educational" and "social" activities, in the false sense these words have sometimes acquired' (ACGB, 1945, p. 6 in Maelen, 2008, p. 56). It is clear from the booklet that the architectures and spaces that arts centres occupied was a priority from the very start of the post-war period. Later in 1965 the Arts Council published the White Paper on cultural policies – A Policy for the Arts (ACGB, 1965). This included the section 'Housing the Arts' which strongly influenced the development of building-based national arts institutions. The paper launched a set of proposals including the establishment of a capital fund under the control of the ACGB 'to encourage regional and local authorities and other agencies to join forces in the building of new arts centres and venues throughout the country' and an invitation to do so through partnerships with ACGB and other agencies at local and regional level (Maelen, 2008). In the decades to follow, a number of cultural practitioners advocated for arts centres, and the founding spirit of the movement can be found in the two books 'Arts centres: every town should have one' (Lane, 1978) and 'The case for arts centres' (English, 1981).

Theatre writer and director John English, who also co-founded an arts centre in Cannon Hill Park, known as the Midland Arts Centre or Mac (Birmingham) in 1962, argues that the arts centre model is functional to the 'enjoyment and strengthening of our civilisation' (English, 1981, p. 25). English also emphasises one fundamental distinctiveness of arts centres as being 'the facility for the individual to participate in arts experiences not only as a consumer, but as a doer, a creator, a performer' (p.12). Writing at a historical juncture when leisure time was increasing, English advocates for arts centres based on the idea that 'the arts have a contribution to make to the quality of life, a part to play in the total culture, the way of life of a society' (English, 1981, p. 26). English discusses the role of arts centres at length, but stresses in particular that 'the quality of any future egalitarian civilisation depends very much on the range and the quality of the ordinary citizens' self-directed activity' (ibid., p.29) and defines 'self-directed activity' as 'this play of the mind, the spirit, the creative imagination' (ibid., p. 30) that is pursued in arts centres. English (1981) sees the role of arts centres as 'yeast for cultural daily bread' (ibid., p.33), as part of social-cultural education 'for everybody', interacting and interchanging with the public education system, but not formally part of its structure. In this respect, English thinks that arts centres should be staffed 'half by people with trained teaching and learning skills, the other half being practical artists and craftsmen' (ibid., p.36) and should have a basic commitment to accessibility, and to involve 'more and more people in more and more activities at higher and higher standards' (ibid., p.39).

Interestingly, in his view, arts centres should pursue 'independence, freedom, adventurousness, new initiatives, involvement of ordinary people…' but he also poses a question about how 'to retain all that if you become institutionalised, part of the local education establishment, or part of the local authority leisure service provision?' (ibid., p.37). Although his reflections might be based on the particular case of the Midlands Arts Centre, there are a set of important principles outlined in this booklet, and important questions about what kind of role arts centres are imagined to play in society.

The question of institutionalisation posed by English is a central kernel that animates the community arts movement, which was not a unified movement as such, but a set of groups that resulted from radical cultural activities occurring in Britain from the late 1960s (Maelen, 2008, p. 27). Whilst national policies prescribed the provision of cultural infrastructures, this push to brick and mortar was met with critiques and reactions from the community arts movement, which developed as an anti-bourgeois movement in the 1960s calling for art to be 'truly democratic' and to be for working-class people as well. At the same time as new arts centres of the 1960s and 70s to some degree seem to meet the goal of fostering audiences for the arts, public and private money spent on buildings were seen as reminiscent of an outdated cultural policy by many cultural workers and activists at the beginning of the 1970s.

According to the community arts movement, within the existing cultural policy framework the arts become stripped of their liberating potential and are locked in elitist conventions. The community arts movement, however, as Owen Kelly explains, is woven from three separate strands: firstly, a passionate interest in creating new and liberatory forms of arts expression. Secondly, there was the movement by groups of fine artists out of the galleries and into the streets. Thirdly there was the emergence of a new kind of political activism that believed that creativity was an essential tool in any kind of radical struggle (Kelly, 1984, p. 11 quoted in Maelen, 2008). Voicing their criticism towards the sole physical and financial infrastructure for arts provision, the proponents of the community arts movement insisted that 'local people' should make their own decisions about what kind of arts they needed and 'refuse the exclusive role of passive audience' (Lane, 1978, p. 20). In the many community-based arts organisations and experimental arts centres that emerged, the artistic programming was directed by a vision of the arts being less high arts and more like creative social activity. To an extent, the community arts movement was concerned with putting cultural democracy into practice (Jeffers and Moriarty, 2017), by advocating for people to make art themselves, and to support arts activities that are built from, and arise within communities. As described by Mulgan and Worpole (1986), the democratising paradigm is based on a distribution model,

distributing access to culture, whilst cultural democracy addresses the problem of what constitutes that culture.

However, as Kelly points out, the community arts movement soon become institutionalised, seeing this as the 'danger in which its founders had been dabbling' (Kelly, 1984, p. 14). Kelly points to two main reasons for this - the first being that since the movement didn't have a coherent sense of its own history, and no political framework within which such a history could be located, it was unable to construct any programme which might give effect to its aims (Kelly, 1984). Secondly, when discovering that the Arts Council from 1974 was willing to fund community arts projects '(b)ecause it could not be seen as obstructing the future' (Kelly, 1984, p. 10), the movement's partakers gradually allowed themselves to become accustomed to Arts Council funding and finally became grant-addicted. From being outsiders of the British arts territory, community artists and their activities were recognised, understood and, Kelly argues, even controlled by arts and education authorities; hence 'community arts became welfare arts' (Maelen, 2008).

In conclusion, the arts centre model draws on both national policies and on the community arts movements and combines the democratisation of culture paradigm with the cultural democracy one, producing a variety of arts centres. As Lane (1978) argues, and further studies by Hutchison and Forrester (1987) confirm, there is not one type of arts centre but many:

> The Miners' Hall in Consett with its £4,500 revenue grant is a far cry from the £153 million Barbican Arts Centre in the City of London which opened in 1982. More than ever in 1986 arts centres come in every imaginable shape and size, their genesis, their history, their activities and their buildings […] products of very varied needs and privileges, assumptions and aspirations (Hutchison and Forrester, 1987, p. 12)

This could be said also about arts centres' relationship to cultural policy agendas, in that the arts centre idea is at the convergence of different discourses of democratisation of culture and cultural democracy. Another key difference seems to be between regional and metropolitan arts centres, and the kind of local authority building or supporting it. In this sense, arts centres in London, namely the Southbank Centre and the Barbican Centre, embody a very different, much more large-scale model as compared with anywhere else in the country.

London reconstruction plans

As already observed, cultural policy is linked to the ideology of the nation state, whereby culture is a celebration of national identity. This was very much the case with the Festival of Britain (1951) on the Southbank. Since 1945, the ACGB had envisioned a future where more and more local authorities would wish to be engaged in the provision of arts through establishing arts centres. It advised in its booklet three alternative options for approaching this task: erecting a new building under a Private Act; building in bombed areas as part of the re-planning scheme; and under the Physical Training and Recreation Act (1937) to acquire, adapt and equip an existing building. Whilst during the Second World War local authorities had few statutory powers to provide buildings or facilities for entertainment (only private corporations were given such powers), in 1948 Parliament gave local authorities limited financial powers of their own (Maelen, 2008, p. 57).

At this stage, the London County Council (LCC) and local authorities were committed to reconstructing the devastated areas of the city, offering housing and new facilities. The distinct modernist architecture and purpose-built performance spaces of the Southbank became a clear expression of this new cultural policy, where democratisation of culture brought high art to the masses in a space that simultaneously symbolised regeneration and nation-building. In 1948 plans were announced by the then Government to hold the Festival of Britain to be a 'Tonic to the Nation' following the Second World War. The selected site was between the Waterloo and Hungerford bridges. As part of this, a new concert hall was to be built as a permanent centre for the musical life of London. The Royal Festival Hall was opened in 1951 seating 2,900 people and able to accommodate an orchestra of 100 and a choir of 250. In 1967 additional performance spaces in the shape of the Queen Elizabeth Hall and the Purcell Room were opened, followed a year later by the opening of the Hayward Gallery.

At that time, the only governing body in London with similar autonomy, power and resources to the LCC was the City of London Corporation, controlling the economically vital 'Square mile'. Although not expressly in competition, these were the two main centres of governing power in London, and soon after the success of the Southbank Festival of Britain in 1951, the City of London began the process of developing what became the Barbican Estate, which was to include the arts centre.

The Barbican Estate and the arts centre: 'The City's gift to the nation'

The Barbican Centre is constitutionally a fully owned subsidiary department of the City of London Corporation, its principal funder. It was opened by the City of London in 1982, commissioned as part of the Barbican Estate. Located in the City of London, the Barbican Estate is one of the largest post-war urban redevelopment projects in the UK, built on a 35-acre site that was bombed during the Blitz in 1940. The City of London Corporation discussed whether to redevelop it commercially or residentially, and after more than 15 years of the site being left empty, the Court of Common Council eventually voted to redevelop it as a mixed-use residential site. The Estate was designed and built between the mid 1950s and the early 80s as 'a city within the City' that would include residential buildings alongside other facilities, including an arts centre. Designed by architects Peter (known as Joe) Chamberlin, Geoffry Powell and Christoph Bon, the Barbican Estate is today a Grade-II listed architectural complex internationally known as a Brutalist architectural icon (Borthwick, 2011).

Plans for reconstructing the Barbican area began to develop in the mid-1950s. Several reports to the Court of Common Council refer to a letter written by the Minister of Housing and Local Government to the Lord Mayor in August 1956 regarding the district, instructing that plans should be made for a 'genuine residential neighbourhood incorporating schools, shops, open spaces and other amenities, even if these means foregoing a more remunerative return on the land'.[5] Built at a time of idealistic views of the welfare state as serving every section of society, and at a time when Britain had introduced comprehensive education and founded the NHS, the Barbican Estate was to become a new neighbourhood in Central London, providing an opportunity for mid-to-high income tenants to move to the City.

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[5] Letter from the Minister of Housing and Local Government, 28 August 1956, qtd. in City of London, Common Council Minutes and Reports 1971, Appendix 11, 'Joint report of the Barbican, Music and Library Committees. Barbican Arts Centre', 15 April 1971, p. 9. LMA, COL/CC/04/03/59.

Figure 2 – 'The City's Gift to the Nation'(1985) – from Barbican at 35 website (Barbican Centre, 2017)

The Barbican Arts Centre, which was incorporated in the masterplan half-way through the construction project, partly came as an afterthought, at least in the size in which it was finally built. Researchers (e.g. Fair, 2018) have argued that construction of the arts centre was partly prompted by the Arts Council of Great Britain's (ACGB) 'housing the arts' initiative which ran between the late 1950s and 1960s. Already in the ACGB document on 'Housing the Arts' (1959), the Barbican received endorsement with ACGB expressing appreciation for the City of London Corporation's decision to build the arts centre.

In their proposals of 1956 and 1959, Chamberlin, Powell and Bon had initial arts centre designs including pavilion-like structures, an art gallery, small concert hall and theatre, which were to be shared by professional performers and the students at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. During the development of the Barbican Arts Centre plan (the 1960s and early 70s), the City of London considered the opportunity of building a larger arts centre than had originally been envisioned on the Barbican site. The new plans were discussed in the Anthony Besch report, which was commissioned by the City of London (Report to the Corporation of the City of London, 1964). This report concluded that the arts centre should comprise a bespoke set of spaces for professional performers, separate from those catering for students at the Guildhall School. By the time plans were finally approved in 1971, it was decided the centre would function as an arts and conference venue and would have two resident companies, the London Symphony Orchestra and the Royal Shakespeare Company.

Although plans for arts provision existed from the beginning of the project, the final plan of the Barbican Arts Centre was approved by the Corporation of London only in 1971, and the centre opened to the public in 1982. It is today defined as 'Europe's largest arts centre', and it includes a 1943-seat concert hall, two theatres – the 1156-seat Barbican Theatre and the Pit Theatre, two art galleries (the main Art Gallery and The Curve), three Cinemas, a public library, a Conservatory and a plethora of other spaces for conferences and events, including the large Exhibition Halls.

City of London as founder and principal funder

The City of London Corporation is a local governing body unlike many others (Engel, 2013). It is one of the 33 areas with local authority responsibilities into which London is divided, however it differs from the other 32 in substantial ways, including the provision of its own police force and the ability for businesses to vote in elections alongside residents. Local authority services are provided by the City of London Corporation. The residential population of this small area is approximately 9,000 people. However, over 500,000 people commute into the City every day for work and over 10 million tourists visit every year. The City of London Corporation is the governing body of the Square Mile, the financial district and one of the oldest historic centres of London. Confusingly, when we say the 'city', depending on whether we put a capital C or not, we refer to the wider London Metropolitan area (the city of London), administered by the Greater London Authority (GLA), or to the 'City of London' area administered by the City of London Corporation.

The City has its own 'vision' and Corporate Plan, whose latest version states its own dedication 'to a vibrant and thriving City, supporting a diverse and sustainable London within a globally-successful UK' (CoL, 2018). Undoubtedly, the City has exercised a profound influence over the Barbican Centre since its inception. The same could be said of the ACGB and then ACE. Although the Barbican did not receive direct funding from ACE until 2008, its resident companies (LSO and RSC) were regularly funded by the Arts Council. Moreover, arguably the Barbican did partake in the main discourses and conceptions of cultural value put forward by ACGB and ACE (Leighton-Kelly, 2014, pp. 14–15). As Leighton-Kelly argues in her doctoral thesis, the 'dual patronage of the Barbican by the City of London and Arts Council England' means that the organisation has to articulate its own value in different ways simultaneously to meet competing demands and requirements (2014, p. 16).

The Barbican Centre has a specific funding framework sees the City of London as principal funder, whereas Arts Council England (ACE) only contribute a small percentage of its total income. Despite not being part of the government subsidised cultural sector, except from a small percentage of its funding from ACE, the Barbican is a subsidised arts institution in that it is funded by its local authority, the City of London Corporation. Thus, policies and practices at the Barbican Centre still have to be understood against the backdrop of shifts in British cultural policies, as well as in relation to strategic plans within the Square Mile.

The very unusual City of London's administrative structure as both a local authority and a commercial corporation offers two readings of its cultural funding and policy concerns. Leighton-Kelly (2014) argues that if the City is seen as a local government authority, its significant financial support for culture far outweighs that of any other in the UK. If instead the City's income is seen as largely commercial, its cultural funding is then better understood as philanthropic, fulfilling the City's, and its corporate residents', social responsibilities. However, the City sees it remit in funding culture as national, rather than solely part of its local authority role, as also suggested by the slogan 'gift to the nation' adopted to promote the arts centre. Therefore, its public subsidy for the arts is arguably neither comparable to that of other local authorities, nor does it follow the logic of public funding or of private funders, which would see the arts centre apply for support from the City as other organisations would do with philanthropists.

The 'Open Foyers' policy

It is in this context that the specific architecture of the Barbican, and thus the particular development of the foyers, occurred. The Barbican has extensive foyer spaces that have been reconfigured in many ways over the last few decades. In this respect the Barbican is similar to the Southbank Centre, and possibly again has been influenced by decisions made at Southbank, including the 'open foyers' policy. From its opening in 1982, the foyers of the Barbican have been open to members of the public without tickets. However, given the location of the site, the majority of foyer users would still be event goers from the limited demographics that frequented the arts centre. Conversely, the Southbank Centre is in a geographical location surrounded by major public thoroughfares and pedestrian areas. In 1983 the GLC instated and funded the radical 'Open Foyer' policy, whereby the foyers of the Royal Festival Hall were made accessible to the public all day, seven days a week, with free exhibitions, lunchtime concerts, evening jazz performances, shop, bars and cafes opened to non-ticket holders. The GLC was instrumental in the implementation of this policy for

the Royal Festival Hall, which meant that the building was open to the public all day long. Free lunchtime concerts, evening jazz performances and exhibitions were made available to the public. A 1984 TV commercial starring George Melly promoted the activities people could do in the foyer (Williams, 2018, p. 20). This new provision of essentially public space made the Southbank a more democratic space, and arguably set the tone for developments in foyer use in other arts institutions over the next decades and changed the ways in which people have used arts centres since the 1980s. With the abolition of the GLC in 1985, the Arts Council took over responsibility for the Southbank Centre and an independent South Bank Board was established in 1987 making the Southbank Centre one of the 'big five' flagship performing arts organisations alongside the Royal National Theatre, Royal Opera House, Royal Shakespeare Company and English National Opera.

This is of particular interest in the City of London, where due to the lack of public space in the Square Mile, the foyers of the Barbican have offered the potential provision of interior public space in this very specific geography. In legal terms the Barbican Centre is an independent and privately managed complex and should perhaps most accurately be termed 'publicly-accessible property' (Staeheli and Mitchell, 2008). It is run on behalf of the public and, despite being primarily funded by CoL, it also receives some public subsidy. In this sense, the Barbican is an example of hybrid quasi-public space as it is publicly-accessible but privately-owned by the City of London, 'nominally a "local authority", but in fact (with) power and resources beyond the normal local authority backed by the power of the medieval (but modern investors) the Guilds' (Pratt, 2017, p. 5). Given its specific spatial, funding and governance framework, the Barbican Centre provides a significant lens through which to analyse the changing role of arts institutions in relation to their publics.

In particular, the Barbican Centre presents a unique case study to look at the intersection of spaces, audiences and cultural participation for a number of different reasons. Firstly, the Barbican is not just a single arts centre building, but a 'cultural ecosystem' in itself, with multiple venues dedicated to different art forms, as well as a plethora of other mixed-use spaces including a greenhouse-Conservatory, foyers and cafès. Although it shares architectural similarities with other cultural buildings such as the Southbank Centre and the National Theatre in London, the whole Barbican complex does not have a direct comparator. There are two architectural features of the Barbican that are particularly relevant to this study. The first is, as said, the large number of seats in the venues. This means the programming of classical music and theatre has to attract large audiences, and it inherently implies the model of audiences as seated spectators or ticketed customers. However, the Barbican also has

some of the largest foyers of any UK arts centre. As already noted, these spaces bring in a large number of non-ticketed audiences. The presence of these two features in the same arts institution make the Barbican a good case study for a research on discourses about audiences and spaces in arts institutions.

Site-writing 2 – The Cloakroom

It was mid-March 2016, and I was working a shift in the cloakroom of the Barbican Centre, on level -1 of the centre, a busy LSO night… - when I decided to apply for the Barbican-Guildhall studentship. I remember starting to put together a proposal in my head whilst putting clothes away on the hanging racks, and the ideas I was putting together were very much informed by my experience of working at the Barbican as a host for quite a few years before then. In many ways, over four years after that night, I can see how the space in which I was thinking – a peripheral, somehow hidden and not-strictly-artistic, yet crucial (practically speaking) space of the centre – has shaped my ways of seeing, and thinking about, the Barbican Centre and its audiences.

I have fond memories of cloakroom shifts, sitting with other hosts and talking about books, art, philosophy, performances and possible futures. Sometimes the feeling of 'being trapped' on a shift meant that observing audiences walking around the space and preparing to enter the concert hall becomes quite similar to being a spectator of a public performance ritual: choreographies, costumes, snippets of dialogues, background music, noise, announcements, drinks, mirrors, latecomers running, people up and down magnificent staircases. And more, like a movable feast.

I remember writing fragments of ideas on the back of cloakroom stickers, and on the sheet with the operational notes. I have kept those stickers for years, but not paid them any attention. Now bringing them out to take this picture, only a week before my final submission, I wonder whether my perspective on audiences has shifted, or whether audiences themselves have shifted and changed over four years of research.
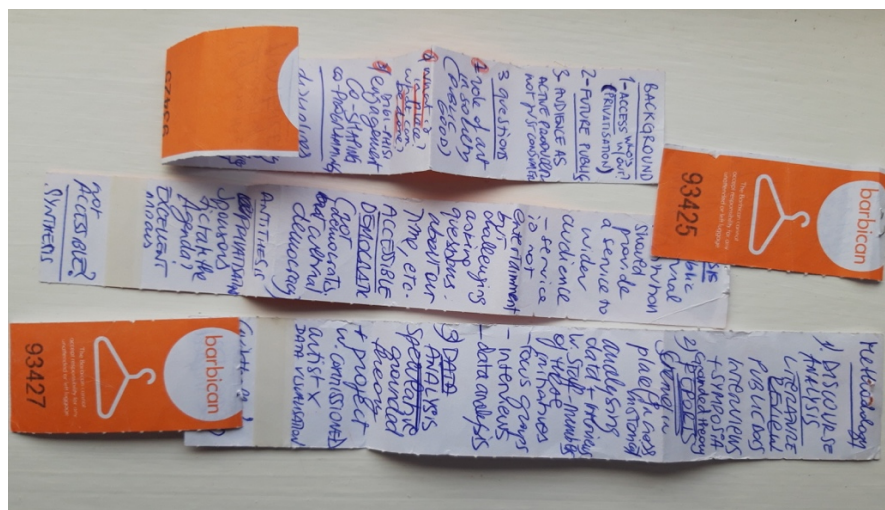
Figure 3 - Notes for a proposal cloackroom stickers

Chapter 4. Methodology

Introduction

In this chapter I present the methodological approach and the research strategy through which I conducted this study. I begin with the research focus, understanding audiences, in relation to the research setting, the arts institution. Informed by considerations from the literature review, I argue that audience research cannot limit itself to a single method to capture the complexity of audiences in arts institutions. Hence, adopting a discursive-ethnographic approach allows for an exploration of multiple facets of the audience – arts institution relationship: both discursively and spatially. Furthermore, the focus of my study is on policy, managerial and everyday discourses about audiences rather than being a study based on audience responses to a performance, a service, or a programme.

Echoing the literature review, I briefly discuss epistemological questions in audience research, and I introduce discourse studies and governmentality, explaining why they are appropriate analytical tools in the context of this research. I also acknowledge my own positionality as a researcher and casual worker, and how elements of institutional ethnography are inevitably present in the research process. I conclude by explaining the need to expand the methodology towards a problem-oriented discursive-ethnographic approach. In order to do so, I have adopted multiple methods that combine elements of critical discourse analysis, partly inspired by Foucault, with an ethnographic approach derived from an awareness of my own positionality.

I then present the study in its chronological unfolding, describing the stages of data collection and data analysis, and outlining rationales and justifications for the three sub-studies. From the initial study on foyers through the eyes of hosts, which was influenced by an understanding of grounded theory, I then move on to explain the process of reading the annual reports within a critical discourse analytical framework, and finally exploring the interrelations of discourses and their spatial manifestations through interviews with managers. I explain my decision not to interview audiences as part of my research, but instead to interview front-of-house workers (host) and to investigate discourses about audiences. I also discuss the methodological questions that arise when incorporating knowledge produced from different epistemological approaches. Finally, I outline some of the challenges and constraints encountered in the course of the fieldwork, and I cover ethical issues.

Understanding audiences: epistemological considerations

It is important to consider that the ontological preoccupation at the heart of this study was to understand audiences in arts institutions. One aspect highlighted in the literature is that a variety of methods can be used by researchers, and that methods themselves – in this case audience research methods – can become objects of analysis. This is the core of the argument on the 'performativity of methods' put forward by Ruppert, Law and Savage (2013) and it is an important premise upon which I begin this chapter. Over the last few decades, the social sciences and humanities have undertaken a radical overhaul in terms of challenging the dominant logical positivist understanding of social realities. Although there are many disciplinary areas and research traditions that adopt positivist approaches to knowledge production, it is understood that there is a range of potential approaches that can be taken to the understanding of social worlds. Different methods have different aims and produce different research outcomes, constructing certain 'social realities' (Ruppert, Law and Savage, 2013).

We could say that the ontology – *what is audience?* – shifts depending on which epistemology - *how do we know about audience?* – and methodology – *what do we do to know about audience?* – approaches we take to the research. Epistemology means 'theory of knowledge' and so epistemological positions refers to what scholars consider as valid data, and how the role of the researcher and research 'subjects' are understood. For a good summary of different epistemological positions, with regard to arts management and cultural policy research, I draw on Paquette and Redaelli (2015, pp. 92–111). Paquette and Redaelli contend that a productive way of resolving epistemological debates is to understand various research strands and approaches as co-existing positions and knowledge producers within a shared 'epistemic field'. The same could be said of audience research in the arts, which can encompass epistemological approaches that are somehow incongruous, but that can be used in combination. Incorporating research from different approaches seems essential in a field as interdisciplinary as audience research in the arts, as asserted in the latest Special Issue of Cultural Trends launched at the 'Audience research in the arts conference' that took place in Sheffield in July 2019:

> Once we add into the mix the requisite methods and methodologies that range from ethnography to biometrics via big data analysis, we have a truly hybrid discipline that rightly reflects the complexity of capturing and attempting to make sense of audiences' diverse experiences of arts and culture (Hadley *et al.*, 2019, p. 81).

In the context of this research, as already anticipated in concluding the literature review, the focus is not on audiences and their experiences, but on the discourses about audiences that co-exist within arts institutions, seen as discursive-spatial entities and as producing certain governmentalities of audience experience, engagement and participation. In the next section, I discuss the conceptual framework further, exploring why discourse and governmentality are relevant to this research project.

Critical discourse studies, governmentality and arts institutions

There are two terms, drawn from Foucault, that are central to my conceptual framework: discourse and governmentality. In this section I explain how these two terms are employed in this study in order to conceptualise the arts institution as a system of discursive practices, power and knowledge.

Despite its usage across a range of disciplines including critical theory, sociology, linguistics, philosophy, social psychology and many more, discourse as a term is rarely defined by academics, as if assuming that its definition is part of common knowledge (Mills, 2004, p. 1). Generally, the term discourse has been commonly taken to refer to a system of language that draws on particular terminology and encodes specific forms of knowledge. In linguistics, there are various understandings of its definition with regards to how the term is employed: as language above the sentence; as language 'in use'; and as a form of social practice in which language plays a central role (Cameron and Panović, 2014). Some scholars posit that discourse is historical; it is not produced without context and cannot be understood without taking the context into consideration (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997). This relates to Wittgenstein's 'language game' or 'forms of life': utterances are only meaningful if we consider their use in a specific situation, if we understand their underlying conventions and rules, if we recognise their embedding in a certain culture and ideology, and most importantly, if we recognise what the discourse relates to in the past. Fairclough and Wodak (2010), key scholars in the area of critical discourse analysis, argue that discourses are always connected to other discourses which were produced earlier, as well as those which are produced simultaneously and subsequently. In this respect, they include intertextuality as well as sociocultural knowledge in their concept of context (Fairclough and Wodak, 2010, p. 104).

However, in the work of French philosopher Michel Foucault, and of scholars inspired by his work, there is a gradual shift 'towards conceptualising discourse more broadly as particular collections of knowledge and practices that shape society' (Doughty and Murray,

2016, p. 304). Even within the Foucauldian tradition, discourse is variously understood across periods and scholars, producing discourses about discourse (Howarth and Howarth, 2000). The definition employed in the context of this study is a taken from 'The Order of Discourse' in which Foucault writes that discourses are:

> ways of constituting knowledge, together with the social practices, forms of subjectivity and power relations which inhere in such knowledges and relations between them. Discourses are more than ways of thinking and producing meaning. They constitute the "nature" of the body, unconscious and conscious mind and emotional life of the subjects they seek to govern (Weedon, 1987, p. 108)

In this sense, discourse in Foucauldian terms does not refer just to written and spoken language, but to 'a corpus of "statements" whose organisation is regular and systematic' and as 'the rules of the production of statements […] that delimit the sayable' and 'create the spaces in which new statements can be made' through practices that are material and discursive at the same time (Kendall and Wickham, 1999, p. 42). Broadly, there are three key shifts in the development of Foucault's theories of discourse and power. Starting from *The Order of Things* (1966) and theorised in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969), discourses can be understood as statements or speech acts that conform to a historically specific set of rules. The genealogical approach broadens discourse to include non-discursive practices and articulates the role of power and conflict in forging identities, rules and social norms. The third model moves towards notions of governmentality. Particularly *The Order of Discourse* demonstrates that Foucault understands discourse as 'tightly intertwined with the notions of knowledge, power and truth' (McIlvenny, Klausen and Lindegaard, 2016, p. 10). This is particularly emphasised by Hook (2001) who critiques conventional approaches to discourse analysis pointing out that Foucault's definition of discourse is not readily translated as language, but linked to knowledge, materiality and power. In this sense, discourse is to be understood in connection to the notion of governmentality.

Governmentality is a term that was coined by Foucault in his later work in the 1970s and is derived from the combination of 'government' and 'mentality' to indicate:

> The ensemble formed by the institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, the calculations and tactics that allow the exercise of this very specific albeit complex form of power, which has as its target population, as its principal form of knowledge political economy, and as its essential technical means apparatuses of security (Burchell 1991 quoted in O'Brien, 2014, p. 30).

One way in which Foucault explains governmentality is in terms of 'the conduct of conduct': rather than seeing governance confined to the sphere of the state, Foucault observes that is has broader ramifications, including 'the way in which the conduct of individuals or of groups might be directed: the government of children, of souls, of communities, of families, of the

sick (Foucault quoted in Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982, p. 221). Nikolas Rose's influential work on Foucault's concept of governmentality identifies 'government through community' (Rose, 1996, p. 332) as characteristic of 'advanced liberal' (neoliberal) governance that facilitates 'new modes of neighbourhood participation, local empowerment and engagement of residents in decisions over their own lives' that will, it is hoped, 'reactivate self-motivation, self-responsibility and self-reliance' (ibid., 335). In another quote from Rose, the connection between the notion of discourse and governmentality becomes even clearer:

> Language is not secondary to government; it is constitutive of it. Language not only makes acts of government describable; it also makes them possible. […] However, analytics of government are not primarily concerned with language as a field of meaning, or with texts embodying authorial intentions which might be recovered and made intelligible in the appropriate historical context. They are concerned with knowledges, or regimes of truth. […] It is not so much a question of what a word or a text 'means' – of the meanings of terms such as 'community', 'culture', 'risk', 'social', 'civility', 'citizen' and the like – but of analysing the way a word or a book functions in connection with other things, what it makes possible, the surfaces, networks and circuits around which it flows, the affects and passions that it mobilises and through which it mobilises (Rose, 1999, pp. 28–30, quoted in McIlvenny, Klausen and Lindegaard, 2016, p. 1).

This explanation is particularly relevant in the context of arts institutions, and in analysing how the use of language and rhetoric constructs certain social worlds and makes certain relationships possible or not, by mobilising affective meanings. In this sense, my choice to analyse the language and discourses used in annual reports as vessels of institutional communications is useful to understand how certain discursive constructions became accepted in the context of the arts centre, with various discourses circulating at different times. Furthermore, by looking at how discourses develop and circulate across different planes, discursive and material-spatial, like in the foyers, the aim is to highlight how certain governmentalities of audiences become normalised within institutions, but also how these governmentalities are not fixed, but ever changing.

The reason why notions of discourse and governmentality are so important in relation to discussions about audiences and arts institutions is that:

> Institutions like states, markets or governance networks can be conceptualised as more or less sedimented systems of discourse, that is, partially fixed systems of rules, norms, resources, practices and subjectivities that are linked together in particular ways (Howarth, 2010, p. 312).

Arguably, the same could be said of arts institutions defined as systems of discourse, power and knowledge. Drawing upon a Foucauldian approach, Bennett conceptualises the museum as a hegemonic space, developed in the 19th-20th century as a 'site where bodies, constantly

under surveillance, were to be rendered docile' (Bennett, 1995, p. 89), providing a mechanism for the 'transformation of the crowd into an ordered, and, ideally, self-regulating public' (ibid., p. 99). Following Bennett, the arts centre could also be theorised as a modernist construct whereby members of the public are imagined as model citizens to shape, to be engaged and managed. The contradictions identified by Bennett as inscribed in the institutional form of the museum, for example between universalising claims of collective ownership and the museum as instrument for differentiating populations, can be extended to the institutional form of the arts centre. There is, however, an inherent risk in taking a strictly Foucauldian approach to understanding arts institutions, as

> it constructs institutions as stable and coherent formations acting as conduits of the policies of governance and state, thereby obfuscating the complexity of the relation between policy and practice on the ground; that is to say, the field of the practicable (Walsh, 2015, p. 79).

Being part of an art institution also means being embedded in discourses and performing within certain governmentalities, as I was in my role as researcher and casual worker. Furthermore, in studying an institution of which one is part, I was constantly running the risk of 'going native' (Ybema *et al.*, 2009), which refers to the process of being socialised to the research community and losing sight of interesting theoretical contributions. For this reason, I have included elements of ethnography and positionality in my methodological approach, in order to 'bring the personal' and 'affect' into a macro-discursive analysis. To an extent, it could be argued that this is not epistemologically conflicting with critical discourse analysis, as there are similarities between Foucauldian approaches and ethnomethodology. As argued, Foucault 'never searches for truth behind the surface of actually observable interaction, but rather approaches the domain of the true or the socio-factual as the domain of the contingently accomplished at a given time and place' (McIlvenny, Klausen and Lindegaard, 2016, p. 23). In this sense, combining ethnographic data to describe what is observed at a given time and place with discourse analysis to analyse how certain practices become norms, allows for a richer contribution to the field. In order to study discourses about, and the governmentality of, audiences – and their experience, engagement, participation – in the foyers of an arts centre, I have conducted a textual analysis of annual reports, combined with site observations of the foyers, and interviews with staff members, from front-of-house staff to senior managers and directors.

Researchers' positionality

In the attempt to identify my specific 'vantage point' as a researcher, it is useful to discuss some key characteristics of qualitative research. Although a spectrum of different paradigms can be employed in qualitative research, including positivist and post-positivist approaches, this study is based on an understanding of qualitative research as grounded in the researcher's subjectivity as key analytical resource (Tracy, 2013; Hayes, Hopkinson and Taylor, 2016). Subjectivity in research is often set against the ideal of objectivity and objectivism, upon which positivist scientific approaches are predicated. This ideal, however, is contested by many social scientists who recognise that every researcher comes into the field with their own baggage of beliefs, personal qualities and pre-existing knowledge that form one's own subjectivity. Hayes, Hopkinson and Taylor (2016) suggest that as qualitative researchers in the field 'rather than deny our plural subjectivities, here we query the fantasy of objectivity' (p.130). In this sense, subjectivity can be used in tandem with the notions of positionality and reflexivity.

Within the feminist turn in social science, and particularly in social geography, qualitative researchers are understood as researching through their own subjectivities, acting as the core research instruments in their studies. In this section I explain the notion of researcher's positionality, derived from feminist social geography (Rose, 1997; Raghuram, Madge and Skelton, 1998). Scholars in this field, by acknowledging the subjective role of the researcher in the fieldwork process and allowing a space for personal reflexivity, have highlighted how issues of power are inherent in processes of knowledge production. Feminist perspectives on ethics and the situatedness of knowledge (Haraway, 1991) informed introspection on the relational and personal nature of researcher positionality (England, 1994; Rose, 1997): they understand the researcher and the field as co-constitutive, their subjectivities and positionalities ever changing against people and place. Hence why it is important for me as a researcher and casual worker to reflect on my specific 'vantage point' in the field, and how this shaped the ways in which I approached the research project.

Clare Madge explains how we need to consider

> the role of the (multiple) "self" showing how a researcher's positionality (in terms of race, nationality, age, gender, social and economic status, sexuality) may influence the "data" collected and thus the information that becomes coded as "knowledge" (Madge quoted in Rose, 1997, p. 308).

Acknowledging positionality as a set of conditions, or 'ways of seeing' that might influence the data, means accepting that knowledge is always already situated, and cannot claim universality. Donna Haraway defines 'positioning' as 'the key practice grounding knowledge' (Haraway, 1991, p. 191). As opposed to the myth of universal knowledge, based on the 'god-trick view from above' and claiming 'to see everything from nowhere' (ibid., pp. 188 - 89), situated and critical knowledges work from their situatedness to produce partial perspectives on the world. This situatedness, Haraway argues, is not given; it must be developed, its technologies revised and invented (ibid.). Situated knowledges see the world from specific locations, embodied and particular, and never neutral; siting understood as locating is intimately involved in sighting, or seeing. For many feminist geographers, reflexivity is one of those situating technologies, necessary to conduct qualitative research. Consequently, I draw on these considerations to understand my researcher's positionality and reflexivity, to consider how they influence the modes of data collection in the field and the presentation in the writing up of the research. That research can 'get personal' is discussed by many scholars, especially with regard to the relationship between the researcher and those being researched as well as to the partial nature of our understanding of 'others' (England, 1994). Another aspect that has to be considered in this respect is the role of the researcher's personality in relation to their proposed fieldwork (Moser, 2008) and the potential for hidden struggles of managing emotions in the process (Punch, 2012).

Similarly to the recognition of subjectivity in research, issues of positionality challenge the notion of value-free research that have dismissed human subjectivity from the processes of knowledge production. Positionality is the notion that personal values, views, and location in time and space influence how one understands the world. Aspects of personal identities such as gender, race, class and other indicators of social and spatial positions are not fixed qualities, but develop and shift in relation to a certain context. Consequently, knowledge is produced from specific positions that reflect particular places and spaces. It is therefore important to take into account personal positions when engaging in research, especially in qualitative research, given that the body and mind of the researcher serve as research instruments 'observing, sifting through, and interpreting the world through observation, participation, and interviewing' (Tracy, 2013, p. 3). As Tracy (2013) asserts:

> Good qualitative researchers think carefully about how they, personally, will experience research in a certain context, both despite of and because of who they are. For instance, a current employee who wants to study the organization where she is employed will have the advantages of already being "in" the scene and of understanding a wealth of background information. However, this same background limits fresh insight, and the researcher will have to navigate the power and personality

issues that come with her position (e.g. interview responses will be affected by the fact that she is also an employee) (p.12).

Reflecting on my positionality as a casual worker / host becoming a researcher has been an important aspect of this study, particularly in terms of which data I would be able to gather, what the potential obstacles would be, and how my relationship with different departments developed over the time of this research. As I embarked on this research project, I grew more and more aware of my own, personal journey inside the Barbican Centre – from an internship with the Community Engagement Manager in 2014, to working as a casual host and then as Architecture Tour Guide in the Customer (now Audience) Experience department between 2014 and 2020. The PhD candidacy at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama took place over a period (2016 – 2019) when I continued to work casually as architecture tour guide at the Barbican Centre. In this sense, my position as a researcher has been both outside and within the same institution I have been investigating as part of my study. Although this has given me insider knowledge of the institution, my casual role did not provide me with the full access that an employed staff member would have to internal offices, systems or data, as for example access to the Intranet or internal documents. Thus, in that sense, I remained an outsider. What I have had access to are multiple informal conversations with other casual staff members and some permanent staff members I worked with, and a direct knowledge of everyday challenges of working across different spaces and engaging with audiences. This has certainly influenced my ways of looking at the object of my research. Informal knowledge gleaned from my time as casual worker has been at times complex to handle in the research context, posing interrogatives around ethics. For example, I might have come across or overheard a conversation, or have had an insightful exchange with an audience member, or have been involved in discussions around practical working issues, and I might think it would be a brilliant example to use in order to illuminate some of the issues in my research. However, bringing 'ethnographic materials' back into my research, partly for ethical reasons, had to be handled with care. This is particularly challenging for those doing 'home ethnography' (Ybema *et al.*, 2009) or attempting to critically assess discourses, given that as someone working in the institutional context I would become naturalised and socialised in dominant discourses and re-enact governmentalities.

Description of fieldwork: case study and data collection

In this section I outline the chronological 'unfolding' of the research design, beginning with my original intentions and discussing the decisions I made during this three-year project. The study builds on three main datasets, resulting in the thesis being designed as a set of sub-

studies: documentary analysis of the Barbican Centre's annual reports 2002 – 2018 (Chapter 5), an interview study about foyers with hosts (Chapter 6), and another interview study with managers across different departments (Chapter 7). Combining elements from critical discourse analysis and from ethnography, the analysis draws upon data from institutional documents and strategies, interviews with staff members across the organisation, as well as the researcher's reflexive notes as a casual member of staff in the Audience Experience department. Broadly, the data sets can be grouped in documentary data from the Annual Reports and ethnographic data from the interview studies. I will now discuss how the data was collected and what the guiding rationales for this process were.

In the context of this research setting, having been a casual worker in the Audience Experience department inevitably put me in a position akin to that of a participant observer. Although the implications of this would become apparent to me throughout the study (I discuss this more at length in Chapter 8), there was never a specific point at which I entered the research field, because I was already embedded in the field when I wrote my research proposal and indeed when I began working on the doctoral study. The original intention to focus on the foyers of the arts centre was based on my informal observations as a host, whereby I would encounter audiences on a daily basis, particularly in those spaces that are 'in between' the 'outside' of the institution and the 'inside' of the performance/exhibition venues. Within an understanding of the arts institution as a discursive space, foyers in themselves discursively mediate between the arts institution and audiences. So do front-of-house staff members working in those spaces. These considerations motivated the choice to start from the Barbican Centre's foyers as research sites. Based on these considerations, in the first interview study, carried out in July 2017, I conducted semi-structured interviews with 12 front-of-house staff members, or Audience experience hosts, focusing on their perspectives on the foyers and on their uses by members of the public. The data collected from these interviews is analysed in Chapter 6.

Following on from the initial study, what emerged was a picture of the foyers as spaces where a variety of different activities take place and various institutional agendas are at play, sometimes creating tensions between different uses of space. Based on an iterative process of going from the literature to the field and back again, I mapped discursive shifts in policy and scholarly research onto the arts organisation's official discourses in order to reveal more about the different audience discourses created, circulated or contested within the arts institution. At this stage, the identification of different institutional agendas at play in the hosts' responses gave a reason to pursue further clarification of these agendas at different

levels of institutional discourse, rather than directly investigate audience responses, which is generally the focus of more conventional audience research for funding or evaluation purposes. Consistently with the literature review where I already identified the investigation of institutional discourse as a gap, I argue for the relevance to better understand how the arts institution conceives of their audiences in discursive and spatial terms. The focus of the project was therefore on researching the institution itself, and which discourses about audiences are produced within it. At this stage, I encountered a series of challenges in the process of finding gatekeepers and gaining access to internal documents and archives - as explained in the Positionality section. Therefore, it seemed appropriate to adopt unobtrusive research methods. Foyers and publicly available documents were the obvious sites from where to start mapping discourses. I carried out the second study as a critical analysis of the Annual Reports from 2002/03 to 2018. The aim was to provide a critical-historical overview of the discursive shifts in relation to audiences and notions of 'publicness' incorporated by the institution during the identified timespan. Having identified a set of discourses, I carried out another iterative process between the scholarly literature and the documents as 'preconstructed data' (Study 2 – Chapter 5).

The process of deciding on the final study was a prolonged one. At this stage I had been analysing text from the annual reports, and the possible avenues were multiple. Some of the challenges encountered during the final stage of the fieldwork will be addressed in Chapter 8. I applied for ethics approval for the final study and carried out the interviews with managers between December 2018 and April 2019. The final case was based on semi-structured interviews with 18 managers across different departments, asking questions about audience policies and practices, and recent changes in the context of the foyers (Study 3 – Chapter 7).

In the next section I present the studies in chronological order of how I conducted them, whereas in Part II of the thesis, 'Spatialising Audiences', I present the analytical chapters in a different order, as outlined here:
- the data from 'Study 1: Semi-structured interviews with Audience Experience Hosts' is analysed in Chapter 6;
- the data from 'Study 2: Critical Discourse Analysis on annual reports' is analysed in Chapter 5 in order to provide a critical-historical context for the actual fieldwork;
- the data from 'Study 3: Semi-structured interviews with managers is analysed in Chapter 7.

Fieldwork methods and datasets

Study 1: Semi-structured interviews with Audience experience hosts

Given the reasons provided for my initial case study, the concerns that followed were about finding the most appropriate methodological approach and qualitative strategy to investigate audience engagement in the public spaces of the arts centre. After considering a variety of options, I decided that the first study would be an interview study with Audience Experience hosts, which was consistent with my intention to focus on organisational discourse, while at the same time being as close as possible to the reality of the situation 'on the ground', with the day-to-day interaction with visitors in the foyers. Instead of starting from the 'room at the top', I chose to carry out a qualitative interview process with staff members working on the shop floors of the arts centre.

In my ethical approval forms (Appendix B – includes interview question), I explained why starting my data collection from hosts, who have experience of working in the spaces of the arts centre but not necessarily institutionally predetermined expectations about how such spaces should operate, would be consistent with my general approach. I identified as key informants the staff members involved in working front-line with members of the public: hosts, or – in the current institutional terminology – Audience Experience hosts.

Data collection: interviewing and transcribing

As Brinkmann and Kvale (2015) say, interviews are first of all live conversations. Although informed by the same set of questions, the conversations would naturally take different directions, as is accepted practice in semi-structured interviewing. The interview schedule provides a starting point from which interviewees feel free to take their responses in directions that are not pre-determined (Tracy, 2013). The study was looking at the perceptions of foyers as they were, at the time, programmed and conceived by the institution as outreach spaces, as well as how they are used by people in the everyday. I therefore asked hosts to think about the last year of their activity, especially from January until March/April 2017, but letting them decide whether to bring into the conversation memories from previous years, depending on how long they had been working at the Barbican. The study was not aimed at analysing specific public programmes or projects taking place in the foyers,

but to gather an overall sense of how the uses of foyers are perceived by hosts in a more longitudinal perspective. Using the word 'usually' in my questions, I was looking for patterns, recurrent behaviours and uses observed and perceived by hosts over their time at the arts centre. A certain degree of generalisation in the answers would allow for identification of recurrent discourses or observations.

In order to transform the interviews into usable data, I transcribed the audio recordings myself into verbatim typewritten records. As discussed in methodology manuals (Horrocks and King, 2010), the first stage of analysis commences during the transcription process. The themes discussed in this case study emerged from a process that covered data collection, transcription and analysis, and continued during the writing up. Individual interviews are quoted throughout Chapter 6, with participants' codes bracketed after each quotation; for example Host 1, 3, 10, 12 are bracketed as (H1), (H3), (H10, (H12).

<u>Data analysis process</u>

My process of data analysis developed through an iterative process, through multiple cycles and using various coding techniques. To frame my research methodologically, I have used methods drawn from Grounded Theory, using a constructivist approach (Charmaz, 2014), according to which a researcher coproduces the reality arising from interactive processes in the social context. As I started looking at the raw data (reading and re-reading the transcripts) in order to start the process of analysis, the main challenge was attending to the transcripts in the attempt to uncover and excavate them, rather than 'searching for evidence' or re-inscribing my assumptions into them. As discussed by Charmaz (2014), wrestling with preconceptions is a necessary step along the researcher's journey, therefore engaging in reflexivity and complementary reading can be an antidote to 'common sense theorising' (ibid., p.157).

After unsuccessfully trying to code the data according to predetermined categories based on the interview topic guide, I used a method of 'staying close to the data' (Charmaz, 2014) and what the raw material suggests (Charmaz, 2014). This 'false start' was a crucial insight, that prompted me to move from 'coding for topics' to 'coding with gerunds'. I realised I needed to move away from codes as mere descriptors of topic areas in order to let codes emerge from the data and aim 'for possibilities suggested by the data rather than ensuring complete accuracy of the data' (ibid.), as consistent with grounded theory. In the following readings of the interviews, I started (1st cycle) by coding the transcripts line-by-line using gerunds to

preserve a sense of process and identifying actions in participants' responses. Line-by-line coding is used as a 'heuristic device to bring the researcher into the data, interact with them, and study each fragment of them' (ibid., p.121) suggesting emergent links between processes. For example, a line of verbatim text 'a lot of people just come to use the space almost like an office, because there's free wifi, so there will be people with laptops' (H10) becomes 'people working' but it also coded under 'people using their laptop' and 'space having free wifi'. We have three codes, or pieces of information here, from just a quote. Another example is provided by the lines 'people's behaviours, observing their behaviour, you see, so one thing that always intrigues me, it is about people's behaviour…' (H12) and 'I think I'm quite good at picking up mmh, like how people are feeling and what people are saying a lot quicker from being an artist and having a kind of background in acting and theatre, and having to look at people, and be other people and stuff like that, which I think is useful…' (H6) that are both coded under 'hosts observing people's behaviour'. These initial descriptive codes were then grouped together under an umbrella code to create clusters of emergent analytical codes (2nd cycle). To use the previous example as illustration, 'people working', 'people using their laptop' and 'space having free wifi' became arranged under the themes of 'using the space to work and study'. For example:

Table 2. Sample of coding (from descriptive to analytical to interpretative codes)

1st level of descriptive coding	Emergent analytical codes	Interpretative codes
PEOPLE WORKING		
USING THEIR LAPTOPS		
REVISING	USING THE SPACE TO WORK AND/OR STUDY	Public spaces as spaces of EVERYDAY ENGAGEMENT self-organised creative activities, knowledge exchange and immaterial production
READING		
SKYPING		
USING THE SPACE LIKE AN OFFICE		
PEOPLE STUDYING		

In order to search the data more precisely and measure some of the 'dimensions' of data, I adopted NVivo. The 3rd round of coding, directly in NVivo, gave me the opportunity to organise the codes more neatly into overarching interpretative codes and produce queries.

Subsequently, through a stage of 'axial coding' (Tracy, 2013, p. 195), all 12 interviews were compared to reveal further groupings. Codes became more conceptual in nature throughout this process, and by these means, I generated theoretical categories. When a code was found to link two other codes, there would be a cross-referencing of codes to build towards a conceptual explanation. For example, 'being an artist' encompasses both a simple self-definition for many participants, but also informs their specific contribution within the arts

institution, as participants created connections between 'being an artist' and 'having an advanced understanding of the arts', but also their 'ability to empathise with people'. The conceptual codes were structured in a narrative form. In grounded theory, analysis continues during the research process, into and including writing up. Certain concepts emerged during the 3rd coding cycle, for example the code 'hosts performing the affective side of the institution' as a result of grouping together the codes: 'ability to empathise with people', 'enjoying working with people', 'being representative of the Barbican' and 'caring about institutional strategies'.

<u>Limitations and bias</u>
Methodologically, I approached interviews as open-ended discussions with hosts, where I would let themes and issues emerge, without suggesting pre-conceived ideas. However, this approach has partly resulted in challenges when analysing the data as I realised that there was a disjuncture between my literature review work and the qualitative enquiry. My choice was to avoid using theoretical references in my interviews, instead framing and phrasing them as open-ended explorations. However, this resulted in a set of emergent themes that were not directly related to the literature. Such disjuncture between the literature and the case study poses more interpretative and analytical challenges, but also opens up potentials to bring knowledge from the field produced through a grounded theory approach into theoretical fields of debate.

Study 2: Critical discourse analysis on Barbican annual reports

Why annual reports?
Arguably, annual reports are the most publicly accessible official documents published by companies, organisations and institutions to account for their activities throughout the preceding year. They are intended to give shareholders and other interested parties information about the company's activities and financial performance. Critical discourse analysis studies on annual reports have been carried out within accounting & business research, management studies, as well as in organisational studies (Alvesson and Karreman, 2000). There are also studies that analyse the UK Operating and Financial Review (OFR) as a genre of accounting narrative (Rutherford, 2005). Within the area of arts management and cultural policy in which my research is situated, there are some examples of studies looking at practices and discourses of accounting. For example, considering how discourses of accounting and austerity have been internalised, resisted or coped with, in the context of three arts organisations in England after 2010 (Oakes and Oakes, 2016).

Dutch linguist Theo van Leeuwen, in 'The Routledge Companion to Accounting Communication' defines corporate annual reports as 'the key vehicles through which companies account for themselves to their stakeholders and ask them to accept their account of themselves and their predictions of future performance' (van Leeuwen, 2013). Recalling Bhatia's definition of annual reports as 'the pulse of corporate realities' (Bhatia, 2012), van Leeuwen suggests that corporate annual reports tend to comprise four different discourses: the accounting discourse containing financial statements, the discourse of finance with facts and figures, the public relations' discourse for example in the form of a chairman's letter, and the legal disclaimer's discourse. In this context, the focus is mainly of the public relations' discourse, which, as van Leeuwen suggests, lends itself to critical discourse analysis in organisational contexts. In practical terms, annual reports are freely accessible and reveal the public discourses developed by organisations to account to their stakeholders. Furthermore, I suggest that there hasn't been a similar study conducted using this methodology to investigate discourses and practices of 'audience engagement' in the context of large arts centres.

Based on the research questions guiding the overall study, I approached the critical reading of the annual reports focusing on how conceptions about audiences and engagement are discursively presented and framed in official documents. This could be applied to a micro-level in the textual analysis, for example in the 'mission and vision' or 'strategic objectives' statements. Furthermore, I looked at what types of discourses can be observed: What is defined, allowed, and possibly limited within the discursive framing of audiences? Which subject positions and objects are discursively constructed in the official documents? Who are the 'actors' and what are the 'actions' offered? Are there power dynamics or relations that the text constructs? I went through various phases of reading and analysis, and the writing process contributed to further analytical insights. Here I will give an account of the main phases of analysis, before introducing the findings. In my attempt to define initial themes, I made decisions as to what needed to be looked at, therefore identifying sections of the documents where audiences are being discussed or talked about. Although setting priorities and deciding what to exclude from the analysis is important, I would argue that sections such as the 'Human resources Director's report' section appearing in annual reports between 2002 and 2007, might be as revealing about changing discourses about audiences and art engagement, as the 'Head of Marketing's report' that directly addresses audiences in terms of 'numbers and ticket sales'.

In practical terms, I have approached the reading of the annual reports without predefined codes, instead coding the text in its 'appearances'. Following this, I defined a procedure for what I would be looking for, which allowed me to start the process. A methodological question that I was faced with was concerning the micro and macro dimensions of the text. For instance, I spent considerable time just looking at a small portion of text, i.e. the Barbican's current 'Vision' (since 2012/13). Because of limited time and resources, however, it would have not been possible to look at large number of texts in this very specific way. Furthermore, in Foucauldian approaches to discourse analysis, there are discussions on macro-meso-micro level of analysis. At this stage, I have decided to focus on macro levels of discursive formations.

Although I had initially constructed an Excel document with a set of headings (which was a helpful way to start off the process and reflect on 'ways of ordering'), I have soon realised that this analytical tool would partly conflict with my methodological choice to critically analyse the texts in order to identify discursive formations. Therefore, I have avoided saving quotes from the text under specific headings, instead working with written notes alongside the text, to see how certain recurrent statements and phrases coalesce into discursive formations. I then divided the reports in three chronological phases roughly corresponding to changes in vision and mission statements and conducted specific queries by keywords in NVivo (i.e. audience, participation, creativity, destination) based on the first stage of thematic analysis. The final stage, which continued through the writing process, led to the identification of analytical categories and main discursive constructions. Excerpts from the Barbican annual reports are quoted throughout Chapter 5, referenced as 'AR' with respective year (e.g. AR 2007/08; AR 2015/16).

Study 3: Semi-structured interviews with managers

The research questions in Study 3 are based on the overall research questions for the doctoral study, and are articulated in a semi-structured interview guide (see Appendix C. Study 3) around three topic areas: audience development in the manager's work, programming and public spaces at the Barbican, specific Foyer projects. However, as the interview study progressed, I found myself using the semi-structured interview guide more as a starting point and building to some extent on previous interviews and conversations. Following the lines of reasoning of the interviewee became more important.

I chose a purposeful sampling of participants, based on a set of criteria that I consider the most consistent with my research purpose: I selected and recruited participants who are involved in audience engagement strategies or public programming activities, either at strategic or operational level (i.e. planning artistic and commercial activities, reporting and evaluating, managing centre's spaces and events); who work or collaborate across different departments within the organisation (marketing and comms, programming, building and facilities, learning); and who are employed at different managerial levels. I also used my existing knowledge of departments and activities across the Barbican Centre to identify a range of individuals with key organisational roles related to audience engagement strategies and programmes, and approach them directly to arrange interviews. Having presented initial findings from my interview study with Audience Experience hosts (Study 1) to the arts programming team in July 2018, I followed up on some of the informal conversations I had with staff members after that meeting to arrange interviews with them. Finally, the sampling was also based on encounters through public projects or events that I was following or attending. I conducted 18 interviews with managers and directors across different departments, including Marketing, the Incubator, the Directorate, Creative Learning, Audience Experience and Music Programming[6]. Individual interviews with the managers are quoted in Chapter 7, with participants' codes bracketed after each quotation; for example manager 1, 3, 10, 12 are bracketed as (M1, M3, M10, M12).

The interviews took place between November 2018 and April 2019. I arranged the interviews by contacting the potential interviewee/participant directly, except from a few cases where someone else in the organisation sent an introductory email. Having been inside/outside the institution for a number of years, 'I was always already in the field'. Therefore, the interview study with managers involved elements of institutional ethnography combined with Critical Discourse Analysis. In line with a CDA approach, the focus of my analysis is not on individual perspectives expressed by managers, rather it is highlighting the most prominent themes that emerged from these interviews. It is important to state how the process of interviewing itself gave me insights into organisational workings and ways in which research is understood internally in the organisation.

This combination is underpinned by an in-depth literature review in the field of audience research, and analysis of documentary resources produced by the organisation. Ethnography is defined as not far removed from the means that we all use in everyday life to make sense

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[6] I interviewed three Directors, two Heads of Department, Senior Managers and other Managers across various departments and functions (Incubator, Marketing, Creative Learning, Audience Experience, Programming).

of our surroundings, of other people's actions, and perhaps even of what we do ourselves (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007): the researcher, in ethnography, is the primary tool of data collection, using methods of cultural participant-observation and open-ended interviewing, while becoming a cultural insider among the people studied. The ethnographic process typically includes the collection of text-based data including fieldnotes, transcribed audio and video recordings and images during fieldwork.

Although critical discourse analysis and ethnography have historically been seen as distinct methodological traditions, there are various scholars pointing to the necessary use of a combined approach, as the two different analytical approaches of CDA and Ethnography can complement each other:

> Ethnography is increasingly indispensable for broadly understood contextualisation while CDA is necessary for the critical analysis of discourses produced and/or received in the studies of social and political, everyday and institutional contexts. This similarity – which is in accordance with and symptomatic for the renewed interest and redefinition of the relation between text and context in broader CDS (Critical Discourse Studies) – emphasises that the merger of the ethnography and CDA might be one of the central ones in contributing the critical research on language and society to the exploration of increasingly multilayered and complex social problems (Krzyżanowski 2011).

Krzyzanowski proposes what he calls a 'discourse ethnographic approach' which integrates anthropological and critical-analytic perspectives through, on the one hand, extensive fieldwork and ethnography in institutional spaces and, on the other hand, the critical analysis of discourses of (social) actors' shaping those spaces and acting therein. There are a number of post-structuralist challenges, for example: how can CDA and ethnographers capture the meanings on the basis of which people act if meanings are not stable or properties of individuals? How do we interpret data if meanings reflect the shifting constitutive role of language? The assertion of a 'reality', in post-structuralist epistemologies, is rejected in favour of 'regimes of truth' which structure institutional practices.

Fieldwork challenges and constraints

Although I discuss some challenging aspects of the fieldwork process in Chapter 8, this section addresses those that most closely relate to methodology. Ethnographic fieldwork is defined as 'the first-hand experience and exploration of a particular social and cultural setting on the basis of (though not exclusively by) participant observation' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007, p. 4): this could involve using research tools from social science such as participant observation, interviewing and the close reading and analysis of documents. Key

to the success of the research is gaining access in fieldwork. This might prove particularly problematic in large and complex organisations, as it might require the approval of several gatekeepers, 'perhaps with political sensitivities to contend with too' (Horrocks and King, 2010, p. 30).

In negotiating my access to institutional documents and spaces, one of the main constraints on my ability to carry out research across projects was precisely the role of gatekeepers. At varying points during the research I encountered various gatekeepers at different levels within the institutional hierarchy and I initially discussed with them how best to recruit and contact participants. Despite investing time and energy in attending events and speaking to various people during the initial stage of the research, I didn't succeed in accessing documents that were not already public and in developing significant relationships across departments that would gain more access than I already had by being a host. The casual nature of hosting means the access to institutional intranet, email communications and other resources is very limited. Gaining access is not a straightforward process, and there are politics involved in it. Cunliffe and Alcadipani (2016) talk about an ongoing process of immersion, backstage dramas, and deception, which can be negotiated and facilitated through various micro-practices. These could include an access proposal that can function as 'elevator speech', but most of all is about connecting with organisational goals and providing gatekeepers with a narrative that can justify the researcher's presence in the field. The main challenge is that of trying to be un-conspicuous as Kirsty Sedgman (2019) argues, talking about her experience of doing research in/with National Theatre Wales for her doctoral thesis: 'the key challenge is balancing the maintenance of long-term partnerships with industry organisations […] with the need to produce rigorous scholarly knowledge' (Sedgman, 2019, p. 105).

Although I was partly aware of the need to find a balance between my researcher's agenda and institutional goals, my multiple identities as a Barbican host and architecture guide, as well as doctoral researcher and student at Guildhall School of Music and Drama, might have created some confusion. A challenge I encountered is that my identity as a host proved problematic as I was transitioning to become a researcher. Firstly, positioning myself as a host – working casually, in one of the most casual roles of the organisational hierarchy – meant it took a lot of effort to gain credibility as a researcher. Stepping from the shop-floor to the Directors' offices for the first time required switching modes of communication and codes. I still remember my first visit to the Directors' offices where I felt slightly out of place. Talking about embodied experience, I became very aware of my accent, my non-Britishness,

and my 'different' educational background, but mainly of my lack of informal, tacit knowledge of the codes needed to navigate such spaces. Many have written about spaces of power in the creative sector (O'Brien *et al.*, 2017; Friedman and Laurison, 2019), discussing the impact of class on the ability to 'work through certain sectors'. However, these personal challenges aside, which I will discuss further in my chapter on positionality, I managed to 'plough through' the 18 interviews, transcribe and analyse the data. I am here writing up the headline findings from the data. In the interview analysis a lot of the themes from the literature, and the initial qualitative study, but also from the analysis of the annual reports, came to the surface. This included audience experience and quality of engagement measurement, business strategy and the relationship with the City, Culture Mile and the imperative of 'becoming a destination', as well as artistic programming in relation to audiences and questions of participation and agency.

Ethical considerations

The Ethics Applications submitted for Study 1 and Study 3 received full ethical clearance from the Guildhall School of Music and Drama Research Ethics Committee. I discuss various ethical considerations throughout the chapter, and I specify at the start that the research was funded by the Barbican Centre and Guildhall School of Music and Drama. The participants interviewed, both hosts and managers, were not considered vulnerable; no form of deception was used and all participants were informed of the project's aims and objectives. I sought consent by explaining verbally and providing an information sheet for each participant (Appendix B. Study 1; Appendix C. Study 3). No financial incentives were offered. I emphasised to each that data could be anonymised and that even after interview participants could withdraw any information provided up until writing up of the findings would start, as specified in the Ethics forms. The fieldwork concluded in April 2019, giving all of the participants at least five months to withdraw. In accordance to what is stated in the Ethics, the data in the thesis is anonymised to protect participants' identity and for confidentiality reasons.

Although I fulfilled these requirements carefully, I was aware throughout the study that the ethics requirements were a real hindrance to certain types of information gathering. Within such a large and tightly fenced organisation, that showed significant resistance to various types of information sharing, the inflexibility of the ethics framework limited the scope of my research. For example, there were many casual conversations and informal observations where very relevant information was discovered, but I was unable to use them in this thesis

due to the slight possibility of an individual's anonymity being compromised, or similar considerations. Possibly due to the musical nature of much of its research, the Guildhall School ethics rules do not adapt well to ethnography and social geographical methods for understanding a culture, where those informal cues and repeated habits make a significant part of the methods' value. There are other researchers looking at arts institutions, based in different universities, who are not bound by such a restrictive ethics code, and in many interactions with them it was apparent that this greatly broadens the potential scope of their research, while, in my opinion, making almost zero difference to the participants or institution in question.

Reflexivity and exiting fieldwork

The process of writing has clarified a number of issues which were not fully processed during the research itself. Writing up becomes an act of negotiating what is useful to say, and what is best to leave out: these constraints and tactical solutions have an impact in the interpretation of what follows. A physical movement away from the site does not necessarily mean leaving the field. I left London in Autumn 2019 and moved to Glasgow, but I had been commuting back and forth until March 2020, when the Covid-19 pandemic started in Britain, followed by the lockdown. I still get some update emails from the Barbican, I have eventually left the Facebook group used by hosts for shift swapping, and when I submitted my thesis in July 2020, I felt as if I was officially exiting the field. Having started my internship at the Barbican in January 2014, it has been 6 years of casually working at the institution, and almost 4 years of research.

It has been pointed out that there is limited research on exiting fieldwork or withdrawing from the research site where empirical data has been generated over a period of time which often involves a deep physical and psychological immersion in the research setting. Exiting it is seen as a key step along the journey, and it is often 'associated with changes in identities and emotions as enacted and experienced by both the researcher and research participants and their (self) learning and reflexivity' (Michailova *et al.*, 2014, p. 139). Often, when associated with uncomfortable or negative experiences, researchers treat exiting as a closet activity: analysing the stages of exiting is part of the learning process, and contains a high portion of tacit knowledge, requiring reflexivity. Undoubtedly, my new geographical distance from the research setting has also allowed a degree of analytical distance.

PART II – Spatialising Audiences

Chapter 5. Audiences in public spaces at the Barbican Centre

This chapter constructs a critical-historical narrative of the Barbican Centre through the institution's annual reports (AR 2002/03 – AR 2017/18), tracing discourses about audiences and public spaces during the period between 2002 and 2018. Temporally, the three sections cover the span of two Barbican directorships: that of Sir John Tusa (2002 – 2007) and that of Sir Nicholas Kenyon (2007 – current). In terms of cultural policy, the wider context is that of New Labour cultural policy (1997 – 2010) and the last decade of the Coalition government (2010 – 2015) and Conservative government (2015 – current).

This chapter provides an additional understanding of the research setting, the Barbican Centre, and of its spatial strategies and public programming in relation to audiences. The chapter's aim reflects the key concerns of the thesis: to explore the organisational values underpinning discourses about audiences and public spaces, and to map the complexity of the context in which the arts centre operates. In doing so, the chapter highlights how certain discursive constructions about audiences and spaces emerge and become established over time, particularly in institutionalised communication such as annual reports. The chapter is roughly divided into three sections, following shifting discourses about audiences and key institutional objectives in relation to spaces:

1. Access, the rise of customer experience and foyer refurbishment: 2002 – 2007
2. 'Bringing participation into the mainstream' and the Weekenders: 2007 – 2013
3. Diversity, foyer projects and the creative destination: 2013 – today

5.2. 'The arts are not a business… (but) should be business-like in their behaviour'

The background of neoliberalisation of culture and New Public Management (NPM) provided in the literature is important to understand changes in funding and institutional structures, and how these occur in the context of the Barbican. Within this analysis, what is shown is how the arts institution discursively incorporates private sector management styles, introduces explicit measurement tools for performance and success, and places greater emphasis on output control. As O'Brien (2014) points out, this shift is part of the wider New Labour political project and its emphasis on public value. Based on this analysis I argue that neoliberal discourses became increasingly dominant in the arts institution by the early 2000s.

This is partly reflected by the adoption of language and organisational methods drawn from NPM – i.e. 'efficiency', 'maximisation' 'value for money' – that appears in the Barbican's organisational communications. As evidenced in many instances, if initially the coupling of 'arts and business' in the reports is deemed to require further justifications, over time it becomes a normalised discursive unit.

In this passage in the 2002/03 Annual Report, the Managing Director John Tusa describes a shift towards a commercially driven model based on income generation:

> (…) the constant drive by our commercial team to maximise earnings has influenced the sales awareness of everyone in the organisation. Every extra pound of direct income made by the Commercial Division is a pound of extra resource for our arts programme. But the change of behaviour and attitude towards money in every department represents a value shift in the organisation whose importance cannot be overstated, while leaving intact the shared understanding that art is at the heart of everything we do. We must be commercially minded, because we care for art (Barbican Centre, 2002, p. 6).

Strikingly, a disclaimer is inserted – that the stress on maximising income has not impacted the shared understanding that art is 'at the heart of everything we do' and that 'every extra pound of direct income (is…) for our arts programme'. Hence the conclusion that a commercial mindset is necessary, followed by a causal phrase: 'because we care for art'. This seems to establish an equalisation of commercial value and artistic value within the organisation. However, as this chapter shows, a set of justifications are provided in further reports, which seem to suggest this is a new regime of practice that has to be integrated in the organisational functions and operations.

This value shift is followed by an articulation of the rebranding of the organisation, to shift 'the prevailing tone of the place from that of a local authority to that of a customer-led organisation'. What is described in the passage below is a shift from a social-welfare model of the arts centre understood as publicly provided by the local authority, the City of London, to a governance of the centre as based on a commercial business model that places the customer at its centre. As explained further:

> (…) not to belittle the necessary values and disciplines of local authorities. But their needs are different from the very direct customer focussed needs of an arts and conference centre. We do not simply deliver services on demand. All our visitors, including audiences and delegates, must choose to buy them (AR 2002/03, p.6).

This statement that audiences, customers, visitors 'must choose to buy (services)' signals a construction of the audience as customer/consumer: the complexities of this discourse in a

publicly funded arts institution is explored in the next section. Within the 'arts and business' model, the centrality of the visitor/customer is considered to be the norm:

> In 1999 we embarked on, and have since actively managed, a programme to ensure that all staff have the highest awareness of, and give the best possible response to, our visitors' needs (AR 2002/03, p. 7).

There are examples where the tension present in the coupling of 'arts and business' is spelt out. In the 2003/04 report, for example, the arts and business relationship is still posed as a question:

> Periodically, some in the arts world get into a lather over the question of whether the arts are a business. Apparently the smallest suggestion that they should be drives a stake through the heart of artistic integrity (AR 2003/04, p.6).

The arts and business discourse is pushed to the fore, as epitomised by this phrase:

> While the arts are clearly not a business in the sense that shareholders would recognise the word, they undoubtedly must and should be businesslike in their behaviour. That acknowledgement is crucial; its successful implementation facilitates the arts rather than undermines them. Acting according to these principles is part of our bargain with our stakeholders, the Corporation of London (AR 2003/04, p.6).

This phrase presents a contradictory statement: that the Barbican Centre is not a business, but that it should behave like a business. This paradoxical statement is provided as a justification for the funding received from the City of London (CoL). The use of the word 'bargain' seems to indicate that the funding framework agreed with the City requires the Barbican to operate like a business. In sum, the quotations above suggest that the NPM discourse was embedded in the organisation, conforming to funding requirements and agreements with the main funder. In the way in which it is described, this shift seems to be motivated by new regimes of governance by the principal funder, the City of London Corporation. Whether this is a sharp discursive turn of the early 2000s, or not, is not in the remit of this study to assess as I choose to look at a specific timeframe (2002 – 2018) without delving into annual reports before 2002 (which are held in the London Metropolitan Archives). It is important, however, to take account of the specificity of institutional histories. In the context of the Barbican Centre this might have a bearing on the discourses in use. Arguably, the language of business had permeated the Barbican Centre as an organisation since its opening, given that the centre was originally conceived as 'an arts and conference centre', and concerns about its financial sustainability were expressed by the City of London up until its final approval in 1971. Since its opening in 1982 it had been primarily financed by the City of London Corporation. It was only in 2008 that the Barbican started receiving direct funding from the Arts Council of England.

Within McGuigan's definition of neoliberalism in cultural policy (McGuigan, 2005; Hesmondhalgh *et al.*, 2014), three main characteristics are identified: the stronger emphasis on corporate and private sponsorship, the running of an organisation like a private business, and the focus on competitiveness. According to these three principles, the Barbican operates within a neoliberal model. The Barbican is owned and funded by a local authority that is also a private financial corporation, in some ways more similar to a private patron than a local government authority funded directly by central government. Therefore, it operates within a hybrid model that is both market-oriented because it needs to generate income in order to support its artistic programmes, whilst also acting within the constraints of local governments and (only minimally) cultural policy funding. The City of London prides itself of being, in fact, the fourth largest funders of arts and heritage in the UK (Culture Mile, 2020a). As discussed earlier in Chapter 3, the funding model is neither comparable to a local authority, nor to a philanthropist organisation, but occupying a grey area in between. The organisation has been run as an arts centre, with conference and commercial venues strategically used to maintain the commercial viability of the arts centre. As it is shown in my analysis of the Annual reports, more emphasis has been put on commercial viability at different points in its history, for example in the 1990s when Detta O'Cathain was Managing Director (Barbican Centre, 2007), and in the following years with John Tusa. Finally, the City of London sees the Barbican Centre as key to maintaining a competitive role as a 'virtuoso on the world stage' (Barbican Centre, 2005, p. 2), increasingly so with the focus on rebranding the Square Mile as Culture Mile and the framing of the Barbican as a destination in its own right.

Whilst in the 2002/03 report the relationship between arts and business is discussed as a complicated matter, in this excerpt from 2004/05 it becomes an assertion:

> If a cohesive leadership, a transformed arts programme, a greatly magnified financial burden of risk, and a professionalised business approach are essential ingredients over the last decade, they only open the way to doing more, better, in the years ahead. If such an analysis reads too managerially for an arts organisation for some, my firm belief is that such a professional approach has had only one end in mind; providing a better arts offering to audiences (AR 2004/05, p.8).

These quotes from early reports suggest a latent awkwardness about settling on the discourse of arts organisations as businesses, but they are preparing the ground for a normalisation of such discourse. Audiences are mobilised here as the 'beneficiaries' of the new managerial approach to arts programming. In this context, audiences are constructed as consumers of a 'better arts offering' that is 'provided' by the arts centre. The coupling of arts and business is consistently reiterated in the annual reports, constructing the arts as good for business and

business as necessary for the arts. Arguably, such justifications for why the arts needs business are provided more explicitly in the earlier reports of 2002 - 2006, losing prominence as the 'business language' becomes more smoothly incorporated and blurred into the institutional rhetoric. It is important to note that in this period the opposite migration of discourse was also under way – that of businesses co-opting cultural language for marketing purposes. Both of these dynamics particularly fit the context of the City of London Corporation, which functions simultaneously as a local authority, as a charity and as a corporation, as well as being known as the financial centre of Europe.

From early reports (2003/04) to the most recent (2015/16 and 16/17), it is possible to observe how the discourse of 'arts and business' is increasingly reinforced and becomes normalised. In most recent reports, it is just assumed, as in these two examples:

> To drive forward and build the Barbican's Development function creating a model which underpins the excellence of the artistic programme and enables new initiatives through increasing private sources of income (AR 2007/08).

> Generous businesses, individuals, grant-makers, embassies and cultural institutes supported programming across the arts (AR 2016/17, p.27).

The Barbican Centre's turn to corporate language and to a neoliberal funding model is not an isolated case. The increasing penetration by corporate businesses is clearly evident across major UK arts institutions. As Victoria Alexander (2018) notices, looking in her case at the National Gallery, the normalisation of the 'arts and business' language could be seen as integral to a wider process of neoliberalisation of culture. Commenting on the National Gallery logo that now features a mention of 'Credit Suisse' underneath the name of the institution, Alexander (2018) says that 'we have come to expect business names to be closely aligned with arts organisations' (Chin Tao Wu 2002, 'Privatising Culture'). From sponsors, businesses have now become partners (Alexander, p.68), and, she argues, the National Gallery is effectively providing an advertising platform for a bank. Having foregrounded the influence of the New Public Management (NPM) – neoliberal discourse in the literature review, in the following sections I will discuss what the implications of this are for audiences.

Within the context of the 'arts and business' discourse, it is interesting to note that most arts organisations in Britain (particularly museums), at least by the 1990s, had started to introduce the practice of writing Vision and Mission statements, and strategic plans (Gilmore and Rentschler, 2002). However, there is limited critical literature on managerial histories in the arts; scholars in this area have mostly focused on museum and heritage management, while less has been written about theatre, concert hall or arts centre management. In management

terms, vision and mission statements serve as public pronouncements of organisational purpose, ambition and values, and they are part of the practice of arts management. One focus of the analysis of the reports was on statements of vision, mission or strategic objectives, understood as signalling the shifting discourses that the institution presented in the reports at different times. Such statements can be seen as condensing policy elements and indicating institutional priorities, at least at the discursive level. An initial analysis of these sections was conducted, that provided a baseline for identifying the key discursive tensions analysed in the chapter.

Access, the rise of Customer Experience and the foyer refurbishment: 2002-2007

The early to mid 2000s at the Barbican Centre are marked by the realisation of a large-scale foyers refurbishment project. Designed by architects Allford Hall Monaghan Morris and funded by the City of London Corporation, the £12.25 million capital project was phased over three years (2003-2006). The scheme involved a physical 'upgrade' of the foyers, entrances and signage of the arts centre, resulting in a rebranding of these spaces as 'accessible public spaces' with an increased stress of their role for the building's accessibility and for sociability. As part of the foyer refurbishment, the two main entrances from Silk Street and the Lakeside were linked by a new internal bridge (generally referred to as 'the link-bridge') connecting the street level to the foyers on the ground floor of the centre. As part of the scheme, the Silk Street entrance was designed to have a bright and recognisable exterior with glazed doors, opening into a light-wall pedestrian corridor placed as the entrance into the building from the street level. New orange signage was also introduced in the foyers. Following the refurbishment, digital screens were introduced as part of the foyer plasma network. The architects, AHMM, defined the project as based on the aim 'to create an accessible and welcoming environment whilst working within a heritage-listed building' (AHMM, 2006).

As described in the annual reports, the ambition of the refurbishment was:

> (…) achieving the long-wanted and long-needed revamping of the spaces between our major arts venues, those crucial public spaces where so much of the human life and engagement of the Barbican occurs (AR 2002 – 03, p.5).

The rationale to reshape and renew these entrances and foyers, as is made clear in this passage, was an acknowledgement 'that the limitations of the centre's public spaces significantly affect visitors' enjoyment' (AR 2002/2003, p. 31). The key institutional rationale was to 'create a proper sense of arrival at a world-class international arts and conference

centre' (2002/03, p. 31). In analysing these texts, attention needs to be drawn to the stated need to focus on spatial refurbishment: 'the process of creating the new foyers' (2003/04, p.5) is the phrase used in the Managing Director's introduction to describe the refurbishment of the Barbican foyers taking place between 2003 and 2006. Interestingly, there is a description provided of what is considered as part of the Barbican's public spaces: the foyers, access and entrances, signage, décor and lighting, location of amenities.

As can be noted from the language used, access in terms of 'a sense of arrival' and 'welcome for visitors' is the main rationale underpinning the refurbishments of the foyers in 2003 – 06, as well as the 'enhancement' of the facilities:

> Electronic screen-based technology was also introduced allowing both images and text-based information to be projected across the foyers to create large-scale displays. Front-of-house facilities greatly enhanced: Information points, ticket sales points, bars, coffee and retail points will be relocated and renewed to make them readily visible and easily accessible. Generally, access was improved, helping the centre to meet its obligations under the provisions of Part III of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (AR 2002/03, p.31).

An intensification of the discourse on public spaces in early reports is identified, whereby main refurbishments in the foyers are described and inscribed within a logic of 'increased accessibility' and the foyers are constructed as 'the core of the human life happening inside the centre'. Although there was no formal opening, this was also the period when the Silk Street entrance became operationally recognised as the main entrance to the building, offering access directly from street level. Following the completion of the refurbishment, the Managing Director recalls:

> Seven years of capital investment in renewing all the major Barbican venues culminated in the renovation of the foyers and public spaces, including a brilliantly stylish new entrance in Silk Street, summed up in Alex Hartley's wonderful moving light wall, Passage. It was pleasing that this commission was made possible by significant support from our immediate neighbours and Barbican Arts Partner, Linklaters (AR 2006/2007, p. 6).

The objective to achieve a unified visual and brand identity across physical and digital spaces and marketing materials is clearly expressed, stressing their experiential dimension:

> The Barbican's distinctive new visual brand identity (developed by North) has now been successfully rolled out across all marketing materials, online and on site in the foyers and represents the culmination of a project to re-energise the look and feel of the Barbican and further strengthens the centre's identity as a dynamic place to experience the best of the arts from around the world (2006/07, p.38)

As discussed, in 'servicescapes' (Bitner, 1992), the 'look and feel' of spaces becomes increasingly important for their experiential value and has an impact on customer and

employees' behaviour. Therefore, identifying the Barbican 'as a dynamic place to experience the best of the arts from around the world' places 'experience' at the core of the institutional mission. This is strengthened by departmental restructuring and increased focus on the importance of front-of-house in the visitor experience. The Barbican foyer refurbishment happened at a time, the early 2000s, when other large arts institutions in London had undertaken transformations of their physical thresholds, for example the British Museum with the opening of its Great Court in 2000, as well as Tate opening the Turbine Hall in the same year. As Parry, Page and Moseley (2018) note, the reshaping of the institutions' physical thresholds is conveyed as a signature statement for the future of the institution as a whole, as 'an agent of organisational reinvention' (p.2). It is not a coincidence, then, that departmental changes occur at the same time, in the context of the Barbican, as I will discuss in the next section.

'To get closer to our customers': from Venue Services to Barbican Experience

Around the time of publication of the 2002 report, the Venue Service department becomes the Visitor Services department:

> The Venue Services department has recently changed its title to 'Visitor Services', which better reflects its role, and directs the focus on the enhancement of the experience of our customers and visitors (AR 2002/03, p. 28).

It is worth noting the elevation of 'experience' in this quote, which appears to be the implicit motivating factor for the change. Later in 2005 the Visitor Services department was renamed as Customer Experience. The word experience here migrates from being a key factor to defining a whole department. At this point the concept of the 'Barbican Experience' has also emerged, defined as the total quality experience offered to visitors. Internal staff are trained on how to provide this 'total quality experience', and through this training it seems that the notion of service marketing has been imported in the organisation. Service marketing is often employed to target the mindset of the employees in an organisation (Skålén, Fougére and Fellesson, 2008), under the rationale that employees' attitudes and behaviour are believed to have a direct impact on customer experience:

> We launched Barbican Experience in the autumn of 2005 […] Through the restructuring, we wanted to capture the same creative, inclusive and buzzy approach to our operations as we have in our programmes. We needed to refresh some of our systems and processes, to get closer to our customers (AR 2005/06, p. 42).

The Customer Experience focus implies the need of operations to reflect artistic programmes ('creative, inclusive, buzzy approach'), again reinforcing the idea of 'total quality': this is seen as a way of 'refreshing processes' to 'get closer to (our) customers'.

'To get closer to our customers' is a marketing trope, suggesting that companies and organisations need to predict customer needs, to maximise their data in order to satisfy the customer and maximise their profit. It is important to note that 'getting closer' comes at a point when most arts organisations begin to have digital presence, and also begin to use digital systems to manage booking and marketing operations. As the digital presence diminishes human interactions in some institutional processes, such as ticket booking, the institutional discourse attempts to compensate. With the newly established centrality of the customer, new technologies are also introduced to measure customer satisfaction levels. 'Enhancing of the experience of our customers and visitors', as explained, is measured against awards – i.e. 'the 2002 London Tourist Award for providing the best World Class Welcome', as well as surveys, feedback from visitors, mystery shoppers and other managerial techniques aimed at measuring customer satisfaction, as becomes evident in this quote:

> We are also pleased with feedback from our latest customer service survey, in which 89% of customers rated the helpfulness of staff as good or excellent. This bi-annual survey, polling some 3,000 customers, is used as a benchmark to constantly upgrade and improve the level of services offered. As well as monitoring service levels, we are introducing a programme of mystery shopping to provide feedback on areas for improvement as well as highlighting points of excellence (AR 2002/03, p. 28).

The terminology used here is 'customer service' in terms of rating, not of the aesthetic experience, but of the 'total quality experience' which is in some instances explained as 'helpfulness of staff'. The implication here is that the staff are central to the production of the customer experience and that the managerial technologies described to measure the total quality of the experience (surveys, mystery shopping programmes) is becoming normalised. As Skålén et al (2006) explain: 'the intangibility of services places the customer experience at the centre of the power/knowledge of managerial marketing' (p.125). Within this logic, the customer experience becomes the product and customers need to be managed with new technologies, such as Customer Relationship Management systems (CRMs), that enable managing the customers at the newly digitally-mediated distance.

As explained in the Annual Report (2004/05), in 2004 the Marketing department introduced the use of a Customer Relationship Management system (CRM), which aims to digitise and automate operations relating to audience information, booking and sales. CRMs are introduced as techno-managerial tools to maximise operations and achieve the objectives

that are predicated in NPM, such as efficiency and effectiveness, as described in the annual report:

> The last year has seen many important developments in our strategy to improve the efficiency of our marketing operation. We have embarked on a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) programme, which means that we are:
> • Reducing our costs of attracting new customers
> • Understanding our customers' needs better to boost loyalty
> • Encouraging people to try new experiences across the art forms
> • Providing better recognition of, and service to, our high-value customers
> • Improving communication with customers – particularly using on-line channels
> • Encouraging more people to join our membership programme
> • Driving down marketing costs
> Investment in the key area of direct marketing has taken place alongside work to centralise our various mailing lists (both on and off line). This means that we can be far more cost effective in targeting people. We can also understand better how they plan their leisure, and how and when they would like to receive communications from us. The Barbican's marketing operation is now performing more cost effectively than it has at any other point in the last six years (AR 04/05, p.19).

The word 'costs' plays a prominent role here. As arts organisations become increasingly neoliberalised and compete in conditions replicating the free market, Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems and the marketing discourse become more prominent: CRM systems are the way in which customers as ticket buyers are managed, large datasets are stored, and box office sales are maximised. This is used by Marketing departments and Box Office, employing a discourse that is numerical (begin with box office data - be data driven), and technological (embed digital tools), but also claims to have the aim to build 'better communication with audiences' (improving communication with customers - matching data). This has to be contextualised within the arts marketing and management discourse, and the NPM – neoliberal shift in arts organisations. There are many instances in the reports, with particular prominence in the most recent reports, in which numbers are highlighted, suggesting that the organisation has internalised the marketing discourse. Without being an explicit intention of the institution, the combined effect of the CRM and the marketing accounting discourse is to produce audiences as data. These changes in marketing take place at a time when changes towards more popular programmes are also put in place.

In 2007 the 'Do Something Different' weekend is launched, which makes use of the foyers to invite families, children and young people into the arts centre's spaces.

> We aim to create the best possible experiences for our audiences and customers, and for everyone who works with us, such as artists and performers; we are regularly complimented on the friendly welcome given by our staff. In addition to creating and delivering bespoke training – Barbican Experience – our customer experience department leads the way in ensuring that the customer remains central to everything we do, and that we are constantly innovating and improving (AR 2006/07, p.20)

The clear shift towards more fully utilising the foyers is laid out here. Given the demographic (families) the Barbican is focussing on at this stage described in the report, this is consistent with trends of the participatory turn. However, there are also important nuances in this quote. Audiences are mentioned alongside customers, but then when the activities of the customer experience department are discussed, audiences are absent and only customers are the focus. The 'audience' is there to have the 'best possible experience', but it is only the 'customer' that is 'central to everything we do'. This may seem like an overly subtle distinction, but it is consistent with the revenue-focussed neoliberalising trends that are accelerating at this time. It is also clearly specified that foyers are being rebranded as 'a destination in their own right':

> In response to feedback from customers and staff, and the success of our second Do Something Different Weekend, we are now developing our foyers as a destination in their own right. Work has begun on enhancing them with events linked to the artistic programme. A major success has been the development of Barbican Lates, a series of late-night, post-show activities, providing entertainment, food and drink in our foyers, created in partnership with the GLA's series of the same name (AR 2007/08, p. 20).

As can be seen here, the language of destination marketing was present since at least 2008. This establishes an intention to focus on the foyers as destination, which stands alongside the promotion of the Square Mile as a business destination, the provision of restaurants and cafés mentioned as part of the destination package. The wider strategic aim of developing a culture and education quarter in the City becomes part of the vision and mission and has a dedicated section in the 2007/08 report. This discourse of 'foyers as destination' is reiterated in the 2008/09 report.

'Satisfying our audiences': the audience-customer hybrid and the 'Barbican experience'

As already shown, the arts organisation is describing itself as moving away from the local authority model of service provider to a marketised model based on customer choice and purchase. Within this shift, the customer becomes central to the institutional discourse. In this section I have discussed the implications of the move towards a customer-focused model, which fits within the NPM – neoliberal discourse, and how discursive constructions of audiences are re-articulated by the arts institution. At this stage, 'audience satisfaction' is a key objective in the Barbican's Vision and Mission (2003 – 2007 reports), as the following statement demonstrates.

> Satisfying our Audiences
>
> by creating a welcoming and friendly environment that
>
> provides a total quality experience throughout the Barbican,
>
> offering education and outreach, expanding and extending
>
> our audiences and regularly exceeding our visitors' expectations.

Although this statement refers to audiences, the dominant discourse is that of 'customerism' (Skålén, Fougére and Fellesson, 2008) and customer experience management, which was being imported by organisations and companies including arts institutions during the 1990s and increasingly being normalised through arts marketing discourses (Hill, O'Sullivan and O'Sullivan, 2003).

In the early reports analysed (2002 – 2007), the term 'audience' co-exist alongside 'customer', and in some cases these two are even used interchangeably. The foyer refurbishment and its focus on the experiential dimension of spaces, the passage from venue services to the Barbican 'total quality experience', new managerial technologies and methods for counting, measuring and evaluating and the advent of Customer Relationship Management systems (CRMs) are all to some extent contributing to the birth of a new hybrid: the audience-customer figure. The two main points advanced in this section are that the experience economy discourse becomes embedded in the institutional language, and that the marketised audience-customer (so the audience-as-customer or 'customerism') becomes the discursive norm[7].

'Bringing participation into the mainstream' and the Weekenders: 2007 – 2014

2007 was an important year for the Barbican Centre. It marked the Barbican's 25th anniversary with the completion of the foyer refurbishment, and saw the appointment of new Managing director Nicholas Kenyon, succeeding to John Tusa[8]. In 2008 the Barbican became a Regularly Funded Organisation of Arts Council England, receiving funding for a new contemporary music programme that was taken to venues across East London (AR 2007/2008, p.21). From 2012, the Barbican became a National Portfolio Organisation. It is notable how at this point the discourse of audience engagement and participation that was a

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[7] To frame the discussion, I refer to marketing management literature – particularly the very influential book 'The Experience Economy' – but also to critical perspectives on marketing discourse and 'customerism' (Skålén, Fougére and Fellesson, 2008, pp. 152–166) that have been briefly introduced in the Liteature Review chapter.

[8] Interestingly, both of them came to the Barbican from the BBC and have a professional background in classical music.

central focus of New Labour cultural policy becomes more prominent in the Barbican's institutional language.

'Do something different', which had been the title of the first two Barbican Weekender events aimed at attracting families and young people into the centre, becomes a theme in the Annual Review documents (2007/08 and 2008/09), suggesting an overall refreshing of the Barbican identity (AR 2007/08). With the new directorship, a set of new strategic objectives come into place, as exemplified in Nicholas Kenyon's opening statement referring to recent successes and to a new emphasis on the need for the Barbican to go 'beyond its walls':

> I have inherited a vibrant, diverse, and ever more adventurous venue that is artistically thriving and administratively secure, with the strongest of arts brands – one that stands for excellence, innovation, risk, and quality. Now we want to develop that achievement further: to take the Barbican beyond its walls in an ambitious series of collaborations and partnerships that will develop the centre's role as the beating heart of the City of London. In the years up to and past the 2012 Olympics we will face East, working with the City, the City fringes, and local boroughs in a rapidly developing area of the capital to ensure that the Barbican Centre and London as a whole make the fullest possible artistic impact in the Olympic period and far beyond (AR 2007/08, p. 2).

In this quote we have a strong sense of the Barbican strengthening their links to the City but also the outer London boroughs, by stating the objectives to 'go beyond its walls' and 'facing east'. It is important to note another crucial change that occurred in this period, which relates to funding and external partnerships, and general priority on branding and new urban networks.

Policy language is incorporated by institutions by way of keywords and linguistic tropes. Although a variety of terms are deployed in the cultural sector at different times, the Matarasso report (1997) marked the beginning of the 'participation agenda' in New Labour's cultural policy. The terminology of 'participation' enters organisational vocabularies and starts to be used more widely by publicly funded arts institutions to indicate various activities and modes of taking part. At a rhetorical level, the terminology of participation becomes very fashionable. In the arts, artists increasingly use the term 'participatory' and one of the key art theorists in this area is Claire Bishop, who publishes 'Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship' in 2012. The term by then has become widespread. Not surprisingly, institutions start to use it as well, as this is also a crucial terminology for funding and branding purposes. Discourses of participation and engagement for many institutions, suddenly become a focus, or a problem to be addressed. In the context of the Barbican, the discourse of audience participation and engagement becomes more prominent

in reports starting from 2007/08. The peak year, in frequency of use, for the term 'participation' in the Barbican's Annual reports is 2007[9]. However, the instances in this report in which participation is talked about refer to 'taking part' in institutionally programmed activities.

In the 2007/08 Barbican Annual report, a new section named under the heading 'participation and engagement' appears (AR 2007/08, p. 7). This is 10 years after Matarasso's report 'Use or ornament' (Matarasso, 1997), at a time when the participation agenda has been widely accepted and incorporated in institutional rhetoric. This new heading in the annual report signifies a new focus in the work of the Education department. A sub-title restates the concepts, but expands on them: 'Participation in excellence and engagement for all'. This is followed by an explanation of the different ways in which the concept of engagement can be intended, as described in this paragraph:

> Engagement with the arts takes many forms: the thrill of being part of a rapt audience, the pleasure gained from hearing a talk by an expert which contextualises and illuminates an event; and, for some, the joy of being hands-on – making, playing, creating. As we aim to bring participation into the mainstream of our programme, we recognise in particular that young people want to be creators as well as participants. We can offer them the chance to be both (AR 2007/08, p. 7).

It is notable how the text merges the discourses of social inclusion and 'engagement for all' with the discourses of 'excellence and quality' and 'participation in excellence'. Interestingly, the logic underpinning this 'participation and excellence' places the arts institution as the provider of 'excellence' and as the agent that aims at 'engagement for all' which reflects the New Labour government's rationale of 'social inclusion'. The Barbican, despite its special status as primarily funded by the City of London Corporation, is expressing an alignment with government and Arts Council England's policies. This focus on participation and engagement points to a departmental change that occurred in 2009, with the establishment of the new Creative Learning department.

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[9] The word 'Participation' occurs for the first time in the 2007/08 Annual Report, and it occurs 7 times in said report and the same number of times in the 2008/09 report. The word occurs again once in 09/10, 12/13, 14/15 and 16/17; 4 times in the 13/14 and twice in 17/18.

<u>The Creative Learning department</u>

In 2009, continuing the legacy of the Education department, the Creative Learning Department was established as:

> …a new joint Division for Creative Learning. The School and the centre already share the support service departments of Finance, Engineering, Human Resources and Capital Projects, but this has now, for the first time, extended the principle to frontline educational and artistic activities (2008/09, p.9).

With the establishment of Creative Learning, a new link is also created with the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, in line with the new mission of 'world-class arts and learning' (Vision 2011/12) but also incorporating the awareness of the need to build a new generation of audiences. It is also at this point that the Barbican 'street team' start their outreach work by going out into community centres and schools to talk to people (understood as potential audiences) about Barbican activities (AR 2008/09, p. 29). The launch of the Barbican-Guildhall School Creative Learning division is presented as part of a long-term goal to create a 'new model of an internationally excellent arts and learning centre'. Amongst the activities produced by Creative Learning, alongside work with schools, young emerging artists, professional art practitioners, there are also Barbican Weekenders. The Weekenders are seen as events on offer 'for someone new to the arts' (AR 2009/10, p.9).

In terms of public programming, the 2007 'Do Something Different', weekend which involved 'a wide array of participatory events for children and families across the foyers and public spaces, many of them free' was seen as demonstrating 'our wholehearted commitment to access and involvement at the highest artistic level throughout our programme' (AR 2006/07). It is also stressed how this kind of event is associated with 'added life and vibrancy that the presence and involvement of so many families and young people bring to the Barbican'. Although the foyers had been used for free activities before, arguably their refurbishment and the new focus on participation and engagement translates into increasing planning and programming of activities in these spaces. Starting from the 'Do Something different' weekends in 2007 and 2008, from 2009 these two-day events become regular yearly appointments under the name of 'Weekenders' taking place in the foyers, mainly free, organised by Creative Learning and aimed as outreach activities to attract new audiences, families with children, and young people.

The Weekenders are described in these terms:

> give visitors the opportunity to immerse themselves in a creative environment with hands-on experiences and dynamic performances across our space (AR 2010/11, p. 7)

> LATES and Weekender events stretch from the foyers out into the lakeside area and audiences who want to discover more can take an Explore Barbican or Hidden Barbican tour (AR 2010/11, p. 9).

> a free Barbican Weekender enabled families to enjoy a wealth of hands-on experiments and experience (AR 2012/13, p.8)

Shared characteristics of the Weekenders are the time regularity, the departmental lead, the spatial location, the target audience and the type of activities on offer. Considering the Weekenders as a new programmatic device introduced by the Barbican, it is possible to say that these events are seen as one-off occasions, complementing the core programmes in the main venues in a similar way to festivals. In this sense, the need for a festival-type of programming seems a tendency that other venues have also introduced at this point. For example, the Southbank Centre undertook a process of 'festivalisation' (Jones, 2016). The department leading the Weekenders is Creative Learning, which continues the legacy of the Education department. Therefore, the Weekenders have a distinct focus on outreach, learning and creativity. Their marketing function is less prominent, however they arguably aim to contribute to a shift in brand perception. There is also less focus on curatorial programming – for example they are not institutionally referred to as public programmes – and more stress on learning and creative experiments.

The spatial location of the Weekenders is in the foyers and across spaces, including the Lakeside, signalling an interest in exceeding the performance spaces and offering artistic activities outside of the main venues. This is characteristic of educational activities, but arguably has been influenced by the bourgeoning of participatory practices by this point. The free nature of the Weekenders could be seen as the need for the Barbican to demonstrate their public value, at a point at which the institution was starting to be regularly funded by ACE, so receiving taxpayers' money. On top of this, the historical funding by the City of London and association with high art (classical music and Shakespearian theatre) might have meant that the Barbican was starting to develop a new participatory message that 'art is for all and can be produced by all'. This is also confirmed by the type of activities on the programme, that are aimed at involving audience members in making things, meeting artists, taking part in performances or performing as part of community groups. In terms of artistic

programming, the Barbican Weekenders are strategically seen as playing a key role in connecting arts programming and learning. Thematically, there is a thread running through the Weekenders that seems to be expanding on the notion of art to involve urban culture, technology and science. This can be seen as an institutional effort to communicate openness. It can also be seen in relation to the growing dominance of the 'creativity discourse', and the concept of creativity as incorporating art, science and technology. Although it might be said that the explicit rationale underpinning the Weekenders is a focus on audience development, it is also important to note that they are tied into other emerging institutional agendas, such as the new stress on the Barbican's iconic building and the development of a cultural quarter.

'New and exciting ways of using the building' and 'Beyond the Barbican'

Interestingly, in 2012 the Beyond the Barbican programme launches, bringing programming in outside locations, in collaboration with Create! London. This can be seen as a watershed moment that reinforces the Barbican's brand identity as an institution providing high-end programming, whilst articulating itself outside of its main performance venues. In this sense, Beyond the Barbican is an expansion on the already existing work in the foyers, which had started to go beyond the walls of the theatre, art gallery and concert hall.

In the summer of 2013, 'Hack the Barbican' took over the centre's foyers with '100 installations, performances, workshops and discussions' produced in association with the Trampery as a 'collaboration between artists, technologists and entrepreneurs that took inspiration from hacker culture to produce projects that blurred the lines between the arts and technology' (AR 2012/13, p. 20). Interestingly, this is again a reinforcement of the expansion of the programming beyond arts into areas of technology and science. 'Hack the Barbican' and the 'Wonder Season', which also included the 2012 Weekender, are seen as 'new and exciting ways of using the building' and with spaces 'used in their full potential' (AR 2012/13, p. 21). The Barbican is now defined as a building that 'remains an outstanding creative destination for cultural and commercial audiences' (ibid, p. 21). In terms of spatial strategies, the retail offer 'extends to the foyers with a number of pop-up shops catering to business events and Christmas shoppers, and supplementing our arts programme through the sale of related souvenirs' (ibid, p. 21). It is also explained that the Barbican is now a popular location for commercial filming and photography.

<u>A new cultural quarter in the City</u>

The idea of visualising the Barbican at the centre of a new cultural quarter is described in the 2006/07 report and developed through following reports (07/08, 09/10, 10/11, 11/12), and solidified in the City of London's cultural strategy. The idea is to 'transform the Barbican into an unrivalled arts and learning destination' (2011/12, p. 21). Linking it with technology and business are mentioned, and again the idea of an 'exceptional cultural destination' is reiterated. The London Olympiads and Cultural Olympics, of which the Barbican was a great advocate and collaborator, had driven the discourse of 'cultural destination' as well as the focus on East London, which had been in the agenda for many years. Later on, the importance of remaining 'an outstanding creative destination for cultural and commercial audiences' (AR 2012/13, p.21) is stated, with creativity increasingly constructed as instrumental for business and maximising income. What was initially called the 'cultural quarter' becomes the 'cultural hub' in the 2013/14 report, which significantly opens with the headline:

> The quality of the Barbican's offer continues to attract new audiences to the City, with recent research showing the organisation to be worth £47m to London's economy, as well as supporting 1,308 jobs in the capital (AR 2013/14, p.1).

This headline seems a good explanation of how NPM and the neoliberal discourse have become so naturalised in the arts institution, that the Barbican needs to explain what its economic impact for the entire city is. This appears to accompany and justify the following explanation that the Barbican is 'creating a public realm' with the City, and that a 'significant increase in visitors' is expected. In this instance, the logic of competitiveness is reinforced by the use of the phrase 'unrivalled destination'. In this report the discursive construction 'a creative destination' appears for the first time, alongside the supposed claim to be 'for local residents and global visitors' and the strategic aim to 'attract a new generation of audiences' that all co-exist. That local residents and global visitors are placed in the same phrase is telling of a model that is aspired to. It is striking that at this point both the discourses of 'participation and creativity' and of 'customer experience' co-exist within the same institution. On the one hand, it seems to suggest that the programme aims to be co-created with audiences, implying a relational dialogue between the arts institution and its public. On the other hand, the asserted centrality of the customer suggests that the relationship is more transactional and staged. Beside this, the new discourse of 'creative destination' appears to be merging these different ideas.

Barbican Foyer Projects and 'the creative destination': 2014-today

Between 2014 and 2019 a distinct set of changes occurred in the context of the Barbican's foyers, in terms of departmental structures, spatial refurbishments and new programming devices being introduced in the foyers[10]. I am going to briefly introduce them here, but considering that part of my fieldwork coincided with this period covered by the annual reports, I am giving a broad overview of the main changes, as a backdrop to the two interview studies with Audience Experience hosts (2017) and with managers (2018-19).

The Barbican Incubator

A key background to recent changes was the Incubator. Established in 2015 as a small central unit (initially 2 staff members, and by 2019 a team of 5 staff members), it works across departments and is charged with ensuring substantive progress against the organisation's five-year strategic plan. The Incubator has since evolved into a cross-organisational programming, strategy and policy team. Their priority is to unify institutional strategies and oversee their implementation. Starting from April 2016, the Incubator has been overseeing and developing the foyer Projects, aimed at 'Transforming the Barbican public spaces' as articulated in the Strategic Plan (Barbican Centre, 2017a), therefore working in relation to a wider audience. Increasingly, the terminology used to identify the activities and projects taking place in the foyers has been referring to 'public programming'. This is particularly relevant to the current study on audiences across institutional spaces[11]. Interestingly, the Incubator is not mentioned in the Annual reports, remaining a behind-the-scenes managerial strategy.

Programming changes: foyer Projects

In terms of programming, the current Foyer Projects at the Barbican ('Transforming the Barbican public spaces'), emerged as part of the new strategic plan in 2015 and were convened by the Barbican Incubator, as 'a new programme of installations and exhibitions animating public spaces' starting from the Spring 2016 (Barbican Centre, 2017b) and combining digital and physical interaction. The foyer programme was launched in Spring 2016, aimed at providing art that is 'free and accessible to all'. It consists of a variety of

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[10] This time also coincides with my casual work at the Barbican (started with an internship in January 2014) and spans the duration of my doctoral fieldwork (2016 – 2019).

[11] During the course of my study I have been working partly in dialogue with the Incubator, and I have also been commissioned a smaller piece of research through them.

different projects including public art installations (Towards the Mean 2016), projections, micro-exhibitions (Soundhouse 2018), programmes of talks (Real Quick) and larger annual projects such as the 'Life Rewired Hub' (2019) which combined installations, performances, talks, micro-exhibitions and artist residencies. The foyer programme did not replace previous initiatives; it sat alongside the still existing programme of the Weekenders, and the newly launched programmes of 'Sound Unbound' (2015, 2017, 2019) and 'Open Fest' (2016, 2018, 2020).

Spatial changes

At the end of 2016, the bookshop was relocated to the front entrance of the building on the Silk Street side. The new shop was redesigned to be 'more accessible', showcasing design talent through commissioned products, and inspired by the Barbican Estate:

> Architects Allford Hall Monaghan Morris returned to the Barbican to design a new, more accessible shop ten years after their overhaul of our public spaces. Located at the entrance to the foyers off Silk Street, the shop showcases local and emerging design talent through its specially commissioned range of products, many of them taking inspiration from the Barbican Estate (AR 2016/17, p.23).

The shop is discursively repositioned as an experiential space, which is permeated by the Barbican branding throughout, given that these specially commissioned products are inspired from the Barbican Estate. This shift towards a carefully curated experience-space seems to suggest an attempt to create a sense of authenticity and sense of place in the context of the bookshop. The bookshop is indeed a curated cultural product in itself. By placing it at the forefront of the building, it communicates the Barbican as a type of space that merges cultural and commercial values. Interestingly, the disused space occupied by the old shop has been converted into a space for various creative learning and public programming activities, hosting the 'Barbican Blocks' and 'Squish Space' programme for under 5s, alongside events curated by the Incubator, Creative Learning and the archive team. The positioning of the new shop is significant – a commercial space at the entrance to the foyers in the position that used to be occupied by the box office. This shift, in the first space most visitors will enter, from administrating core activities to more explicitly commercial use, can be read as a clear metaphor for the spatial changes sweeping arts and cultural organisations at this time. The spatial dimension to this shift expresses the increasing pressure not just to generate increased income from retail, but to integrate the retail offer into a wider cultural branding and destination strategy agenda.

Strategic changes: 'Developing our foyers as a destination in their own right'

In the 2017/18 Strategic Plan, 'Transform Public Space – transforming our public spaces to create a sense of destination onsite and in the cultural hub' is a key part of the departmental programmes. The term 'destination' has entered the institutional discourse, becoming prominent in its strategies. For the first time in the 2002/03 annual report, a quote from the 'The Times' defines the Barbican as 'one of the finest cultural destinations in the world' introducing the very concept of the arts centre as a tourist attraction. After this first appearance, the term becomes more widely used from 2007/08 and is central in most recent reports, as this quote exemplifies:

> The Barbican remains a core partner of the developing cultural hub in the City of London. By forging a creative alliance with the unrivalled collection of arts, cultural and learning organisations around us, together with the City of London Corporation we aim to create "a vibrant destination across the north-west of the City where creativity thrives" (AR 2015/16, p. 23).

The destination agenda culminated in the launch of Culture Mile in 2017 which is promoted as 'a major destination for culture and creativity in the heart of the Square Mile' and makes explicit the destination marketing agenda for the Square Mile area.

Annual Themes

The Annual Theme are another programmatic device that seems to have been put in place to unify the communication of the artistic programmes. The annual themes 'The Art of Change' in 2018 and 'Life Rewired' in 2019, are a way of connecting up the programmes and extending them to the foyers with additional events and performances. The annual theme is a newly introduced idea, which attempts to connect the public programming in the foyers to the art forms programming across the venues. Conceptually unifying the programming across two theatres, an art gallery, a concert hall and numerous foyer spaces, all hosting internationally varied performances, makes the prospect of a coherent theme across a whole year of programming appear quite difficult to achieve. On top of this, the annual themes are most visible in marketing material and official communications, and least present in my interviews from the field. It is therefore a reasonable assertion to suggest the annual themes are in large part motivated to promote the Barbican as a unified offer in itself – in other words, a destination.

Figure 4 - Level G – photo taken during a site visit

Level G

'Level G' is a new Barbican public-facing project, aimed at rebranding the foyers as a unified area of programming. It also operates as a spatial link to the Culture Mile through hosting programmes shared across the various Culture Mile's venues. It was introduced with the objective to reach non-ticketed visitors, guide their journey through the building and highlight the cultural offer in the foyers. Aspects that fall under Level G are the wayfinding, temporary exhibitions and public events, Squish Space, Barbican Architecture tours and Welcome Tours. 'Level G' is a way of referring to the Barbican's public foyer spaces as 'a destination in their own right'. Situated between the core venues, these vast foyers comprise: social and working space; the Barbican's shop and catering outlets; and the Curve gallery. The foyer Projects become part of the 'Level G' programme, comprising a series of installations, projection-based artwork, artist residencies, architectural commissions and a range of public events and talks designed to extend the arts programme 'beyond the walls' of the venues. The 'Level G' programme is managed and primarily produced by the Barbican's Incubator team. Most, but not all, of the Barbican's public programming takes place as part of the Level G programme:

> Our free Level G commissions continue to extend the artistic programme throughout the Barbican's spaces with monumental sculptures, choreographic residencies and large-scale projected installations (AR 2017/18, p.3).

While the Incubator is not mentioned in the annual reports, Level G is featured heavily from its inception, celebrated for various reasons. Given that both these entities represent the

institution's approach to the foyers, this could be seen as the institution making small steps on a journey towards more fully acknowledging these spaces. The following chapters will provide evidence as to the breadth of activities, different modes of use and different ways of valuing the foyers that are already 'organically' present, illuminating just how much is still invisible to the institution.

Conclusions

This chapter is a digest of some key aspects identified in the annual reports which I have found salient in terms of highlighting shifts in discourse applied to audiences and foyers. The data itself, the texts of the annual reports, is material lying 'in plain view' and accessible by the public. However, the discursive analytical strategy adopted to critically read the reports, has allowed me to unearth discourses about audiences, to better understand the framing and reframing of the 'audience' problem. A key aspect highlighted through this process is the mobile and fluid nature of organisations, whereby key objectives are constantly reconceived and rearticulated. The arts institution itself, the Barbican Centre in this case, is always recreating itself, which is a key challenge for a researcher trying to draw conclusions on its strategies, policies and practices. In this sense, the chapter acts as a dynamic window onto the constantly changing nature of the arts institution, and particularly on how the foyers have emerged as a key space in institutional strategies aimed at audiences. Moreover, it is also an echo of larger political changes in the governance of arts and culture nationally.

This chapter provides a background for the data presented in Chapter 6 and 7. The chapter suggests that it is possible to draw out three discursive tensions at the centre of the analysis and that these are prominent at different times in the annual reports and strategic visions: the discourse of customer experience, the rise of participation, and the most recent destination agenda. The chapter considers these discourses in broad terms and examines how they have configured audiences in public spaces at the Barbican Centre. The contention put forward is that rather than replacing each other, different discourses enter the organisational vocabulary and circulate within it at different times. The chapter provides a contextual basis on which the discussions of Chapter 6, on the hosting of the foyers, and Chapter 7, on the management of audiences and spaces, will be built. The two following chapters, due to the adoption of a multi-method approach, add new facets to the current one.

Chapter 6. Audiences in the Foyers through the eyes of hosts

Introduction

One of the research questions of this study is how discourses about audiences and cultural participation in cultural spaces are mediated 'on the ground' by staff members and audiences themselves (RQ2). To explore this question, I have chosen to focus on the foyers and public spaces of the Barbican arts centre. These are the spaces outside the core venues such as theatre and concert hall, open to audiences without a ticket, and generally affording higher degrees of audience agency. In this sense, they are an ideal site to observe some of the implications of the participatory turn in the context of arts institutions, a discourse according to which audiences gain agency and power in arts processes and arts institutions as active subjects. Having in the previous chapter shown the shifting conceptions of audiences and spaces that occurred in the arts institution over the last 15 years through analysis of the annual reports, in this chapter the focus is on the specific site that has often been ignored: the (intermediate, or liminal) foyer spaces. This chapter presents a different facet or lens through which to look at audiences in the arts institution, alongside the annual reports and the managerial discourses. Furthermore, the focus is not on audiences per se, but on how audiences use the foyers as mediated and seen through the eyes of Audience Experience Hosts, who are working in front-facing roles across the Barbican Centre's spaces. The aim is to employ the foyers as a key site to understand how conceptions of audiences and cultural participation play out 'on the ground floor' of the arts institution.

Given the focus is on the foyers, the chapter starts by conceptualising such spaces as thresholds and transformative sites, particularly drawing on contributions from museum studies. I then introduce the specific context of Barbican foyers and hosts, and the key findings emerged from the study titled 'the foyers through the eyes of hosts'. The foyers emerge as a complex ecology of programmed, non-programmed and more subversive activities that could be understood within the discourse of 'everyday participation' (Miles and Gibson, 2016, 2017). The data also points to questions of spatial management and the conflicts of uses of space in arts institutions, which has not been particularly discussed in scholarly literature. I argue that the blurred boundaries in the uses of space and an expanded understanding of participation (Belfiore, 2016; Miles and Gibson, 2017; Stevenson, 2019), as well as the role of hosts as performing affective labour, all seem to fit the frame of the experience economy under neoliberalism, within which discourses of customer experience, participation and destination are intermixed. Finally, I discuss the potential role of front-of-

house staff in future visitor and audience research, which is a key methodological contribution of this thesis.

Conceptualising foyers

What is a foyer? In the Oxford English Dictionary, the first definition of foyer is as '1.a. focus' which could refer 'c. hearth, home'. The definition provided by the dictionary corresponds to what a foyer is intended to be in architectural terms: 'Originally, the green-room in French theatres; now usually, a large room in a theatre, concert-hall, etc., to which the audience may retire during the intervals of the performances; the entrance hall of a hotel, restaurant, theatre, etc.' In arts, music and theatre venues, foyer is the most commonly used term to indicate the areas outside of core venues, where often bars, cafes and shops are located, as well as seating and other service facilities. Architecturally, foyers are the entrances and transition spaces where people meet and mingle before a performance or event, during the interval, or afterwards. Major institutions like the National Theatre, the Tate Galleries, the Royal Opera House, the Victoria and Albert Museum, the British Library all have foyers. Less used synonyms are lobby, entrance, hall, atrium. To an extent, foyers were integrated in the architectural vision of post-war arts and cultural centres to fit principles of polyvalence, defined as the possibility of using given spaces in different ways: foyers, particularly, due to mobile architectural elements, were designed to be converted into exhibition halls or accommodate other events in certain occasions (Cupers, 2015, p. 470). In some cultural buildings, 'a central foyer functioned as the public "plaza" of the complex, connecting directly to the restaurant, cafeteria, and main performance spaces' (Cupers, 2015, p. 471). In this sense, foyers fit the first etymological definition as 'the focus and hearth' of a building, whilst remaining secondary spaces whose main function is to connect up the core venues.

Susan Bennett in 'Theatre audiences' talks about the important role of the foyers as a space of social display 'on the threshold of theatre' (Bennett, 1997), 'that encourages observation in the small, familiar group in which we attend the theatre' (p.133). Seen as the interior architectural elements that frame the theatrical process, Bennett argues that the existence of foyers points to the social construction of theatre. In their historical developments, particularly between the 19th and 20th century, foyers have increasingly taken up more space, and increasingly being designed to facilitate spectators observing and 'studying' the characteristics of other members of the public. Bennett says that foyers in institutions such as the Royal National Theatre and the Lincoln Centre 'are clearly designed with the purpose of promoting the pleasure of watching and being watched'. This is exemplified in a quote

from Denys Lasdun, the architect of the National Theatre, who observed that: 'The inter-connected foyers [of the National Theatre] are not unlike the ancient hypostyle whose communal floors evoked a warm and lively participation by the members of its community' (Denys Lasdun, 1977:29 quoted in Bennett, 1997, p. 130). Bennett also recognises the practical purposes served by foyers, which include cloackrooms, restaurants and bars as well as stores selling theatre-related goods, but can also become the site of additional cultural programmes such as exhibitions, musical performances and gala performances. This historical account of theatre foyers and their architectural and social functions is important, yet it limits the interactions occurring in these spaces to the time before and after the performance. What I suggest in my study is that foyers have now become spaces for day-time activities that are not connected to the theatre or music programmes in the main venues.

Except Bennett's description of theatre foyers as sites of social performance, most recent research on foyers has been produced in other fields, giving particular consideration to spatial aspects and audience behaviours. Particularly in museum studies, foyers have gained prominence as a focus of study in recent times, and they have been variously conceptualised, as 'thresholds of fear' (Gurian, 2005) to be overcome, but also as the beginning and the ending of the museum narrative (Baker, 2011 for V&A; AHRC Transforming Thresholds, 2017). Laursen, Kristiansen and Drotner (2016) point to the inherent potential of 'the foyer as relational space of symbolic exchange between the institution and its visitors and not merely as a fixed physical identity', highlighting the role of foyers as 'to guide and structure the behaviour of visitors' (p.69). This notion of foyers as relational spaces also echoes MacLeod (2005) and her definition of museum architecture as 'a social and cultural product, continually reproduced through use' (p.10). Nevertheless, despite increasing interest in the social use of architecture, there is limited focus on institutional 'thresholds' such as museum lobbies and foyers, that 'remain an under-researched setting when it comes to the meaning-making and communicative aspects of visitor reception and dialogue' (Laursen, Kristiansen and Drotner, 2016). Furthermore, even more limited research has been carried out involving front-of-house staff in the entrances, lobbies and foyers of museums, arts venues and other cultural institutions.

Within a social geographical framework, foyers can be seen as spaces-in-between or spaces that connect other spaces, as heterogeneous spaces, what Foucault would refer to as 'heterotopias', defined as sites which are embedded in aspects and stages of our lives and which somehow mirror and at the same time distort, unsettle or invert other spaces. In this sense, foyers have a multiplicity of potentially contradictory functions that go beyond the

physical and take on symbolic meaning: I would argue that foyers can both function as a lens and a mirror to understand the arts institution and its relations to the public. In many ways, it can be said that if the concert hall or theatre are the spaces for normative audience behaviours, foyers are in close proximity to the arts spaces and allow an array of behaviours that go beyond the sitting and clapping and might sometimes not be deemed appropriate or reasonable for an arts space. In arts management terms, foyers are generally the entrances and spaces that visitors and audiences encounter when they enter an institution for the first time. In this sense, they have a potential for audience engagement, although they have not been conceptualised as such.

In most audience research literature from the performing arts, audience responses are considered in relation to a performance. In music psychology, what happens to the audience member as they are listening to a piece of music is the object of study, and in theatre it is about the response to a performance. Post-theatre talks sometimes happen in spaces outside the performance venues, often the foyers, but still focus on the response to a piece of music, or theatre (Hansen, 2015). Other studies have looked at the pre, during and post-performance experience (Radbourne, Johanson and Glow, 2010; Burland and Pitts, 2014; Heim, 2019). Recent contributions have looked at what happens in public spaces of arts institutions, and the extent to which certain 'audiences' are subject to censorship and behaviour-policing in such spaces (Sedgman, 2018b). Generally, when research on audience experience in the foyers is carried out it is either as evaluation of quality of the audience experience (at the service of audiences and arts institutions to improve services), but not often involving workers who perform the 'audience experience' labour. Within the area of audience research, Walmsley (2018) argues for the deployment of anthropological methods like 'deep hanging out', because they can yield rich insights into audience engagement with arts and cultural experiences. Referring to Tim Ingold's concept of 'sideways glance', Walmsley (2018) suggests that:

> front-of-house staff in theatres, museums, opera and galleries might well benefit
> from acting more like anthropologists by observing and discussing with audiences
> rather than providing touch-points of effective customer service (p. 287).

There are limited examples of theatres and other institutions involving front-of-house in evaluation, and the potentials of this practice remain under-researched and marginal. This study aims to fill this gap and open up a new avenue for further research on institutional thresholds, involving the mediators of those spaces such as front-of-house staff.

The Barbican Foyers

As explained on its website, the Barbican Centre, alongside its main venues 'also includes large foyers and public spaces, a library, the Lakeside Terrace, conference facilities and three restaurants' and it is specified that one can 'experience free installations, commissions and events in our public spaces, whatever time you visit' (Barbican Centre, 2020a). The Barbican Foyers are also in use for Venue Hire. On the website, they are promoted as such: 'Take in the Barbican's iconic architecture from the centre of the action in the foyers. This stylish, buzzing and flexible space is perfect for conventions and large-scale events' (Barbican Centre, 2019 Venue Hire). Because Venue Hire provide specific technical details of the Foyers, this page is helpful in defining what the main areas defined as foyers include:

> Level G
> The Level G foyer provides access to the circle level entrances of the Barbican Hall and Barbican Theatre, and is located on the ground floor of the centre. With natural daylight and overlooking the lakeside, this area is an ideal space for all your catering and exhibition requirements (ibid.).
>
> Level -1
> The Level -1 foyer provides access to both the Barbican Theatre and the Barbican Hall, and can be used for registration and catering for events taking place there. It features a central registration desk with 7 positions and 5 plasma screens, and the cloakroom can accommodate up to 3000 attendees. The foyer also offers a variety of branding and advertising opportunities with poster sites and plasma screens' (ibid.).

Since its opening in 1982, the centre has been both an arts and a conference centre. The Barbican has large foyers, interlinked and at different levels. Architecturally, the foyers could be seen as connecting up all the different venues. However, the architects – despite having a clear interest in the connection between the theatre and the city inspired by Italianate piazzas – designed the foyers primarily as waiting spaces. As already seen from the annual reports, these spaces have evolved over time. The arts centre's foyers are spaces that include multiple functions: not only entrances offering a sense of arrival, foyers also include the box office, the shop, the cafès and restaurants, as well as seating areas and other service facilities. As seen through the annual reports, Barbican foyers have increasingly gained importance as 'destinations in their own right', providing a mix of programming, retail and catering offerings. Foyers are also commercial assets for the arts centre: some areas can be roped off and hired for private events such as graduations, conferences and exhibition fairs.

The reason why museum studies become very important here is that the foyers of the arts centre have more in common with a museum atrium than the lobby of a West End theatre. The Barbican Centre is neither a museum nor a collecting institution, but its foyers constitute

a large amount of space inside the buildings of the arts centre. In this sense, it is appropriate to compare the Barbican foyers with museum foyers elsewhere. Although architecturally very specific, the publicly accessible wide spaces and generous seating of foyers in buildings such as the Barbican, the National Theatre and the Southbank Centre share many similarities with the foyers of museums such as Tate Britain, Tate Modern, and other museum spaces. Amongst other features, these spaces are marked by a proliferation of commercial outlets including cafès and shops, that arts institutions have developed in an increasingly neoliberalised environment.

By the time my fieldwork began in early 2017, foyers had become more prominent in Barbican's institutional strategies ('Transforming Public Spaces' featured as a strategic goal in the business plan 2016/17), and a central focus for programming outside the main venues (foyer Projects had been launched in 2016). Furthermore, with the destination agenda becoming a key tenet of the institutional vision for its future, my focus on spaces and audiences proved to be very timely. The main reason for focusing on the foyers was a wider concern, identified in the field of audience research in the arts, with concept of active participation and co-creation (Walmsley, 2013). If we understand audiences as increasingly involved in artistic and cultural processes, and if the participatory turn has increasingly moved the focus of performance and art-making outside of conventional venues, then the foyers could be seen as an ideal site for the 'participatory turn'.

Barbican Audience Experience Hosts

With Venue and Visitor Services becoming increasingly redefined as Customer and Audience Experience, the role of front-of-house staff in museums, arts institutions and other cultural spaces is gaining prominence. However, very little scholarly research has been produced about front-of-house and visitor experience management from the perspective of those performing the front-line labour. Industry reports do not often even include numbers and data specifically about service workers in the cultural sector. Despite huge numbers of them working across the major London cultural attractions, service workers in arts and cultural contexts have been so far mostly neglected by researchers. However, such workers are arguably the most closely involved in welcoming, guiding, engaging and observing members of the public in cultural venues. Therefore, they have a potential role in future audience research. This study explores perceptions and experiences of a number of front-of-house workers in the context of the Barbican's foyers.

Arts and cultural venues generally have staff working across spaces, including the foyers, to provide visitor and audience assistance. This staff can be hired in from external agencies or work for different departments, depending on the institutional terminology: Information or Visitor services, Front-of-House, Customer Experience. In the context of the Barbican, the front-of-house staff goes under the department of Customer, now Audience Experience, and the staff members working on the arts centre's floor are called Audience Experience Hosts. As detailed in the job description (Appendix B1), Barbican hosts are part of a team working across all the venues of the arts centre to ensure visitors and audiences encounter 'world-class service in a safe, well presented and welcoming environment'. As explained, hosts are recruited on the basis of being 'positive, flexible and committed to helping our customers get the most from their time at the Barbican', confident 'interacting with a wide range of customers' and who would 'strive to exceed the expectations of our audience and deliver an experience that matches the quality of our programme' (ibid.). In the context of this study, hosts have been identified as both the mediators of the specific site (foyers) and as the knowledge-producers in relation to audiences. By virtue of being at the venue doors, info points, main doors, sales points, hosts are in constant direct contact with the public, being asked information, observing and controlling the space, reporting to management, ensuring health and safety.

Hosts are the eyes and ears of the institution. They are working to welcome, guide and keep the public safe and healthy. In the context of the Barbican, hosts are casual workers, recruited directly by the Barbican Audience experience department. Hourly paid, a Barbican host might be working, depending on their personal availability and requirements of shifts from the institution, from a few hours (sometimes zero) a week up to 40 hours a week (and sometimes more). The Barbican Centre trains hosts to a limited extent, and they are briefed before shifts, depending on what is happening in the centre and which venue hosts are working on. Some hosts also work as door ambassadors, mainly welcoming people at the main entrance on Silk Street and directing audiences around the centre. A group of hosts are also trained and work as architecture tour guides, leading walking tours of the Barbican Estate. The role is quite varied, given the programme of events across the centre during a typical day can be wide-ranging, from a wedding in the Conservatory to a drink reception for the London Symphony Orchestra to a youth group activity in the Level G Studio.

Foyers through the eyes of hosts

This ethnographic narrative of the foyers is based on a thematic analysis of data collected from 12 semi-structured interviews with hosts (see interview guide appendix – Appendix B) to build a rich picture of the daily routines of the arts centre, focusing particularly on what members of the public ask for, what they do, and how they use the spaces. The aim of the interview questions was to gather perspectives from hosts on what people say, ask and comment upon, as well as what people do or how they react to both programmed activities and how they use the arts centre's spaces more generally. As I decided to adopt a discursive-ethnographic approach, I have considered the empirical findings emerging from the data and the underlying discourses about audiences that such findings make visible.

Audiences, Customers, diverse publics: 'A real massive mixture'

> …I guess customer experience sounds a bit more, to me, more sales-businessy, but audience is …if that's a way of looking at every single person who walks into the Barbican … it is an audience, but to what? Like, because people just sit on the lakeside, I mean they're not an audience to anything, but they are still a visitor, I mean, as a host, if they come up to you, you're still going to give them an experience… but I guess that's the issue of this wording… I guess it's also that it's down to what's more friendly… customer experience to me doesn't sound exactly very friendly, it just sounds like a hierarchy like I'm serving you from the bottom up … audience I guess, it's like, come and join the party… but visitor is probably more, just appropriate, for the actual job that we do… (H7)

I choose to open with this quote, because it captures a rich set of reflections on a variety of themes that are crucial across the study: the articulation of the host's role in relation to the public, key observational data on how members of the public use the Barbican foyers, and a reflexive interrogation of various terms used by the arts institution: customer, audience, visitor. The host ponders on the terminological differences between 'customer experience', 'audience' and 'visitor', and their resonance, offering a glimpse of the multiple relationship that might be at play when 'providing an experience'. Customer, for this host, has close associations with sales and business, and registers a hierarchical aspect: the host as a subordinate worker serving the customer 'from the bottom up'. This is compared with the use of the term 'audience' seen as having associations with the joyous idea of a party. However, the host concludes, visitor is the term that most reflects the 'job that we do'. Using the example of people observed sitting in the outside areas of the arts centre (the Lakeside), the host comments that those people would not be an audience to anything, but still be involved in the act of visiting and expecting to be 'given an experience'. Whilst discussions

about the differences between customers, visitors and audiences have been addressed in audience and reception studies, 'researchers still struggle to pin down the act of audiency' (Walmsley, 2019a, p. 8). Although there is a recognition that audiences can be variously characterised as guests, fans, consumers, co-creators, protagonists or 'creative comrades', these definitions are most often in relation to the artistic event or performance. Arguably, this is reflected by the vast variability of names and titles given to departments across different arts institutions: front-of-house management, customer experience, visitor services, etc.

Interestingly, from most interviews with hosts, it is clear that the terminology around audiences and customers is perceived as a conflicted terrain. The discussion of the use of different terms such as Audience, Customer and Visitor was particularly timely given that in 2017 the name of the relevant Barbican department changed from Customer Experience to Audience Experience. Notably, this is a change that occurred without any official communications to the casual workers of that department. Nevertheless, the set of discourses that the host is giving expression to reveal how arts institutions and their staff are aware of, and in some cases troubled about, the relationship with audiences and choice of names to indicate them. Another host aptly comments on changes in departmental names and institutional hierarchies:

> …that's something that's been a mystery to me throughout all the years … people's titles, departments' titles, Barbican titles, managers' titles and so on… it's still a bit of a mystery to me, a bit of a blur… in the early days I didn't get very involved, because I only came once a week… these days… I'm perhaps more engaged now than I used to be in the past, but I still … I just like to get on with the job… and not really worry about the hierarchy to be honest… (H11)

Beyond initial terminological reflections, however, when offering descriptions of people in the spaces the term 'customer' is rarely used by hosts. The descriptions provided by hosts confirmed a perceived diversity of people using these spaces: 'a diverse mix of people [are] coming to the Barbican, on their quest or search for something' (H4), 'a real massive mixture' (H2), 'different crowds' (H12) or 'mixed bag' (H3). Many hosts offer nuanced observations of different groups of people using the site, from 'a lot of people just come to use the space almost like an office' (H10) to 'young mothers with babies and young children who seem to use it as a playground' (H11) to 'homeless people sleeping in the space' (H6). Descriptions of diverse publics build a discourse of the foyers as open and diverse spaces, as democratic spaces where people can participate in public life. Based on my ethnographic site observations, carried out as part of the fieldwork (2016 – 2019), it can be noted that diverse

publics make use of the Barbican foyers at different times of day, in different seasons, and on both weekdays and weekends.

Reporting on what members of the public say or ask, hosts describe the recurrence of 'people asking about daily activities' with questions such as 'What can I do today?' (H2, H3), 'What do you have on offer? (H), 'What's on that is free?' (H6), 'What's happening?' (H12) or, for example, first time visitors asking: 'What is this place, what is there to do?' (H8). These recurrent questions seem to indicate both a variety of different audience members, from first-time visitors to regular daily users, as well as various degree of familiarity with the programming. It transpires from host' accounts that some people 'just think they're going to be entertained by the Barbican, having not done any research…' (H2) whereas other people are defined as 'quite established, they knew this took place, they looked out for it, they look out for the dates... some are locals, they do know it's on, some are local residents within the Barbican' (H12). The hosts' accounts also seem to suggest the presence of a cohort of people 'being familiar with the space': 'people go there every day to do work and they sort of feel a connection with the […] space' (H1) and 'you see a lot of people that are using it as their living room…' (H7) or 'It's like their house, they know it inside out, they're so comfortable' (H1). Some audiences are described as highly familiar with the venue:

> but you also get groups of people who go pretty much to every LSO concert, and they have a certain relationship with that space, and I think their attitude to the space is quite different to someone who has never been there before… (…) there's members of the public who have been going there for a long time, and they sort of know the building almost better than you, its history and it has changed a lot… the foyers have changed a lot... (H1)

This quote reveals patterns of space usage by people who have a higher familiarity with the space than others. Drawing upon Savage, Bagnall and Longhurst's (2005) concept of 'elective belonging', Miles (2016) talks about the issue of attachment to a place, and a sense of entitlement to 'claim moral rights over a place' usually displayed by middle-class people in certain spaces. This is an interesting consideration in the context of the Barbican, where arguably there are more 'historical' audiences such as regular attenders of the London Symphony Orchestra concerts, and the classical music season more generally, but also attenders of theatre performances by the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC), which twice a year still has a programmed season in the Barbican Theatre. In this respect, hosts have developed an embodied knowledge of audience members, in some cases necessary to anticipate requests, expectations or preconceptions, as exemplified in this quote:

> Mmmh, people have… they have a sense of purpose even though they don't know where they are going. So they definitely know they need to get somewhere in the

centre, and they might come in with preconceptions of how hard it is to navigate. And they either come directly to you meaning that they kind of, they've clocked that you're there for a particular reason and you know that because they're either looking... they've got their ticket in their hand already, but they've printed it at home, or… sometimes, it's to do with their demographic, so you can tell. Say we've got a particular type of music genre in the hall, and let's say we've got the RSC in the theatre, genuinely speaking, if they start similar time and the audiences are coming in at the same time, you can tell. If you can identify that they're coming for a performance, you can tell by the way their demeanour is. If they're more of a music, musician type, like … person, you know, or a theatre goer. And that could be down to... I suppose… I don't know… not just the look, but it's the way… the way in which they hold themselves (H3).

What this quote reveals is that hosts develop knowledge of audiences to the point where an initial identification, to an extent a segmentation of the audiences walking in, happens in the space, based on repeated encounters with audience members. As problematic as this might appear in terms of 'profiling' members of the public, this ability to discern between audience types is also something often encouraged by management. For example, in staff briefings, where a certain audience is described as more well-behaved and, for example when a contemporary gig is on, a younger audience is described as needing 'a bit more policing'. This embodied knowledge tacitly required from hosts is necessary in terms of audience experience management, although not explicitly requested in the job description. In a complex space with a variety of venues to manage, and multiple programmes, this embodied knowledge seems to be of paramount importance. It also highlights one of the key challenges faced by arts institutions today, as their audiences become increasingly more diverse: to manage multiple publics across multiple spaces and programmes.

In this sense, as noted by another host, the Barbican foyers are very different from the foyer of a West End theatre, where 'there's no foyer or a place like that… well, there is but it's very small, it's not designed for people to hang around...'. Instead, the host quite interestingly, describes it from the perspective of possible audience members:

> …the Barbican has venues, but they're not holding areas, like in a normal... in a theatre designed just for the theatre, the foyers are holding areas where they sell their merchandise and it's a space for people to stand in the interval, get in, out, done! it's functional! whereas as well as a base layer of functionality at the Barbican, those foyers are (…) a space for opportunity (…) the other places are just not the same thing, you go there for the auditorium and the show. That's it. That's the thing. You go... there for…you know, these theatres are branded with the shows' brands so you don't go... well, you say: We went to Billy Elliott last week, I went to Wicked the other day, you don't go I went to the Apollo Victoria, we went to the Victoria Palace (…) For the Barbican you wouldn't be like, you might be like…Ah, we went the LSO, we went to Mozart. No, it's like We went to the Barbican, you know, We're into the Barbican…because it's very strong… it holds a lot in it. For everyone, a lot of people' (H3).

What emerges from accounts of hosts describing the Barbican is the centre's perceived specificity. A host recollecting a memory of their first visits to the Barbican when younger uses the phrase 'it felt very distinctive from other arts centres or art galleries…' (H1), another host says 'there's not a huge amount of other places like this (in London)' (H8). Another category is architectural complexity, arising from codes such as 'people getting lost', 'people commenting on confusing architecture'. 'I think the arts centre contextualised within the estate is quite different to the arts centre on its own...' (H1) said one of the hosts I interviewed: the aspect of the Barbican being a residential complex is elicited by participants as they speak about 'residents using it' or residents 'seeing it as the extension of their living space'.

In one account by a host the aspect of geographical specificity is put in connection with the type of audiences observed:

> I think like any centre, like any institution… you do what sells… so we are in the heart of London, Barbican, Central London, what's the demographics who live in Central London, so we can look at that sort of business-like, like maybe city people with lots of dosh or whatever, and certain class of people that can see stuff, within that demographic, and who lives in the area… Who lives in the Barbican area, Moorgate area? And what is this.. what is… we're not too far from the West End, so… again, it's …what would attract the people that live in the area, Barbican, Moorgate, West End… that would make them come over to, like, fill the seats, bums on seats, … in the centre and I think you'd either do what sells, or you do what speaks to demographics, or the people that live in that terrain, or where your centre is… so if you … if you had an arts centre as you do in Deptford, like the Albany… Deptford is a predominantly black, mixed-race, Irish community, got so many Nigerians, Jamaican, so, so… clearly within that terrain the types of shows that would be produced, then would attract the demographic, so I think it's all about… the Barbican Centre is so famous and international, and everyone knows it… so you've got stars that come there, you know, clearly like any centre, what fills up is a big name, or a famous musical number like LSO, and all the other things that it… but again, it's the area, it's all the area, quite affluent area I must say… within the Barbican realms and Moorgate, so that's… I suppose you're going to produce what sells good… (H4).

Foyers as complex ecology of programmed and non-programmed activities

Routines are observed in the use of space and described by hosts, reporting different temporalities of use, from 'morning interactions of people in those spaces and then obviously in the more, sort of, evening performance… times' (H5) to people spending 'a good couple of hours' in the foyers (H6) or 'stay(ing) there all day' (H8). Another host notes how 'some people would spend 5 or 10 minutes, some people like to …like… sit on the floor, some like to have …you know… the whole table... People kind of do adjust, depending on how busy

it is' (H8). Although hosts were just recollecting these patterns by memory, and not having spent time observing the space for the purposes of this research, the role of the foyers, as spaces where people can linger and find seating facilities is apparent from the hosts' recollection. This echoes findings from an observational study of the V&A's foyers, (2011) which found evidence of the importance of seating areas as 'an important provision for visitors, not only as places to rest and wait, but as an invitation to participate in the public life of the Museum' (Baker, 2011). Compared to this study, my 'foyers through the eyes of hosts' interview study was not aimed at counting and measuring levels of certain specific activities, but rather capture the atmosphere of the foyers and some of the politics of managing the space[12].

The spectrum of audience behaviours described by hosts is quite broad and varied, including programmed and non-programmed activities. As already pointed out in Chapter 5, programmed activities in the foyers include the Barbican Weekenders, Sound Unbound, Open Fest, the foyer Projects and a range of other events taking place throughout the year that are often offered as free and un-ticketed. In general, it emerges from hosts' accounts, people appreciate the opportunity to 'take part in free activities'. In describing what they observe happening in the spaces, hosts refer to people engaging with the existing artistic offerings in the foyers. This doesn't emerge as a prominent theme in the analysis, possibly because the study was not focused on specific programmes or projects and, accordingly, the interviews didn't include targeted questions on specific programmes. However, hosts have recollections of specific events that had a particular significance to them, for example in terms of creating a 'super-cohesive' ambience, or a 'very active space':

> they had lots of people on the bridge watching, you had people by St Giles watching, you had people on the lakeside watching, it wasn't like hoarded off, so… and you could see people out of their flats, so it felt like, it felt super-cohesive (H1).

Overall, engagement with the artistic offerings of the Barbican is seen as more 'casual', sometimes catching people by surprise, unless it is one of the organised events such as the Weekenders. Alongside this, talking about what people say or do in relation to organised offerings in the foyers, a number of hosts have referred to elements of 'surprise' or 'chance' in people's encounters with such public programming, that could encompass foyer installations, Weekenders, freestage concerts. As a host captures this:

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[12] However, the Barbican did commission a piece of observational research that was aimed at measuring audience reactions to some of the Foyer projects (i.e. in terms of time spent in front of an artwork), and I worked as a host on a number of shifts to perform these observations. Although this was not part of my fieldwork, it was an insightful experience which made me aware of some of the external research commissioned by the Barbican Incubator to evaluate the Foyer Projects.

even though that they're arranged events, I feel like the majority of people just happen to be in the Barbican and find these things, rather than they came specifically for it… unless it's a classical foyer event, then people seem to know in advance (H10).

Other phrases that indicate this element of surprise are 'stumble across' (H10), being 'pleasantly surprised' (H2, H12), 'catch(ing) themselves surprised by something delightful' (H3), 'pleasant surprise' (H6), or comments from people such as 'Oh, I had no idea that was going on' or 'Oh, that's there!'. One of the hosts, talking about a Classical Weekender (Sound Unbound 2017), said that 'some discover it by chance' (12).

Freestage live events as well as free events in the foyers[13] and people's appreciation of them are mentioned by hosts, with many hosts describing specific events taking place in the foyers. A host remembers when there used to be lunchtime jazz sessions, described as 'free of charge, and lots of people used to come…' (H12). The events organised in the foyers are seen as 'designed to push people's comfort zones, it's not in a kind of like theatre - absurd way, but in a kind of let's get inclusive, you know... with the community' (H3). Although describing them as very lively, hosts also notice how sometimes foyer events 'interfere' with other activities, such as people working or studying, especially during weekdays. From a series of accounts, it appears that 'negotiating noise, sound and silence' (H1, H2, H3, H11, H12) in the foyers is a recurrent theme.

Socialising: 'things can happen without the Barbican having to programme them'

Hosts describe the foyers as gathering places, for small and bigger groups, reporting informal gatherings, people eating lunch together, meetings with friends, general socialising and 'hanging out' or 'having a coffee' using both the inside and the outside spaces, particularly the Lakeside. As one host puts it:

> Yes, I think there are different crowds. This is purely from my own observation… I think you get different groups meeting, using it as a rendez-vouz if you like… for them to meet in the Barbican foyer (H12).

Another host captures the serendipitous nature of the foyers in this description:

> Well, I do remember this group of women and I don't know what they were talking about, but they were meeting for a particular reason… maybe it was a study group, maybe it was a book club, mmmh, I don't remember well, but I remember them …this was on level 1 by door 9, the one closer to the sales point, there's like a bridge, with tables… and they moved the table, they cleared the tables to one side, and sat around a circle without taking much space, but definitely making themselves present in the space, and engaging in a conversation, and I remember another woman was

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[13] - 8 references by 5 sources

just walking past, they didn't know each other, and she overheard the content of the group …the things that they were talking about, and she asked the leader or the person that was talking at the moment, a question about that particular thing that she was talking about, and she got invited into the group, and she stayed there for a while.. I was working in the door, on a concert, I was observing this, I didn't participate, but I thought that was really positive, because there was someone who was entering the Barbican perhaps for another reason, either to go and get a coffee, or something, I don't know... but she then interacted with another group of people that were in a focused mmmh activity and then she was participating just in that, just by the mere fact that she was just walking past them... So, I think that's the beauty of the foyer spaces of the Barbican… that things can happen without the Barbican having to programme them… but things that can make an impact to visitors that are just passing by, it's very inviting, I think… (H5).

This quote is poignant because it captures in just one image a set of aspects of the foyers and the role of hosting: that the foyers operate as meeting spaces, where strangers can gather and self-organise activities; but it also places the host as a body in the space, by the door of the concert hall, where their role is mainly to invigilate the space, but meanwhile allowing the host to be an active observer (it is noted 'I didn't participate') of different uses of space and their apparent value. In this case a scene of strangers socialising and of an individual joining a self-organised group is described. The host also comments on the beauty of the space as a space where things can happen spontaneously, which is seen as a complement to the existing programmed activities. This quote confirms the concept of embodied experience of the space that hosts have, given the time spent in the spaces, but it also reveals another aspect of hosting: how being seen, as well as observing and people watching, are integral part of the role. In this sense, the host becomes both the agent of an 'institutional gaze' that is partly facilitated by the architecture, with its interlinked foyer floors at different levels, and a daily ethnographer, capturing daily interactions and observing everyday activities in the foyers.

<u>'A place to sit and work with free wifi'</u>

Infrastructural elements are mentioned by many of the participants as crucial, such as the 'space having free wifi' (8 references by 6 participants), as well as availability of desks and 'movable furniture'. A theme that emerges from the data is linked to people's 'repurposing or appropriating space' for their own activities, moving furniture, or 'set(ting) up like whole workstations on Sales points, […] when they are not being used for their function, everything sort of takes on another function...' (H1). One of the most recurrent codes in the data is 'people working in the foyers'[14]: all research participants refer to this phenomenon at least once. Accounts provided by hosts of people being observed whilst using the public spaces

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[14] - of which I identified 22 references from 12 sources

of the arts centre to work and study point to the emergent theme of 'foyers becoming spaces of informal work and knowledge exchange'. What emerges through all hosts' accounts of their casual observation of the foyers is the fact that people work and study in the public spaces of the Barbican Centre, with references ranging from 'people seeking space to work' to 'people carrying out work on their laptop', 'people who use those spaces all the time to work' or just 'using their laptops'[15]. Alongside these more general descriptions of 'work' with no specifics, participants in their accounts have described people 'studying, revising or doing their homework'[16], in some cases engaging in 'language study sessions'.

A host capturing the changing nature of foyer spaces explains: '[…] increasingly people need space away from home in which to work, or meet, or whatever…'cause you carry your office with you now, don't you?' (H9). Another host, who has been working at the Barbican since the 1980s, compares the foyers today to past memories:

> …of course in 1987 nobody had computers or laptops, so I don't remember them being used in the way they are today… where people sit around doing their homework, or whatever, I don't really remember the foyers ever been used except when there were events and people were coming to concerts or theatre, whereas I mean, I used to go to concerts at the Southbank as well, I think over there they've always used the public spaces a lot more than we have here… (H11).

Although the Barbican website does not advertise the foyers as working areas at this stage, starting from the end of the summer 2017, at the same time as I was conducting my study, new furniture was introduced in the space. Architects Witherford Watson Mann also developed a new layout for the foyers to better cater for the range of visitor needs here (AR 2016/17, p.23). This might refer to users working in the foyers (as noted below) and is a notable change that the arts centre put in place in response to users. This responsive change could be seen as demonstrating a commitment to making the spaces more accessible and inclusive and accommodating different uses. However, it could be said that it is in the interest of the Barbican management to increase the numbers of people using the space, as with increased numbers there's an increased potential for commercial purchases in the cafès, the shop, or box office. The tension between providing a public space with facilities for everyone and the pressure to generate income is a thread that runs through strategic documents and emerges clearly from the managers' interviews (Chapter 7).

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[15] - 9 references by 6 participants

[16] - 15 different references by 7 participants

In contrast to others highlighting the beauty of informal activities, a host points to the necessity to regulate the space and prioritise ticketed audiences:

> I think maybe the Barbican should pay more consideration to paying customers who come to the Hall, or the Theatre, and perhaps make the people who just sit around with their laptops, or whatever they're doing, make them aware when there are events on in these venues, so that they don't take up all of the seating, 'cause I don't think there's ever enough seating… for intervals, or before a concert (H11)

The issue of regulating the use of foyers is not only limited to the Barbican: other institutions with large foyers like the Southbank Centre and the National Theatre face similar questions on space regulation, particularly before performance times. This translates into questions on how to treat ticketed audiences who might come into the space just before an evening performance, as compared to users of the foyers who might need space to work on their laptops. The host continues the discussion, suggesting an approach based on performance timing, but also clearly reinforcing the idea that 'paying good money' and not finding anywhere to seat seem incompatible:

> I think that if you pay good money to come to a concert and you walk around, and you can't find anywhere to seat, because all these people are sitting there with their laptops, so I mean, I have no problems with them working in there during the day, I know it is a shame now that some areas have closed because of security issues I suppose, in normal circumstances let them work there during the day but maybe say, from 6:30 - 7 o'clock they should be made aware that certain seating areas should be left free for the paying public… (H11)

This quote not only highlights the presence of different publics, as already noted, but raises the question of which audiences might be prioritised over others, especially if generating more box office income. The discourse at the basis of the discussion on different uses of space is underpinned by an understanding of paying customers as having a 'right' to the space over other people in the foyers by virtue of their financial transaction. In the interviews with managers, this question reappears (Ch 7). Ultimately, how space is allocated and what the rules and regulations of its use at different times constructs different conceptions of audiences and relates to the crucial aspect of accessibility:

> […] especially younger people who may be or don't have access to another kind of space, to meet, the fact that there are these free spaces, and people can just come and use them, and not be pushed out, and they don't have to necessarily buy anything, and they can just come, and meet together and just use it as a social space, without any pressure of money… or, mmmh, being of a certain status, I just think that's a really nice thing…that the Barbican offers… (H10).

<u>Creative activities: 'People rehearsing dances, I see all the time'</u>

A variety of creative activities are identified and described by hosts such as 'dancing',[17] rehearsing or practising 'creative stuff'. Other activities identified by hosts include 'playing computer games'[18], reading or writing[19]. Other participants mentioned activities such as sketching, reading and writing. Most of these creative activities are informal and self-organised. It is clear that in some cases these behaviours are policed or contained by the venue management, as for example in this description of people dancing in the foyers:

> Yeah, of course… the dancers that sometimes come in… mmmh, and they… I've seen them maybe two or three times, and then on level -1 and -2 by the mirrors and they're like swinging, swing dancers and they put on they always ask permission there, I think … but I think they don't ask the managers I think sometimes, they ask the cloakroom staff, which is just us, the hosts, and obviously like, we are just like, yeah. You know what I mean? Why not? (H6).

Another host mentions slightly more subversive uses of the space:

> Thinking about interactive things… You do, oh, on the foyers I quite enjoy things that people shouldn't do, like I've seen people sort of… things like people sort of scootering around level -1 when it's empty, like round and round… which is quite fun… some have their sort of weird seg-way type scooters…. Or sliding down bannisters, I think that's fun, sliding down bannisters… it's probably the most accessible foyer installation (H1).

The findings of this round of interviews with hosts show that the foyers and public space of the Barbican centre emerge as spaces of creative activity and everyday engagement, not just as engagement with the programmed artistic offerings, but as informal ways of engagement in self-organised creative activities:

> Yeah, the foyers are open like that, you know, to invite all walks of life to come and use it, and I think that's probably the route to why they do those foyer projects because they know all sorts of walks of life will walk through those foyers and maybe catch themselves surprised by something delightful that they didn't know existed in form of art (H3).

Foyers are spaces characterised by daily routines and durational projects. These include the Foyer projects' installations, timed public programming with varying frequency such as public events, Weekenders or concerts organised by the Barbican on the freestage, and private events booked by external clients such as graduations, conferences and exhibition fairs. Seen as 'an excellent facility' provided by the management of the Barbican or the City of London, where 'you can go and sit in the Barbican for… 8 to 11 … 12, 13, 14 hours…

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[17] - 8 references by 5 participants

[18] - 4 references by 3 participants

[19] - 3 references by 3 participants

with a comfort and do your studying, open space, and all, different levels, different areas you can sit there… constantly' (H12). Openness and freedom of use are seen as key: 'I think what's good about the foyer spaces is feeling free and relaxed to be able to sort of do whatever you want to do, that's quite nice, it's part of the welcoming atmosphere of what an arts centre should be, I think…' (H8). However, a set of tensions emerge from the data, between openness, accessibility and securitisation of space, the public and civic role and the use of private space in the arts centre, as discussed in the next section.

Mixed uses of space: private / public / commercial

It's important to note that there is almost zero public space in the City of London, except that provided by churches: the paucity of genuine public realm is striking (Grylls, 2018). Despite being a quasi-public space, the Barbican uses the terminology and encourages a public space-like behaviour. Many hosts recognise the accessibility of the Barbican as a 'privilege' and are 'amazed by […] how accessible the Barbican is'. Some hosts explain this by saying that their perception of space inside buildings is that such space is 'private' assuming that there are restrictions and regulations:

> maybe that's just psychologically because it's a building… rather than an outside space, so I would always consider if something is a building, then it's not technically public, because a building will shut at a certain time, and although it's free for the public to use […] I would always assume that there are certain restrictions and regulations (H10)

Given that foyers are publicly-accessible spaces but are also strategically seen as commercial assets because of shops, cafes, restaurants, but also private hire, another aspect that comes into the discussions and observations is to do with the role of space as public or private. As hosts explain, it is an aspect that is difficult to communicate to the public, as most people expect to come into the space and find it available for them to use. As one host puts it: 'the main difference is whether it's a public or a private event, that's the way the space would change mostly…' (H10), pointing to the fact that the nature of the events programmed or taking place in the foyers changes the dynamics of the spaces. Hosts describe 'moment(s) of tension' when private events are taking over the foyer spaces. One host says: 'there's always a tension when we have private events' (H10) or if the space is 'closed off […] that's a moment of tension' (H6). A few hosts describe feelings of irritation in members of the public when they discover that there's a private event, or they describe the situation as 'awkward' because, as it seems clear, people feel a sense of entitlement to the space, therefore complain when the foyers are closed off. As discussed earlier, people ask or look for space to use, mainly to 'do some work', so there seems to be a certain sense of 'ownership' over the space

that regular users develop. The tension between the space being perceived as private or public is exemplified by this phrase from another interview: 'Occasionally people ask if they can actually come in… is it a private space? Or a public space? Not very often, but I do get asked that…' (H9).

Linked to the previously discussed theme of people appropriating space to work and engage in creative activities, another theme that emerges from the data analysis is 'spatial power and control', pointing to a set of tensions between openness, accessibility and securitisation, and more generally a tension between the public/civic space and its private nature. Access and accessibility are recurrent words used by hosts when asked to describe how people use the space. One host describes the foyers as 'open like that, you know, to invite all walks of life to come and use it' (H3), whilst another host defines accessibility as 'a privilege […] but if it becomes closed because there's an event on, I find it strange that people feel entitled that they should still be able to get in…' (H10). Emerging from data analysis is also the overarching theme of spatial power, control and hierarchy – of spaces, departments, people as staff, people as audiences, ownership over spaces. A large part of the hosts' role is spatial management, from the basics of controlling queues to ensuring safety and surveilling the spaces to look for 'unaccepted behaviours'. As new behaviours appear in the space, there is always a delay for policies of space usage and management to catch up, and so there are grey areas of practice in terms of what is or is not accepted.

Despite the issue not being mentioned in my questions, many hosts have touched upon the theme of 'securitising space'[20], which is the second most prominent 'code' in the whole dataset. At the point of doing the interviews with hosts, this perception might have been intensified by heightened security measures put in place following a series of armed attacks in public spaces occurring in London in 2017. There is a perceived tension between foyer openness and securitisation, and their uses as public and private spaces.

> I don't think many people just walking on the street can find it... by accident … as a percentage… I don't know, but yeah, I think this last month is not representative... obviously they closed off the -1 foyer and the level 1 foyer, which are the spaces where audience members who are… who are homeless, or using the wifi or working, or eating their lunch, they've sort of... been pushed out of those spaces… but luckily, it's very sunny but it's completely empty (H1)

Participants point to how recent changes to do with security are affecting the job of hosts working in the centre, although this seems a 'temporary measure', seen as necessary by many,

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[20] - 10 out of 12 participants

given recent events. A host explains that 'the primary reason why we are there is to make sure that everybody is safe' (H2), but that this has an impact of the overall audience experience in that:

> you can't be yourself that much because you're told to be aware and alert and watching people in... I'd say the joy has slightly been taken out, but then I would say, to be honest, that's kind of the general feeling of living in London, over the past year or so.. not so much at the Barbican, kind of just the circumstance... and obviously audience safety is of paramount importance, but it just is a shame that there's a 100% focus on that, maybe 98% on that and only 2% focus on an actual experience that audience members are going to get... 'cause right now that's being completely stripped away... (H2)

The data suggests that participants sense a shift in terms of spatial management and regulations. Even though it was not part of my interview guide, hosts would bring up issues of health and safety and increased measures such as bag searches. Bag search policies have increased in the last three years (2015 – 2018) changing the nature of the hosts' role (14 references from 8 participants) and foyers were partially shut during the summer of 2017 (4 references by 3 participants). Bag search measures also have had an effect on the way people perceive the space: 'recently there's lots of tension because all this bag searching you have to do now…' (H9). It is not in the scope of this thesis to discuss issues of spatial security in arts and cultural spaces, which is arguably an emergent phenomenon and one that has not been widely discussed in the arts management and audience literature. However, especially large venues in urban contexts will increasingly face new challenges in terms of balancing spatial accessibility and securitisation: how this will affect audience experience and cultural participation is a question for future researchers. A few of the participants express their viewpoints on the temporary measures, saying that the increased security measures might threaten accessibility, but also have an impact on the free activities that are offered by the Barbican Centre: 'I guess it's keeping the balance… between safety and access' (H10) is how a host comments upon the current struggle of keeping the space 'as open as possible' and also making sure it is safe. What hosts seem to capture is that the 'increas(ing) the security presence … really changes the spirit of the foyers… (H1), but that this is a current necessary measure: 'there's going to be a lot of sensitivity about the roaming around the foyers and putting on free stuff for people to do… (H2).

In the next section, I discuss the role of hosts in managing the foyers, and the multiple facets of working front-of-house in a large urban arts centre with a multiplicity of diverse activities and publics.

The multifaceted role of hosting between service provision and affective labour

When I asked participants to describe their role in their own words, some of them had already through previous answers provided descriptive elements to explain 'what a host does'. Some of the themes connected to 'the role of hosting' have emerged from the conversations even when I wasn't directly asking about them. In their accounts of what working as hosts entails, participants describe a role that is multifaceted, involving tasks and activities that cover a range of themes, roughly clustered as follows: providing a functional/practical service; being able to understand and empathise; having embodied knowledge; representing the institution; identifying as an artist in an arts institution; other comments on the nature of the job and staff management. These are themes that do not necessarily match the job description, suggesting that a set of specific skills are needed but not overtly described in the job role.

> A host is a very good word, I think that's quite an interesting place to start, just the word host because it kind of brings up for me you're welcoming, or you're the person to go to that you know will accommodate your needs, whether it's practical or whether it's enjoyment, love or …anything like that so, I always say my role as a host is to ensure that the many different people that come in here experience it in a pleasant way and that can be quite different in approach […] that's why I don't say front-of-house, because you're there to assist… in all jobs you're there to assist in the fire evacuation, so that's functional, however, you're not just a bloke who stands by a door watching what the schools are doing. You know, sometimes it might be on a conference, or something, but particularly with Barbican Box, you actually get involved, they put hosts that will do that, and so, because they employ lots of people in hosts roles that are actors, musicians, are singers, curators, anything like that, doctors, you know, in philosophy maybe, I don't know... people who have an advanced understanding of the arts, and what it is like to be in and around it, are employed and you know …it's such a valuable resource to plonk someone like that working as a host in the room (…) Actually my career is a professional actor, then they realise why you're there then you know you get a real sense of fulfilment because you're not there just to stand by door in case the alarm goes off and of course, you get to see it all in the end and everything (H3).

This host highlights that having front-of-house staff trained as actors, musicians and in other creative professions is a 'valuable resource' for the institution, because such professionals 'have an advanced understanding of the arts'. What the host is suggesting here is that not only the cultural capital brought by hosts is valuable, but also their investment in the arts and creative industries, in that they bring their 'advanced understanding of the arts' and find 'a sense of fulfilment' in the job. The 'self-expressive' and 'passionate work' (McRobbie, 2002, 2016; DePalma, 2021) is a typical phenomenon of the new cultural economy, whereby work in the creative industries 'is experienced as profoundly satisfying and profoundly pleasurable' and is often experienced in terms of 'deep attachment, affective bindings' and 'self-actualisation' (Gill and Pratt, 2008). However, as some scholars have pointed out, labour in

the cultural and creative industries is often highly casualised and precarious (Oakley and O'Brien, 2016).

This host also explains why he would not use the term 'front-of-house' but instead the term 'host' because it reflects the engaged nature of the role. Some participants describe the role of the host as 'front-of-house' or 'usher' and they list a series of tasks such as providing information, answering questions (answering the same questions repeatedly), checking tickets, giving directions. Hosts are like a 'dispersed info point' and the second eyes (active observers) of the institution. Hosts are recruited for health and safety reasons, so mainly to control the space. What they do is observing, trying to understand what audience members or people want, search for, try to find. As many hosts have pointed out, despite being recruited on this basis, there is much more to their role which is to do with giving directions, directing people through the space, communicating to people what the Barbican is about:

> I mean, some people … they've never been here before, you know for example from the info point… and you're in front of the Advance Box office and for someone who hasn't been here before, so obviously you welcome them and you describe the building, and what it consists of, roughly, and the theatre, classical concert halls, there are cinemas, venues, the library and the art gallery, and all these venues, that are in the building… and then I used to get the monthly programme, open it out, tell them this is the index, that's on every dates, and the page, and the details is in the page number, which is in the index… you see, this is very important… (H12).

Health and safety and emergency, evacuation and security responsibilities, as well as checking the space, are mentioned by participants. These are very practical tasks, that have a repetitive element (this idea of repetition is suggested by the language used by hosts), and in fact two of the research participants refer to technology (such as screens) and signage as infrastructural aids that could help people navigate the spaces of the arts centre. One participant says 'this could be done with signage' and another host suggests the idea that an app with videos could help navigation, given that sometimes hosts have to give directions and repeat them many times.

One theme that could be connected to this and partly contradict the idea suggested by hosts that signage and navigation tools can help, is the theme of 'Barbican as very specific setting' which includes references to 'how confusing the building is' and that 'it was designed with the intention that people would wander around the space'. However, the spectrum of tasks covered by hosts is broad, ranging from more practical tasks, as said, to a personalised service performed at a very personal level. Alongside describing the host as a service/information/navigation provider, it is interesting to note that some participants

describe this service as 'engaged', at a physical, intellectual and human level. This excerpt from a participant's account seems to me to capture the concept quite meaningfully:

> 'hosting is a service but not in a way that, you know, you go to a petrol station and have your car, you know, serviced… it's more like you're more engaged in someone's experience, so you're almost quite involved even though you know you're not going to sit next to them in the cinema, watch the film with them you know'. (H3)

In this phrase, the affective and emotional labour involved in working in the experience economy is elicited by the host. Recurrent phrases used by hosts are 'listening, accommodating needs and offering help' as well as 'being friendly' and smiling, welcoming to everyone, making sure the person will have a positive experience, which all suggest affective elements. 'Affective' is a word that we commonly use in the everyday to refer to 'people, places or things that make us feel in a certain way'. The descriptions that the hosts give can be contextualised in the literature on affective investment in the cultural economy. There is a growing literature on 'the economy of smiles' (Gerrard, 2019) in the service industry (Farrugia, Threadgold and Coffey, 2018) and creative economy, and the creative industries conceptualised as a 'passion industry' (McRobbie, 2002, 2016; Bennett, 2018; DePalma, 2021). Within this framework, workers' passions, investment in the arts and creativity are capitalised upon at the service of corporate interests, and the performance of passion is systematised, requiring workers to internalise business values. As pointed out by Bennett (2018), passionate work is emotional labour:

> ratcheted up and channelled through the individualisation demanded by the chaotic neoliberal cultures of the 2000s. The inevitable gap between unceasing demand and the finite resources that each worker has to supply must be filled, notionally, by something – "passion" (Couldry and Litter 2011 in Bennett, 2018, p. 446).

One host talks about 'being representative of the institution' and when asked what they bring in from their background, some of the recurrent answers refer to things such as 'empathy' 'being human is enough', 'understanding how people are feeling', 'artists having an incredible amount of empathy'. There is an affective dimension of the institution that hosts seem to perform, consciously or unconsciously, negotiating between practical/functional tasks and being involved in the audience members' experience. The role of hosts in performing the affective side of the institution aligns with the experience economy need for staged experiences.

> Well, I think that would come organically. Because… even as an actor you need voice, so you need knowledge, you need information you need to know what you're doing, you need to be effective if you're playing a role… in the same way, if you're a host, you still need …so I think actor and host come to marry each other… because both disciplines need to be on voice and communication skills, effective, articulate and straight to the point, and need the right information and the updated

information… and so, in a sense, both of those fields of endeavours marry each other…. so yes, that's what I think, yeah…(H4)

Another aspect that emerges through the interviews is how the affective side of the institution is performed by hosts, through the uniform and branding but also their 'being artists' and highly invested in the arts.

> I think you actually do bring in a fair amount of what you've learnt training… because, I mean, it's a bit corny, but being an actress you're being watched and you allow people to watch you …you know... on stage, you allow that to happen… and even though actresses can be shy, or confident, or whatever, you do participate in the language of people staring at you… and you accept it. So I think that does help in terms of being a host, when you're shouting over a massive audience, you know, 'You all need to make sure that you have your bags ready, la la la' you know, I don't have any problems with doing that… and I think maybe if I didn't have the theatre training, I might be a bit more reserved perhaps… you know… (H2)
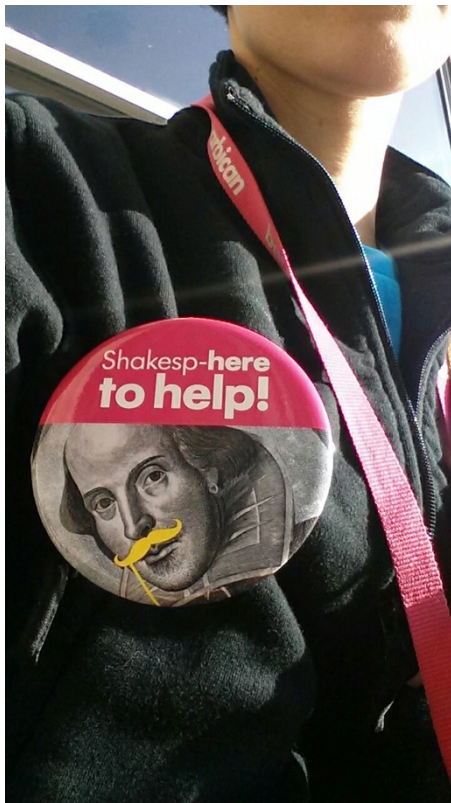
Figure 5 - Working as a Host, Barbican Weekender 2015

Figure 6- Working as Architecture tour guide, Barbican Lakeside 2017

Paradoxically, Audience Experience Hosts, who are the first level of encounter of the institution with its publics, do not seem to have necessarily been informed about 'official strategies' directly, according to their responses, but many of them declare to embody those values and strategies partly by having picked them up as they worked at the centre for a long time. This could mean that hosts absorb the institutional language, strategies, values, but most of it is built over time, is accumulated, as 'embodied knowledge' which seems to suggest that the governmentality of 'total quality experience' has been internalised and is performed by hosts by virtue of being in the space.

When I say the 'affective side of the institution' I refer not just to the physical space, but also to the physical bodies employed by the institution to represent itself with the general public. Hosting can be conceptualised as 'affective labour' that has to do with human interactions in which feelings and emotions are involved. Depending on how proactive hosts decide to be, they can establish a relationship with the person and being operative at the level of empathy, as mentioned by some hosts. Learning about the space and knowing about the centre and its requirements seem to be identified as knowledge that is built over time, and those hosts who say they are more confident ascribe that to the time spent inside the building. In terms of cultural capital, hosts say that 'being interested in the arts, active interest, knowing what's going on, etc.' help them on the job.

<u>Being an artist</u>

A recurrent theme is the participants' identification as artists. 8 out of 12 participants identify as being artists, from practising musicians to actors to visual arts practitioners, although just one of them identifies as a 'professional'. 'Being an artist' seems to be very much part of the identity of hosts, and some of them draw links and connections between their artistic background and/or practice and their work as hosts. In my question 'what do you draw upon for your work as a host? What knowledge do you bring in?' I have in some cases referred to hosts being also practising artists, but the theme had most of the times already emerged in the conversation. Interest in the arts and therefore knowledge of the programming seems to be another important theme. Being interested ('having an advanced understanding of the arts'), 'more familiar' or appreciative of the kind of arts and public programming that the Barbican offers. In some cases, being an artist was linked by participants with being able to empathise and understand human behaviour. Three different participants describe 'empathy' and ability to 'empathise' as crucial for being a good host:

> 'just have to be, you know, human is enough, when you're talking to another human who's had a bad day […] if you don't kind of empathise with that, and understand that they're just as, you know, you're just as human as they are… […] you know it's like companies really like getting customer satisfaction surveys done, because they get this sort of answers, or complaints… and they get this sort of things, but people aren't always willing to fill those in, you know, whereas hosts are an invaluable resource for these sort of thing, because we hear it from the horse's mouth and if enough of us say the same thing, then they'll put a strategy in place to deal with what effectively the audiences are directly telling the hosts… (H3)

> 'but a lot of it, what it comes down to, is do just, being someone who's quite friendly and quite kind of, just someone who can who can empathise with people or relate to the way, to what they might be experiencing...' (H8)

> 'I'd say like, people skills, which the majority I feel artists… I'd say empathy, I'd say artists have an incredible amount of empathy, not as a big generalisation, but maybe compared to the average person whatever that means' (H6).

'Everyday participation', destination marketing and the politics of urban public spaces

To conclude, I would like to recall Gurian's observation that 'the foyer is more than a foyer' which is an important point confirmed by this study. Gurian observes that investigating the foyers and the complexity of thresholds in museums and other arts institutions involves much more than just looking at the 'membrane between the museum and the outside world' but it is 'about the functions of the institution itself, its philosophy and mission' (Gurian in: Parry, Page and Moseley, 2018, pp. xv–xvi). Going back to the initial question that motivated

the study: How are, then, discourses about audiences and cultural participation mediated in the foyers of the Barbican Centre? To an extent, it can be said that foyers allow the emergence of different discourses of audiences and participation by expanding them beyond the institutional frames defined in the annual reports. If audiences in the reports are mainly counted in terms of numbers of ticketed audiences in the main venues, and participation as engagement with those activities programmed by the arts institutions, the study on the foyers demonstrates that there are other concurrent discourses. On the one hand, discourses of audiences as everyday non-ticketed users, and of 'everyday participation'; on the other hand, discourses of audiences as commercial customers hiring space, and participation as 'place consumption' through destination marketing. The juxtaposition of these discourses sums up many of the challenges faced by arts institutions today in imagining their civic role, particularly through their use of public space as performing a civic function, whilst also generating income.

I started with the idea of exploring the foyers of the arts centre as a unique and relatively neglected site of research. I assumed the foyers as the spaces of maximum openness of the institution by virtue of them being the most accessible of spaces. The same applies for hosts (as animateurs of the foyer), not just because they are the first level of encounter between the institution and its publics, but also because, as individuals performing the institutional role, there is a certain 'freedom' in their ways of communicating institutional messages. The Barbican Centre's foyers, more specifically, are an example of public-private spaces: they largely function as publicly-accessible areas, but they are officially owned, managed and controlled by the City of London through the management of the arts centre. Whilst they allow a diversity of people, uses, behaviours, and ideas to circulate, the access to these space is conditional upon the regulations established by its owner.

One of the trends emerging from the data is the use of public spaces in the arts centre for a variety of different purposes, such as working, studying, dancing or rehearsing creative activities. The findings seem to point to a blurring of the boundaries between leisure time, flexible work and cultural engagement, whereby people engage in a mix of undefined activities that can potentially fall into all these categories: using a space traditionally understood as a space for the arts, repurposing it for knowledge exchange, creative activities and self-organised gatherings. The idea that the arts centre is not just strictly a space devoted to artistic engagement, but that allows a broader spectrum of activities to take place, is substantiated by observations of behavioural patterns and everyday interactions, that represent alternative ways of engagement and participation. However, these types of

engagement are more difficult to identify and measure, and often fall 'outside' the boundaries of measurements and evaluations set by funding bodies. People using the foyers to gather, interact and engage in informal activities are actively taking part in everyday forms of participation. Yet despite this they are not understood as such within the discourse of 'engagement participation into the mainstream' as articulated in the annual reports.

As Miles and Gibson (2016) argue, in cultural policy and state-funded cultural programming towards participation:

> there is an orthodoxy of approach to cultural engagement which is based on a narrow definition (and understanding) of participation, one that focuses on a limited set of cultural forms, activities and associated cultural institutions but which, in the process, obscures the significance of other forms of cultural participation which are situated locally in the everyday realm (p.151).

By highlighting the variety of informal and self-organised activities taking place in the foyers beyond the Barbican programming, the foyers could be seen as spaces that allow forms and modes of everyday participation off the participation spectrum. This recognition demonstrates the limitations of models and spectrums of participation in measuring what happens 'at the thresholds'. It also suggests that such activities are somewhat 'invisible' to the institution, unless they clash with existing events or programmes, because their value is not measured in official evaluation frameworks. In the case of the Barbican, however, with the establishment of the foyer Projects and their evaluation, more attention has been paid even to these peripheral activities that arguably contribute to making the arts centre into a complex 'cultural ecology' (Holden, 2015).

To an extent, 'everyday engagement and creative activities' informally taking place in the spaces of the arts centre could also be understood as expressions of 'cultural democracy', challenging established understandings of what constitutes 'cultural value'. Such evaluation of the foyers reinforces a discourse of the civic role of arts organisations, which has recently seen a re-emergence thanks to research commissioned by the Calouste-Gulbenkian foundation (2016). Within this discursive frame, the foyers can be seen as evidence of the civic role of the arts centre, given that 'One of the most basic ways that building-based organisations can maintain their civic role is ensuring that their buildings are free to enter and use' (Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 2016, p. 24). Therefore, one of the ways in which the Barbican Centre performs its civic role is by providing space that can be inhabited, informally used and appropriated for different purposes by people, without necessarily framing it as such. However, the discourse of the civic role through public spaces is challenged and contradicted by other existing discourses and institutional agendas, such as

the commercialisation of space and its nature of quasi-public space, but also the transformation of public spaces through destination marketing. These discourses can be lumped together as an expression of the wider trend of neoliberalisation of cultural policy (McGuigan, 2005; Hesmondhalgh *et al.*, 2014) and cultural institutions (Alexander, 2018; Ekström, 2020), whereby marketisation of the arts and a growing sense of managerialism have become dominant trends in British arts institutions.

Use of space in arts institutions is increasingly for commercial functions because there is a need to generate income. It is clear from the interviews that the extent to which these diverse activities are tolerated in the space depend on the context. The foyers can be hired by private clients, and in these circumstances public access is restricted. Commercial events have more than doubled between 2011 and 2018, increasing from 207 in 2011/12 to 455 in 2017/18. There is no public data about how these events are distributed across the spaces, and it is the case that many of these events happen in spaces that tend to be used as commercial venues (i.e. Conservatory, Frobisher Rooms) and are therefore not publicly accessible. However, a significant proportion of them (i.e. graduations, large commercial exhibitions) occur in spaces that would otherwise be publicly-accessible such as the foyers. With such a notable increase in commercial events, it is reasonable to deduce this also means an increase in the number of occasions when the public access to the foyers is restricted. These events generate revenue, and so this doubling of commercial events signals an increasing conflict over the use of foyer space. In some cases, public access might depend on new regulations, or health and safety requirements. The decision to refurbish the foyers and provide tables that people can use when no other events are on, signal an institutional interest in increasing footfall of non-ticketed audiences coming in to do their work and use the free-wifi. But dancers coming in to rehearse might one day find the space available, and the day after find the space shut down. The contested and conflicted uses of space mean there is no guarantee that these diverse activities can continue.

By looking at the findings on how many people work and rehearse in the space, foyers also become a reflection on the urban cultural economy: more space for creative activities is needed, but also more visibility is sought by artists and creatives. This points to the changing role of arts centres and within cultural venues, a need for spaces that can be used by people to create and make things in the everyday. This phenomenon of repurposing the arts centre as working/creative space 'affordable by everyone' can also be understood and explained in the wider context of socio-political trends characterising urban cultural economies, such as an increasing pressure on space but also the emergence of new forms of organisation of

workforce and urban labour and new socio-material infrastructures in cities, such as co-working spaces (Merkel, 2019). An important question to be asked is whether and how the programmed artistic offerings link to these 'other', often self-organised activities such as 'dance sessions in the foyers'. Moreover, there are managerial implications of re-configuring arts spaces into 'third places', such as a as a drop-in centre for work, creative activities and socialisation. In the literature there are arguments for and against informality and everyday participation, which point to the challenges faced by arts institutions increasingly requested to perform different roles. Beside raising this set of questions, this chapter demonstrates the significant potential in foyer culture that must be considered in any discussion of this area.

The multiple uses of space also highlight the nature of the Barbican foyers as quasi-public spaces: they offer a conditional entrance, but they are not fully public. People who are deemed to be engaging in loitering or so-called anti-social behaviour can be removed from the premises. Moreover, the richness of value brought by informal activities is in the long term potentially threatened by the fact that the foyers themselves are increasingly used as commercial assets to generate income. Already existing as a very exclusive space due to its location in the financial City, its historical identification with classical music and Shakespearian theatre, and its specific management by the Corporation of London, the Barbican risks losing its inner life if diverse publics are threatened from entering and using the space. Having explored the eyes and ears on the ground of the institution, the next chapter investigates how the management constructs discourses.

Site-writing 3 - The Directors' office

So here I am. I am standing by a glass door, deciding when to ring the bell into the Directors' office. I walked past this almost invisible door so many times, coming from the highwalks to go into a briefing before a shift, running a bit late as I just got changed in the Roadway. First, I have actually made it – I am here. After a year and a half of research, I have been invited to informally share initial findings from my research in the Wednesday programming meeting – I enter the space I've only been in a few times, always feeling slightly awkward for not quite knowing how to start some small talk with the people in the open plan area. Of the many faces in the room, I have met a few before. There's a line-up of presentations, of different upcoming projects across the centre. I have been given 5 minutes to present my initial findings and next steps, then another 5 minutes for questions. Initially I had prepared for a 20 minute presentation, but – I tell myself – it's understandable they had to make it shorter, everyone here is very busy, tight schedules, I'd better get a few slides ready with the key messages and use the time in the best possible way. It's July, quite a warm day, I'm carrying a bag with all my notes. The space lets a lot of light in, some people are sitting around the long table and others are scattered on the sofa and the chairs available. Sandwiches have been ordered in for lunch, they're passed around and people start eating, whilst the presentations start. Then it's my turn, I have prepared the 5 minutes, and I have presented so many times before, so it's all fine. Yet, I feel a sense of physical discomfort – of being in the wrong place. I wish we could actually have an informal conversation, I would probably be able to say things I would like to say. About being a host, about what that feels like, about the difference between this Office and the Roadway, where hosts get changed before a shift. There are some questions, then a few people say they'd like to have another chat, to get in touch to arrange another meeting. When I leave I have the feeling of having just crashed a party of people who all know each other and speak with the same accent. Mine is different. I didn't take notes, I didn't want to be noticed except for my presentation, but I was observing and taking in the ambience, the smooth chats, the office vibe, the familiarity with which someone would say: 'I love your shoes' to someone else. I mostly felt paralysed in observation. I wish I could have shaken off that sense of paralysis. I am thinking about John Law when he writes about the ethnographer's anxiety: 'What does an ethnographer do? I worried about this a lot. Partly it was a matter of measuring myself against an ordering idea – that of the ideal ethnographer. Such a creature would have been more energetic, made more phone calls, been more sociable, and have had a better memory' (Law, 1994, p. 43).

Chapter 7. Managerial discourses on audiences

Introduction

This chapter compares and contrasts managers' conceptions of foyers and audiences with those of hosts. In arts marketing terms, the notion of the audience tends to be used as a simple, monolithic term, or sometimes in sectional terms, for example with demographic data based on gender, class, ethnic origin. However, spatialising this notion into a specific institution such as the Barbican Centre shows how many complex and multiple layers this notion can entail. Who is part of the audience? Is anyone coming through the building of an arts centre or a museum part of the audience? Or is an audience just inside a specific arts venue like a theatre or concert hall?

In order to explore the overarching question 'How does the Barbican Centre think about audiences?', I interviewed managers across different departments, on topics of audiences and spaces. This chapter presents the key findings that emerged from the interview study conducted with managers and directors who work on planning, managing or programming the foyers. The scope of this study, carried out as the final stage of my fieldwork, was to identify what kind of discourses are employed institutionally to talk about audiences: from operations and venue management, to marketing, planning and programming. In interviewing managers, I used the angle of the Barbican foyers and recent changes that have occurred in these spaces, to explore various conceptions of audiences and their underlying discourses. In the final section of Chapter 5, I have introduced some of the recent changes that occurred in the context of the Barbican, with projects such as the Incubator, Level G and the Annual Themes being established. It is important to bear those changes in mind as they are mentioned in many instances in the interviews with managers.

Who are the audiences? Different conceptions and discourses

Audiences are increasingly taking priority in arts institutions' strategies and public communications, arguably replacing rationales such as 'artistic excellence'. Within this shift, which has been on the rise for the last two decades, audience development, engagement and participation have become more prominent in institutional agendas, and this could be linked to the participatory turn in cultural policy discussed in the literature. As this manager says:

The next (priority) is about (…) renewing and rethinking the relationship with the audience: ticketed, non-ticketed, young people, existing audience and future audience (M10).

However, as it's clear from the list after the word 'audience' in the manager's speech, the key challenge for a large arts centre such as the Barbican, when thinking about audiences, is how to identify who the audiences are: to define the scope of audiences. Who is part of the audience and who is not is a contested idea: are audiences only those already existing, those who buy a ticket? Are potential future attendees part of the audience as well? These are pressing questions for arts centres, museums and other arts institutions, at a time in which they not only have to compete in the cultural marketplace alongside digital platforms and new forms of entertainment, but they are also requested to articulate their value in terms of both numbers, quality metrics and social impact to justify funding, either from the public purse or from other funders.

As a manager explains, the relationships with audiences poses questions about the purpose of the arts centre more broadly:

'…critically how we keep thinking about who this (the centre) is for and of course we have to think about core audiences, but the purpose of an arts and cultural centre which has an amazing range of activity including commercial activity, you know, it's all there but it's how we bring that to the surface. And can tell a strong narrative (…)' (M5)

In this instance, the relationship between the institution, referred to as 'we', and its audiences, is constructed as one-way, whereby it is implied that the institution needs to generate a 'strong narrative' that audiences are seen as passive recipients of, not necessarily as participants. The motivation given for that is 'so people have a strong sense of who we are and what we do when they walk into the building whether they're coming to see something whether they're just in the space and equally people on the website, you know' (M5). This suggests a fixed idea of institutional brand, that has to be defined so the audience ('they') can have a strong sense of what the institution is offering. To an extent, the discourse of 'strong' brand as constructed from within appears to be almost defensive, and resonates with Lindelof's critique of audience development as reproducing a one-way, top-down institutional perspective, without calling into question why attendance, participation and the performing arts matter (Lindelof, 2015, p. 207).

The idea of audience segmentation in this sense fulfils the institutional perspective on audiences. In this passage, the manager already provides a breakdown of audiences, based on how they are reached: learning programmes, arts programming and 'becoming more of a

destination' are seen as distinct areas of audience reach. The other distinction that is clear in this phrase is amongst types of audiences:

> You know, the people we reach through our learning programs, the people we reach through our arts programming, the people you reach through us becoming more and more of a destination, the people we interface with in this immediate community increasingly because of Culture Mile and the interface with the residents (M5).

In this snapshot alone, the concept of audience loses its monolithic quality and becomes a more expanded notion that is defined by modes of engagement, behaviour and modes of attendance, as well as, crucially, by locality and proximity to a venue. These elements complicate a monolithic notion of 'audience' and expand its understandings, but at the same time produce new segmentations of audiences. The necessity to understand these different audiences is one of the main reasons why organisations conduct audience segmentation, and various methods have been developed for these purposes. This is usually a technique used to segment existing or potential audiences into target groups, based on motivations of attendance, behaviour, taste, and other, more sophisticated criteria such as psychographics (Morris Hargreaves Mcintryre, 2020). Audience segmentation methods are generally underpinned by audience development and arts marketing rationales: to sell more tickets and expand the audience base, to enrich existing audiences' experience, to reach out to new potential audiences. Rarely, however, those labelled as cultural non-participants are considered and segmented as they are not in the first place seen as potential audiences within segmentation frameworks. This work offers a more fluid, dynamic and interactional angle onto audiences and foyers, by considering non-ticketed visitors as everyday participants. At the time of my interview study, the Barbican had just commissioned a large piece of audience segmentation research, both on ticketed and non-ticketed audiences. The new research on non-ticketed visitors is referred to by many of the managers in their responses, as will be explained later.

Audience development: growing audiences, making money

As discussed in the literature, the prominent discourse of audience development took shape in relation to ideas of democratisation of culture and the deficit model of cultural engagement (Kawashima, 2006; O'Brien, 2014; Stevenson, 2019). In the institutional context, the need to rethink relationships with the audience is connected to the broader strategic aim of audience development which is a key strategic goal in the Barbican Business Plan. This is how a Manager describes it:

> we want to grow audiences in terms of the reach, but also we need to make more money as well.. […] But also we need to, we need to retain, you know, we need to

keep an eye on access as well. And I think also the trends are that the audience expect a more responsive approach. They expect to be listened to more […] they want to in some cases a more proactive and closer relationship and a more human relationship with the audience because at the moment, although there are talks and things where we do meet the audience, quite often our interaction with the audience is in responding to letters of complaint. So you will sort of respond because someone is discontent, rather than ask someone who is content why they are content (M10).

This excerpt captures the dilemma faced by many arts and cultural institutions that are both asked to widen their audiences, and to demonstrate financial sustainability. The quote is interesting seen in contrast with the concept of strong institutional narrative put forward by another manager (M5), as it takes into account a trend towards a more dialogic approach to audiences, a more responsive and listening approach. Nevertheless, even in this case the institution is constructed as 'we' and the audience as 'they' which suggests a discrepancy with literature pushing the discourse of participatory institutions. In this circumstance, the Manager admits that the majority of audience interactions involve 'responding to letters of complaint' instead of asking questions and establishing a dialogue about audiences finding contentment. Audience development, as Hadley (2017) argues, remains a sectoral mantra. In the interviews, respondents don't question why they need to grow audiences, this is simply normalised suggesting that an implicit discourse of democratisation of 'excellent art' is at play in the arts institution. The challenge identified is how to balance out the different agendas and priorities that are at play: audience growth and reach, income generation, access, institutional responsiveness to audiences, need to increase opportunities for participation.

The Manager also says that 'more feedback from the audience' is needed and that 'we' (the institution) need to look at increasing the opportunities for participation:

> We feel that there is an appetite for us to offer more insight into the process, and revealing sort of hidden part of the creative process. The foyers have done that partly, with sort of open residencies where people can see an artist actually working. Then there's a sense of this being a live arts venue, a sense of togetherness, a sense of human contact. We want to get more feedback from the audience, of course the research has done that, but maybe there's more real time feedback we can get. Technology might be a part of that. And we need to look at increasing the opportunities for participation. And sort of this phrase "everyday creativity" that is being used by Culture Mile as well (M10).

The underlying discourses are the marketing-infused discourse of audience development, 'growing audiences' in size as well as the deficit discourse of cultural participation ('keeping an eye on access' and 'increasing the opportunities for participation'). To a certain extent, there is also an element of the liberal Humanist vision of culture and the arts as universal human values, the 'culture is good for all' idea: 'this being a live arts venues, a sense of

togetherness, a sense of human contact…'. Finally, the phrase 'everyday creativity' is mentioned by the Manager. It strikes me that this is a phrase that I have used in my initial analysis of the hosts' interviews, to indicate the variety of activities happening in the Foyers. 'Everyday' is a phrase that has entered arts discourses more consistently in recent years. However, when combined with the ubiquitous term 'creativity', it is not clear what it stands for. It functions as a floating signifier, which could indicate a variety of activities, from having a coffee to going to a classical music concert in the foyers. It is worth noticing that marketing material advertising Culture Mile is increasingly using this phrase (Culture Mile, 2020b), as the Manager also mentions. As we have seen, in the literature there is a growing field of research on 'everyday participation' which encompasses activities that happen informally and that are not necessarily funded by ACE. The proposal of the Understanding Everyday Participation project is precisely to question the definition of culture that state institutions affirm, and to investigate 'other forms' of cultural participation that people are valuing in the first place. The Understanding Everyday Participation study has expanded the notion of participation outside institutional funding frameworks (Miles and Gibson, 2016). Therefore, the use of this term and the term 'everyday creativity' in institutional contexts, suggests a clever use of terms to signal informality, but in a tightly constructed brand exercise. Nevertheless, the use of terms 'participation' and 'everyday creativity' in a large institutional context tends to refer to people taking part in activities that are programmed by the institution itself - and that can be found listed on the website under 'Take Part' (Barbican Centre, 2020b). What the Understanding Everyday Participation project reinstates is that participation needs to be understood as a situated practice, in relation to places which have their own histories of local governance and funding models. In the context of the City of London Corporation and an institution like the Barbican, the term participation has had a place in strategies, but participatory modes of governance have not been necessarily tested internally. I would argue that this has to do with the institutional history and specific nature of its governing local authority, but also has to do with the nature of the space as public-private, which I will return to later.

This is to say that conceptions of audience and audience development are further complicated by the introduction of new terms. However, how is audience development understood and who is in charge of it? A Manager says that audience development should be part of every strategic plan, and that audience development is part of what everybody does, and that it's not just about audiences but the wider public:

> We have the strategic plan. But every year we go back to it. At the moment we're
> saying, the vision and mission stay the same, we still feel there's work to be done on

this and the objectives but the strategic project behind it, we review. Which ones do we need to keep going? Which we start with new ones? We need to make things happen. And all of that is about refreshing our approach to our programming, our arts and learning work, our approach to audiences, the wider public, income generation etc., etc. The other bits, you know, it's not happened yet, but I think we will think about audience development. Is that something that we started having just as the fifth of the five (strategic aims) or whatever and it's actually it's just part of what everyone does. We never stop thinking about that and from my point of view, it shouldn't just be about audiences. It's just the wider public, and public engagement (M5).

In this case the Manager introduces a new phrase: 'public engagement' (m5), which interestingly is not mentioned by any other Manager. As it appears, this phrase is still emergent within the organisation and across the arts sector (Stallings and Mauldin, 2016). This is possibly due to the fact that it is not officially part of the strategic plan: it hasn't been imported in the organisational discourse. On the other hand, audience development is the most recurrent term in use, and as I ask about it, mentioning that this is one of the five strategic objectives in the Business Plan, managers describe it in different guises. Managers tend to attach their own agenda to the audience development notion and strategic goal, in this way transforming audience development into an 'empty signifier'. As a Manager describes it, it is a slippery and shifting notion:

Although everyone has, in a way everyone has a responsibility for audience development [...] it's a very vague term really, as in like... anytime you do it, anytime you do anything which invites the public into your building, it's audience development (M3).

The Manager goes on to explaining that any project has a potential for audience development, even commercial and business event, or people logging into the wifi:

that would be audience development then, because then you are actually, you're trying to reach new audiences, but we don't ...we don't do that. We don't even really treat most of our concerts or theatre events, like, you know we don't treat them as audience development, we don't... we don't put an extra effort to try and make it more accessible or to reach a different audience, which I think is audience development (M3).

Audience development is also seen as 'quite patronising':

...I think also the other thing with audience development [...] is that is quite patronising to assume audiences will respond in a certain way, because you don't know them, right, so it's quite patronising to say "let's put on a grime concert because that will bring in young black people from London", especially 'cause we know at the Barbican it would probably bring in a young white audience, because, you know... so don't, don't, essentially condescend your audience by trying to trick them into coming, or trying to kind of, it's a little too... it just doesn't work like that... by all means programme that thing, but then don't still be annoyed if they don't come, because you, because maybe they prefer to go to another venue to see that same kind

of music, or maybe they don't like going to big theatres full stop, you know, they'd rather go see Shakespeare at the Globe, or go to see classical music in a pub, we're just never going to be that place, so I think that, when you put the numbers first you end losing out on all of that thinking... (M3)

This resonates with the Understanding Everyday Participation project, which recognises that the historical perception of the institution has an effect on the kind of audiences that the institution is able to attract, even when changing the programming. Kawashima's distinction between product-led and target-led approaches states that audience development can be done either by changing the programme, and therefore attracting a new audience interested in it, or in trying to attract a new audience to engage with an established artistic programming. Yet, the manager suggests this is not as simple as it might appear, and that it is not just about programming a grime concert in the Barbican concert hall, because it might attract a new audience, but not necessarily the new audience that the institution is trying to attract. Moreover, it is acknowledged that spaces play a role in audiences' decisions, in that certain audiences might prefer to see classical music in a more informal context, like a pub.

By expanding the remit of what audience development is employed in relation to, the notion loses specificity. In some cases, managers choose to shift the focus on other terms or phrases, often referring to unchallenged assumptions behind the use of audience development. For example, this manager expresses discomfort at the implication that audiences need developing, and is more comfortable with the term 'engagement':

> It's how you do build relationships, and that's what engagement is really, and that's why I think … and that's why I prefer audience engagement rather than audience development, 'cause I think audience development makes me feel uncomfortable, there's no, those audiences they don't need developing *(laughs)*, it's the organisation that needs developing (M2).

This comment resonates with Lindelof's provocative suggestion that it is institutions that need developing, not audiences (Lindelof, 2015). This point of critique to institutional workings is reflected in what another manager identifies as the need to engage in a reflexive process as an organisation, linking audience development to equality and inclusion, and that the attitude has to be 'focusing on yourself or your colleagues' to become more inclusive:

> I think that this is a challenge and I think really that that's a key part of the way I think about audience development, or equality and inclusion more generally, which is that you, the attitude has to be, focusing on yourself or your colleagues, the way that you work, and asking yourself every day, or every time you have a decision to make, am I making this ... is it my aim here to be more inclusive? […] so I think it's never ending, it will actually be never ending, that is kind of the unfortunate thing about wanting to reach the widest possible audience, is that it could always go wider, and also the audience, the potential audience is always changing, so people are

coming, and leaving, coming into London, leaving London, like the demographics of London are changing, constantly, and are becoming more and more ethnically diverse, and younger, as time moves on.. so, your widest possible audience is literally doing this *(gesturing with hands)* constantly, is like narrowing and widening, you know, so I think that you kind of, if you get wrapped up in who they are, you'll never really know what you're... if you're doing well or not anyway. It's tricky, 'cause no one likes to hear that, 'cause then they think then how am I going to report on this? That's like the major challenge... (M3).

This is an interesting quote, because the discussion focuses on the way institutions work internally, and the challenges of being committed to change in terms of equality and inclusion. It then moves onto demographics, with an implicit critique on the impossible task of segmentation, and the point that 'the widest possible audience' is constantly narrowing and widening. To 'reach out to the widest possible audience' in the context of London is described as a constantly shifting target. Strikingly, only some of the managers raise the question of audience diversity, and mention the constantly shifting nature of the London population. In relation to this theme, only one of the managers I interviewed indicates that the perceived 'diversity' of audiences coming into the foyers needs to be questioned, and challenges me on my assertion that the foyers are a space where a diversity of audiences hang out:

> Let's be honest . . . I mean, you know London exists in a bubble in the wider world - and even within London, the Barbican exists in a bubble. And the arts rightly or wrongly - I think wrongly - are perceived as very educated middle-class pursuits. So, I don't think a huge variety of people in general come through the Barbican. I would say instead that a large variety of people from a certain segment of society come through the doors.... (M14)

There is a desire and commitment to be critically and socially engaged from the side of some managers, and these are often the most interesting and insightful conversations, where tensions in their work are made visible, rather than being clothed in strategic management talk. However, none of the managers addresses the question of the diversity of the workforce, although this has become a strategic objective in the new Strategic plan (City of London Corporation, 2019).

In respect to audience development, a major tension that is made explicit in the interviews and discussed by many of the managers is its relationship with the income generation goal, and how to balance this with access and accessibility. As a manager says: 'we need to make more money out of the audiences, but we need to remain accessible' (M10). These tensions between the equality and inclusion agenda on the one hand, and the income generation agenda on the other, are perceived at strategic levels, as evidenced by managers directly

expressing the need to balance out the imperative to generate more income whilst securing accessibility. The income generation priority is also countered by the need to remain accessible, as another manager puts it:

> …very broadly put, the fact that we need to make more money out of the audiences, but we also need to remain accessible. We need our foyers to make some money, but they also need to be civic space where people don't feel that the minute they walk in, they are expected to open their purse. So, there's always going to be a tension for that, always has been... […] A tension between what we can sell to an audience and how the audience has a right to be a part of what we do even if they don't buy a ticket, I guess... For me, actually one member of my team […] was saying yesterday: "we shouldn't have those people working on the foyers. We shouldn't allow people to bring in food from elsewhere. We shouldn't..." but how do you stop it? I don't think you can stop it. It's a public space. So that public space has to be welcoming for the public, for people... members of the public. Whether they buy anything or not (M10).

This quote brings to the surface the existing dilemma between the Liberal Humanist discourse of the audience as citizens to be educated as opposed to the neoliberal discourse of audience as customer and consumers, and the new hybrid of the participant citizen-consumer and emergent publics in a changing cultural economy. Here the Manager carefully explains that it is a fine balance between different priorities and strategic aims, in this case accessibility and income generation. Whilst the ideal of accessibility is grounded in the post-war discourse of democratisation of culture, the 'need to make money' is a reflection of processes of neoliberalisation of culture and the adoption of arts marketing and New Public Management logics within a publicly funded organisation.

Moreover, as discussed by managers, the different uses of foyer spaces and discussions of 'tenancy lines' that define the private and public uses of the foyers show that internal tensions and competing priorities exist in relation to public programming and public spaces:

> […] but the two ones that probably are the most pertinent, are the ones about audience development which I've mentioned and also, um, kind of mixed income generation. Um, so we have a very strong kind of brand. Our brand value is arts without boundaries. […] And so the annual themes, things like the art of change are really easy way of us being able to say, actually this is what the Barbican is about as a whole. Rather than these, kind of little events. So we've done a lot of work around the art of change, to try and make people realise that the Barbican is relevant and to really push that message of what the Barbican is, which is arts without boundaries and kind of push that up. So, the vast majority of the work we do is about selling tickets,… and so it's making sure that the work that is done to sell those tickets unifies itself under the kind of arts without boundaries, and all ladders up to the wider brand objectives. So that is, it's not just, Barbican theatre doing something over here, the Barbican art gallery doing something over here... That together if you see an advert that's for a gig or for a theatre show or for an art gallery, that that would all be unified and to change perceptions and kind of rising up to a bigger objective (M12).

Audience engagement is the other slippery term that pops up a lot in the interviews: it is discussed by a Manager: 'this question of engagement is really complex'. There is an attempt to reframe engagement as a non-transactional relationship between the arts institution and the audiences. For example, one of the managers highlights that there's a lot of 'brilliant work going on with marketing about engaging our audiences' and that the relationship is not 'just a transaction' but actually:

> engagement, dialogue… it's getting them on that engagement ladder if you like with us, turning them from a visitor to an advocate and that journey is an investment journey (M17).

Another manager interprets the Marketing approach as:

> to convert a one-timer into someone who's going to become a member, about the purchasing power (M2)

and highlights a contrast with:

> creating those conversations with people, it isn't about treating people like data, although data is important (M2).

As evidenced by these quotes, notions of audience development and engagement appear contested and can be attached to different strategic goals, concealing underlying discourses. Particularly, the two key underlying discourses are those of access, equality and inclusion on the one hand, and that of income generation on the other hand. The site of public foyers is where these tensions become more visible, partly because other priorities are at play, such as the civic role of arts organisations, brand perception, and the emerging objective of 'becoming a destination'. In this respect, research was commissioned by the Barbican in autumn 2018 to a private consultancy, to understand more about the foyers, and this research has been focusing on 'non-ticketed visitors'.

Research on ticketed and non-ticketed audiences

The need to categorise those audiences who don't buy a ticket for a performance has resulted in the increased use of a new term: non-ticketed visitors. As exemplified by this comment, 'people who are in the foyers' raise questions for some managers, in terms of knowledge and segmentation:

> […] sometimes it's really difficult to work out why people are here and like the foyers can be really full during the day […] why are these people here, it's great that they are and we want them to be but is understanding why they're liking it. Are they between meetings? Are they using this as an office space? Are they using it, do they

come here every day, which some people do, just for the wifi? Is it the art, and how did they find out about this? Because it's not something that we necessarily advertise, the fact that the foyers are a fantastic place to come in and crack on with some work. So where did you hear about us? Is it word of mouth? You know, because that is something that we would like to continue to promote and yes, it's always going to be forever changing (M7).

There is something in this quote that suggests that the enduring objective to promote the venue is connected to the destination agenda, whilst the need to understand audiences is seen as instrumental to the marketing of the Barbican as a destination. This objective signals an increased focus on the role of the arts centre as one of destination-building. We can suppose that 'those who just come to the building' are categorised as 'non-ticketed visitors'. This introduces a set of themes about the knowledge, and thus power, of understanding audience motivations, and to capitalise on data to promote the Barbican as a destination.

As mentioned above, the Barbican commissioned research to understand more about non-ticketed audiences in Autumn 2018. The results of this piece of research have been circulated internally. This demonstrates an increasing interest in doing audience research, but it is clear that the purposes of this research are understood differently across departments. Some managers lament the fact that in the past 'audiences haven't been consulted enough' or that not enough audience research was being carried out, others refer to questionnaires collected or external surveyors carrying out audience research, others say there is 'lots of audience research' going on. As a Manager, linking audience research to driving business, puts it:

> for example Marketing are… doing a huge amount of work at the moment and it's all going to land at once in many ways and some of it is, so there's lots of audience research going on, lots of desires to do something different in terms of marketing, to try and drive business… (M17).

Another manager expresses the need for more audience research that looks at how artistic quality is perceived:

> …I'd say that although we do have some research, I suspect that we don't have enough and we don't do it enough... (M17).

It remains unexplained whether 'a lot of audience research' or 'not enough audience research' is carried out. For example, this Manager explains:

> […] this audience research project that marketing are doing that I think is a really overarching attempt to try and understand who it is that comprises our audiences and like give us a framework for sort of trying to go like, okay, we want to sort of target this and that audience. I think that for the first time we're trying to put a model like that in place […] there's not, that there's not a one or a single Barbican (M16).

In this case, the statement partly contradicts the idea of strong narrative or brand predicated elsewhere, by acknowledging that the Barbican is not a single entity, but has different resonances with different audiences. The question of who the Barbican is for returns:

> So... Who's the Barbican for? It's like… who's the audience who's going to come to Chronic Youth next weekend or who's the audience that came to a Soundhouse event? Who's the audience...? And like those are so but then also who are the people who see the Barbican as like an expansion of their flat versus the ones who see it as a place to work versus the ones who see it as a place to reflect and treat it as a therapeutic space? (M16)

The audience is expanding, and the foyers and programme are affording different activities to take place, but it is recognised that audiences come with different financial weight:

> But, as a list… those look like equal things, but in terms of money the institution spends or the numbers of people who come they will always be weighted towards the large venues. So, the concert hall or the theatre or the art gallery are, like, have more gravity than a space for 30 people or an event for 15... (M16).

Nevertheless, it is recognised that public programming has to change, and not only to reinforce the existing audiences:

> But the way of thinking that has influenced some of the more recent public programming on level G is also present because of […] the wider conversation about what should the annual theme be or should we do this project with Sky Arts? And or, should there be the thing that was happening here on Saturday, 'Tune into Access' or 'What London watches', which was this Cinema season that was... So, incrementally rather than in an instantaneous way, some of the questions or ways of thinking that are inspiring the smaller scale programming are also influencing the larger... Yeah, the whole programme. And that is manifest now in some of the program you see in the main art forms. Yeah, so like the 'Pit Shake Up' or… the 'Sky Art 50 Open Fest Day'? (M16).

The challenge of this, however, is written into the specific architecture of the Barbican, its large concert hall and its theatre built in post-war London as a 'gift to the nation': as Johanson aptly captures in an article: the problem of permanence is that you're 'stuck with it' (Glow and Johanson, 2017). Kawashima argues that institutions taking audience development seriously might embark on target-led strategies aimed at changing their audiences, and inevitably incur the problem that existing audiences might feel 'excluded' by new programmes. For this reason, a change in audience demographics has to be weighed against the possible decline in ticket incomes and other sources of funding. Furthermore, Kawashima critiques the idea that culture can contribute to the combating of social exclusion, predicated upon the assumption that museums and other arts institutions are neutral in their value judgements. As opposed to this, Kawashima argues that what these institutions choose to preserve and how to display it are sites of cultural politics (Kawashima, 2000, p. 19).

Most audience research in the Barbican context is driven by Marketing rather than the Arts departments. When it comes to audience research driven by Marketing, this is seen as measuring and gaining quantitative evidence of numbers, demographics, ticket sales, footfall through the centre. Increase in footfall and spend are seen as precise 'genuine' measurement tools, 'you can actually measure it', whereas the surveys are seen as biased because you tend to get 'polarising information', either those who love you or those who hate you:

> I don't have the specific indicators to do that… where those indicators lie within the audience experience, where I will be looking to, is an increase in footfall and an increase in spend, that's what I would see as genuine, where the… where you can actually measure it. These are measurable. […] Then there is the not so easy to measure which is the, the emotional response to what's happening. You can do that by doing, so you can survey your audience and you can try and frame a question that gets them to express that. But that is something I've always struggled to, to crack that particular nut. How do I know that the experience is right and often it's, you can only do that by tracking the satisfaction of your audience. So you can do satisfaction survey, which I used to do, but actually I never got any metrics out of it that was useful. So, I kind of, I want somebody to come up with a brilliant idea and help me here […] in my experience the 'Do you love us?' survey if you like, never delivers the results, because a lot of the times people will only talk to you when they really are in love, or they're really in hate... So you end up with polarising information. You never get the real sense of what's going on, even in the moment is really hard to do. So, you know, you measure it by... because we actively encourage people to talk to us and tell us if things aren't working, you know, if your complaints go up, is that a good thing or a bad thing? (M17)

In this quote, the Manager discusses indicators and their validity, and poses a question about what kind of audience research might be more useful to the organisation. The question introduced here is whether measuring footfall, which is quantifiable, provides more insights than other methods. Increasingly, the institution wants to know more about who the people in the foyers are, why they decide to come and what they use the foyers for. The focus of audience research is slightly shifting from audience satisfaction to audience segmentation and identification of their needs. This can be linked to the changing nature of the public foyers, and the related goal of transforming them to become a destination. Therefore, very little of this research focuses on the aesthetic or artistic experience. Instead, the focus is on how people perceive the brand/space/destination. Beside this, the Barbican audience base is so huge, it would require a large team to carry out qualitative audience research at a large scale, and it would pose the challenge of inherently reproducing inequalities if research participants were self-selecting. However, it seems that this is exaggerated further by the Barbican's focus on brand perception and destination rather than other issues.

The changing role of public spaces in arts institutions

One of the challenges in talking about foyers and public spaces is that their physical boundaries, at least in the context of the Barbican, are not easily defined. The architecture of the Barbican includes outdoor areas and internal levels with different elements of legal and perceived 'publicness'. However, most managers describe the foyers as public spaces. The Barbican is seen as quite unique compared to more traditionally designed theatres and museums, and this is ascribed both to its architecture and to its programming:

> Because it's cross arts, there's a lot of room to play because the Barbican is an art centre, it has a lot of public space which museums and galleries or theatres don't necessarily have […] except for other arts centres, like the Southbank, you don't spend a lot of time in the theatre before or after, whereas you could come here and spend time in the foyers. It's a bit more public so I think that gives us a kind of unique activity because you don't have to enter a museum or to buy a ticket to something necessarily to come and play in 'Squish Space' or work in our foyers. The kind of, Barbican has the kind of art forms but it also has this wider branding or tag line strategy around learning… and arts without boundaries (M1)

It is described by the Manager as a space where different publics mix, and different temporalities merge together, which also comes with 'interesting challenges' and 'a weird spillage between the people who use those spaces':

> …at four o'clock it's a space for under five and by five thirty or six that space is packed away and there's a completely different audience in the space and it's a talk or performance or it's used like a talk space or reception space as well. So, in terms of the practicalities there's something interesting about the Barbican, how minute to minute very different people use the same space (…) so it's sort of spills into the public domain. And so, by the time an architectural talk might be starting at half five there's still like parents and carers and babies sitting outside, there's this weird spillage between the people who use those spaces (M1).

Having worked in the Barbican foyers as a host for several years, that 'spillage' and mixing of people has been evident to me as an observer in the space. The space described here (the Old Shop) outside of Door 6 and 7 of the concert hall, is a space where in the evening there would be classical music goers queuing to get their tickets checked and go into the concert hall, and some of them would have been coming for decades to see the LSO, but that same space would become a pram parking space during the day when the doors of the concert hall are closed. The Barbican does not have a permanent collection like a museum, but it does have a famous and iconic architecture that attracts a variety of people to come in and use the space during the day, without necessarily even knowing what might be on in the concert hall in the evening.

This Manager is very keen to reinforce the idea that the foyers/public spaces at the Barbican are aiming to be welcoming to everybody:

> And so, I think there's something quite nice about having a space visible because there are always tensions within... You have people coming to go to the Symphony. People come in to see the Mime festival, you have people who are looking for like a warm place because it's cold outside. You have people who are there with their children, and you have all this mix of people and I think it's quite significant to have something that really shows that the Barbican is a space for those children and adults as well as everybody else who uses the space (M1).

There is a difference between managers talking about the foyers as a destination and the description of foyers as spaces that afford different groups and activities. The institution has a vested interest in reproducing the notion of publicness, as it plays into the idea of 'spaces welcoming and accessible for all'. Nevertheless, the Barbican has pursued the strategy of 'transforming public spaces' in recent years, and as we have seen, already in the early 2000s the public spaces discourse was becoming prominent, as well as the focus on accessibility. Increasingly, foyers and public areas are designated as areas to be programmed, and used to reach out to new, wider audiences: audiences who might not turn up for a concert in the hall or a theatre performance, but to visit the foyers as 'a destination in its own right'.

> […] But it has to be a destination in itself. And this is why the programming on the Foyer spaces is to help deliver, or realise that space as a destination so 'level G always open, always free' is how the marketing of that space has been delivered and it's to see how that works. Is it working, the look and the feel around these things? How is that delivering for people? You know, it's a learning curve as well, because you know, (a manager) would say "maybe we program too much all at once, for example, we could eek it out more, we could perhaps remove the freestage space as a space in the interim, and just be selective about what we put on and when"... Does it complement? Is it something different? So, it's all about that... and the programming itself is about, you know, the ethos behind that […] is about enlivening like those foyers, is making them a destination in themselves. So, you know, we're beginning... The beginnings of tackling level G as a destination and how we can catalyze that as well in terms of driving income… is really important that we drive footfall, but we drive income as well... (M17).

The institution sees the foyers as platforms for engagement and public programming, but also as a 'destination' and 'placemaking' that generate more income. As evidenced in the interviews, there are internal tensions over ownership and use: the more institutions are under the pressure of neoliberal policies, whereby the model of arts and business is normalised, the more the civic role of their spaces is under question. The income generation discourse in relation to spaces keeps propping up in the managers' interviews:

> Well, okay, the challenges are... Space. Whose space priorities go to? Business Events are a big challenge, because they see the spaces as... money, which of course they need to do, and we need to bring in that commercial. We need to bring that in, but they, they provide a completely different experience to what we would provide. They

feel, they feel very, very much less audience-focused than we are. And so that's one big challenge. So, putting a project on in the foyer, when you know that in like a week time, you're going to have two thousand people come through for a graduation... At first when we started doing the Foyers project, it was a huge thing, but I have to say they have really come to terms with it (M13).

When asked to describe the process of deciding how the public spaces or the publicly accessible areas or the foyers are used across the year, a number of managers pointed to the complexity of managing them, particularly because the foyer projects are a new activity:

> That's complex. There isn't one person who makes that decision because in running a business, the business events and conferencing side is an important part of that. So, in any one year a certain amount of space is offered to business events, when those areas are then rented or hired by an external organisation, they have the right to have those public areas cut off from public use for the period of time when they hired that space. However, the money we make from them, you could say in a way comes back into providing some of the artistic creative offer that we offer at other times. So sometimes those spaces are not accessible, you know, that's potentially problematic, but that's just the reality of our financial model at the moment. If we didn't have that money, we would have a big problem. At other times, we do not... unless someone is indulging in inappropriate activity, we don't ask people to leave. So, and we've got a big sign that says 'Welcome' so people can walk in (M10).

A number of Managers point to the increase in public programming over time and identify the programming in the foyers aimed at outreach:

> the move to program more in our foyers and do more interesting things in our public space […] It helps us reach. It helps us provide more so that if people just walk up to the Barbican there's something to look at, something to do, something to participate in. […] To the audience it's just all like an activity that is a part of the Barbican. And I think in having the public spaces as a place for the different teams to program has made us maybe think about that a bit more and see that actually the platform is open to everyone and equal. There's something valuable about that (M1).

Another manager says that historically it would be Art forms departments programming their own thing in the foyers, independently. Whereas now there's a central programming team (the Incubator) trying to link up the programming in the foyers. But 'there was nothing like Open Fest… centre wide':

> [...] stuff in the foyers already happened, so a lot of the stuff that we do was already in the foyers. That kind of fell down to mostly individual art forms doing things like putting on Creative Learning Weekenders, or occasionally people would come together and do Weekenders, but at the time there was, it was very much like one department over another department... And there was nothing like Open Fest is now, you know, Centre wide and then this idea of one Barbican came about (M13).

It is clear that a certain degree of programming was already happening in the foyers prior to refurbishments, Weekenders and foyer Projects, but it has been structured differently in

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recent years and to an extent, programming in the foyers and the rise of public programming have played a role in bridging silos between departments. As explained in the Annual reports, activities and programmes in the foyers can vary enormously. From one-off concerts, to freestage, to festival type programming, or the Weekenders. Since the launch of the foyer Projects, it has been temporary installations, projections, or micro-exhibitions such as Soundhouse, as well as platforms like 'Life Rewired Hub'.

These are put on at the same time as the spaces might be available for private/commercial hire. The events, once again, vary enormously: from a fund-raising fair, to graduations, to other commercial events. This leads to tensions in how the spaces are managed and distributed internally, but also in terms of everyday users, who might not be able to predict whether the space would be open to the public or not. The internal foyer working group is described as a group that does not make programming decisions, but is there to arbitrate between things:

> The Foyer group exists not to be, not to make necessarily any programming decisions because there is a programming, a foyer programming group but the Foyer group was there to arbitrate between things that were clashing or things that needed to work on the foyers, so if somebody wanted to come in and put a great banner up or something like that or drill a great big hole in the wall in order to hang something, you know, we could say, well actually there's a whole raft of guidelines that you need to follow, before you do something that could be such a bizarre intervention that doesn't deliver the look, the feel and therefore the experience that audiences will instinctively understand, so you don't go somewhere and go "those lights are perfect. And the carpet is the right shape and the atmosphere is correct". You don't think that, you think "this is great", but you know... if you sat down someone and said: "now, can you articulate why you think it's great?" then they would probably struggle a little bit so... And that's the same thing, audiences will feel exactly the same with things that are too jarring and they don't get it and I don't like it here, but why? I don't know, there's something not right with it, and it was about trying to control that response in our audiences by not having too much in one place or not enough in others or basically making sure that if anyone's doing an intervention that follows a style guide, that it conforms to listed building guidelines, for example, so there's a lot... It's almost like a group that exists to try and help facilitate these things without people going wildly off piece... (M17)

There are also voices of managers who both see the value of programming the foyers, but also question the level of engagement expected from audiences. This manager, particularly, questions the possibility of attentive audience engagement in the foyers:

> I'm a great believer in animating foyer spaces, because I think that it's very important that there's an energy and something going on wherever you come into a concert hall or an arts centre, or else it can seem like a dead space. On the other hand, sometimes I'm a little bit sceptical about how much you can expect audiences to seriously engage with stuff that's presented in foyer spaces […]. I think it probably engages most people on a relatively superficial level […]. I'm uncertain as to how you can really

engage in a foyer space if you're one person with a set of headphones surrounded by hundreds of hipsters with their laptops, and children and babies and buggies and audiences coming through, and coffee machines going. But maybe I just have an old-fashioned attitude to depth of engagement versus entertainment! (M14)

The use of the term 'entertainment' is used with a specific function here, comparing it with 'engagement'. Only this Manager has used it, and it's pointing to an existing tension: the foyers are undoubtedly, at many times during the day, noisy, busy spaces where a multiplicity of activities co-exist. They can afford certain types of engagement, but not others. The increasing number of people working on laptops, which is a phenomenon of the last couple of decades, has changed the way people use these spaces. What this comment points to is something that has emerged in the foyers study: that the way the spaces are used is increasingly blurred, merging work, leisure time, and engagement with artistic programmes. On the one hand, programming the foyers has a potential to reach out to non-attenders who might be going through the building and get engaged and learn about what is going on, or with non-regular audiences who might come in for specific free programming like the Weekenders. However, on the other hand the programming in the foyers has to accommodate other agendas such as the catering and cafes, or the occurrences when the spaces are privately hired. This seems to be a tension not only across departments, but also for the programming team, in terms of defining the audience target they want these events to attract:

> I think it's a tension […] we think and we hope the outcome of our way of working will be the addition of a platform within the Barbican that will allow and encourage audiences to engage in different ways with part of what happens here. Our starting point at the minute is not a specific audience member, so our relationship with engagement tends to be at the beginning of a conversation with whoever is we're working with, questions like: "what is it in your design that is going to encourage someone to cross the threshold from there, you know with their family or going to the kitchen or like going to pick up a ticket to sort of go I'm going to go here" (M16)

As a Manager puts it, allocating resources to the foyers, or even changing policies of access to the foyers, however controversial internally, has become the norm:

> But I think, some people might say "we should stop doing all the stuff on the foyers. We should stop doing stuff Beyond Barbican. We should stop doing Culture Mile, and the core of what we do is in the venues and that's what we should focus on, if we haven't got much money". And I could not disagree with that more. I just think the door is open and you can't... Having started doing it, you can't stop it. And that we would look very old-fashioned. And we just wouldn't be responsive as an organisation if we stopped doing those... I was going to say extra it's not extra. It's part of… now. It's part of who we are (M10).

Conclusions

This chapter shows that conflicting conceptions of audiences co-exist within the management of the arts centre and how different agents within the organisation develop different conceptions of foyers and audiences. These conceptions reflect various agendas and narratives underpinning the work of different departments, which are perceived as functioning to some extent like silos, resulting in what is described by some managers as 'a lack of a consistent, holistic audience strategy' for audience development.

Looking at the kinds of discourses that emerge from the interviews, it is apparent how the discourse of destination is substantiated by arguments of 'footfall' and 'counting numbers' but also of 'world-class venue', whilst on the other hand there's the awareness that for certain audiences it is important to be able to come and eat a sandwich brought from home. But from the programming point of view and considering especially the position held by classical music audiences, 'don't like kids running around' but also the recognition that they will 'put up with the kids because they are going to grow up in this environment and maybe they'll learn to love something I love, be it opera, be it music' (M9). It becomes clear that it is not an easy task to manage the foyers and its multiplicities and multitudes, and the Incubator expresses this as their challenge and objective: 'the foyers were like, a missed opportunity that they're in some ways the heart of the building but they were this kind of no man's land that lots of different teams relied on but there was no ownership of' (M16). However, it seems that the Commercial division needs more persuasion on the value of the public programming, although some of the people in programming say that it is becoming more evident that the value of the spaces as a cultural destination plays into the commercial agenda as well. A lot of internal negotiations need to be accommodated on the use of the foyers, and it is not clear how much of the programming has to be tweaked to accommodate certain agendas. Certainly, it seems that there are a set of ongoing discussions regarding the extent to which certain programming is seen as enough 'instagrammable and friendly'. An example provided by one of the programmers is that an artist that was commissioned in the Old Studio tried to make the work 'instagrammable outside and serious inside'. This seems to be an opportunity for artists to work around the challenge of having to please various different priorities within the institution.

Throughout the interview study, it became clear that the existence of the Incubator, the idea of 'Level G' and the Annual Theme are attempts to unify the languages and strategies to do with spaces and audiences. However, managers have different understandings of audiences

and public spaces across departments, and of what the public spaces are for. These public areas are changing and exceeding what is stated in the Strategic Plan: they are not only transforming physically and in relation to audience needs, but they also still have to function commercially, with negotiations taking place to manage them across departments. The lack of consistent narratives of audiences across the managers' interviews is a clear expression of the conflicting range of interests and agendas across the institution.

In 2013, a specially curated edition of the journal *Organization Studies* focused on 'white spaces' of organisation, identifying these as those unknown aspects of an organisation's spatial reality. Employing the notion of 'Sites/Sights', O'Doherty *et al.* (2013) investigate new sites of organisational practice that might be invisible/unseen or revealed as strangely familiar, defining the notion of 'new site/sight' as implying:

> the existence of something resolutely novel, something never before seen and therefore inherently interesting. However, the notion of a new sight can be understood in a more optical manner, as the discovery of a new way of seeing, and thus as potentially showing us something new in the assumedly old and well-known. A new site/sight can thus be [...] a call for more research into a newly discovered place (O'Doherty *et al.*, 2013, p. 15).

In this thesis, I have employed the foyers as new 'sites/sights' of research: by this I mean that the foyers are material spaces of organisational practice which can be observed in their daily functioning to highlight new audience trends and patterns, but they also operate as lenses or new ways of seeing the arts institution itself. The foyers are shown to be sites of strategic conflict between different conceptions of the audience. Marketing tries to 'capture' the foyer as part of its 'audience plan'; the institution tries to 'make the foyer work harder for income'; also the foyer – it is realised – is the 'front line' of audience perception and engagement. Whilst foyers are relatively neglected areas in scholarly research, this study shows how strategically important they are as a 'no man's land' that is symbolically 'fought over' to align with different institutional agendas.

Chapter 8. The Researcher and the arts institution: impact agenda and positionality

Following the presentation of the empirical findings, and before moving to the conclusions, this chapter offers a critical reflection on the research process, discussing the relationship between the researcher and the arts institution being researched, against the backdrop of discussions on the research impact agenda and positionality. Reflecting back on the research trajectory, it argues that there is much that reflexivity has to offer the field. To some extent, the emergent findings of this research study are of a methodological nature and would be of use to other doctoral students as they approach their fieldwork. This reflexive chapter is particularly relevant to a collaborative doctorate, based on the concept of industry-university partnership and knowledge exchange. I have placed the chapter here because these reflections have been developed throughout the process of writing and analysis and constitute an additional perspective to the study.

Research impact agenda

This introductory section foregrounds the debate on the impact agenda in academic research. The debate on the social impact of the arts has been prominent in cultural policy since the 1990s (Matarasso, 1997; Merli, 2002; Selwood, 2002; Belfiore and Bennett, 2007). Parallel to this, the 'impact agenda' has become a normative expectation across a range of sectors. It is now widespread not only in the arts but also in higher education and academia. In their intellectual history of the social impact of the arts, Belfiore and Bennet (2008) argue that the necessity to demonstrate the impact that the arts have on society is not a new thing: that there was never a golden age, and that different historical eras produced different justifications for the importance of the arts in society. Similarly, in academia, concerns remain around what role academic research plays in contemporary, neoliberal societies: whether research can be understood as an independent process, rather than a project with defined aims, objectives and targets predetermined by funding or governmental bodies.

Increasingly, when applying for research funding, for example to the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), both prospective PhD students and seasoned academics have to prove at the start of the process that their research will have a demonstrable impact. This often involves advance speculations on the possible policy implications of research results (Bandola-Gill, 2019), even before research is undertaken. By these standards, a lot of pressure

is put on academic researchers to artificially provide demonstrable impact of their research. This research impact agenda changes the nature of academic research. As a corollary of this, there is a tendency to discourage researchers pursuing certain directions of critical work that does not result in easily instrumentalised outcomes. The implication for academic researchers is that the theoretical knowledge produced by the research might contribute to academic debates, but not directly translate into institutional practices. This often creates a hiatus between academic knowledge and practitioners' knowledge, that has also been defined as the 'applicability gap' (Walsh, 2015). In the following section I discuss how this has affected this doctoral work and how I negotiated the tensions within the framework of a research project funded by the same institution that I was critically analysing. This chapter is based on extracts of primary data from my research journal, which I kept to track the research journey from inception to completion. Before moving into the analytical section, the concept of positionality will also be recalled, as an important reflective component of the process.

Positionality in the field

The concept of positionality has already been introduced in the Methodology. Tracy (2013) argues that in qualitative research the researcher functions as the research instrument: bringing her body and mind into the field to interrogate, investigate, etc. As already explained, positionality is a term that refers to the importance of taking into account the unique factors that contribute to an individual researcher's viewpoint: these factors could be identified as gender, race, nationality, socio-economic status, sexuality, etc and they are understood as influencing the data collected and their analysis. By acknowledging one's positionality, we acknowledge the biases we carry with ourselves. Using the terms employed by feminist geographers, the kind of knowledge being produced through this process can be seen as embodied and situated, which tends to sit starkly in contrast with the idea of master narratives more typical of positivist research traditions.

However, in the context of this chapter it is important to consider the double role of the researcher's positionality in the field, given that the field itself is constantly changing. The extent and terms to which the researcher's positionality can be fixed is put into question. It is recognised that the multiple identities of the researcher herself are shifting and adapting throughout the fieldwork. Nevertheless, as said, my own positionality has effects on the processes of data collection and analysis. To an extent, it can be said that positionality is relational and can be variously perceived by different research participants at different times. This complexity needs to be taken into account in the writing up and presentation of data,

particularly if the findings are aimed at an institution and understood to have policy implications. Whilst, on the one hand, findings in institutional research can be packaged in a way that can be easily instrumentalised, on the other hand findings that pertain to the more personal experience of the researcher are generally side-lined and seen as harder to translate into practitioners' terms. In a wider sense, this shows how research that includes a reflexive process on the researcher's positionality tends to have a higher degree of specificity. Such specificity stands against principles of generalisability and repeatability, which are commonly understood as markers of good quality research, at least within the historical lineage of positivist research epistemologies. Further in this chapter, I explore these concerns, and the rationales used for the presentation of data in the three main analytical chapters and in the present one.

Audience research(ers) and institutional ethnography

Traditionally, audience research comprises surveys and either quantitative or qualitative studies focused on understanding audience motivations and experiences, that can be employed for marketing, programming and evaluation purposes. Whether it is market research or research commissioned by an institution, audience research in institutional context tends to take an empirical approach, privileging findings that can be operationalised. However, a variety of approaches are possible in this field of study and increasingly scholars, particularly in the tradition of theatre studies, highlight the importance of giving a voice to audience members who have historically been silenced.

In the case of academic researchers working with institutions to produce audience research, a complex negotiation of data collection and its use needs to take place. This kind of research tends to reproduce a positive bias, and to take the form of advocacy, whereby the institution is depicted in a good light and findings need to be framed in positive terms. A recent study of this kind is 'Locating the audience' (Sedgman, 2016) which starts to occupy a possible space between critical research and advocacy, and crucially, is sub-titled 'How people found value in National Theatre Wales'. Within this approach, the most critical (and thorny) concerns associated with doing institutional research are usually ignored and accounts are produced from which the personal is banished. Interestingly, only in a recent article did Sedgman (2019) more openly address and discuss the conflicts that arise whilst carrying out scholarly audience research with an awareness of cultural organisations' pressures to produce their own ongoing audience evaluations. There are different models employed by academics to conduct embedded research in institutions, and these models can sit along a spectrum.

Increasingly there is, at least at a rhetorical level, a focus on collaborative research: researching with, rather than across or against the desires of institutions. However, with growing numbers of collaborative or professional doctoral schemes, scholarly reflection is much needed around the challenges and potentials of such research-industry doctoral partnerships. In the following section I will reflect on my own process of devising audience research as part of a joint doctoral programme.

In the context of this research project, I was not interested in continuing the conventions of audience research. Rather than asking what audiences think about the arts, a performance or an institution, I chose to ask how arts institutions think about audiences through a spatial-discursive approach. Instead of building empirical knowledge on audience experience, I decided on the approach of an institutional ethnography, observing what was happening around the project, and how the institution developed discourses about audiences. I expected this would achieve a better understanding of institutional rationales, and it would provide a critical understanding of 'audience research' rather than performing it. If doing audience research for an institution is 'tricky', as Kirtsy Sedgman points out, doing institutional ethnography comes with added challenges, because it is even less clear what the direct benefits for the organisation are. In allowing this kind of research, the risk to the institution is of inadequacies or contradictions being displayed too clearly - in the age of whilstleblowing, #metoo and the reputation economy, institutions have to very carefully manage their brands and reputational cachet. As evidence of this, at the beginning of my interview with one of the heads of departments, the manager who I was about to interview said they'd like to know a bit more about what I was going to say in my thesis: 'we care a huge amount about our audiences, and don't want anything being said that would damage that relationship with them'.

Politics of the invitation

Back in April 2017, in a conference where I presented a paper based on my initial case study on the foyers, an academic - practitioner in the room asked me: 'Have you thought about the politics of the invitation?'. By invitation they meant me being offered this PhD position, from the institution where I had been working casually for a couple of years. I have kept thinking about that question, that I couldn't quite answer at the time, but that is very relevant in the context of this research project. The invitation was from a large institution to a casual member of the front-of-house staff, working at the lower level of the organisational hierarchy, to be supported for three years to carry out research about audiences. On the page,

this was a great demonstration of the now ubiquitous institutional commitment to openness and diversity. In the same way that the Silk Street entrance bears a giant 'Welcome' on the screen above the doors, I interpreted my appointment as an official welcome into the spaces and internal workings of the institution, given that being a casual worker very much feels like being inside/outside. However, I very soon realised that the same sense of 'getting lost' that people experience in the Barbican's foyers or trying to find the entrance to the arts centre, was paralleled by my position as a researcher. As a PhD student and host, I had very limited access to documents, spaces and people inside the institution. In a sense, my process of entering the institution with the researcher's hat on represents a fourth facet of the study. My own perspective, as represented in this chapter, is equally bound up with the politics of looking.

Arguably, to gain access often involves being able to understand and decode unwritten rules and to perform accordingly. There is a growing body of research on how social class and the ability of 'code-switching' are necessary skills to 'get in' and 'get on' in creative careers. I would suggest that similar skills are requested of the researcher inside institutions. In their research based on interviews with staff from BBC and similar companies, Friedman and Laurison (2019) talk about feelings of self-censorship, not belonging, playing safe and 'changing oneself' to fit into institutions, highlighting the importance of 'fitting in' as a way to gain legitimacy. In recent research focusing specifically on creative careers, Brook, O'Brien and Taylor (2018) have been looking at the make-up of creative industries jobs in terms of social class, demonstrating a lack of diversity in terms of class and ethnicity in managerial roles. This is relevant to my fieldwork journey because, especially when entering into contact with members of staff at higher managerial levels, I increasingly perceived feelings of 'not belonging'. Paradoxically, the 'thresholds of fear' that I initially considered as a theoretical concept to work with, materialised in my own experience of navigating the institution, its spaces and unwritten codes. In this scenario, given the lack, or perceived unavailability of more access, foyers became the sites where access was granted to me anyway. I therefore started theorising the foyers as the most open of spaces, yet as mirrors of the most hidden of institutional spaces – the 'white spaces' of organisations (O'Doherty *et al.*, 2013).

As is often the case, large institutions have a tendency to generate silos within themselves. In Renshaw's report about the Barbican Centre and Guildhall School, 'Participation: myth or reality?' (Renshaw, 2017, p. 9) that appeared about a year into my research, I found a quote that specifically refers to siloes:

> Organisational thinking naturally entrenches difference and distance because at a conceptual and physical level we humans are divided into departments, rooms, hierarchies. Productive conversation requires the engagement of so many senses and relies on mutual feedback in order to develop anything resembling empathetic communication. The tools organisations use to communicate (e-mails, over-long meetings) nullify so much of what we rely to communicate properly (body language, eye contact, tone – as well as a range of small-talk which makes clear that we have lives and problems beyond our job titles!). These crude communication technologies, combined with the differentiating impact of the identity politics created by being divided explicitly into distant departments, is a toxic combination (e-mail from Sidd Khajuria to Peter Renshaw, 02.09.16) (Renshaw, 2017, p. 9).

In my experience as a researcher in the field, I perceived these institutional divisions to be the case. Having worked in the Customer experience then Audience experience department, I perceived this lack of communication with other departments, and lack of knowledge about institutional structures[21]. I also had experienced working in the Marketing department during my Community Engagement internship in 2014, and that experience revealed how separate departments are, even in physical terms. This is also stressed in an interview with a Manager:

> I think we are in a department that kind of engages and is in the middle of a lot of conversations. Interestingly, where we sit physically within the organisation is... we're off in the exhibition halls, where no one knows where we sit and we're not in with all the other offices and things like that (M12).

Many casual conversations I had in the corridors would end with an ironic 'This is how connected Barbican departments are…'. The institution is perceived as being quite siloed. Although many strategic attempts exist, particularly led by the Incubator, to break these siloes down, it appears to still be an organisational characteristic. Thus, being invited into an institution that has historically been and still appears to be quite siloed, proved complex to navigate. If the implied invitation was to get in and get engaged, in my experience there was never a support network to discuss access and other issues with. What I gathered from this process is that as a researcher you need to have something to offer in exchange for the institution to willingly open their doors. Often invitations to 'participate' come with an invisible set of 'instructions on how best to participate' within existing frameworks. It strikes me that this is mentioned in an interview, in relation to audiences, in this case particularly discussing the politics of inviting young people into the arts centre:

> there is an interesting tension between those two, where they want younger, more diverse audiences to come, but they also want to train them in a particular way that suits them… and I don't think that's necessarily right, I think actually… it's almost like you're inviting people into your house and then give them a set of rules, before they come through the door …and then you say, oh yeah have a great time, and

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[21] For example, only after a few years of being a host, images and descriptions of the Heads of departments were introduced in the Host Briefing Room. Before that, as a Host you wouldn't know who the people working in the organisation were, unless you did your homework to learn about it on your own.

here's your set of rules, and they're like "what?" *(laughs)* …and it's hard, it's hard. And I think organisations, the pressure for them, or the crunch for them is how do you encourage new audiences to keep coming, or to come for the first time, and how do you train existing audiences to be flexible? Because existing audiences who might have had all those experiences already… who may have grown up going to the theatre, or may have gone to see lots of classical music, they already know what those set of rules are, it's almost like unwritten rules as well, and they change from artform to artform, it's an interesting one, and it's very, very … I don't think anyone has quite got it right… yet (M2).

As a researcher navigating the field and gathering data, I haven't felt particularly welcome into any of the departments. Every time I would visit a department for an interview, even at the late stage of the research process, I would have to rehearse the performance of the interview in advance. This could be attributed to my chameleon-like identity, and the difficulty to place myself as either a researcher or a host. As one Senior Manager told me at some point in an informal conversation: 'You're doing ten different things at the same time...'. This was said to me during some site observations I was doing for the 'Soundhouse' project (2018) in the context of which I was actively hosting, interviewing hosts, participating as an audience member, observing from up close and from a distance. This was the point in the research process when I realised the challenge of separating evaluation from research, the divergent epistemological approaches that need to be employed and how my position was beneficial on the one hand, because I had previous knowledge of the foyers, but also contributed to a confusion of roles and responsibilities. At this point of the discussion, it is important to talk about positionality in the context of my personal case, which I am going to do in the next section.

Positionality and participant observation in the field

My positionality as a researcher in this study was complex from the beginning, as I had already been a casual worker in the institution for over two years before starting the PhD. It is worth recalling here my 'work history' in the institutional context. Between January and April 2014, I had been an intern with the Community engagement manager in the Marketing department and from July 2014 I had started working as Customer experience host, in the Curve Gallery and then across different venues in the centre. In summer 2016, as part of the same team, I also started a casual role as Architecture tour guide. I have never been employed by the Barbican Centre, but I worked as a casual member of staff between 2014 and 2020. This positioned me as an insider, yet not officially inside the institution. Although I wasn't fully aware of the complexities associated with this position, there was never a specific point at which I entered the field as a researcher. In a sense, I had been *always already* in the field

since my first internship in 2014. I would define my positionality as that of a host – tour guide - PhD student - researcher. My community of reference inside the institution was that of other hosts to start with. However, to progress as a researcher my identity as a host had to be adapted in the attempt to develop relationships with other members of staff across departments, in some cases trying to 'pitch myself' as a researcher more than a host to gain credibility in a meeting. My multiple roles meant that my researcher identity was becoming very difficult to explain. The first question along this research journey has been about what kind of participant observation would be carried out in my fieldwork: am I observing from within or from outside? I have been a participant observer, however there are different ways to do a participant observation. Having not actively considered positionality in my ethics, ethnography and auto-ethnography became mixed up. However, there remains a separation between what I observed in the field and what I observed about myself observing - the challenges of observing whilst participating / participating whilst observing.

Having being part of the host team meant that my identity was first of all as a member of the Audience experience department, without any access to Intranet or institutional documents. Negotiating access has been a challenge for me along this journey. I have struggled to access institutional documents, and over three years, have been allowed to view a very small number. For this reason, my choice to analyse publicly accessible documents was a more adequate research strategy than if I had decided for internal documents. Paradoxically, I think an external researcher might find it easier to gain access than I did. As I could gain from informal conversations with a researcher from an external institution who was also doing fieldwork at the Barbican, the researcher managed to find an informal gatekeeper who broached access to many documents and spaces. I had an official gatekeeper and did not have this access. However, I eventually managed to carry out my interviews with managers, overcoming issues of access to a certain extent.

If an awareness of the researcher's positionality comes with an attempt to inhabit multiple identities (Madge, 1993), these multiple identities in ethnographic work need negotiations. Having multiple roles would be expected to be the best way to 'smuggle yourself in' in a fieldwork situation, yet I found this to be a distinct challenge in my own case. I remained very much at the margins of the institution looking in. This was partly inscribed in my research since the beginning, because my area of study was arguably on the margins (thresholds and foyers), but it was possibly exacerbated because I started with interviewing hosts before managers or directors. In this sense my research was inspired by the concept of

institutional ethnography in Dorothy Smith's terms, as I started from everyday experiences before dealing with high theory (Billo and Mountz, 2016).

In the first study based on interviews with hosts my position as a host helped because there were no issues of power relations. The only problematic element of these interviews was possibly to do with hosts feeling in any way evaluated in their roles or sharing information that could be damaging to their already precarious situation. To make sure these risks would be avoided, I recruited hosts via informal means, I anonymised all the interviews and I have chosen excerpts of the interviews without any personal references. After Study 1 was conducted, I had an opportunity to present my findings to management in a Programming meeting, where I was given 5 minutes to present and a few more minutes to respond to questions. The limited time apportioned to this contributed to my developing awareness of the low importance of my role to the institution.

Carrying out Study 3, which involved interviewing managers, revealed issues of power in the interview context. The nature of the interview encounters laid bare the relational understanding of positionality. For example, in the process of arranging the interviews I realised that not having access to the Intranet meant either asking another manager for email contacts or doing a bit of online research to make sure I had the right name and surname for the person to contact. In some cases, I would contact the manager and had to arrange the interview with their PA. It is possible to speculate that managers were more likely to carefully consider what they said if they thought they were talking to a researcher than a host. I felt in some cases managers would share information or say things that I had to carefully consider how to use in the write up of the study, as some aspects that were addressed were breaching codes of confidentiality, or could have been used to highlight wider problematics within the institution. However, the most interesting variable in the interview encounter would be the space chosen. With senior managers, this would usually be their office, although in a few cases the managers decided to meet me in the café. Generally, interviews in the office environment, especially if around a large boardroom table, would feel quite clinical, whereas interviews in the café unfolded more naturally. On the other hand, interviews in public spaces proved tricky because other members of staff might be around the cafè, or because of unpredicted interruptions, or the background noise making the process of transcribing the interview very time-consuming.

Criticality and funding

One of the concerns at the core of this joint doctoral studentship has been how to write a piece of critical research on the same institution that is funding the researcher carrying out the research. This largely remains an unanswered question in academic debates, and the task is generally understood to be very hard. In my case, conducting research meant to critically engage with the same institution that was not only funding my studentship, but also providing some extra income through my casual job and in which, at the time of writing up, I've spent a large part of the last 6 years. One of the risks in this process is the tendency of the researcher to 'go native' and to lose the capacity to question and distance themselves from the field.

Although I was requested to slightly tweak my proposal, the key ideas I presented to the interview panel[22] before being offered the position in April 2016, had all been accepted. The agreement was that I would conduct my research by interviewing staff members across departments, and possibly also audience members after performances, that I would organise seminars and share my research results with the organisation. Evidently my methodology moved beyond this, but there was never at any point overt tension over my methods or objects of study.

When I started the doctoral study I had the ambition to carry out a piece of research along the lines of Georgina Born in her work on IRCAM and her subsequent work on the BBC, but it became increasingly clear that a certain level of academic credibility is often a requirement to be able to take a certain stance in writing. Born did write her PhD on IRCAM and published a book, which was variously received in the academic world, but that marked the beginning of her career. Relevant examples of ethnographies that were not very welcomed by the institution in question, aside from Georgina Born's thesis on IRCAM and her work on the BBC titled 'Uncertain Vision', include analysis of conservatoire and classical music cultures, such as ethnographies of a single setting e.g. Henry Kingsbury (1988), of organisation e.g. Geoff Baker, El Sistema (2014), of specific institution: Bruno Nettl (1995), or of groups of people: Stephen Cottrell (2004). I have been aware of these complexities throughout the process. Whilst I'm not trying to predict the reception of my thesis, I am

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[22] The interview panel consisted of: Head of Research at Guildhall School of Music and Drama, Prof. John Sloboda (who was to become my Principal supervisor), an administrative member of staff from the Research department, a Senior Manager and the Head of Marketing at the Barbican Centre

aware that my multiple identities proved difficult to negotiate in the analytical and writing up process.

Research and social change

The extent to which research and theoretical knowledge can effect social change is a widely debated philosophical question. Considering that my initial proposal (Appendix A1) had the aim of influencing future Barbican policies, this has been a lively question throughout the journey: to what extent could my own research, and the process of going about the research, influence and effect change in the institutional setting being researched. In many instances I asked myself whether being more actively involved in actions and activities aimed at organisational change could have made for a more socially-engaged piece of research. To some extent, this could have been achieved by adopting a methodological approach based on action-research. Although the question here is about the relationship between research and social change, interestingly this also points again to the positionality of the researcher. For example, researchers who are also activists see their research as necessarily having to join struggles and campaigns in order to effect change.

Having moved to London in 2013 as I was doing my MA at Birkbeck College, I started working casually for a recruitment agency that would provide service staff to museums and arts organisations. I worked in different venues such as the Roundhouse and the Southbank Centre, and whilst doing shifts I met lots of international and European young professionals working in these positions. Being in contact and being part of this precarious class of creative workers and freelancers who also have one (or more) zero-hour contracts to survive, made me reflect on the nature of cultural labour, precariousness and social class (Gill and Pratt, 2008). I have asked myself multiple times whether it would have made more sense to do a project about the labour of mediating the audience experience from the perspectives of hosts and other workers across the foyers with a larger sample of front-of-house staff from other institutions. To a certain extent my ethnography of the foyers has also highlighted this aspect and called for further research to be conducted that looks at the intersection of audience research, cultural labour and organisational change.

Depending on how active or activist one is as a researcher, some issues gain prominence in the work. After the first study on the foyers, I considered shifting the focus from audiences to the labour of 'providing excellent audience experience'. I wanted to focus on what it means to perform cultural labour in the neoliberal city, and, and for those in the Barbican audience

experience department, what it means to work in the service industry. However, the limitations and time constraints of the research project prevented this being a feasible direction. In the conclusions, I offer final considerations on how my research points to a set of avenues for future studies. On top of this, I realised at some point that the only way for me to find some distance from the object of study, and particularly from an object of study that had been such a large part of my life for 5 years, I had to go into 'exit mode' to write the research up. By exit mode I mean bringing the wider fieldwork to a close by reducing my time spent in the institution.

Evaluation, knowledge exchange and legitimacy

The dominant ways in which research in institutional contexts is understood is as evaluation, advocacy or evidence-based research. There are pragmatic reasons for this given that institutions are under pressure to demonstrate their value to funders and the public more generally. In relation to this, knowledge exchange, a ubiquitous requirement in funded research initiatives, is more easily facilitated if findings can be packaged within an evaluation, advocacy or evidence-based framework. This incentivises the production of knowledge in terms of findings that can be presented in digestible terms and easily acted upon, for example in quantifiable measures that can be translated in marketing initiatives. However, this tendency also poses a growing challenge to academic research aimed at observing and understanding institutional dynamics without a specific actionable agenda.

Since the start of my study, I felt a lack of shared expectations on what the Barbican and my academic institution intended my research to achieve: once again, the doctoral research journey was a 'world within a world' in which my expectations were enmeshed with those of the structures and institutions I was working with. Given the frequency of different audits and processes of internal evaluation taking place separate to my research, it was often necessary to present the research with the disclaimer that my study had not been commissioned, but only funded, by the Barbican. This was elevated by the fact that soon after my research commenced, the Barbican increasingly focussed on the foyers in internal and external commissioned work. For example, the decision of the Barbican to commission a study on 'non-ticketed' audiences might have been influenced by my initial findings, which I had shared with members of staff in the Marketing office.

All the points discussed in this chapter might suggest an ambiguity as to the value of this approach. However, despite the apparent complexities, I felt these were the strongest

methods available to me, given the specific aims of this research referencing different disciplines and approaches and my positionality as a host/researcher. This research project and the larger field of audience research bears witness to the value of alternative methodological approaches. In conclusion, my personal journey and reflections show that to a certain degree certain issues are irresolvable, which is partly reflected in the continuously changing nature of the arts institution.

Site-writing 4 – Taxi Home

I get out of Silk Street around 1am, the Manager just called a cab for me to get back home. That's one of the benefits of doing evening shifts past midnight, you get a free cab home. The event was a wedding in the Conservatory. As hosts we rotate between doors, and our task is to check that the guests who leave through the Sculpture Court doors to smoke outside and don't end up speaking loudly in the middle of the Court, since the top three floors of Frobisher Crescent have been reconverted into residential flats. Noise pollution is a problem, we have to keep people quiet by policing them. A host is paid £10.98 an hour and it pays the rent and the bills, if you build up enough hours every week.

I sometimes end up feeling like a disposable body in a branded uniform, hired to tell (increasingly drunk) people to be quiet, then standing there as they smoke and talk to each other about their job, or the next holiday. Half listening to strangers' conversations, I am trying to work out in my head how many hours I have to accumulate this week and how many shifts I should swap: Is everyone else also desperate for work this month? Why are new hosts being hired right now that we are all desperate for shifts? Ok, now I'll have to go and tell that person they can't have a loud phone call in the middle of the court. Embarrassing, telling adults off. But that's what I am paid to do tonight, so I just have to do it. Providing excellent customer experience to all, exceeding expectations: I am definitely exceeding this person's expectations as I approach them to say 'Please be mindful of noise, there are people sleeping in the residential block right here. You can only smoke in the designated area by the doors'. 'Ok' - they say half grudgingly, as they move towards it.

The late nights can be fun. Some of those late shifts end with a sense of camaraderie amongst staff and managers, we've made it through the night! 'Well done guys' says the Manager, collecting our postcodes to organise the cabs. I keep my uniform on at the end of the shift, I realise I'm quite tired from all the standing tonight – but it was a fun shift, I almost repeat to myself to justify my time here: 'I'm kind of lucky, I get to observe these events, I will never get invited to one like this in my lifetime…'. I grab my bag from the locker in the Roadway's changing room, that's where hosts get changed before shifts. Get out to Silk Street, cab should be arriving soon. It's about 1am in the morning. I am still very awake and have a conversation with the taxi driver. I am not an English native speaker, but I realise neither is he. He says: 'What do you do?' and I say 'I work at the Barbican'. He says something about not knowing banks would close so late. I ask him whether he's ever been inside. He says: 'No, what's there for me to do?'. I say 'It's an art centre, music, theatre, cinemas, all sorts of stuff going on'. He says he thought it was a bank inside, every time he picked someone up from there. I remember saying that he 'should' come back with his children (whom he had mentioned), and I said that the Barbican organises a lot of free events for families and that it is really fun and worth coming to. I felt genuinely good about saying that, I thought, here's someone who's never been to the centre, and I'm explaining what's inside, that this place is for everybody. I sometimes wonder whether that taxi driver has ever been back to the Barbican with his children.

Chapter 9. Conclusion

This study started with the aim of investigating how certain discursive conceptions of audiences are produced, challenged and re-assessed through institutional communications, spatial strategies and public programming within a particular research setting, the Barbican Centre. To this point, the thesis has mapped out the theoretical, methodological and empirical grounds of arts management and cultural policy concerned with audiences, identifying a need for more situated studies that look at spatial politics of participation inside the public areas of arts institutions. This chapter will draw out more fully how concepts of audience, experience and participation – that have driven this research – can be better understood in relation to the theoretical grounds laid down in the literature review (Chapter 2). To a certain extent, some of this has already been teased out in the empirical chapters but this conclusion will provide a consideration of such discourses and practices beyond the context of the Barbican Centre. Therefore, I present the key findings and outline major contributions to knowledge, discussing their implications and transferability to other contexts, and finally providing insights into the potential for further research.

In the introduction, I began by exploring the paradox/disjuncture between discourses of audiences and cultural participation in the official rhetoric of arts institutions, and on the other hand how these are mediated on the ground by those working in public facing roles. I have addressed this across several chapters by analysing discourses of audiences and cultural participation as discussed in scholarly literature and as lived in the 'practised spaces' of the institution. Rather than focussing on audiences per se, this research study focused on discourses about audiences produced at different levels of an arts organisation, from the hosts who directly interact with the public on an everyday basis, to public strategic discourse as represented by annual reports, through discourses of senior and middle managers involved in strategic and managerial decisions. I sought to investigate the existence of such discourses across different institutional planes, taking a holistic approach to the whole institution rather than focusing on a specific project. As I make clear from the outset, my research provides a novel angle for analysis by focusing on arts professionals and their understanding of audiences, rather than on audiences and their experiences.

By examining how institutional communications construct certain conceptions of audiences and participation, I showed how such concepts can shift, circulate and develop over time within the arts institution. The interest in embodied experience and 'practised spaces' also brought me to look at how front-of-house staff see audiences in the foyers, their uses of the

spaces and work with the public. To understand how discourses are mediated across departments, I have also focused on how managers understand their own work in relation to audiences and foyers, and the agendas guiding it. Institutional documents, spatial strategies and managerial approaches have been the objects of analysis in the context of this research. The key hypothesis of this study was that it is possible to detect discourses and discursive shifts not just through textual analysis, but that such discourses are coded into the practices and spaces of the institution. The key sites of my fieldwork, therefore, have been the foyers of the Barbican Centre.

By focusing on the foyers as the primary lens of analysis, the study made visible some of the competing agendas that are at play when discourses are mediated in material spaces. In doing this, the study had the objective to discuss the limitations of normative conceptions of audiences and models of cultural participation. Such conceptions are dominant in traditional arts marketing that tends to see audiences as seated spectators or ticketed visitors (Hill, O'Sullivan and O'Sullivan, 2003), even though there has been a shift towards engagement (Walmsley, 2019b). Similarly, in survey-based studies about cultural participation, this is often intended as attendance and 'taking part' in the funded arts. By shifting the attention from core venues and programmes, this research challenges these normative conceptions, and makes visible a set of other spaces, cultures of participation and knowledge-producers that have been under-investigated, whether in arts institutions or in academia. Foyers come to the fore as sites of research, front-of-house staff become key agents of knowledge production, illuminating everyday and non-programmed modes of participation in the arts centre.

Multi-method approach and strengths of different facets

In order to analyse discourses and their spatial mediations, I have adopted a discursive-ethnographic approach to the field, combining methods from critical discourse analysis and ethnography. The gradual transformation of critical discourse analysis towards a more situated and contextual analysis, and of ethnography to a more reflexive research practice, allows a merging of the two for problem-oriented research, whereby researchers identify with their object of study rather than claiming allegiance to particular movements (Krzyzanowski, 2011). This was a novel approach in the field of audience research, using existing methodologies but applying them in a radical way, by focusing on foyers and involving hosts. It is nevertheless important to point to some of the challenges and potentials that come with using a multi-method approach. One of the challenges is that by choosing different

qualitative methods, their underlying paradigmatic framework might present incongruent epistemologies, therefore presenting a problem with incommensurability: 'Indeed it seems to be more common among contemporary scholars, trained as they are in multiple methods, to blur the paradigmatic edges' (Tracy, 2013, p. 47). However, by moving amongst different paradigms, researchers might highlight the multiple ways a problem or issue might be fruitfully addressed.

The institution's complexity almost resembles that of a living organism, thus using a multi-paradigmatic approach can provide a suitably complex and rich understanding of the research setting. In terms of paradigms, the study of 'the foyers through the eyes of hosts' (Chapter 6) takes a more interpretative approach, whereas the reports (Chapter 5) and interviews (Chapter 7) are analysed through a critical discourse approach. Through combining these with the researcher's vantage point, they produce a multiple, multi-faceted ontology of audiences and cultural participation. In the next section I provide some concluding thoughts on the specific studies, their respective findings, and discuss how they interrelate and stand apart from each other.

In Chapter 5, I presented findings and discussion of the annual report study, conducted using an approach inspired by critical-discourse analysis, which allowed me to identify key discursive shifts that locate the Barbican Centre within British cultural policy history of the last two decades. The study identifies three key discursive shifts, showing how, in the context of the Barbican Centre, discourses have been be imported, circulated and reproduced. These are often derived from existing cultural policy or arts marketing, but are also contextual to institutional histories. The first shift is towards 'customerism' (Skålén, Fougére and Fellesson, 2008), a term used to signify the underlying governmental rationality of marketing as centered around the customer. This is linked to the rise of customer experience, contextualised against the backdrop of the experience economy paradigm (Pine and Gilmore, 1998, 2011). The second shift, at the level of official rhetoric in the reports, is towards 'participation into the mainstream' which became prominent in the late 2000s, in coincidence with the establishment of the new Creative Learning department. A third shift focuses on the 'destination agenda' and seems to be influenced by the urban regeneration, creative city and placemaking discourses in cultural policy over the last two decades.

This final discursive shift seems to incorporate and co-opt the previous two, with destination becoming both about an increased 'participatory agenda' but also being about an individualisation of the audience experience. Ultimately, I would argue that the destination

and place marketing discourse, fitting the neoliberal model of urban development (Paddison, 2019) and of contemporary institutions as experiential brands, employs a certain understanding of participation that is not dissimilar to the 'everyday participation' theorised in literature. However, given the specific geographical context, this 'everyday participation' does not appear to be rooted in specific communities at a local level, given the high numbers and turnover of audiences in a large urban arts centre. Within this conception of 'everyday participation' at the service of destination, the logics of income generation and consumer culture tend to be dominant. These discourses and their dominance coincide with historical shifts, but arguably are re-circulated at different times and in the present, partly performed for the sake of the institution's existence, for example to secure funding, but also as part of wider urban development agendas. For example, within the City of London Corporation's Cultural Strategy that aims to transform the Square Mile into Culture Mile, the dominance of destination does not seem to be at the service of the Barbican, but of a bigger agenda that would benefit the City's financial district in terms of place branding and city competitiveness at a global level. Within this latter logic of city branding, audiences who use the foyers in the everyday for self-organised activities, would only count as audiences as long as they fit the brand. However, there might not be accountability towards them in the long term.

Although these discourses might appear neutral, when looked at within a critical-historical view they show and demonstrate specific rationales that are generally left implicit. If, with the earlier reports, it is possible to provide a greater historical perspective, this is somehow less feasible with most recent reports. For example, the 2003 report marks three key shifts: the understanding of income generation as a core value, the dismissal of service provision to become a more customer-focused organisation, and the subscription to a managerial approach to the arts centre and its customers, which seem to be in line with a wider process of neoliberalisation of culture (McGuigan, 2005) and turn to New Public Management. It is around the early 2000s, interestingly, that the discourse of destination first appears and then recurs in later reports. It is more complex to conduct a critical analysis on recent reports, as less historical perspective is available. Nonetheless, important shifts in discourse can be identified right to these most recent reports. As a key contribution, this chapter shows that by providing historicised accounts of institutions we can observe the effects and complexities of certain discursive shifts. Historicising is an effective tool that can be employed as a way of making visible the non-neutrality of institutions and their discourses. The critical-historical approach afforded by the reports is a counterpoint to the very 'grounded' study presented in the following chapter.

Chapter 6 is based on 'the foyers through the eyes of hosts' study, which was conducted with the aim to understand what happens in the foyers in the everyday, what the work of hosting involves and how audience members make use of the foyers. This study shows how different notions of audiences and ways of participation emerge at the thresholds of the arts centre, providing examples of everyday participation modes that tend to be consistently erased from institutional narratives. This covers a huge spectrum, from chess clubs and writing groups to political protests. In the hosts' study some of the themes that emerge are everyday engagement, the co-existence of programmed and non-programmed activities (which seems to imply an increased focus on audience participation at least at a discursive level), but also tensions between public and private/commercial use of spaces, and the necessities and practicalities of service provision (a return to the discourse of 'customerism' from the annual reports). The discourse of destination does not feature in the hosts' study, showing how strategic objectives might sometimes remain trapped, or guarded, at a managerial or strategic level. This would be different if the interviews were to be conducted post-2018, as by then the destination agenda would have been more overtly communicated to hosts through the establishment of the Foyer projects, the launch of Culture Mile and Level G. Beside its methodological contributions, the Foyer study, tapping into wider academic debates on engagement and participation, demonstrates how notions of participation are overly limited within institutional frameworks and understandings. It also sheds light on numerous opportunities where these limited notions could be practically expanded.

Chapter 7, the managers' study, constitutes a third lens through which discourses about audiences are explored. It makes clear that very little of the participation language emerges in managerial discourses about foyers and audiences in the foyers. It is harder to discern the extent to which this affects institutional practice. The new role of Level G seems prominent, as an example of how discourses of 'customerism', participation and destination can converge and be merged, evidenced by the mix of commercial spaces and public art programming. Conceptualising the foyers as a destination is normalised by managers, except from a few cases. In some instances, the existing conflicts to do with the use of spaces are mentioned, in marked contrast to the absence of participation discourses. The managers' interviews make visible that the participatory turn does not permeate the managerial language. There seems to be a wariness about participatory discourses in the specific context of the Barbican Centre. This reticence may be due to the participatory agenda challenging the core programming philosophy of the institution. If the annual reports represent a more sanitised version of the institutional narratives, through the eyes of hosts the foyers emerge as battlegrounds (with conflicting discourses of 'customerism' and participation), while the

managers position themselves as diplomats, balancing the official discourses from reports and strategic plans with everyday concerns about the uses of space. Managers regularly downplay the importance of the 'customerist' language by referring to audiences instead. It becomes clear how certain discourses that feature in the reports don't get employed in the everyday, particularly 'participation and engagement in the mainstream of our programmes'.

Key contributions to knowledge and implications of the study

In this section, I foreground the study's key contributions to knowledge, before outlining the implications for institutional practice and some of the directions for future research that stem from the project. Even though it is concerned with audiences, the study is not performing audience research in conventional terms. The main aim of this study was to address the lack of research on how discourses about audiences are produced and spatialised in arts institutions. By using the Barbican foyers as its research setting, the study shows the value of these spaces across different dimensions: as 'practised' spaces of everyday participation, and as contested spaces of mediation between different institutional agendas. In the following sections I'm going to explain how this research project provides important contributions to knowledge in the growing interdisciplinary fields of cultural policy, arts management and audience research.

Contribution to cultural policy studies and museum studies

This study offers a significant contribution to an emerging body of cultural policy literature focused on everyday forms of cultural participation in specific contexts, situated outside of the traditionally funded arts (Miles and Gibson, 2016, 2017; Gilmore, Glow and Johanson, 2017; Stevenson, Balling and Kann-Rasmussen, 2017; Belfiore and Gibson, 2019). Within this area of research, public parks (Gilmore, 2017), charity shops (Edwards and Gibson, 2017), libraries, social clubs and various other everyday spaces are explored ethnographically, proving that people assign cultural value to activities that are not usually measured and counted as cultural (i.e. knitting clubs, pub quizzes, socialising in parks). Drawing upon principles and methods from the Understanding Everyday Participation project, my research adds to knowledge about everyday participation, specifically by challenging the idea that this could only be found outside of traditional arts venues. As evidenced in my ethnography of the Barbican foyers conducted involving front-of-house staff, foyers within a large urban arts centre are spaces with a rich ecology of everyday participation activities beyond the formal artistic programming. My study focused on the 'practised spaces' of the foyers,

showing that they have now extended their function from waiting spaces into 'third places' (Oldenburg, 1989): living rooms, co-working areas, informal meeting forums, spaces for self-organised creative activities.

In the literature, some theatre and music scholars have noted the social role of foyers (Bennett, 1997; Small, 1998; Burland and Pitts, 2014; Glow and Johanson, 2017), but the most recent empirical research has been produced within museum studies, highlighting the centrality of foyers and thresholds for the visitor experience (Laursen, Kristiansen and Drotner, 2016; Parry, Page and Moseley, 2018). The implication of my study is that ancillary spaces within arts institutions have gained a more central role, both architecturally and socially: this is a further contribution to museum studies concerned with the communicative aspects of lobbies, entrances and foyers. This demonstrates the value of public spaces, as the spaces that afford more agency to members of the public, being open and free to access in the everyday and allowing 'cultural ecologies' (Holden, 2015) of participation to emerge. This shift in spatial use can be attributed to changing dynamics of work and leisure in cities transformed by the experience economy (Lorentzen and Hansen, 2012; Smith and Graham, 2019), where times and spaces for living, working and socialising are increasingly blurred (O'Brien, 2014; Merkel, 2019). My findings bring into question the traditional understanding of arts centres as spaces frequented mostly by audiences attending theatre, music, visual arts events or exhibitions. In doing so, it expands the notion of audience beyond ticket buyers and 'bums on seats', to non-ticketed audiences, using the spaces for a variety of daytime activities and uses of space: formal, informal and more 'subversive'.

Contribution to arts management and audience engagement

Another key contribution of this research is the highlighting of simultaneous and conflicting discourses about audiences, which can be observed through the lens of the foyers. As inherently liminal and hybrid spaces, foyers construct audiences as simultaneously citizens, customer/consumers and participants in both passive and active modes. Through an original conceptual approach that focuses on the intersection of discursive, spatial and programmatic conceptions of audiences in institutional contexts, the study argues that discourses about audiences have implications at the level of practice, especially in terms of spatial management. Planning, programming and allocating space in the foyers is a strategic management challenge, as clearly articulated across my three studies.

The research contributes to studies on audience development, engagement and participation in the area of arts management and policy (Markusen and Brown, 2014; Lindelof, 2015; Conner, 2016; Jancovich, 2017; Walmsley, 2019a), especially those with a specific focus on arts centres in systems of urban cultural production (Kawashima, 1999; Maelen, 2008; Glow and Johanson, 2017). In the literatures, it shows how the 'problem' of audiences has been tackled through arts marketing processes (Rentschler, 2002; Walmsley, 2019b) such as segmentation and targetisation, as well as audience development (Kawashima, 2006) and participatory methods to building 'audiences as communities' (Novak-Leonard and Brown, 2011). All these approaches, however, tend to be based on 'deficit models' of cultural participation (Jancovich, 2011; O'Brien, 2014; Miles and Gibson, 2016) and to reproduce the 'democratisation of culture' model. In doing so, they maintain a 'monological relationship' (Lindelof, 2015) and reproduce dominant discourses such as audience development.

The different discourses of audience development, 'customerism' and participation, as well as those of the arts centre as civic, commercial and destination-oriented, translate into practical challenges in terms of allocation and uses of spaces. Different departments need the foyers for different purposes: they need to be 'public spaces' that are 'always open, always free' as an overall institutional strategy (Level G), they are used for artistic programming (e.g. Foyer projects), they need to generate income (Commercial) and they also need to be welcoming to different audience groups (these could include LSO concert goers, everyday dancers and mums with babies, and many more). It is not always possible to accommodate all the audiences and to fulfil the needs of all the departments, which can produce frictions. From the perspective of the shop-floor workers, departmental agendas and audience groups have different expectations of what 'excellent audience experience' means, implying that Venue managers and hosts have to work around those expectations, often on the basis of intuitive embodied knowledge. The normative conception of 'excellent audience experience' is a myth, in that it tends to reproduce the needs of paying customers and to obscure the needs of those who have no transactional power within these spaces. Although the value of 'cultural ecologies' is rhetorically recognised by the institution, the extent to which it is ok 'to slide down bannisters' is always renegotiated, and in some cases denied.

Programmatic implications

The programming implications of this are that the Barbican Centre could cultivate discourses of participation as more dispersed, informal and self-organised, whereby the value offered to audiences is in the space being made available: the shared and publicly-accessible cultural

infrastructure rather than the structured programmes. Moreover, the 'participation into the mainstream' discourse results in a reproduction of top-down audience development models within a democratisation of culture model: audiences seen as citizens to be educated, entertained, engaged. Radically shifting the dynamics of power, the everyday participation model turns the attention to what audiences value and want to engage with in the first place.

This would also allow programmers and marketeers committed to transforming the public spaces to make the case with Commercial and other departments. The foyers have a unifying power, in that all departments of the institution have some interest in them, but they also fragment, as some uses are privileged over others: Barbican Level -1 can't be used as a dancehall by young people, if the LSO concert goers are queuing to deposit their coats in the cloakroom. As within the paradox of everyday participation, all ways of participating are valid, however, within every institution, some ways are more valid than others. My advice is that in order to produce future publics, arts institutions need to give more space, visibility, concessions to projects, audiences and activities less traditionally 'fitting'.

The nature of these audiences is important to note. I could have tried to prove the value of everyday participation in the Barbican Centre foyers via more traditional audience research, however those 'new audiences' were not identified by the institution as audiences in the first place precisely because they are interstitial. They appropriate the spaces in ways that are often visible to the hosts that live the spaces in the everyday, but not to senior managers in the office. With such a rich ecology of audiences, previously unseen within its walls, the Barbican has a unique opportunity to expand and enrich its offer and its value as an institution.

The discourse of everyday participation is likely to increasingly conflict with discourses of destination marketing, which construct audiences as consumer-tourists, counted in terms of footfall numbers and valued based on economic multiplier models of how much extra income they can generate. Moreover, destination marketing models risk reproducing exclusionary practices; loiterers, dancers, artists and people just gathering in the spaces might be more heavily policed because they're not spending money in the destination. This has proven to be the case in many privately-owned public spaces, often linked to processes of gentrification in urban neighbourhoods, where the 'authentic destination' brand is accompanied by securitised practices that would not allow 'problematic ways of participating' that don't fit the destination brand.

Contribution to audience research methods and visitor studies

The ethnographic study of the Barbican Centre's foyers from the perspective of front-of-house staff provides a novel methodological contribution to the field of audience research, raising a number of opportunities for institutions and researchers to better understand the mediation of audience experience. Whilst the potentials of involving front-of-house staff as audience ethnographers had been identified (Walmsley, 2018), only very few studies in museum contexts have involved front-of-house staff as the informants for audience research (Laursen, Kristiansen and Drotner, 2016). Based on my review of the literature, front-of-house workers are rarely involved and represented in scholarly or institutional research. Building on this recognition, my thesis offers a study of the foyers through the eyes of Audience Experience hosts. In doing so, it opens a path for future research that includes the voices of those directly involved in audience interactions. It is clear that more collaborative research in this direction can be highly valuable for arts managers, researchers and front-of-house workers themselves. For managers, to achieve a detailed evaluative process for their audience policies, for front-of-house staff, to have their knowledge affirmed in shaping the trajectory of the institution, and for researchers, as a highly textured source of data from knowledge producers that have previously been side-lined in research.

The study foregrounds front-of house-staff, the Barbican Audience experience hosts, as key 'mediators/co-producers of the audience experience' but also as 'knowledge producers' in audience research, given their embodied-ethnographic knowledge. The study also suggests that the role of front-of-house is more than customer service provision, but extends to audience engagement. Moreover, hosts and FoH workers are key agents in relation to audiences as affective labourers in the experience economy. The research makes clear that 'Hosting' is a multifaceted role that involves both functional service provision and being involved in 'performing the affective side of the institution'. This study has shown the value of involving front-of-house staff as knowledge producers and that adopting ethnographic methods can complement more traditional quantitative methods of audience research. It shows that hosts are often in receipt of detailed knowledge concerning audiences and their uses of foyers and public spaces. For this reason, hosts can be involved as knowledge producers in relation to audiences and they are a resource that institutions could greatly benefit from listening to.

These techniques could well be transposed to other arts institutions, or more broadly, other public facing institutions. However, considerations on the ethical and epistemological nature

of such an approach are an integral part of its findings. Particularly within increasingly neoliberalised institutions, there is a risk that the benefits of this knowledge are reaped solely for marketing and income generation purposes, which could result in the exploitation of the knowledge producers. It is of huge importance for the Barbican Centre and for other institutions to realise the wealth of knowledge and affective investment of hosts as well as the numerous ways in which hosts would improve the institution in terms of bringing a range of diverse perspectives into institutional practices.

Methodologically, the foyer study challenges normative models of audience development and segmentation used in arts marketing. After I completed my study on the foyers, the Barbican introduced the 'hosts' journal' in the context of the Life Rewired Hub to gain more information from hosts on the foyers and on so called 'non-ticketed visitors'. This might point to an immediate impact of my work on the institution. The hosts perform the role of the information gatherers, in this case, of the qualitative information that is seen as increasingly important to arts institutions. However, in this way the hosts have also become part of the increasing surveillance the public are subject to in urban spaces, which has already been pointed out as an existing tension in terms of spatial management. With a more participatory approach that could be defined and be led by hosts themselves, qualitative knowledge about audiences could be gained in a more ethical way, avoiding the surveillance aspect.

Given the multifaceted role of hosts, their investment in the arts and them often being artists, more involvement in audience research could mean generally more cross-departmental relationships and being involved with projects in different departments. There are accounts of managers who started off as front-of-house and made their way into curatorial or managerial careers. There are many ways the Barbican could embrace front-of-house staff more fully. Mentorship schemes, collaborative projects, or even granting use of space for collaborative projects would be ways of giving importance to a 'community' that is part of the institution yet often left at the margins. Given that careers for artists and creative workers are becoming increasingly more unsustainable, especially in cities such as London where the cost of housing and studio renting is getting higher, supporting the internal community of hosts is a way of nurturing future artists. This is not specific to the Barbican, and as recent national surveys have shown, a large part of house workers in museums currently feel undervalued (FoHMuseums, 2019). Valuing front-of-house workers and offering them better spaces, working conditions and creative opportunities is much needed, and recognising their qualitative knowledge of the institution is an important part of that.

Reflecting back

Given my mention of positionality and reflexivity in earlier chapters, there is now a need to critically reflect back on what this thesis has achieved and to discuss some of the potential limitations that have occurred in the course of its production. I will do this through two lines of discussion; firstly, to explain why through the course of the research process, certain 'slippages' and iterations have occurred between the early literature chapters and the empirical ones. Secondly, there is a need to think through how the methodological choices I made in the production of this thesis have greatly influenced the type of knowledge that has been produced, ultimately an epistemological question, and how orientation has inadvertently led to some of the aforementioned mismatches.

Initially, the thesis attempted to understand audiences within the participatory shift, and aimed to understand how audiences can become involved in shaping the spaces and practices of the arts institution. However, the focus shifted from an interest in understanding audience experience to how discourses about audiences, their experience and cultural participation are produced by the arts institution. The focus became much more on institutional practices, and on showing facets of institutional practice that hardly find space in academic, let alone in market, research. In particular, Chapter 6, through the interview study with hosts, makes visible a community that exist within the arts institution, but that is often written out of institutional narratives about audiences.

It also became increasingly clear to me that my specific positionality firstly as a host and architecture guide, and my process of becoming a researcher, made me aware of my 'being always already in the field'. A critical point to reflect back on is that the choice to use interviews, participant observation and textual analysis as the primary research methods led to a specific account of the institution being developed. There is no doubt that the choice of methods has directly resulted in the type of knowledge that this thesis has produced. For example, had a much more generalised research technique been used, such as visitor surveys, a very different account of audience experiences would undoubtedly have been given. This would have created a much more 'detached' account, whereas being directly involved with the participants, experiencing with them a variety of cultural activities and seeing their transformations, led to a 'closer' account of such experiences. A limitation of the research, as already mentioned, is its fragmentation in three different facets. It would have been possible to produce a more socially-engaged longitudinal project that focuses primarily on

the experience of 'hosting audiences in the spaces' given that the role of front-of-house is an underestimated aspect of institutional practice. This could have been done by inviting hosts into the research process as co-investigators. However, given the nature of a PhD study as an individual endeavour, this kind of project would be better developed by a larger research team.

Policy and management implications: The Barbican Centre and beyond

This investigation is relevant not only for academic enquiry, but also for arts managers and policymakers. Although the world of arts institutions is constantly evolving, and often very rapidly, it is important for practitioners in the field to scrutinise their strategies and policies, reintegrating research knowledge with professional expertise. Often academic debates about audience engagement and participation can sound very far from the day-to-day management challenges encountered in an arts centre, yet they can offer important openings into rethinking practices and challenging the status quo. For example, critical discussions on cultural participation and the expansion of its concept beyond those who take part in the 'subsidised arts', can highlight problematic ways in which institutions exclude or don't recognise certain cultural practices as legitimate or valuable. As shown in my ethnographic study, such spaces are a valuable lens for understanding how overall institutional strategies are expressed, practised and in some cases challenged on the ground.

Whilst foyers might be described in annual reports as an 'outstanding creative destination for cultural and commercial audiences', people using the publicly accessible areas in the everyday have introduced new uses of space and modes of participation that were not necessarily planned for these spaces. As my study showed, informal, often self-organised, practices of everyday participation (book groups, dancing sessions, drawing sessions) co-exist alongside officially recognised artforms (theatre, classical music, visual arts) and formal artistic programming, contributing to the overall 'cultural ecology' and vibrancy of the arts centre. Barbican policies don't necessarily acknowledge this variety of activities as an integral part of the space, and the presence of non-ticketed audiences is often justified as 'generating income'. However, by calling them 'public spaces' the Barbican commits to their use as such: open, free for all, and allowing a certain degree of unpredictability and spontaneity, not strictly in commercial terms. In order to do so, management should start including a consideration of everyday participation in their strategies and policies and highlight the cultural value of different activities happening in the foyers.

This has far-reaching implications for policy makers. It demands greater emphasis and investment on cultural initiatives that give people the space to actively participate in their preferred forms and not just to be seen as 'cultural consumers'. This would mean giving more agency to the public in defining what kinds of activities and resources should be provided in public spaces within arts institutions. From an arts management point of view, it is an opportunity to diversify and include new audiences, beyond the existing artistic offer. A challenge that needs to be taken into account is that institutions with specific programming histories tend to have audiences who might feel a higher sense of ownership and entitlement over the space, which means diversifying the programming can alienate some audiences whilst inviting some new ones in.

Given the changing nature of audiences as increasingly more 'fragmented, dispersed' but also more 'participatory', and given the multiplicity of spaces that an institution like the Barbican has at its disposal, there are many opportunities to explore and diversify programming models for specific audiences and to limit the risk to lose existing ones. To an extent, this has been the focus of the Foyer projects over the last four years, with the development of installations, talks and other curatorial formats in the public spaces, that sit alongside other artistic offerings and commercial endeavours. The Foyer project provides a useful example of how programmatic innovations can be integrated in the spaces, whereby a classical music event in the main Hall can happen simultaneously as a micro-exhibition in the Old Shop/Studio, and an informal book group can gather in some other areas of the foyers. The idea of simultaneous programming is not new, but what can be gleaned from the foyers as a complex 'cultural ecology' is that it has a potential to include a greater diversity of audience groups who can feel represented and 'belonging' in the space.

Significantly, this study found that rather than staff across departments constructing a single framing of audiences, they simultaneously constituted audiences and the use of foyers in multiple ways, making visible some unresolvable tensions between different agendas. The key tension is between the use of space as public/free ('always open, always free') and as private/commercial ('need to generate income') which is sometimes seen as a disconnect between the organisation exposed and enacted values. Another implication for managers is that policies and strategies developed at senior levels inside institutions, often need to be tested out and re-assessed based on what the everyday experience of implementing those policies is. For example, 'transforming public spaces' cannot be done without consultation and listening processes involving the agents running these spaces in the everyday, such as front-of-house staff. This study provides a clear methodology for this process. Beyond the

Barbican case, more open and honest communication across departments and across different levels within organisations is much needed. This can involve disrupting hierarchies and creating safe spaces for discussion and exchange where staff at different levels can express their ideas and suggestions, including acknowledging failures and pinpointing 'what doesn't work so well'. Too often front-of-house staff, despite their key role in managing audiences in the everyday, are left out of decision-making processes regarding audience policies and strategies, as well as the management of spaces. This is an area where arts institutions can do more, to make sure there is a better integration and sharing of purposes across the whole staff cohort.

Exiting the research mode, another practical implication of this study relates to the ways in which departments such as Customer/Audience experience are perceived within institutions. In my experience, the role of such departments tends to be seen as serving the other departments in a functional way. This side-lining seems to contradict the strategic goal about 'customer experience' being of paramount importance to the institution: 'To create timely, relevant and memorable experiences for our customers, exceeding their expectations in everything we do' (Barbican Centre, 2017a). Those working to provide such 'excellent customer experience', namely Centre, Venue and Assistant Venue managers, Barbican hosts and Box Office staff, as well as cleaners and security staff, are key workers without whom the centre could just simply not be open. In a nutshell, they keep the arts institution going in the everyday. Just imagine a sold-out concert in the Hall with no hosts or no cleaners on site. Nevertheless, beyond praising the importance of Customer experience workers in the annual reports, more needs to be done in structural terms to improve working conditions and recognising their role at an institutional level.

A key message that this work points to is that arts institutions need to reassess the value they give to the work of front-of-house staff working on zero-hours contracts, who are also very often identifying as artists and creative practitioners, therefore part of the creative industries and of the service industry at the same time. The majority of hosts are practising artists; there are musicians, writers, visual artists, theatre practitioners, photographers, and practitioners in other creative disciplines. Given that most staff are non-unionised and have no structures of social security, arts institutions should at least open a conversation about how they can allocate resources to support them. If the arts institution, as stated in their mission statement, wants to 'celebrate the artists of today and invest in those of tomorrow', then there is a huge potential to start from inside their own front-of-house staff cohort to nurture the artists of the future, and actually offer some resources beyond financial exchange.

At a basic infrastructural level, this would mean allocating better spaces for front-of-house staff such as changing rooms, but also allowing access to the Intranet to front-of-house staff after a certain time of them being employed. Other examples of this could be offering mentorship schemes, or the possibility to meet a curator or professional from another department within the arts institution. A further way to develop a more sustained relationship with front-of-house staff would be to promote artists commissions or offer spaces for exhibitions in the arts centre at specific times during the year. There is also a potential, given the embodied knowledge about audiences that front-of-house staff members have, for practice-based and host-led audience research activities to be carried out as on experimental grounds, commissioning pieces of participatory audience research. These approaches would also have a re-distributive potential in terms of resources, given that front-of-house zero-hour workers are amongst the least secure in the institutional hierarchy. If 'providing excellent audience experience' is of paramount importance for arts institutions, then developing ways to improve also the experiences of those providing 'excellence' should be a basic requirement. Although workers already have their own capacity to create alternative spaces of social exchange and support, more could be done by institutions to provide structures of welfare support.

Future lines of enquiry and potential for further research

This study inspires a number of productive avenues for future enquiry and research projects across various fields: comparative cultural policy, audience research, arts institutions' management and wider sociological research on cultural labour.

<u>Comparative cultural policy</u>

Following on from the literature review, further comparative cultural policy studies on varying notions and discourses about audiences across different countries and languages. This would offer insights into the proliferation of 'Anglo-American' models that have been circulated and adapted to different arts and cultural policy contexts. Even within 'provincial' Europe, the 'audience development' paradigm has become dominant, as evidenced by the recent 'Study on Audience Development' (European Commission, 2017). Beyond some isolated yet poignant intellectual interventions (e.g. Bonini, 2019), further critical examinations on the effects of the prevalence of such discourses and how they have been borrowed and incorporated into discourses across different countries both in the Global

North and the Global South, are needed. Some key scholars in media and cross-cultural studies (Butsch and Livingstone, 2014; Carpentier, Schrøder and Hallett, 2015) have laid the ground for such comparative approaches to grasp the construction of meanings across diverse contexts. Building on their work, further investigations within the area of audience research in the arts is much needed, in order to understand how terminologies are used at different times and places, by governments, organisations, social movements and how they are translated across contexts. This would produce a useful empirical base for global cultural studies about audiences to develop, even within a post-colonial lens.

Histories of arts centres' management

Within the specific UK context, a further study that could be developed would be an archive on the history of arts centres in post-war Britain that could allow drawing comparisons between different arts centres' models across a set of areas, from governance to cultural programming, to architecture. A recent study on British modern playhouses from an architectural-historical standpoint (Fair, 2018) could provide a blueprint. In particular, this book calls for more attention to institutional documents and growing archives held by arts institutions, as an important way of tracing changes in managerial strategies and programming approaches in relation to audiences.

Audience research

Based on the findings that have emerged from the ethnographic study, further research is needed on the changing role of public spaces in arts institutions in relation to everyday participation to improve our understanding of the relationship between formal and informal activities and the role played by architectural thresholds. Bringing together cultural policy literature on everyday participation, audience researchers could investigate how people use spaces within arts institutions. This would provide a better understanding of the meanings that foyers, thresholds and public spaces have to individuals, and how arts institutions can respond to audience changing habits of cultural participation and consumption. This would allow other researchers to test and compare findings in other arts centres, arts venues, libraries, parks and other public and private spaces within communities. Academic and institutional research could pay closer attention to initiatives already developed by arts institutions and develop useful empirical insights for the advancement of the literature.

Within audience research, another potential strand that stands out clearly as an avenue for further research is the potential for participatory audience research co-produced by arts institutions with front-of-house staff members involved as knowledge producers and participants. Arts institutions and scholars could work with existing communities of front-of-house staff to commission research that focuses on non-programmed cultures of participation outside core venues but still within institutional boundaries, and to understand and explore the value and role of cultural engagement for non-participants or non-ticketed audiences. However, an ethical consideration would be about the mode of this research: it would have to take into account that the knowledge gleaned by front-of-house staff is not just there to be exploited, but that this needs to be a two-way relationship.

My study also points to the need for wider sociological research on cultural labour, showing how the work of front-of-house staff represents a specific site of encroachment of creative industries and service industries. One of the most pressing issues that I think would need tackling by researchers in the future is to do with the relationship between service workers in the creative industries and social inequality in the arts. This could build upon the model of the 'Panic' report published in 2018 (Brook, O'Brien and Taylor, 2018). It could take the shape of a longitudinal mixed-methods enquiry into socio-economic and cultural conditions of front-of-house staff across different arts institutions, their double identity as service workers – creative practitioners. A case study on the London landscape, where the pressure of rent and the lack of studio spaces for artists are most severe, would contribute to an existing area of study on affective and precarious cultural labour (Gill and Pratt, 2008). This would require a large team of both quantitative sociologists and qualitative researchers, looking at large datasets, socio-economics and other aspects, as well as qualitative data on the affective labour and logics that govern so much of the service work deployed by arts institutions. At this specific moment of crisis within the Covid-19 pandemic, with freelance and zero-hour workers in the service and creative industries being amongst the most vulnerable, this is a timely piece of research to be carried out and would potentially be very resonant.

The age of remote participation?

Having started this thesis with a reference to our 'age of participation' and permanent 'audiencing', it seems surreal to be ending it whilst the Covid-19 pandemic has taken over our everyday lives across the globe in recent months. Arts institutions and museums across the world, those spaces that require the presence of the body of the audience, of a multitude of bodies in a specific space, have closed their doors to the public due to the coronavirus outbreak in March 2020. If a state of 'permanent audiencing' had already been normalised through the increasing use of social media in the last decade, and particularly so in the last 4 years since the Brexit referendum, now we are all audiences and participants to an unprecedented global pandemic scenario. Paradoxically, we are participating in our lives but mostly doing so remotely, and to a large extent our participation in society requires the avoidance of social interactions in physical spaces. Digital platforms like Teams, Zoom and Houseparty are now used to mediate our social gatherings and interactions, both for work and leisure. The idea of the presence of bodies in a specific space, more than ever, comes forth in all its unmeasurable value at this time in which there are strict limitations to gathering live in a physical venue with other participants.

The current Covid-19 pandemic begs questions about how public and semi-public spaces will be regulated, used and controlled in the future. Restrictions on the use of public space and physical-social distancing have been key measures to reduce the transmission of Covid-19 and protect public health. My data analysis revealed the tension between the 'always open, always free' approach and the limits necessarily set on uses of semi-public spaces, based on various concerns including public health and safety. At this time, in July 2020, when museums and other arts institutions are seeking possible models for safe re-openings, a pressing question is on how to ensure safe use of foyers when physical distancing is needed. The dichotomy between ticketed spaces where numbers of people can be monitored and controlled versus non-ticketed spaces becomes even more stark and problematic. The long-term impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic are still unclear, but it is evident that it will have huge effects on the use of public spaces in arts institutions, which, as my thesis has shown, is already highly contested. In the ensuing months and years, it will be critical to study these changes in order to inform the future of audiences in the arts, and of public spaces and programming.

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Appendices

APPENDIX A. Barbican-Guildhall Studentship Call (March 2016)

Barbican Centre/Guildhall School of Music & Drama
Joint doctoral studentship: full fees waiver plus £13,000 maintenance allowance p.a. for three years
Three years full-time to start in September 2016

About the context
This unique studentship is a brand-new initiative for two leading arts organisations. The Barbican and the Guildhall School of Music & Drama have used their physical proximity and shared cultural and social goals to forge a long history of collaboration, and this is an exciting further step. The Barbican is currently making its strategic plan for the next five years; the Guildhall School has for the last five years been running a strand of research in Understanding Audiences. As the Barbican approaches its 40th anniversary and Guildhall School expands its research activity, the time is right to offer an enviable opportunity to an exceptional individual: the chance to spend three years in one of the UK's flagship arts organisations finding out what the next 40 years might look like from the point of view of audiences.

About the project
Audience and reception studies have been increasingly important in the arts and humanities over the last decade or so, whether in a cultural history or policy context; they have always been of interest in socio-economic and marketing contexts. The present project seeks to understand the concept of 'audience experience' through various prisms: aesthetic, cultural, psychological, identity-politics, economic, etc. It will investigate contemporary notions of relationships between individuals and not-for-profit corporate bodies from both their perspectives. It will track engagement with the venue as a space and as an idea/ethos/brand. It will attempt to understand how that engagement translates into virtual spaces, including online. It will, finally, assess the usefulness of particular kinds of tools and metrics for adding to understanding of these issues.
The precise title of the PhD will be negotiated with the successful candidate within these parameters. The project will necessarily involve a full literature survey (including industry, funder and government reports) and training in aspects of data-handling if required, and will be subject to the general structures and regulations governing doctoral study at the Guildhall School.

About the person
You will have a good first degree in a relevant subject (e.g. Music, Drama/Theatre Studies, Fine Art, Art History, Film Studies, Social Sciences, Psychology, Economics, Marketing, etc.) and either a master's or equivalent professional experience in a relevant sector. You will be passionate about the arts in society, and have an understanding of contemporary methods of relationship-forming between arts organisations, venues and audiences; you will be fluent with social media and similar tools. You will be comfortable dealing with relatively large amounts of data. You will have knowledge of the public funding landscape in the UK, and understand the political and philosophical background to that landscape, and also be aware of the various other income streams available to the arts.

About the process
Interested applicants should apply in the usual way to the School's doctoral programme email address mailto:doctorate@gsmd.ac.uk noting explicitly their interest in this studentship.

For further details about the School's doctoral programme and application process please see: www.gsmd.ac.uk/barbicanstudentship

Closing date for completed applications **28 March 2016.**

For more information, please contact doctorate@gsmd.ac.uk

Appendix A1. Approved Research Proposal (January 2017)

Proposed Title: Public engagement and the agency of the public: investigating the relationship between spatial strategies and public programming at the Barbican Centre

Background and rationale

As a leading international multi-arts venue with over 1 million people passing through its doors every year, the Barbican Centre (BC) is implementing crucial policies aimed at providing 'arts without boundaries for the widest possible audience' (Kenyon, 2016). This study, developed in response to the Barbican-Guildhall doctoral research call (April 2016), sets out to offer an important contribution to the timely debate on 'public engagement' at the BC, drawing on the research in Understanding Audiences undertaken at Guildhall School of Music and Drama.

At the heart of an emerging cultural and connectivity hub, the BC's key goals of the coming years are transforming its public realm, promoting diversity through 'an increasingly strategic Creative Learning programme' (BOP Consulting 2013; Renshaw 2013) and maintaining inclusivity, while also seeking financial sustainability and income generation through commercial activities. Given its unique position as both cultural and commercial venue, the iconic architecture and specific funding framework (founded and funded by the City of London since 1982; and an ACE NPO since 2012), as well as the interdisciplinary programming, the BC is an important lens through which to analyse the changing role of arts institutions in relation to their publics.

Not only places for cultural consumption, but also potential sites for active cultural citizenship and critical practices, arts institutions in the 21st century play a greater civic role (Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation 2016) as 'spaces of mediation' between different forces, values and agents (Sheikh 2004). To foster social change, progressive institutions 'seek to create a democratic space of polyvocality', in which 'managing diversity and making existing conflicts productive' become key critical issues (Möntmann 2006).

The complexity of managing spaces for a multitude of diverse publics appears to be an inherent struggle faced by arts institutions today. If the BC aims to become a more 'porous institution' (Kenyon 2012, 2016), this invokes a reflection on the rationales of designing spaces for 'informality and presence' (Sennett 2006) and on the challenges and opportunities presented by 'agonistic' public spaces (Mouffe 2007), understood as spaces that allow a pluralism of conflicting views.

The initial aim of this doctoral project is to answer the following key **research questions:**

- In the context of the Barbican Centre, how is the notion of 'public engagement' played out in institutional approaches to spatial strategies and public programming? What is the role of public programmers and other practitioners in developing relationships with audiences?

- What does it mean for audiences to be engaged - in terms of 'participation', 'co-creation', 'co-curation' – in the process of shaping the spaces and practices of the institution, and to what extent has this been planned by the BC? What are the potentialities and gaps of reframing public engagement as agency gained by the public?

- To what extent are the values predicated by the BC reflected in its practices? What has been the achievement of the institution in playing a civic role of mediation between different agendas, to foster values such as porosity and diversity?

Literature review outline

Discourses and approaches produced from academia, funding bodies and within institutions have redefined the understanding of 'public engagement' from a range of different perspectives, with distinct philosophical underpinnings and understandings of social theory. An important focus has fallen on the differences and connections between 'engagement', 'participation' and 'agency'. Different strands of literature use similar terms, raising issues of definitions and methodologies. Drawing upon an array of theories and discourses from different disciplinary fields, the literature review will provide an account of current debates on notions of 'public' in relation to engagement strategies, artistic programming and institutional spaces. Such notions could be explored through key structural themes provisionally identified as: concepts of cultural value and social impact of the arts; spectatorship, the dilemma of participation and the 'social turn'; critical-spatial practices and conceptions of public space; alternative approaches to institutional practices.

Cultural policy discourses produced by funding and government bodies tend to frame 'public engagement' in terms of levels, motivations and forms of involvement, or in terms of quality metrics (Arts Council England 2016). The focus can be either on measuring economic and social impact (Reeves 2012, Renshaw 2013; BOP Consulting 2013), or on trying to capture artistic excellence and intrinsic quality (Arts Council England 2016). The limitations of such approaches have been discussed and reassessed (Matarasso 1997; Merli 2002; Selwood 2002; Belfiore and Bennett 2007, 2010; Hewison 2014). Renshaw (2013), looking at specific creative learning strategies developed by Barbican-Guildhall, contends that 'a new paradigm' is needed to address key issues confronting learning and development in the arts, through a set of interconnections that take into account artistic quality, social impact and access.

In the field of audience and reception studies, it is possible to trace a general shift from the conception of audiences as recipients of cultural provision to an understanding of new modes of cultural engagement, variously understood as 'active spectatorship' (Barker 2006; Radbourne et. al. 2013; Burland and Pitts 2014), 'participation', 'collaboration', 'co-creation' (Walmsley and Franks 2011). Radbourne et al. (2013) propose a conceptualisation of 'audience experience' based on research that examines new modes of arts participation and considers the limits of cultural indicators used by funding bodies. However, their study results in a practical toolkit advocating for key intrinsic attributes of the audience experience: knowledge, risk, authenticity and collective engagement (Radbourne et al 2013). From a different position, Lindelof and Hansen (2015) propose an approach to audience experience that is neither target- nor product-led but rather based on openness and co-operativeness. Different methodologies used to understand audience experience will be scrutinized.

Following the evolution of practices of relational aesthetics (Borriaud 2002), participatory art (Bishop 2012) and socially-engaged practices (O'Neill and Doherty 2011), the review will point out key 'turns' in the conception of the role of audiences. Scholars from various disciplinary areas have highlighted opportunities and pitfalls of participatory practices (Miessen 2010, Huybrechts 2014), in some cases suggesting a radical rethinking of the meanings of terms such as 'active spectatorship' (Bennett 1997; Rancière 2009).

Within the institution, public engagement is variously understood by different departments, as related with the aesthetic (specific artforms), social or educational (Learning and Engagement), or institutional (Development) dimension. Following the analysis of policy and academic

literatures, internal documents produced by the BC will be reviewed to analyse how public engagement is framed, practiced and translated into both physical and digital spaces, where the boundaries are between free, ticketed and paid for events, as well as the interplay between programmed activities and commercial services in the foyer environment.

With the awareness of the wealth of scholarship on audience and public engagement, this research project is situated at the intersection of cultural policy, audience research and aesthetic theories on art and social practice; as the research unfolds, new areas of debate could be incorporated. For example, curatorial studies (Möntmann 2006, Lind 2010, O'Neill and Doherty 2011, O'Neill 2012, von Bismark et al 2012) represent an emerging multi-disciplinary body of thought, that conceptualises the public as the result of a series of interconnections, translations, mediations that exist beyond 'the passive observation of the "viewer," the commodifying gaze of the "consumer," and the stylized participation of the "spectator" ' (Hlavajova et al 2014).

Pilot case study: public spaces at the Barbican Centre

Given the set of questions and theories outlined in the literature review, as well as my pre-understandings of the BC, the research project proposes to look at how these complex dynamics are played out in the public spaces of the arts centre, such as the foyers, the Curve Gallery, the shop and the café, the blog and social media channels. Understood as 'liminal' sites between the inside (core venues such as the concert hall, theatre, art gallery) and outside (the highwalk system and the podium, the city) of the BC, they could be conceptualised as 'thresholds' (Gurian 2005) where a multitude of diverse audiences gain degrees of agency — over spaces, content and processes.

There is a growing literature on foyer spaces in the field of museum studies seen as the beginning and the ending of the museum narrative (AHRC 2011-14; V&A 2011), highlighting their inherent potential 'to guide and structure the behaviour of visitors' (Laursen at al 2012), to overcome 'threshold fear' (Gurian 2005). However, 'museum foyers remain an under-researched setting when it comes to the meaning-making and communicative aspects of visitor reception and dialogue.' (Laursen et al. 2012).

The current Foyer Projects at the Barbican ('Transforming Public Space'), emerged as part of the new strategic plan initiated and convened by the Barbican Incubator, is 'a new programme of installations and exhibitions animating public spaces' (Barbican blog 2016) combining digital and physical interaction.

Methodology

Adopting an interdisciplinary approach, the study will draw upon theories from the fields of arts management, sociology of culture, critical studies, curatorial theories and social geography, with the aim, over the course of the three years, to explore key domains discussing the shift from audience engagement to new paradigms of publics, the potentials and problems of public programming and engagement strategies, as well as the changing role of art institutions as public spaces of mediation in society. The current methodology outline is a detailed plan until the Upgrade, where long-term and short-term goals are identified.

Drawing upon Actor-Network theory (Latour 2005) as a research framework, the study will look at the BC as an interconnected system of people, objects and values, or 'cultural ecology' (Holden 2015). This will help identify key policy and strategy documents, publications, physical

and digital spaces, as well as groups, individuals and associations to critically engage with, in relation to the main research questions.

Alongside a comprehensive literature review on key theoretical issues, a case-study (Pilot case study: Foyer Projects) approach to the BC will look at changes undertaken by the Centre in the last decade in relation to spatial strategies and public programming, against the backdrop of wider cultural policy shifts (London and the UK), through the analysis of annual reports and other communications, policy and strategic documents (2006 – 2015). In addition, through archival research of key resources and records held in the Barbican-Guildhall archives, the study will analyse interdisciplinary public programming initiatives by the BC, drawing comparisons with a number of peer organisations (i.e. Southbank Centre, King's Place, Tate, Museum of London) around key issues. This critical-historical enquiry will investigate the particular ways in which notions and practices of audience engagement, public programming and spatial strategies have been framed and understood, challenged and reassessed.

Combining methods from Grounded Theory (Charmaz 2004) and Discourse Analysis (Fairclough 2003), a set of theoretical concepts will be identified, that will inform the interview process. This will be followed by a process of qualitative data collections from one-to-one audio interviews with members of staff (from departments including Curatorial, Creative Learning, Development and Marketing, as well as artists and other stakeholders). The new information gathered will be analysed through 'axial-coding', to generate a new set of conceptual explanations that will inform the writing up of the Upgrade document. Members of staff from the BC will be formally involved in the Upgrade process through a consultation-cycle in which the study will be subject to internal scrutiny.

Informed by the outcomes of the 1st phase of the research, the following phase will identify the appropriate qualitative methodologies for further investigation, where the mode of enquiry will take the form of the subject that it seeks to investigate. Following the Upgrade, the initial findings of the study will be publicly shared in a workshop-discussion with internal staff, artists and stakeholders involved in specific projects (i.e. public programme in 'Art and Change' 2018) and in a series of symposia organised in collaboration with Theatrum Mundi (2017-2018). At this stage, the aim is to be able to share part of the research through a first academic paper that could be circulated in the public domain.

Given that the focus of the Barbican programming in 2018 will be 'Art and change', this will constitute an opportunity to inhabit the institutional spaces, conduct field work and gather new qualitative data. Public engagement will be investigated as a durational, collaborative and dialogic process through a series of discussions, workshops and meetings, where the material being brought to light by the research – documents, concepts, projects - will be critically examined with the relevant constituencies both in physical and digital spaces.

The final stage of the research will incorporate a multiplicity of voices and perspectives on models, strategies and policies of public engagement that would be published to inform future institutional developments.

Appendix B. Study 1 (30 May 2017)

To the Guildhall School of Music and Drama Ethical Committee,

This letter is to communicate an amendment to my recent Ethical approval application, revised as requested by the committee and submitted on the 15th May 2017.

Only after having submitted the forms and having taken some time to carry out further research on qualitative research methods, I came to the conclusion that the pilot case study '*Audience engagement through spatial strategies and public programming in the foyer spaces of the Barbican Centre'* had to be modified, in order to ensure coherence with my current lines of inquiry and research aims. Below I present detailed methodological reasons as to why I came to these conclusions, and therefore I am asking you to consider a new Ethical approval application for an amended case study, renamed '*Audience experience hosts' perspectives on the public spaces of the Barbican Centre'*.

Firstly, this amendment reflects the nature of the enquiry. As outlined in my proposal, the aim of the research is to investigate how notions and practices of 'public engagement' are understood, assessed and enacted through spatial strategies and programming from within the institution, but also how members of the public use, and engage with, these public spaces. The plan set out in my application was to conduct a process of qualitative interviews with Barbican Centre's members of staff from different departments and across various organizational levels, who would be selected on the basis of their involvement in the foyer projects and public spaces, either at strategic or managerial level.

However, what I am trying to explore and capture at this stage is 'what kinds of engagement take place in the public spaces of the Barbican' that can mean both programmed or unprogrammed activities, 'ways of using, and interacting with, the spaces of the arts centre'. Therefore, key informants are the staff members involved in working front-line with members of the public, in the spaces between the inside and outside of the institution. For this reason, I have now concluded that it would be more appropriate to my research design and rationale, to start with a qualitative interview process involving Audience experience hosts as participants, given that they are the direct 'interfaces' between institutional approaches to, and the realities of, what happens in the spaces of the arts centre.

Furthermore, Audience Experience hosts are:

- physically involved in the everyday running of the spaces of the centre;
- the first level of encounter between the general public and the institution;
- spend long periods of time in these spaces, therefore have different perspectives and, crucially, 'embodied knowledge' of how members of the public interact with them.

Secondly, the new case study will be coherent with my methodological approach. For this initial phase of qualitative inquiry, I am using grounded theory, 'a systematic inductive analysis of data that is made from the ground up' (Tracy 2013) which means that I am going through an iterative and open-ended process of gathering data from the field and building on that, rather than approaching the data with pre-existing theories and concepts. In this sense, I speculate that it would be more coherent to start collecting data from informants who have direct experience and knowledge of 'being in the spaces' and not necessarily have institutionally predetermined expectations on how foyers and public spaces should operate.

The proposed plan for the new case study is to put out an open call and recruit around 10 - 15 Barbican Audience Experience hosts as research participants for a set of qualitative interviews, to gather data that will be analysed and become part of my Upgrade document. The outcomes of this initial case study will inform the second stage (autumn term) of qualitative research with Barbican's members of staff at different organisational levels and covering various roles (i.e. strategic, managerial, curatorial, commercial). My Upgrade thesis will offer initial findings to informants who are involved at strategic or managerial levels of the organization, drawing upon themes that emerged in the first set of interviews as a starting point for interviews focusing on specific aspects of spatial strategies and public programming. The findings of the first and second set of interviews will then be linked together in a larger narrative and included in an academic paper early next year, possibly to be presented at the Reflective Conservatoire conference 2018. So, the work that I have already done on the earlier Ethics submission will not be lost, just postponed to a later stage.

Finally, given that initial case studies are used to test procedures and methods for data collection (Yin 2003), it would be more appropriate to start with an interview process that poses minimal issues in terms of anonymity, accessibility of participants (i.e. senior managers might be more difficult to reach than hosts) and power relations. In this sense, the initial case study will allow me to gain experience in

qualitative research methods and interviewing techniques, for my second stage of interviews with more senior members of staff.

There is a large community of Audience Experience hosts (I am part of this community as well). Given the size of it, and the fact that there isn't a hierarchy of roles within it, it is possible to ensure full anonymity to research participants as they would be named as 'Participant 1, 2, 3' and therefore not be identifiable. Furthermore, it will be feasible and preferable to reach hosts via non-institutional routes. As explained in my new ethical application form, these informal communications will be a message posted on the facebook closed group 'Barbicano Hosts!' that is used by the majority of hosts to communicate with each other, and a printed leaflet in the Hosts' changing rooms at the Barbican Centre, where every host currently working spends time in. Finally, being a host myself means that I will occupy the same horizontal position of my interviewees, which minimises issues with power relations. In my role as a researcher, I am not conducting evaluative work for the institution, but engaging in an independent research process. Because of this, I will ask participants to volunteer for 45' of their time, trying to schedule interviews around their availability, in a set of specified dates, in the facilities of the Guildhall School of Music and Drama.

Given the reasons provided in this letter, I am requesting to put on hold my current Ethical approval form (which will still be valid for the second stage of interviews) and to replace it with a new case study named '*Audience Experience Hosts' perspectives on the public spaces of the Barbican centre'*.

With the hope that this letter fully explains the rationales for this change of plan, I remain available to discuss this further with you.

I look forward to hearing back from the Committee.

Sincerely,
Stefania Donini

```
Application form for the ethical approval
of a research project
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For office use only (tick completed or attached)   *For office use only*
Part 1: Basic information   X   Risk level: High /Medium/<u>Low</u>
Part 2: Human participants   X
Part 3: Obscene or potentially offensive material
Part 4: General   X
Part 5: Declarations   X

Attachments: Question set or sample   (Appendix 1)   X
                      Participant information sheet (Appendix 2)   X
                      Participant consent sheet (Appendix 3)   X
                      Call for participants (Appendix 4)   X

Part 1: Basic Information (to be completed by principal lead researcher)

---

1. Full project title

> Initial case study:
>
> Audience experience hosts' perspectives on the public spaces of the Barbican Centre

2. What is the hypothesis/research question?

> The broader questions for this study are:
>
> - How are notions of public engagement understood and practiced in the public spaces of the Barbican Centre?
>
> - Which strategies aimed at 'transforming public spaces' are developed by the Barbican Centre, and which activities aimed at engaging the public in such spaces are planned (i.e. Foyer projects)?
>
> - What is the role played by members of staff across the organisation in developing relationships with the publics using the foyers?
>
> - What does it mean for members of the public to engage in the process of shaping spaces and practices of the institution?
>
> In this specific case study, the focus will be on how public spaces function in the everyday from the perspectives of Audience experience hosts involved in welcoming and directing the public in such spaces:
>
> - How are public spaces of the arts centre perceived by Hosts? What is the purpose of the foyers and what are they used for?
>
> - How do members of the public make use of the public spaces? Are there recurrent behaviours?
>
> - What are the main challenges and potentials of managing such public spaces?
>
> The research question at the core of this study is how 'public engagement' takes place in the public spaces of the Barbican Centre, seen as the spaces-in-between the inside and outside of the institution. The aim is to understand how notions and practices of 'public engagement' are understood, assessed and enacted from within the organization, but also how members of the public use, and engage with, those spaces. The reason for choosing the foyers as a cross-cutting aspect, or lens through which an understanding of the arts centre can be derived, is explained in more detail below.

Appendix B. Study 1 (30 May 2017)

3. Nature of the investigation

Give a brief lay (non-technical) summary of the study (not more than 200 words) such as you would give as an explanation to participants. Indicate whether this is School funded research, external funded research, or postgraduate dissertation/thesis. Give name of external funder where relevant

I am carrying out research for a three-year doctoral research project on public engagement in the context of the Barbican Centre, as part of the Barbican-Guildhall studentship.

This initial case study is the first of a two-part study on the public spaces of the arts centre. The aim of the case study is to understand members of staff's perspectives on the purposes and uses of the foyers, considering historical changes since the 2003-2006 refurbishment, current strategies of use intended by the Barbican Centre, but also the ways in which members of the public make use of these spaces through different types of engagement.

In this initial case study, the aim is to explore and capture Audience Experience Hosts' perspectives of 'what kinds of engagement take place in the public spaces of the Barbican'. That can mean both programmed or unprogrammed activities, 'ways of using, and interacting with, the spaces'. Given that hosts spend long periods of time in the public spaces of the centre, they are the first level of encounter between the general public and the institution. In this sense, they have an 'embodied knowledge' of the public spaces of the Centre and how members of the public use them.

4. Principal researcher's name and position/student ID

Stefania Donini, PhD student, 1617048

5. Departmental address of principal researcher

Guildhall School of Music and Drama	Work/mobile phone no.	
	Emergency no.*	0778 3606084
	Fax	
	Email	stefania.donini@stu.gsmd.ac.uk

Appendix B. Study 1 (30 May 2017)

6. Principal researcher's qualifications and experience in the past five years (relevant to proposed research)

> July 2014 – current: Customer experience Host / Architecture tour guide – Barbican Centre
>
> Feb – March 2016: Research assistant to Prof. Sophie Hope (Birkbeck University) for Ideas Test project
>
> 2013 – 2015: MA Arts Policy and Management – Birkbeck University
>
> Sept 2014 – Sept 2015: Project and research assistant - Futurecity Ltd (cultural placemaking agency)
>
> March – June 2014: Research Intern – Futurecity Ltd (cultural placemaking agency)
>
> Jan – April 2014: Community Engagement intern – Barbican Centre
>
> July 2012 – Sept 2013: Archivist and researcher for community archive – Public Library Molveno (Tn, Italy)

7. Co-researcher's name(s), qualifications and position(s)

A	
B	
C	

[delete or add co-researcher boxes as necessary]

7.1   Address of A above

	Work phone no.
	Emergency no.*
	Fax
	Email

7.2   Address of B above

	Work phone no.
	Emergency no.*
	Fax
	Email

7.3   Address of C above

	Work phone no.
	Emergency no.*
	Fax
	Email

Appendix B. Study 1 (30 May 2017)

8.	Provide details of location of research activity (eg on campus or at placement, or postal) with address and contact details where relevant.	The researcher will conduct the interviews in the facilities of the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in a set of specified dates (29th June – 9th July 2017).

9.   Does the research project take place on NHS property or involve NHS patients? No

   If Yes, you must follow NHS ethical approval procedures.

10.   Does the research project involve human participants?   Yes   If yes complete part 2

11.   Does the research involve obscene or potentially offensive material? No If yes complete part 3

Part 2: Human participants

1. In what way do you intend to involve human participants in the project (tick all that apply)?

Interviewing	x	Observation (non-invasive)	☐
Paper questionnaire	☐	Observation (invasive)	☐
Computer questionnaire	☐	Testing	☐

Other   ☐   Provide description: internal policy documents from the Barbican Centre (tbc)

2.   **Consent** – Are all participants able to provide consent for themselves?   [x] Yes   [ ] No

   If **no**, please explain why not

3. How many participants do you intend to recruit? | 10-15 |

4. How will they be selected and recruited? Are participants to be compensated for the time/travel? (if so provide details)

Participants will be recruited from the community of Audience experience hosts that the Barbican Centre employs to work on different events within the Centre. The call for participants will make clear that what is required is working as an Audience Experience Host at the Barbican Centre and being available to have a conversation about it.

The call will be put out via informal routes, in the format of an online message and a printed leaflet (see Appendix 4. Call for Participants). The message will be posted on the facebook closed group 'Barbicano Hosts!' that is used by the majority of hosts to communicate with each other, and a printed leaflet will be placed in the Hosts' changing rooms at the Barbican Centre, where every host currently working spends time in. Participation in the research will be voluntary. No compensation is provided, in order to guarantee anonymity of participants. Participants who decide to take part, will volunteer their time and will not be interviewed in their workplace, but in the facilities of the Guildhall School of Music and Drama.

I am aiming to conduct qualitative interviews with 10 – 15 hosts. My choice of interviewees is based on theoretical sampling methods, whereby I identify hosts working front-line in the public spaces of the arts centre as having an 'embodied knowledge' of what happens there. However, given the large community of hosts, this poses challenges in terms of sampling participants to ensure that everyone interested in taking part will have an equal opportunity of being chosen for the study. Usually random sampling is considered best practice, however it works best with quantitative survey rather than in-depth qualitative studies. If more than 15 hosts demonstrate their interest in taking part, a theoretical sampling method will be adopted, whereby I will choose participants who cover a range variables identified as (a) gender, (b) age, (c) ethnicity and (d) length of time spent working at the Barbican.

Participants will be asked to volunteer 45' of their time, and interviews will take place between 29th of June and 9th of July in the facilities of the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. Participants will receive the Participants' Information Sheet (Appendix 1) and given the opportunity to agree or withdraw from the study. The Information Sheet indicates that (a) invited hosts are free to take part only if they wish to do so; choosing not to take part will not disadvantage them in any way; (b) if they choose to take part in the research, they will be volunteering and will respond directly to the researcher; (c) information from the interviews will be anonymised; (d) the

research project is supported by the Barbican-Guildhall studentship.

Relevant gatekeepers will be informed that the research is being conducted (Director of Creative Learning and Head of Customer Experience/Customer Experience Manager in the Audience Experience department), however it will be the researcher's responsibility to contact and liaise with participants.

A sample of the Call for Participants, Information Sheet and Consent Form will be agreed and signed off by the supervisory team.

5. Interviewing/questionnaires (*complete where relevant*)

5(a) How many questions do you intend to ask (and give approximate timings)? In what format are you collecting the answers [eg yes/no, 4point scale, 5 point scale, free text, mixed]?

What method of analysis, quantitative or qualitative, do you intend to use?

Semi-structured interviews will include 7 – 9 questions (see Appendix1. Interview schedule)

Each interview will last approximately 45'

Answers will be recorded, collected in free text form (full transcript of interviews) and anonymised.

The method of analysis will be qualitative, combining methods drawn from Discourse Analysis and Grounded Theory

Main areas of investigation will be Hosts' understanding of the public spaces of the Barbican Centre, their observations on how members of the public use such spaces, differences in behaviours between organised and non-organised offerings, what members of the public say to hosts. The interview will also cover understanding of the role of host, and potential awareness of Barbican Centre's strategies.

5 (b) Please attach either the full questionnaire /set of interview questions or a sample (at least 20% covering all methods). Where the full questionnaire is not submitted it must be signed-off for use by the line-manager or supervisor and a copy lodged with the Committee Secretary prior to data collection.

6. What do you think will be the effects of your observations/questioning on your participants? Are the effects likely to differ for different groupings (eg male/female, people with or without a disability, different ethnicities)? What safeguards or follow-up care arrangements need to be put in place?

Appendix B. Study 1 (30 May 2017)

All participants will be informed of the project's questions and objectives, seeking consent by explaining verbally and providing an Information Sheet and Consent Form (see appendixes).

The study aims to provide a broader understanding of how public spaces of the Barbican Centre are used by members of the public, both for programmed and unprogrammed activities. Given the explorative nature of this initial case study, for Audience Experience hosts who will take in the study, interviews will be an opportunity of sharing their experience and perspectives of working in such spaces.

There is a large community of Audience Experience hosts (approximately 200 hosts, and I am part of this community as well). Given the size of the community, and the fact that there isn't a hierarchy of roles within it, it is possible to ensure full anonymity to research participants. Furthermore, it will be feasible and preferable to reach hosts via non-institutional routes. Finally, being a host myself means that I will occupy the same horizontal position of my interviewees, which minimises issues with power relations. In my role as a researcher, I am not conducting evaluative work for the institution, but engaging in an independent research process. Because of this, I will ask participants to volunteer for 45' of their time, trying to schedule interviews around their availability (in a set of specified dates) in the facilities of the Guildhall School of Music and Drama.

As a researcher, I will not put any pressure on the individuals to answer questions that they feel would put them at risk of disclosing confidential material, or expressing opinions that might be in conflict with organisational priorities. All participants will be sent a full transcript of their interview by 01/09/2017 and they will also be free to withdraw from the study at any point up to the writing up process (by 15/09/2017). All the interview data will be anonymised and treated with the utmost respect, stored securely in encrypted files.

Members of staff from the Barbican Centre will be formally involved in the Upgrade process through a consultation-cycle in which the study will be subject to internal scrutiny. All participants will be given access to the thesis when published, and notified of any other public outputs.

No follow-up care arrangement needed, beyond the provisions of item 7 below.

7. How will the raw data be stored and for how long? Who will have access to this data?	The data will be stored in encrypted files and no one will access the raw interviews transcripts other than the researcher. Raw transcripts are destroyed within 5 years.
8. Describe how you intend to make the results of the study known to participants?	All participants, although their identities will be anonymised, will be given access to the thesis when published, and notified of any other public outputs. There will be an internal consultation-cycle process with members of staff from the Barbican Centre and Guildhall School of Music and Drama for review prior to publication.
9. Proposed collection starting date (dd/mm/yy)	29/06/2017
10. Proposed finishing date (dd/mm/yy)	09/07/2017
11. Proposed final report date (mm/yy) and format	30/09/2017 – Written thesis/Upgrade document

Appendix B. Study 1 (30 May 2017)

Part 3: Obscene or potentially offensive material

1. Please describe the nature of the material to be used and its significance to the research project

2. How will this material be gathered?

(please indicate whether you intend to use School IT equipment in any form)

3. How will this material be stored and for how long?

Who will have access to this material

4. Proposed starting date (dd/mm/yy)

5. Proposed finishing date (dd/mm/yy)

6. Proposed final report date (mm/yy) and format

<u>Appendix B. Study 1 (30 May 2017)</u>

Part 4: General

Describe and discuss any ethical issues arising from this project, other than those already dealt with in your answers above.

You may wish to consider issues of:
- Sample size and anonymity
- Issues of informed consent in older children and whether they are 'Gillick competent'
- Peer pressure to be involved or not involved
- The need to exclude participants during the project if they become ill etc (and who decides).

This section should also reference subject-specific ethical guidelines or reference points, eg
- Research Ethics Framework [ESRC]
- Ethics and Educational Research [BERA: British Educational Research Association]
- Rigour, respect and responsibility: a universal ethical code for scientists [Council for Science and Technology]
- Conducting research with people not having the capacity to consent to their participation [British Psychological Society]

Recommendations from both the ESRC 2015 ethics guidelines and the Guildhall School of Music and Drama have been taken into account. According to the ESRC (The Economic and Social Research Council), 'Research staff and participants should be given appropriate information about the purpose, methods and intended uses of the research, what their participation in the research entails and what benefits and risks, if any, are involved' (ESRC 2015). However, as pointed out in literature on ethics in qualitative research, in this information-giving process, whilst not being deceptive, the researcher needs to acknowledge a concern to protect the open-endedness and fluidity of the qualitative interview process (Horrocks, C. & King 2010, pp. 103 - 111). Given the purpose of the initial case study is gathering data that will inform the second stage of the project, empirical predictions of uses/outcomes need to be kept at a wary distance, prioritising an open-ended exploration of emergent themes.

As discussed above, participation is voluntary and not compulsory. Identity of participants will be protected by anonymising the raw data of the interviews. Given the community of hosts has many members, and that interviews will not take place in their workplace, it is possible to ensure full anonymity of research participants. Sampling methods have been discussed in point 4.

The study will take a number of measures to ensure that data collected complies with the Data Protection Act 1998. All the interview will be recorded, subject to the participant's permission. They raw data will be anonymised and treated with the utmost respect, stored securely in encrypted files. No one will access the raw transcripts other than the researcher. All participants will be shown a full transcript of the interview by 01/09/2017, and they will be able to withdraw from the project at any time until 15/09/2017.

Alongside my academic research, I also work as architecture tour guide and audience experience host at the Barbican Centre (casual role started in 2014), which gives me some insider knowledge of the Centre. However, despite my dual role, I do not envisage ethical issues in terms of conflict of interests, power relations and/or confidentiality, as I am a casual worker, not an employee of the Centre (i.e. no access to Intranet, institutional meetings, etc).

Part 5: Declarations

1   **Declaration by principal researcher/student**

The information supplied in this application is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, accurate. I have considered the ethical issues involved in this research and believe that I have adequately addressed them in this application. I understand that if the protocol for this research changes in any way, I must inform the ethics committee.

Appendix B. Study 1 (30 May 2017)

Name of principal researcher (please print):	Stefania Donini

Signature of principal researcher	Stefania Donini

Date:	30.05.2017

2.   Declaration by line-manager of principal researcher or student's supervisor

I have read the application, and it is appropriate for this research to be conducted for the purpose stated. I give my consent for the application to be forwarded to the ethics committee.

Name (please print):	John Sloboda

Signature:	John Sloboda	Department:	Research and Development
Date:	30th May 2017	Designation:	Lead Supervisor

Where the line-manager is also one of the co-researchers, the line-manager declaration must be signed by Director of Music or Director of Drama as appropriate

3.   Declaration by the senior manager of a participating organisation (where applicable)

I have read the application, and it is appropriate for this research to be conducted in this department. I give my consent for the application to be forwarded to the ethics committee.

Name (please print):	Sean Gregory

Signature:	Sean Gregory	Organisation:	Barbican Centre
Date:	30th May 2017	Designation:	Supervisor

Appendix B. Study 1 (30 May 2017)

Appendix 1. Interview schedule

Stefania Donini – Initial case study
Audience experience hosts' perspectives of the public spaces of the Barbican Centre

The aim is to gather hosts' perspectives on the public spaces of the Barbican Centre through a simple set of open-ended questions. The interviews will be semi-structured, using the following interview schedule as suggestive rather than prescriptive.

Interview Questions

In this interview I am not interested in what happens in the main venues, but I will focus on the public spaces of the arts centre. To start with, we're going to focus primarily on the last month of your work here…

1. How long have you been working at the Barbican Centre?

2. Which of these public spaces of the Barbican Centre have you work in, over the last month?

3. What are some of the typical behaviours/responses that you observe in members of the public to organised, themed, advertised offerings (i.e. Foyer projects)?

4. What do members of the public say when they approach you as a host regarding organised offerings?

5. What things do you notice people doing in these spaces that are not connected with the organised offerings?

6. Given these things you just mentioned, what do members of the public say to you regarding non-organised offerings?

- We've concentrated on the last month, do you think this is typical in terms of the ways people use such spaces?

7. Can you give an example of a time in the public spaces when you observed the public engaging in a positive way? Do you have examples of ways of engaging that didn't work well?

8. How would you describe your role as a host? What do you draw upon in your role as host (previous experience, knowledge of the Barbican, specific training…)?

- Do you work in a similar setting elsewhere? If yes, how do you see the role of Barbican Host as compared with other organisations?

9. To what extent do you know about Barbican specific strategies in their public spaces? If you are aware of some these strategies, how do you see people responding to the programmed activities?

Appendix B. Study 1 (30 May 2017)

Appendix 2. Information sheet for participants

Initial case study - Audience experience hosts' perspectives of the public spaces of the Barbican Centre

Study approved by School Research Ethics Committee: _____

Dear Participant,

I am a research student at Guildhall School of Music and Drama, as well as being a host at the Barbican Centre. I would like to invite you to participate in a case study I am undertaking, as part of my doctoral research project focusing on public engagement in the spaces of the Barbican Centre.

The aim of this case study is to gather Audience Experience hosts' perspectives on the public spaces of the arts centre. What is your experience of working in such spaces? How do members of the public use, and interact with, them?

If you are interested to be involved, please take time to read the following information. You are free to get in contact with me if you would like to know more about the study.

Participation is voluntary. If you agree to participate, this will involve volunteering 45' of your time for an interview taking place in the facilities of Guildhall School of Music and Drama between the 29th of June and the 9th of July 2017. I can undertake the interview at a time that is convenient for you.

Interviews will be recorded and transcribed, but all the data will be anonymised and treated with the utmost respect, stored securely in encrypted files. No one will access the raw transcripts other than the researcher. I will send you a transcript of the interview by 01/09/2017, and you can withdraw from the project at any time until 15/09/2017 when I will be at the point of writing up my thesis. All participants will be given access to the thesis when published, and notified of any other public outputs. The final Upgrade thesis will be submitted to GSMD Research Department and might become publicly available in the format of an academic paper. Members of staff from the Barbican Centre will be involved in the review process through a consultation-cycle.

If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this study you can contact the Guildhall School of Music & Drama using the details below for further advice and information:

Professor John Sloboda, Principal Supervisor (john.sloboda@gsmd.ac.uk)
Dr Cormac Newark, Head of Research (cormac.newark@gsmd.ac.uk)

Researcher: Stefania Donini (stefania.donini@stu.gsmd.ac.uk)

Appendix B. Study 1 (30 May 2017)

Appendix 3. Research Participant Consent

Title of project:

Initial ase study: Audience experience hosts' perspectives of the public spaces of the Barbican Centre

Study approved by School Research Ethics Committee: _____

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this research. The person organising the research, Stefania Donini, will explain the project to you and you should have read any accompanying information sheet before you complete this form.

- If you have any questions arising from the Information Sheet or explanation already given to you, please ask the researcher before you decide whether to participate. You will be given a copy of this Consent Form to keep and refer to at any time.

- I understand that if I decide at any time, during the research that I no longer wish to participate in this project, I can notify the researcher involved and withdraw from it immediately (without giving any reason). Participants will be sent full transcripts by 01/09/2017. All raw data will be anonymised to avoid identification. I understand I will be able to withdraw my data from the project at any point up to 15/09/2017.

- I consent to the processing of my personal information for the purposes explained to me. I understand that such information will be treated in accordance with the terms of the Data Protection Act 1998.

Participant's Statement:

I _____ *(full name, please print*)

agree that the research project named above has been explained to me to my satisfaction and I agree to take part in the project. I have read both the notes written above and the Information Sheet about the project, and understand what the research involves.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Appendix B. Study 1 (30 May 2017)

Appendix 4. Call for Participants

CALL FOR PARTICIPANTS
FOR RESEARCH PROJECT

Audience Experience Hosts' perspectives on the public spaces of the Barbican Centre

I am looking for 10 – 15 research participants to take part in a case study looking at the public spaces of the Barbican Centre and how they are used by members of the public. This will involve volunteering 45' of your time to have a conversation about your personal experience and perspectives of working as an Audience Experience host. Interviews will take place between 29th June - 9th July at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, where I am based as a doctoral student. They will be recorded, however your answers and personal details will be kept anonymous.

If you require further information and/or are interested in taking part in this study, please send an email with subject 'research participant' to **stefania.donini@gsmd.ac.uk** by Tuesday 20th June

This case study is part of my doctoral project, as part of the Barbican-Guildhall studentship. Approved by the Guildhall School of Music and Drama Ethical committee.

Appendix 5. Email to participants (if more than 15 hosts show interest and availability to participate)

Dear Host…,

Thank you for your interest in taking part in the research case study. Given the high number of hosts who showed their interest, I will have to operate a selection in order to have a group of 15 participants as initially planned. In order to give everyone equal opportunities as well as to have a diverse group of research participants, I'd like to ask you to send an email back indicating this set of information about how you identify yourself in terms of:

- Gender
- Age
- Ethnicity
- Length of time you have been working at the Barbican

This information will be kept confidential, but they will allow me to generate a diverse group of participants and give everyone equal opportunities to be selected for the study.

Many thanks, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Best regards,
Stefania Donini

Appendix B1 – Barbican Host job description

Table 1.1. Barbican Host job description (updated Oct. 2015)

<u>Barbican Host</u>

Role

- To proactively meet and greet all customers visiting the Barbican, engaging with them in an open, welcoming and friendly manner.

- To promote the Barbican Brand Values and Customer Experience Standards.

- To provide front-line customer experiences: engaging with customers in Venue, foyer and exhibition spaces, seating customers, providing information and advice, checking tickets, selling programmes and confectionary.

- Effective communicator who is proactive and enthusiastic.

- To be an ambassador for the Barbican, being the first point of contact for all customers, providing a world class customer experience.

- To take responsibility for the safe evacuation of the public in the event of an emergency in a calm and assured manner. To understand evacuation procedures.

- To take responsibility for ensuring the centre is clean, tidy and presentable in line with providing a world class customer experience.

- To take responsibility for keeping up to date with information about the Barbican and its arts programming.

- To be responsible for the safe and accurate keeping of money and stock when selling ice cream, confectionary, programmes and other merchandise.

- To proactively introduce additional service and maximise sales of ice cream, confectionary, programmes and other merchandise.

- To operate EPOS (Electronic Point of Sales) and related software.

- To follow existing cash handling and sales procedures.

Person Specification

- You will be a highly motivated team player who can demonstrate a genuine passion and belief in creating and providing an exceptional customer experience.

- Ability to work under front line pressure while maintaining an efficient and effective service at all times.

- A positive and flexible approach to work.

- Excellent communication skills.

- Excellent time keeping skills with a responsible approach to work.

- Ability to react quickly to new information and situations.

- Ability to stand for long periods of time.

- You must be able to assist in any evacuation of the building which may require climbing many stairs. We may ask you to provide a GP's letter to confirm fitness prior to start date.

- A smart, well-groomed appearance is essential (basic items of uniform will be provided).

**Application form for the ethical approval
of a research project**

For office use only (tick completed or attached)   *For office use only*
Part 1: Basic information   X   Risk level: High /Medium/<u>Low</u> (circle)
Part 2: Human participants   X
Part 3: Obscene or potentially offensive material
Part 4: General   X
Part 5: Declarations   X
Attachments: A. Interview guide (topics)   X
                        B. Participant info sheet   X
                        C. Participant consent sheet X

1. Full project title

> Audience engagement through institutional strategies, public spaces and
> programming: a case study on the Barbican Centre – Final stage of data
> collection (Nov 2018 – May 2019)

2. What is the hypothesis/research question?

> My doctoral study investigates how audience engagement models are
> developed in the context of the Barbican Centre, through institutional
> discourses, spatial strategies and public programming planned across
> departments (i.e. marketing, programming, learning):
>
> - Which discourses and methods are employed to describe audiences in policy
> and practice, and which metrics are used to measure and evaluate audience
> experience and engagement?
>
> - Which kind of spatial politics of participation are afforded by the Barbican
> 'public spaces' and which kind of social orderings of audiences they produce?
>
> - Which kind of public programming devices are deployed by the Barbican, and
> how do they reproduce or challenge normative conceptions of audience
> engagement and participation as discussed in literature?

3. Nature of the investigation

> *Give a brief lay (non-technical) summary of the study (not more than 200
> words) such as you would give as an explanation to participants. Indicate
> whether this is School funded research, external funded research, or
> postgraduate dissertation/thesis. Give name of external funder where relevant*
>
> The study focuses on audience engagement in arts management and cultural
> policy in the British context, using the Barbican Centre as research setting. My
> research looks at engagement models developed by the Barbican Centre
> through marketing, programming and learning strategies. This study involves
> interviews with members of staff across departments to gain a broad
> understanding of how audience engagement is defined, and through which
> tools and metrics it is measured and evaluated. Particularly, the activities
> planned in the publicly accessible areas of the arts centre are the core of my
> analysis: how these spaces are programmed by the Barbican, which kind of
> audiences and communities rely on them, and what their relationships with the
> arts centre are. The role of public spaces and programming in cultural
> institutions is under-researched and this study aims to provide new
> perspectives drawing upon the Barbican case study.
>
> The PhD research is funded through a joint Barbican-Guildhall studentship in
> Audience Studies, a three-year research project across the Barbican Centre
> and Guildhall School of Music and Drama. I have also been working at the
> Barbican Centre as audience experience host and Architecture guide for a few
> years.

Appendix C. Study 3

4. Principal researcher's name and position/student ID

Stefania Donini

5. Departmental address of principal researcher

Guildhall School of Music and Drama	Work/mobile phone no.	
	Emergency no.*	0778 3606084
	Fax	
	Email	stefania.donini@stu.gsmd.ac.uk

Part 1: Basic Information (to be completed by principal lead researcher)

Appendix C. Study 3

6. Principal researcher's qualifications and experience in the past five years (relevant to proposed research)

> *September 2016 – current:* PhD researcher, Guildhall School of Music and Drama / Barbican Centre
>
> *July 2014 – current:* Customer experience Host / Architecture tour guide – Barbican Centre
>
> *Feb – March 2016:* Research assistant to Prof. Sophie Hope (Birkbeck University) for Ideas Test project
>
> *2013 – 2015:* MA Arts Policy and Management – Birkbeck University
>
> *Sept 2014 – Sept 2015:* Project and research assistant - Futurecity Ltd (cultural placemaking agency)
>
> *March – June 2014:* Research Intern – Futurecity Ltd (cultural placemaking agency)
>
> *Jan – April 2014:* Community Engagement intern – Barbican Centre

7. Co-researcher's name(s), qualifications and position(s)

A
B
C

[delete or add co-researcher boxes as necessary]

7.1   Address of A above

Work phone no.	
Emergency no.*	
Fax	
Email	

7.2   Address of B above

Work phone no.	
Emergency no.*	
Fax	
Email	

7.3   Address of C above

Work phone no.	
Emergency no.*	
Fax	
Email	

8.   Provide details of location of research activity (eg on campus or at placement, or postal) with address and contact details where relevant.

> The majority of the research activity will take place in the Barbican Centre spaces and its premises, including the Guildhall School of Music and Drama.
>
> Site and participant observations of spaces, events and programmes will be carried out on site, including the Season Hub project chosen as final case study to observe. Interviews will take place in the professional workplace of the interviewees (Barbican Centre and its premises) and where not possible by phone or skype.

9.   Does the research project take place on NHS property or involve NHS patients? <u>No</u>
      If Yes, you must follow NHS ethical approval procedures.

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10.   Does the research project involve human participants?   <u>Yes</u>   If yes complete part 2

11.   Does the research involve obscene or potentially offensive material? <u>No</u> If yes complete part 3

Part 2: Human participants

1. In what way do you intend to involve human participants in the project (tick all that apply)?

Interviewing	x	Observation of events (non-invasive)	x
Paper questionnaire		Observation of internal meetings (invasive)	x
Computer questionnaire		Testing	

Other   [x]   Provide description: access to a number of meetings regarding the final case study on the Season Hub to understand part of the process and internal discourses around 'programming in the foyers' (this would involve minutes of meetings); participant observation of a selected number of events as part of the Season Hub and writing reflectivelly about them.

2.   **Consent** – Are all participants able to provide consent for themselves?   [x] Yes   [ ] No

If **no**, please explain why not

3. How many participants do you intend to recruit?   10 - 25

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4. How will they be selected and recruited? Are participants to be compensated for the time/travel? (if so provide details)

Interviews will be carried out with Barbican members of staff, but also practitioners who have worked or collaborated, or are working with the Barbican on projects across marketing, learning, programming. The aim is to get a broad spectrum of the institutional discourses and methods of audience development from staff members and practitioners in their professional capacity, to complement my analysis of documents and annual reports.

I have chosen a purposeful sampling of participants, based on a set of criteria that I consider the most consistent with my research purpose: I will select and recruit participants who are involved in audience engagement strategies or public programming activities, either at strategic or operational level (i.e. planning artistic and commercial activities, reporting and evaluating, managing Centre's spaces and events); who work or collaborate across different departments within the organisation (marketing and comms, programming, building and facilities, learning) and who are employed at different managerial levels.

I will use my existing knowledge of departments and activities across the Barbican Centre to identify a range of individuals with key organisational roles related to audience engagement strategies and programmes, and approach them directly to arrange interviews. Having presented initial findings from my research to the arts programming team in July 2018, I will follow up on some of the informal conversations had with staff members after that meeting to arrange interviews with them. Finally, the sampling will also be based on encounters through public projects or events that I am following or participating in.

For public programming events such as the Season Hub, the Curator or Producer would be the primary interest for an interview, but a Venue/Centre manager, an artist or possibly a few key speakers could also be of interest. Taken together, the sampling strategy would purposively seek interviews with public programme's curators first and foremost, and other practitioners involved in the project.

For ethical purposes, I would keep track of this 'network of events' in my research diary to document access routes and decisions made throughout the research process. I am not asking a Director to be my gatekeeper, to avoid power pressure from above, as I believe this might have an impact on the freedom of research participants to decide to either take part or not in the project.

I will ask participants to take part in interviews during their paid time. Thus, no compensation is needed for them. I will be on site at the Barbican Centre and will arrange to meet the interviewee in the premises of their office or workplace. When this is not possible, I will travel to meet the interviewees in another suitable public venue, or contact them via skype or phone calls.

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5. Interviewing/questionnaires (*complete where relevant*)

5(a) How many questions do you intend to ask (and give approximate timings)? In what format are you collecting the answers [eg yes/no, 4point scale, 5 point scale, free text, mixed]? What method of analysis, quantitative or qualitative, do you intend to use?	Semi-structured interviews will include 5 - 10 questions with a simple interview guideline that I will adapt to different interviewees (see A. Interview guide). The interview guide will outline the main topics that I would like to cover, but it will be flexible in terms of phrasing the questions and the order in which they are asked, to allow participants to lead the interaction in unanticipated directions during the interview. Each interview will last approximately 1h Answers will be recorded and collected in free text form (full transcript of interviews) The method of analysis will be qualitative, combining methods drawn from Critical Discourse Analysis, Grounded Theory and Ethnography.

5 (b) Please attach either the full questionnaire /set of interview questions or a sample (at least 20% covering all methods). Where the full questionnaire is not submitted it must be signed-off for use by the line-manager or supervisor and a copy lodged with the Committee Secretary prior to data collection.

6. What do you think will be the effects of your observations/questioning on your participants? Are the effects likely to differ for different groupings (eg male/female, people with or without a disability, different ethnicities)? What safeguards or follow-up care arrangements need to be put in place?

I will inform research participants of my project's questions, providing comprehensive information about the purpose, methods and intended uses of the research, what their participation in the research entails and what risks and benefits, if any, are involved. This will be done by explaining verbally and providing an Info Sheet and Consent Form (see Appendixes) before the interview takes place. On the basis of this, they will be able to give their informed consent.

The study aims to provide a broader understanding of how ideas and practices of audience engagement are developed in the context of the Barbican Centre and will be of interest to those involved in working in, or researching, arts management and cultural policy. Interviews will be open-ended discussions where the purpose will not be to evaluate, but rather to gather accounts of how audience engagement is understood and practised from within the institution across different levels and departments.

Although it is difficult to accurately predict effects of a piece of research in advance, I do not envision any negative effects of my research on the professional safety or reputation of the individuals involved in the study. Anonymity of the respondents and resulting data will be treated with ethical care to ensure anonymity (as explained in Part 4).

No follow-up care arrangement needed, beyond the provisions of item 7 below.

7. How will the raw data be stored and for how long? Who will have access to this data?	The data will be stored in encrypted files and no one will access the raw interviews transcripts other than the researcher. Only my external supervisors, who are not working at the Barbican Centre, might request to see the full transcript for matters of academic validity. However, these will not be shared with staff members at the Barbican Centre. All interview transcripts will be sent to relevant participants, and they will have time to withdraw from the study within the provided timeframe (by 30/04/2019). Normally raw transcripts are destroyed within 10 years.

8. Describe how you intend to make the results of the study known to participants?	I am planning to organise a public event in 2019/2020 to share my research work and participants will be invited to take part if interested. If participants express an interest to read the final thesis, I will notify them once this has been published.

9. Proposed collection starting date (dd/mm/yy)	15/11/2018

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10.	Proposed finishing date (dd/mm/yy)	30/05/2019
11.	Proposed final report date (mm/yy) and format	30/09/2019 – First draft of written thesis

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Part 3: Obscene or potentially offensive material

1. Please describe the nature of the material to be used and its significance to the research project

2. How will this material be gathered?

(please indicate whether you intend to use School IT equipment in any form)

3. How will this material be stored and for how long?

Who will have access to this material

4. Proposed starting date (dd/mm/yy)

5. Proposed finishing date (dd/mm/yy)

6. Proposed final report date (mm/yy) and format

Part 4: General

Describe and discuss any ethical issues arising from this project, other than those already dealt with in your answers above.

You may wish to consider issues of:
- Sample size and anonymity
- Issues of informed consent in older children and whether they are 'Gillick competent'
- Peer pressure to be involved or not involved
- The need to exclude participants during the project if they become ill etc (and who decides).

This section should also reference subject-specific ethical guidelines or reference points, eg
- Research Ethics Framework [ESRC]
- Ethics and Educational Research [BERA: British Educational Research Association]
- Rigour, respect and responsibility: a universal ethical code for scientists [Council for Science and Technology]
- Conducting research with people not having the capacity to consent to their participation [British Psychological Society]

Recommendations from both the Economic and Social Research Council and the Guildhall School of Music and Drama have been taken into account. According to the ESRC Framework for research ethics (2015), 'Research staff and participants should be given appropriate information about the purpose, methods and intended uses of the research, what their participation in the research entails and what risks and benefits, if any, are involved'. However, as pointed out in literature on ethics in qualitative research, in this information-giving process, whilst not being deceptive, the researcher needs to acknowledge a concern to protect the open-endedness of the qualitative interview process (Horrocks, C. & King 2010, pp. 103 - 111).

Anonymity: Identity of participants will be protected by anonymising the interview transcripts and concealing the identity of the participants in all the documents resulting from the research. However, the empirical setting of the research is known to be the Barbican Centre, and given the specific nature of the interviewees' roles and relatively small number of individuals working in this area, I anticipate a set of challenges that will need to be managed through the research and writing up process:

- to avoid the risk of putting participants in an uncomfortable position in terms of what can be said and published in the public domain, I will not put any pressure on the individuals to answer questions that they feel would put them at risk of disclosing confidential material;

- interviews will be anonymised and use of names and job roles will be avoided so that statements and quotes are not attributable to specific individuals. All interview data will be anonymised to avoid identification and any defining features that might help identification will be taken off the text. I am aware that the setting is identified as the Barbican Centre, and there might be risks of identification by external readers. However, having taken this into account, given that the analysis will employ Discourse Analysis (combined with Grounded theory and Ethnography), the focus will be on discourses produced in interview text not as expressions of the individual, but in terms of their wider societal effects and in relation to institutional discourses observed in the annual reports.

It is understood that if they accept to take part in the interview process, participants will be interviewed in their professional capacity, and therefore will be aware of the normal disciplines of their contractual agreement in terms of confidentiality, nondisclosure and other obligations.

All participants will be sent a full transcript of their interview within a fortnight from the interview date. All the interview data will be anonymised and treated with the utmost respect, stored securely in encrypted files. Research participants will also be free to withdraw from the study at any point up until the writing up process starts (by 30/04/2019).

Pressure to participation: Participation is voluntary and not compulsory and this will be specified in the Info Sheet and Consent Form.

Data protection and ownership: The study will take a number of measures to ensure that data collected complies with the the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and new UK Data Protection Act which came into effect on 25 May 2018. All the interview will be recorded, subject to the participant's permission. They raw data will be anonymised and stored securely in encrypted files. No one will access the raw transcripts other than the researcher. All participants will receive a full transcript of the interview within a fortnight from the interview date and will be able to withdraw from the project at any time prior to 30/05/2019. The raw data from interviews is owned by the

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researcher and research participant involved, but will not be shared with the Barbican or any other third parties.

Researcher's positionality: alongside my academic research, I also work as architecture tour guide and audience experience host at the Barbican Centre (casual role started in 2014), which gives me some insider knowledge of the Centre. However, despite my dual role, I do not envisage ethical issues in terms of conflict of interests, power relations and/or confidentiality, as I am a casual worker, not an employee of the Centre (i.e. no access to Intranet, institutional meetings, etc unless agreed as part of the research process). Finally, the purpose of this study is not to evaluate, but to gain an in-depth, rich understanding of how audience engagement strategies are developed and understood from within the institution.

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1   Declaration by principal researcher/student

2.

The information supplied in this application is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, accurate. I have considered the ethical issues involved in this research and believe that I have adequately addressed them in this application. I understand that if the protocol for this research changes in any way, I must inform the ethics committee.

Name of principal researcher (please print):   Stefania Donini

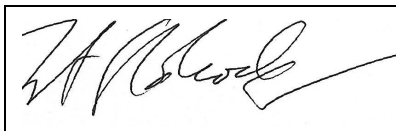Signature of principal researcher

Date: 6 November 2018

Declaration by line-manager of principal researcher or student's supervisor

I have read the application, and it is appropriate for this research to be conducted for the purpose stated. I give my consent for the application to be forwarded to the ethics committee.

Name (please print):   Prof John Sloboda

Signature: Department: Research and Knowledge Exchange

Date: 6 November 2018   Designation: Research Professor and Principal Supervisor

Where the line-manager is also one of the co-researchers, the line-manager declaration must be signed by Director of Music or Director of Drama as appropriate
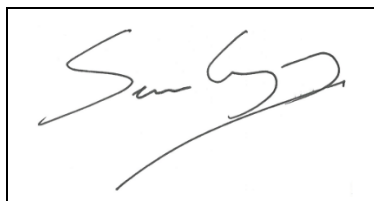
3.   Declaration by the senior manager of a participating organisation (where applicable)

I have read the application, and it is appropriate for this research to be conducted for the purpose stated. I give my consent for the application to be forwarded to the ethics committee.

Name (please print):   Sean Gregory

Signature: Organisation: Barbican Centre / Guildhall School

Date: 6 November 2018   Designation: Director of Learning and Engagement