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Cultural Sustainability of the Arts through Cross Cultural Market Segmentation

Wendy Kennedy, Deakin University, Australia
John Hall, Deakin University, Australia

Abstract: The cultural characteristics attributed to individuals in their country of birth are likely to change through immigration and acculturation processes taking place in the host country. Immigrants are likely to develop their own unique cultural styles through a blending of their old culture and the host culture. With slightly less than half of the population born overseas or with at least one parent born overseas, and with some 200 languages, Australia has one of the most cosmopolitan populations in the world, with a relatively small population of 20 million. This paper considers the cross cultural nature of the Australian population and the sustainability of culture through the Arts. This paper also considers the marketing of the arts from a cross cultural segmentation perspective.

Keywords: Arts marketing, Cross Cultural Segmentation

Introduction

Sustainable Development is a fundamental objective that requires dealing with economic and cultural dimensions in a mutually reinforcing way. It has been argued that: ‘Communities that embrace diversity, creative expression and cultural activity are richer, stronger and more able to deal with social challenges’ (Arts Victoria 2003:12).

With slightly less than half of the population born overseas or with at least one parent born overseas, and with some 200 languages, Australia has one of the most cosmopolitan populations in the world, with a relatively small population of 20 million.

In this multicultural society how is the sustainability of cultural heritage to be achieved? Are the arts a viable medium for this process? How do those in the arts industry segment the ethnic melting pot that is the Australian market place to provide a service that adequately meets the needs and wants of this diverse population? The ability to attract and retain arts consumers is essential for arts organizations to become more financially viable and self-supporting but perhaps more importantly; it allows them to make a significant contribution to the sustainability of the many cultural practices and traditions that comprise a multicultural society by encouraging greater arts participation. And as Weil suggests; many commentators have reflected on the diversity of benefits that arts and cultural activities deliver to society, ‘Like language, the arts are one of the principal means by which a society binds itself together and transmits its beliefs and standards from one generation to another. The arts perform this function when they embody, reinforce, and celebrate the values of their society, when they confirm and exemplify the lessons simultaneously taught by the family, by the formal structures of education, and by the mass media in all their variety. In this function, the arts play a critically important role. Not only do they provide a kind of social “glue”, but they also furnish a means by which society can identify and distinguish itself from others’ (Weil 1995, Australia Council for the Arts, 2003:15).

This paper considers the cross cultural nature of the Australian population and the means by which culture can be sustained through the Arts. On that basis, this paper also considers the marketing of the arts from a cross cultural segmentation perspective. The issues that need to be taken into account before segmentation can be considered as potentially viable are also addressed.

Culture

Any discussion concerning the arts should be conducted in the wider context of culture, as art can be considered as a sub-set of culture. Culture, as a concept, can be difficult to define (Kasapi, 2003; Schönflug 2001). The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), provides a comprehensive, definition of culture from five perspectives; World views, Daily life, Recreation culture, Art culture, and Values and norms. The two most important definitions for the purpose of this paper are:

- Art culture - refers to 'works of art embodied in music, opera, ballet, painting, literature, drama
and other art forms. Culture includes all of these, but is a much broader concept. Such works of art can only be understood in the context of the wider culture in which the artists live and work’ (UNESCO 2003:1); and

- Values and norms - used mostly by social scientists to compare cultures using the values held by a group and the norms that govern their behaviour as a basis (UNESCO 2003:1).

Definition of the Arts

Researchers tend to agree on a core set of activities that constitute the arts as outlined by UNESCO and by commercial researchers (National Arts Council Singapore, 2003; Saatchi and Saatchi Australia, 2002). However, the extent to which other activities can be regarded as part of the arts is open to debate. For example, a broader interpretation includes advertising (Saatchi and Saatchi Australia, 2002), contemporary music and cinema (Hirons, 2002), and video games (Australia Council for the Arts, 1999). The Music Council of Australia (2003) addresses the ongoing entertainment-culture debate, ‘Proponents of the high arts might deride examples of popular arts like a popular musical, or a rock song, as mere entertainment. But the times have moved on. In a post-modern world it is accepted that there are different strokes for different folks’ (Music Council of Australia 2003:1).

Benefits of the Arts

The opportunity to participate in cultural life through the arts, for example, is considered as a fundamental right of individuals: ‘Access to and participation in cultural life being a fundamental right of individuals in all communities, governments have a duty to create conditions for the full exercise of this right in accordance with Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights’ (UNESCO, 1998:2)

The view that participation in the arts promotes a greater understanding of cultural diversity is widespread, not only across nations but from the perspective of widely differing demographics within a single country. As a study of the value of the performing arts in five US cities explains, ‘Respondents in each of the five communities have similar views regarding the extent to which live performing arts help them understand other cultures better. Overall, between 68 percent (in Cincinnati) and 76 percent (in Alaska) of respondents strongly agree or agree with this statement. This strong level of agreement holds regardless of education, income, age, or whether there are children at home’ (Koczyński and Hager, 2002:9). A similar but somewhat broader view on the importance of the arts in retaining cultural integrity is expressed by Arts Victoria; ‘...it is also important to recognise the intrinsic role of the arts in expressing Victoria’s culture by providing a means of identity, preserving our heritage, understanding other cultures, and encouraging self-expression and creativity’ (Arts Victoria, 2002:8).

The contribution of arts participation to social wellbeing and sustained development is not just about facilitating an understanding of other cultures, but it also allows individuals to examine their own cultural values and how they fit into the wider understanding of culture in a society; ‘activities that actively analyse, develop and challenge our cultural norms are crucial to social wellbeing and sustained development. For example, the self-analysis stimulated by cultural products, such as literature or film allows us to assess our social behaviour and values. New meanings generated by arts activities help us to adjust to change and to understand our society. Cultural activities, particularly heritage activities, help to accumulate, preserve and communicate the knowledge built up by society’ (ABS, 2001:275).

The benefits outlined in the preceding paragraphs suggest wide acceptance of the view that participation in the arts has an important part to play in cultural sustainability. However, in practice, the achievement of sustainability applies not only to the cultural aspects of a society but to the need for financial sustainability. Some level of funding is required to provide opportunities for expressing and experiencing diverse cultures through a variety of arts related activities.

Historically, the arts industry has presented unique challenges to those in a variety of countries seeking to increase arts attendance and participation, as it has traditionally relied, in part, on subsidies or government funding (RAND 2001; Radbourne, 1998). Letts (2002) reflects that, due to the difficulties of ‘attracting large audiences and box office, there is great dependence upon subsidy and probably an almost limitless capacity to absorb it in expressing ideas’ (Letts, 2002:6). Decreases in government funding since the late 1990’s (Radbourne, 1998) has required arts organizations to focus on activities that lead to greater commercial success in order to become self-supporting (Rentschler 2002; RAND, 2001), and to ‘survive in a market economy’ (Radbourne, 1998:67).

It is likely that there is some unrealised potential for audience development that will not only contribute to the financial sustainability of arts organisations, but will allow such organisations to provide a sufficient variety of arts participation opportunities that can lead to cultural sustainability.

Research in Australia for example shows that, 84% of people believe the arts should be more
accessible and available to average Australians, and 81% would feel more positive if there were a greater sense that the arts are available to everyone (Comment 65) p. 350 (Saatchi & Saatchi Australia, 2002:23). This report goes on to suggest that ‘...a substantial proportion of the public can be seen as a ‘sleeping giant’ in relation to the arts. They are neither ‘for’ the arts nor ‘against’ the arts. This means they have enormous potential to be influenced in either a positive or negative direction if given new information, encouragement and options related to the arts’ (Saatchi & Saatchi Australia, 2002:31).

A greater emphasis on marketing and market segmentation in particular can help to increase audience development and participation in arts-related activities generally. The main use of market segmentation is to understand and predict the buying behaviour of a group of consumers with homogenous characteristics (Dibb 1999, in Lindridge and Dibb, 2002; Bickert, 1997). This could include characteristics based on ethnicity. Being able to segment markets in this way increases the ability to efficiently deliver product offerings to meet consumers’ needs (Allenby, 2002; Bickert, 1997).

Researchers in the arts industry have stressed the importance of audience development in arts marketing (Australia Council for the Arts, 2002; Radbourne, 1998), and the need to focus on ‘identifying and satisfying the needs and wants of their audiences’ (Rentschler et al., 2002, p. 122). Internationally, audience development has focused on the following segments, as they are underrepresented in the population of arts consumers in Australia (Arts Victoria, 2003), the United Kingdom, (Arts Council of England, 2003), Singapore (National Arts Council of Singapore, 2003), and North America (IFACCA, 2005; Kopczynski and Hager, 2002):

- Attracting younger audiences and maintaining older audiences (Arts Victoria, 2003; Arts Council of England, 2003; National Arts Council Singapore, 2003; Staple, 2002);
- Outer metropolitan and country residents (IFACCA, 2005; Arts Victoria, 2003);
- Individuals with disabilities (IFACCA, 2005; Arts Council of England, 2003);
- Individuals from culturally diverse backgrounds (IFACCA, 2005; Arts Council of England, 2003; Arts Victoria, 2003); and
- Low income earners (IFACCA, 2005; Kopczynski and Hager, 2002).

The development of audiences based on these segments has been actively pursued. However, the segmentation of arts markets on the basis of ethnicity appears to be a somewhat under researched area.

**Multicultural Societies**

The ability to achieve cultural sustainability is complicated by increasing cultural diversity within communities. For example, Table 1 shows the increase in the proportion of permanent ethnic residents in Canada, the United Kingdom, North America, and Australia over the 1990s and into the 2000 era:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>% of ethnic residents - 1990's era</th>
<th>% of ethnic residents - 2000 era</th>
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1 While the proportion of immigrants has barely changed in the Australian population, the composition of nationalities has become more diverse, and so too has their reasons for migrating (ABS and Hugo 2002).

This has implications for the ways in which arts organizations approach the delivery of arts-related product but it also presents opportunities to meet the needs of increasingly culturally diverse potential and existing audiences. As Kolb highlights, ‘Rising immigration will make the demographic composition of the audience for arts an increasing issue’. (Kolb, 2002:173).

By looking more closely at the use of ethnic identity as a means to segment arts markets, we are also looking at ways in which a variety of cultural practices, values and beliefs can be retained in a way that encourages and celebrates diversity within multicultural societies.

The remainder of this paper will focus on the potential for using ethnic identity as a means of segmenting arts markets for the purpose of audience development and the subsequent development of financial and cultural sustainability.

**Ethnic Identity**

The term *ethnicity* is closely related to *culture* but ethnicity includes a genetic aspect, as Aaker (1999)
Acculturation

The cultural characteristics attributed to individuals in their country of birth are likely to change through immigration and acculturation processes taking place in the host country. These forces can impede the ability to predict the consumption behaviour of individuals and various ethnic groups within a multicultural society. Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits (1936) provide an early definition of acculturation as 'a process that entails contact between two cultural groups, resulting in numerous cultural changes in both parties. In effect, however, the contact experiences have much greater consequences for the non dominant group members' (Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits, 1936, in Stevens et al., 2004:689). The terms assimilation and integration used in acculturation models also require definition. Assimilation refers to a displacement of an original ethnic identity and the adoption of characteristics of the host culture (Chung and Fischer, 2000; Kurman and Ronen-Eilon, 2004). Integration implies that immigrants possess knowledge and understanding of the host country but they do not relinquish aspects of their own ethnic identity (Kurman and Ronen-Eilon, 2004).

Berry's (1992, 1997) seminal acculturation model is quoted frequently in the literature (Ben-Shalom and Horenczyk, 2003; Snaauwaert et al., 2003; Nauck, 2001; Chung and Fischer, 2000; Nesdale et al., 1997; Laroche et al., 1996). Berry (1992, 1997) proposes that assimilation and integration are only two out of a possible four acculturation strategies that can result in an immigrant either Integrating, Assimilating, Segregating or Marginalizing. Immigrants influence their own acculturation process through their level of involvement with members of other [local] cultures and, decisions made by immigrants in this regard, are heavily influenced by the level of acceptance from the receiving society (Berry, 2001). A summary of acculturation studies by Berry (2001) helps to illustrate the complexities of factors influencing the acculturation process. Early uni-dimensional assimilation approaches to acculturation have fallen out of favour (Birman and Tricket, 2001), with researchers preferring a more flexible approach (Davies and Fitchett, 2004; Ben-Shalom and Horenczyk, 2003; Querter and Chong, 2001; Knaf and Schwartz, 2001; Chung and Fischer, 2000; Laroche et al., 1996, 1998). This multi-dimensional perspective posits that immigrants are likely to develop their own unique cultural styles through the blending of their old culture and the host culture (Wallendorf and Reilly, 1983, in Chung and Fischer, 2000). The blending of cultural styles suggests that these consumers will respond differently to marketing approaches than other residents of the host country.

Bi-Cultural Individuals

Researchers have recently identified the emergence of individuals who possess dual cultural identities that enable them to engage in cultural frame switching in which they 'move between different cultural meaning systems in response to situation cues' (Benet-Martinez et al., 2002: 493). Cultural frame switching is activated by priming bicultural individuals with cues that remind them of their ethnic identity. In a study involving the exposure of Chinese American bicultural students to Chinese or American icons, Hong et al., (2003) found that these cues would activate cultural frame switching only if the students felt that a Chinese approach, rather than an American approach, was required to solve a particular problem presented to them (Hong et al., 2003). When increases in immigration are combined with acculturation processes and the emergence of bicultural individuals, ethnic identity could be considered as more fluid than ever and this has implications for market segmentation strategies. Jamal (2003) argues that consumers with bicultural identities are likely to 'conform neither individually nor as a group to any one specific segment or category' (Jamal, 2003:1614).

Segmentation Issues

Variables that have been successfully used as a basis for segmentation have been proven to be:

- Measurable - capable of being measured (Tonks, 2000; Pires, 1999);
• Stable – relatively unchanged over time (Tonks 2001; Pires, 1999);
• Substantial – of a size that would render them profitable (Tonks 2001; Pires, 1999);
• Accessible – the segment can be reached by marketing communications (Tonks 2001; Pires, 1999); and
• Actionable – consumers want the product offering (Tonks, 2001; Pires, 1999).

Measuring Values

The identification of values and norms inherent in residents of a particular nation has been researched and measured for many years. Values are considered to be important in guiding the behaviour of individuals (Brangule-Vlagisma et al., 2002; Thyne, 2000; Chun-Tung Lowe, 1998). Research on values, in a cross-cultural sense, has been heavily influenced by Hofstede’s (1980) national dimensions of culture. Hofstede’s seminal work proposed the following five indices of culture that reflect the values held by residents of a particular country: Power distance, Uncertainty avoidance, Individualism/Collectivism, Masculinity/Femininity and Long-term orientation/Short term orientation (Hofstede, 1980). The Collectivist-Individualist constructs have been the most widely used (Johnson et al., 2005; Bond et al., 2004; Van Herk et al., 2004; Benet-Martinez et al., 2003) in a variety of international business contexts (Merritt, 2000). More recently, Schwartz (1994) identified ten culture-level value dimensions: Power, Achievement, Hedonism, Stimulation, Self-direction, Universalism, Benevolence, Tradition, Conformity, Security (Schwartz 1994). Schwartz and Bardi (2001) subsequently proposed that countries can share associations with certain values but the level of importance in which a particular value is regarded varies between countries (Schwartz and Bardi, 2001).

Measuring Values in Cross-Cultural Settings

Many researchers emphasize the complexities of equivalence issues in quantitative cross cultural research (Allik et al., 2004; Cervellon and Dube, 2002; Caprara et al., 2000; Myers et al., 2000). Byrne and Campbell (1999) highlight the importance of understanding the implications of data collected in cross-cultural settings, ‘we cannot overemphasize the importance of having a solid understanding of one’s data. Such knowledge derives not only from the rigorous preliminary screening and analysis of data but also from the recognition of possible cultural differences’(Byrne and Campbell, 1999:571). Difficulties arise when the instrument of measurement is translated into another language without considering cultural differences. There are likely to be problems in the way the questionnaire may be understood, or in interpreting the causes of behaviour being measured, as they are unlikely to be the same for all countries (Chudry and Pallister, 2001; Byrne and Campbell, 1999; Chun-Tung Lowe, 1998). Moreover, tests developed in one country can fail to achieve their aims in other countries. This can be due to cultural differences in the way individuals respond to the measuring instrument (response bias) (Johnson et al., 2005; Allik et al., 2004; Smith, 2004; Van Herk et al., 2004). Response bias can include respondents believing that a higher score is a better score, and agreeing or disagreeing with almost every statement on the instrument (Cheung and Rensvold, 2000). While some of these problems can be ameliorated in the questionnaire design stage (Chudry and Pallister, 2001; Van Hemert et al., 2001), they still represent the potential for inappropriate labelling of ethnic groups for marketing or other purposes. The measurement and comparison of values across countries is not a simple task and it can become more complex when identifying and measuring values for segmentation purposes in multicultural societies.

Ethnic Segmentation in Multicultural Societies

Multicultural marketing within a single country can be defined as ‘the application of domestic marketing to a local demand that is culturally diverse, that is, segmenting the local market based on cultural attributes’ (Pires, 1999:33). Multicultural marketing is evident in the United Kingdom where, ‘during the last couple of decades a variety of ethnic retail enterprises have emerged within the SME business sector in the UK’ (Jamal, 2003:1601). Wilkinson and Cheng note that in Australia, for example, it is easy to find retail outlets and organisations that cater to a variety of ethnic groups. (Wilkinson and Cheng, 1999).

Recognition of ethnic identity is important to some individuals. For example, a study of direct mail attitudes amongst Pakistanis in the United Kingdom found that this group wanted to be targeted according to their ethnicity but noted that their attitudes towards direct mail varied considerably (Chudry and Pallister, 2001). This suggests that while ethnic identity is important to these consumers, their attitudes are not homogenous enough for a conventional market segment. Interestingly, consumers not normally associated with an ethnic background could also be potential candidates for ethnic affiliated market offerings. Cannon and Yapra (2002), contend that some consumers can be considered as cosmopolitan
in that they ‘hunger for a variety of diverse cultural experiences’ (Cannon and Yaprak, 2002:46).

The MOSAIC segmentation model (Pacific Micromarketing, 2000) has made some progress in the use of ethnicity in an Australian context. MOSAIC uses geodemographic variables such as occupation and postcode and combines them with variables that have previously been used to measure ethnic identity. These include the use of language from the original culture, and the consumption of mass media in that language (Laroche et al., 1996; Tsai et al., 2000). The geographic focus of MOSAIC provides a convenient segmentation tool for marketers. However, geodemographic segmentation variables are not entirely appropriate for ethnic segmentation as the ethnic composition of a geographic location can change over time (Tonks, 2001). For example, the suburb Footscray in Melbourne, Australia, has moved from a predominantly Italian population to a thriving community of Vietnamese, other Asian groups and more recently, immigrants from the Horn of Africa. MOSAIC’s ‘Emerging Ethnic Enclaves’ segment (Pacific Micromarketing 2000) consists of the following subgroups, based partly on country of origin:

- Ethnic Enterprise - Asian and Southern European;
- Villas and Mansions – none specified;
- New Arrivals, New Hope – Asian;
- Close-Knit and Debt-Free – Greek and Italian born; and
- Time for a Change – Asian and Middle Eastern.

However, the overlap of country of origin between these sub-groups is not consistent with segmentation theory that requires ‘sufficient behavioural differences to constitute a distinguishable market segment’ (Lindridge and Dibb, 2002:270). Research also suggests that segmentation on the basis of ethnicity is problematic for the following reasons:

- The behaviour of consumers cannot be attributed specifically to ethnicity as other factors, such as demographics, may be involved (Johnson and Garbarino, 2001; Pires, 1999);
- The experiences associated with acculturation are very individual and the effects of acculturation are difficult to apply to homogenous groupings (Davies and Fitchett, 2004);
- A conceptual framework relating to the behaviour of ethnic consumers needs to be developed first (IJRM Editorial, 2002; Chudry and Pallister, 2001).

Ethnic Segmentation of Arts Markets

Research by Kolb (2002) identified ethnic group differences in arts attendance in North America. The study found that lower rates of attendance for ethnic groups may not be the result of differences in levels of education or income, but are the result of these groups having their own values and tastes that affect the benefits that they desire from attendance’ (Kolb, 2002:172). Of interest also is the finding that ‘the social aspects of an arts event can be as important as a motivator for attendance as the art form itself, and yet European presentation style of arts often ignores these social aspects’ (Kolb, 2002:179). The ethnic groups examined by Kolb (2002) consisted of African American, American Indian, Asian, Hispanic and White. However, these groups are too broad for segmentation purposes (Pires 1999). For example, Asia consists of many countries, each with their own unique characteristics. Moreover, cohorts such as American Indians and Hispanics represent the cultural composition of North America and therefore, are not easily transferable to other countries.

The difficulty in transferring cohorts from one country to another is only part of the problem. The flexible nature of consumers and their behaviour in multicultural societies makes them difficult to pin down for segmentation purposes, as Jamal (2003) points out, ‘in a multicultural marketplace, marketers and consumers of different ethnic backgrounds co-exist, interact and adapt to each other. In doing so, consumers act as skilled navigators who frequently engage in culture swapping to sample the many tastes, themes and sounds of different cultures’ (Jamal, 2003:1599). Perhaps what is required when dealing with ethnic identity and market segmentation in multicultural societies is a more flexible approach to marketing. Non traditional approaches such as Tribal Marketing (Cova and Cova, 2002) and focusing on the Cosmopolitan consumer (Cannon and Yaprak, 2002; Thompson and Tambuya, 1999) may be better equipped to deal with the consumer of the future described by Jamal (2003).

Conclusion

This paper has presented a synopsis of current issues in relation to the arts in multicultural societies and the role that marketing can play in creating cultural sustainability through increased and ongoing participation in the arts by populations in those societies. The potential of increasing arts attendance using ethnic identity as a segmentation variable has also been discussed. Given the fluid nature of ethnic identity through the acculturation processes and the emergence of bicultural individuals, there is clearly a need to re-examine conventional marketing
approaches in relation to multicultural societies. The arts industry provides an interesting focus for the study of ethnicity and cultural differences as arts involvement could be considered as a perfect expression of culture and ethnicity in itself. The expression of ethnicity through dance, theatre, fine arts and movies, for example, is not only a celebration of particular ethnic identities but a means to understand the diversity inherent in a multicultural society. Challenges in relation to segmentation by ethnicity appear to be far from resolved. However, these issues present interesting questions for further research and potentially, opportunities for audience development and retention in arts markets that can effectively lead to cultural sustainability in multicultural societies.

References


**About the Authors**

Ms Wendy Kennedy

Deakin University, Australia. Wendy Kennedy’s research interests include ethnic identity, multicultural marketing, social marketing, subjective wellbeing and research methodology. Wendy teaches the subjects Advanced Market
Research and Consumer Behaviour at Victoria University and is currently undertaking a PhD scholarship at Deakin University.

Assoc Prof John Hall

Deakin University, Australia. John is an Associate Director of the Centre for Business Research and an Associate Professor in Business Research. John has a keen interest and long experience in consumer behaviour and business research. John has spoken and published extensively both nationally and internationally on matters directly related to these concepts. His texts on Applied Business Research are best sellers in their field in Australia. John has skills in both qualitative and quantitative analysis. John has been involved in business research for more than 20 years. John's research, teaching and publication areas are business related but focus on a variety of distinct areas including research methodology and analysis, international business, applied social research, tourism, leisure, sport, hospitality, education, consumer behavior, small business research and various aspects of marketing. John has obtained a number of awards for his research, teaching and publications. John has more than 130 publications relating to business theory and practice. These include books, journal articles and conference papers. His expertise in this area is also highlighted by over 70 applied research projects undertaken with local, state and federal governments as well as small, medium and large business organisations.