**Impacts of Economic, Structural, and Organizational Characteristics of Israeli Art Museums on their Artistic Repertoire**

**Abstract**

This article examines the impacts of economic, organizational, and structural characteristics of art museums on the repertoire of art they exhibit. This mixed-methods study applied a combination of quantitative and qualitative methodologies. The first phase analyzed quantitative data from the period 2000-2014, collected from 11 art museums in Israel that are recognized and supported by Israel's Ministry of Culture and Sport. The data pertain to the museums' income, socio-demographic information on the artists exhibited in the museums, and information about the museums’ exhibitions. In the second phase, to enrich understanding of the quantitative data and to view the investigated phenomenon in a broad context, 20 interviews were conducted with museum directors, curators, and artists involved with the museums in the sample.

The study findings indicate three factors external to art that influence the cultural products of the museums. The first is economic. Today, art museums rely on a variety of sources of income. The overall level of income and the proportion of each type of funding in a museum's budget impact the exhibitions it presents. The second is related to the location of the museum. The study found differences related to the scope and nature of the art exhibited in museums in Israel's geographical/cultural center and those in peripheral regions. The third is related to museum management. The study showed that museum directors’ subjective preferences largely determine the artistic line the museum follows. The discussion of the study findings addresses the implications of factors external to art having an impact on cultural production in art institutions and the relations between center/periphery or centrality/marginality in cultural institutions.

**Introduction**

Many scholars in the field of cultural economics have addressed the complexity of the relationship between art and economics, which embodies a connection between spiritual/metaphysical, social, and economic factors (Baumol, 1986; Becker, 1984; Blaug, 2001; Bourdieu, 1983; Throsby, 1994). In the context of museums, these studies emphasize that factors with an economic rationale, such as the museum's budget and funding sources, museum size, supply and demand, and directors' organizational strategies, can influence the museum's activities (Camarero, Garrido & Vice, 2011; Frey & Meier, 2002; Hughes & Luksetich, 2004). Studies on relations between center and periphery in the cultural field emphasize the importance of the center, mainly due to the link between art and finance. Central cities have a greater number of cultural institutions, more tourism, larger art-loving audiences, and a greater influx of artists. These factors influence the supply of art in museums located in the center as opposed to those in the periphery (von Graevenitz, 2007; Ofrat, 2016; Rosett, 1991).

Sociological studies of cultural markets indicate that evaluation of a work of art does not depend solely on the intrinsic value of the object. Rather, underlying the evaluative processes are various social factors, such as power relations, preferences of agents in influential positions, social perspectives on tastes, and the status of the artists (Becker, 1984; Beckert, 2009; Bourdieu, 1983, 1984).

Based on these areas of research, the current article empirically examines how, in formal art institutions, the economic and organizational characteristics and the location of the museum impact its cultural production, on the one hand, and the exhibited art on the other. The article contributes to literature on cultural economy in two ways. First, it advances sociological understanding of how factors external to art influence the cultural products exhibited in museums. Second, by using two methodologies, the study integrates economic, organizational, geographical, metaphysical, and social aspects of cultural production within the context of art institutions. No previous studies have considered the links between all these particular issues.

The literature shows that various factors external to art, such as economics, geography, and social characteristics, influence the art exhibited in museums and on the assessed value of the works of art. Accordingly, in this study, two issues are examined. The first is the impact of a museum's economic and organizational characteristics on its repertoire of art. The second is whether there are differences between art museums in Israel's center and its periphery in terms of their economic characteristics and artistic repertoire. The research question addresses whether and how economic, organizational, and structural characteristics of art museums influence the artistic repertoire and the characteristics of the artists exhibited in them.

Finally, this paper offers a systematic model of how factors external to art (economic, geographic, organizational/management) influence the museum's cultural production.