

**THE VISITOR STUDY IN SCOTLAND DURING THE 1990S :
AN EXAMINATION OF RESEARCH INTO THE VISITORS OF
MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES, WITH PARTICULAR
REFERENCE TO THE ARTS**

Peter Tyas

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Examination of Research into the Visitors of Museums
and Galleries with Particular Reference to the Arts**

Peter Tyas

MPhil. Museum and Gallery Studies.

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Abstract:

The visitors to museums and galleries have been studied from a variety of perspectives and with a variety of goals. This thesis seeks to draw together the varying techniques and attitudes towards the visitor, as well as summarise the current position of museologists towards the relationships involved in museum visiting. The focus of this study is Scotland during the 1990s, though long term trends which extend beyond this time frame will also be included, as will contextual data into international patterns of attendance and attitudes.

The main areas of concern within this thesis are: firstly, the characteristics of museum and gallery visitors; secondly, the attitudes and perceptions of the public towards the arts and museum and gallery visiting; thirdly, the motivational forces which induce visiting and the factors which act as barriers to attendance; and fourthly, the general climate within which museum and gallery visiting takes place.

This study will analyse the collection methods as well as the conclusion for qualitative and quantitative data. This will include a contextual study of the climate within which the research has been commissioned, conducted and criticised. The visitor study is inextricably linked to the society that produced it. Long term comparisons of visitor studies are not always possible, due to differences in collection methods and the parameters of study. Comparisons of the assumptions and the methodologies that drive research are highly informative and can be used to express the changing nature of visitor studies.

This thesis seeks to divide the museum and gallery audience into its constituent parts, and to prove that there exists a multifarious visiting public. There is no average museum visitor, nor a set of visitor profiles for all museums and galleries, instead there are distinct audience profiles for specific venues.

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Introduction

This thesis will take the form of a synthesis of research, though it will not be restricted to a simple survey of available data. I will gather together a broad range of reports and research centred on the visual arts in Scotland, encompassing visitor profile demographics, social and cultural research and quantitative data on attitudes and attendance. This diverse range of information will allow me to examine the complex patterns of behaviour that are encompassed within the museum visit. Throughout this thesis I shall compare the general data pertaining to the arts with specific research into the visitors of museums and art galleries. It is my contention that research is as informative in its conception as in its conclusions. That is to say, that the reasons for conducting research, and the purposes that this research is designed to serve are just as informative as the information gathered.

There are three chapters to his thesis. Chapter one introduces the methods of data collection and explores the validity of the information that will then be used in chapters two and three. Chapter two focuses upon the audience for the arts and the venues which are attended, drawing mainly on data provided from surveys and other quantitative research methods. These surveys can only provide general information on the levels of attendance and the attitudes and perceptions of people in a non-specific manner. These responses will be contextualised within the UK, and in some cases with references to Europe. Chapter three focuses upon the mechanics of the museum visit, upon the motivational forces that encourage museum visiting, and upon the disincentives which act as barriers to museum visiting. Chapter three deals with the attitudes

and perspectives of individuals, and makes use of qualitative data, mainly from focus group research. There has been a lack of such work carried out in Scotland, however, and so chapter three concludes with a general review of recent research across the UK.

Throughout this thesis I shall make comparisons between venues and between audiences. These comparisons will be made across the regions of Scotland and across a period of time. There is, however, a fundamental difference between measuring the level of services provided and measuring the quality of these services. When making comparisons within the museum community it is necessary to define exactly who, and what, is being compared to ensure a comparison of like with like. There are no easy divisions to be made within this community due to the great diversity of services and venues. The divisions that I shall make will be based upon the available data.

There is a great deal of research available into the general attitudes and the general perceptions of the public towards museums and the towards the arts. It would be wrong, however, to assume that the general data into the attitudes and perceptions of the public towards museums and galleries represents the attitudes and perceptions of the public towards museums and galleries of all types. There is a fundamental lack of research into the individual types of museums and galleries and the different groups of people who visit them. This makes it virtually impossible to express the distinct nature of the audiences for each type of museum within Scotland.

The differing methodologies of researchers, despite producing data which is incompatible, do reveal a great deal in their assumptions about the audience and the style and procedure of measuring that public. One of the most

comprehensive survey studies ever carried out was executed by Bourdieu and Darbel in the 1960s. This research encompassed five European countries and sought to establish the definitive criteria for the museum visit.¹

Bourdieu and Darbel concluded that “the relationships observed between museum visiting and variables such as socio-economic category, age or environment are almost totally reduced to the relation between level of education and visiting.”² The existence of such a strong relationship was, however, completely reliant on individuals entering the education system with sufficient family upbringing and familiarity with the arts to assimilate the schooling.³ What is expressed through level of education, therefore, is the cumulative effects of training acquired through the family and schooling; thus an early ‘cultural initiation’⁴ from the family is vital. Indeed, such is the importance of cultural inculcation to attitudes and practices, namely disposition towards artworks and museum visiting, that the level of education measured by qualifications attained is less meaningful than the level of ‘cultural aspiration.’⁵ This can be understood as the self-perceived level of cultural knowledge attained by an individual regardless of certificates of achievement. Not only are visiting patterns reliant upon education, but “all visitors behaviour, and all their attitudes to works on display, are directly and almost exclusively related to education”.⁶ Thus taste in particular works and consumption in general can be seen as emanating from the culture of

¹ Bourdieu, P., and Darbel, A., *The Love of Art: European Art Museums and their Public*, trans. Beattie, C., and Merriman, N., Cambridge 1991. [Originally printed; Les Editions de Minuit in 1969.] This study did not include analysis of the UK. The five European countries were: France, Holland, Poland and Greece and Spain.

² Ibid., p. 26.

³ Ibid., p. 26-27.

⁴ Ibid., p. 27.

⁵ Ibid., p. 15.

⁶ Ibid., p. 37.

the audience member, and the specific situation of the individual visitor within that culture.

Bourdieu and Darbel split the 'audience' in each country into its constituent parts, and weighed each against the other. This analysis, however, was reductive. Education was singled out as the most important factor, which dictated the relationship between all the other factors. Bourdieu sought a universal truth, a defining factor for the entire relationship. Modern audience analysis, however, allows each factor to play more than one role, and for importance to shift with this changing of roles. Bourdieu divided the audience for systematic analysis, and yet treated the divided mass as originating from a single audience. More recent analysis has perceived a multiple audience, composed of various groups and subgroups, which move in and out of audience types.

Within cultures can be found sub-cultures, namely people who share similar attitudes, actions and values.⁷ Geographical regions or ethnic backgrounds usually define or separate these subculture groups from the dominant culture. Within subcultures can be found 'reference groups', which do not necessarily fit within the values and attitudes of subcultures, and may cross the boundaries that define cultural groups. A 'reference group' can be defined as any group, including family, friends and work associates, with whom an individual identifies. This identification may involve a degree of assimilation of values and attitudes and even behaviour.⁸

Bourdieu and Darbel's analysis did not allow for differences in audience type, that is they did not allow that different motivational forces would act on

⁷ Hill, E., O'Sullivan, C., and O'Sullivan, T., *Creative Arts Marketing*, Oxford 1995, p. 28.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

different people. Bourdieu also assumed that all visits had the same high minded goal, a cultural or aesthetic experience,^{and} within this there was no room for other uses of the museum. Bourdieu and Darbel's study was conducted prior to the advances in learning theory, which allow for differing learning styles. Gardner has subsequently described seven human intelligences - linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, musical, bodily kinaesthetic, inter-personal and intra-personal.⁹ His theory of multiple intelligences explained why people learn and remember in different ways, according to the strengths and weaknesses of those intelligences. David Kolb has divided the learner into those who prefer to perceive new experiences through sensing/feeling, and those who perceived through thinking.¹⁰ These new experiences were then processed actively through doing, or reflectively through watching. Since the time of Bourdieu and Darbel's, there has been a range of methodologies employed in understanding the museum experience and in theorising its structure.

One of the characteristic features of visitor studies has been the diversity of approaches that have been taken to its subject: anthropological, sociological, psychological and educational. No single approach has been proven pre-eminently successful.¹¹

Each discipline lends a unique insight, but no single approach offers a complete view. The differing notions of the museum experience inform how and what should be measured. The most recent approach to measuring the arts is that of market research. This scientific discipline uses models and equations to provide

⁹ Gardner, H., *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*, New York 1983.

¹⁰ Kolb, D.A., *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development*, New Jersey 1984.

¹¹ Bicknell, S., and Farmelo, G., 'Introduction,' in Bicknell, S., and Farmelo, G., (eds.) *Museum Visitor Studies in the 1990s*, London 1993, p. 7.

profiles and diagrams which seek to explain the visitor's behaviour and attitudes. Two of the pioneers of this methodology are Semenik and Bamossy, who have used a combination of market research and sociology to break down the visitor's experience. This style of research has been termed 'consumer aesthetics,'¹² and has been developed by using psychological methodology and sociological insight to draft models for the aesthetic experience.

Semenik and Bamossy argued that the 'visitor experience,' particularly in art galleries, is made up of several immediate responses to a particular art work. These are felt with varying intensity and continuity and so are highly subjective and personal.¹³ This model of the experience would mean there would be no sure way to measure the experience in a quantifiable and scientific manner. According to sociologists a person can never have a pure, immediate aesthetic experience, as whenever we gaze at an object our reaction to it is historically grounded and inseparable from our ideology and social values.

Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson have sought to explain the aesthetic experience in a universal model using four overlapping dimensions; the perceptual, the emotional, the intellectual, and finally the communicational.¹⁴ Using these dimensions they sought to prove the nature of the experience in a generic sense, they sought to move away from the aesthetic experience as a highly personal one, and to establish the fundamental criteria. They found that

¹² Semenik, R.J. and Bamossy, G., 'The Experiential Nature of Cultural Consumption and the Shaping of a New Aesthetic,' in Shaw, D.V., Hendon, W.S., and Waits, C.R., (eds.) *Artists and Cultural Consumers*, Association for Cultural Economics, OH 1987. Quoted in Kawashima, N., 'Knowing the Public. A Review of Museum Marketing Literature and Research,' *Museum Management and Curatorship*, Vol. 17, No. 1, pp. 21-39, p. 33.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

¹⁴ Csikszentmihalyi, M., and Robinson, R.E., *The Art of Seeing: An Interpretation of the Aesthetic Encounter*, Malibu CA 1990, pp. 178-9.

the structure of the aesthetic experience was universal, the central factor being that the art work presented a challenge or a series of challenges which the individual unravelled within one or more of the four dimensions, mentioned above, as a point of access.¹⁵ This meant that no two experiences were identical and though each was specific to the individual all shared a common structure. Consequently they disagreed with the notion of the viewer as a passive recipient of a singular aesthetic message. Instead, the audience engages in a 'productive experience,' and knowledge is created during the visit by the public.

Society and art are bound in a relationship which constantly redefines the role and actions of both. The experience of viewing art, therefore, is a changing phenomenon, and the visitor study, intrinsically linked to the society which produced it, must also adapt. The exhibition of art is a method of both communicating knowledge about the arts, and a method of creating knowledge and new experiences. It is in effect, a reflection of culture, a method of recording culture and a process of creating culture.

Abercrombie and Longhurst suggest that there now exists three audience experiences, the 'simple audience,' the 'mass audience' and the 'diffused audience.' These 'audience experience' classifications are fluid, that is to say that individuals are not restrained by categorisation within an audience 'type' but instead are free to move between them.¹⁶ Indeed, the 'mass' and the 'diffused' audiences have developed out of the 'simple audience.' The simple audience experience as set out below, has been altered by two forces, the challenges of modern art and the response of the museum.

¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 77-8.

¹⁶ Ibid., pp. 28-9.

[there is] a certain immediacy in the experience of being a member of an audience. There is a communication of some kind between sender and receiver, this communication is fairly direct, the context is spatially localised and, typically, takes place in a public space [an art gallery, for instance]. There is a reasonably clear distinction between producers [artist] and consumers [visitor]: producers perform and audiences appropriate the performance with a great deal of attention and involvement. Events involving simple audiences of this kind are exceptional, depend on a certain ceremonial quality, and demand relatively high levels of attention and involvement.¹⁷

The above definition sets out the main tenets of being a member of a 'simple audience,' and from here it is possible to introduce the forces of modernity which have altered this relationship and produced the two other types of audiences mentioned above. The main challenge to this audience experience came from mass communication and mass reproduction. Benjamin described the effects of mass communication as the stripping of the 'aura' from art works, removing the unique status of the art object.¹⁸ This has had the effect of reducing the 'exceptional' nature of the experience of art, as reproductions can be purchased from galleries and hung in homes and workplaces. Mitchell reworked this argument to introduce the effects of advanced digital reproduction, and the advent of digital art, which has rendered the distinction between 'original' and

¹⁷ Abercrombie, N., and Longhurst, B., *Audiences: A Sociological Theory of Performance and Imagination*, London 1998, p. 44.

¹⁸ Benjamin, W., 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,' pp. 217 - 220 in Frascina, F., and Harris, J., (eds.) *Art in Modern Culture: An anthology of Critical Texts*, London 1992.

'reproduction' unusable.¹⁹ Digital art works designed for mass dissemination have further eroded these distinctions, and in some cases blurred the line between 'producer' and 'consumer'.

The pervasiveness of mass communication has removed the necessity for a 'local experience,' and taken away the 'ceremony' and 'public' aspect. The overall effect has been a levelling of art, which has taken away the elite nature of the art experience. This has elongated in both space and time the experience of art, for no longer is art experienced only in a gallery, reproductions can be found on clothing, billboards and television.²⁰ Equally, modern art has broken out of the gallery and public art is placed in streets and parks. The public may no longer be seen as an undifferentiated body in modern research, but the understanding of the actual process of communication remains largely unstudied and the distinctions within the visitor profiles remain clumsy. The marketing approaches to audience research allow for a fairly sophisticated understanding of the audience and a view of the museum as providing a 'product' which is appropriated differently by separate sections of the audience.

The 'mass audience' experiences art through a mediator, the curator (and the gallery itself), and in a less intense manner. These audiences move in and out of attention and have become highly adept at manipulating the media.²¹ This ability to manipulate the media clearly distinguishes the 'mass audience' from the 'simple audience.' For the manipulation of media makes the mass audience a very active audience; they become producers. Modern society is drenched in media,

¹⁹ Mitchell, W.J., *The Reconfigured Eye: Visual Truth in the Post-Photographic Era*, Cambridge MA 1992.

²⁰ Abercrombie, N., and Longhurst, B., *Audiences*, 1998, p. 62.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 142-7.

and the boundaries between media and reality have become as ambiguous as those between art and life can be.²²

The dissolving boundaries of the audience experience have meant that a 'diffused audience' has emerged. That is not to say that the 'simple' and the 'mass' audience experience no longer exist. On the contrary, they are as common as ever, but they must be understood as taking place against a background of the 'diffused audience.'²³ The 'diffused audience' is the product of modern life, and the modern media (which includes the arts) where the two are so closely entwined that they become inseparable. That is to say the 'diffused audience' is the experience of culture in every day life. The arts surround the public in the twenty-first century, rather than the public crowding round the arts.

The implication of this for surveys of arts consumption are many-fold, and have not yet been fully addressed. In the twenty-first century there is no easy way to measure the level of involvement by the public in the arts. All the gallery visits added together do not total the level of involvement by the nation in the arts. Studies of arts provision cannot be restricted to art galleries and art museums, but must include public art projects as well as private galleries. The general research into the attitudes and perceptions of the nation on the broadest of issues must be supplemented by in-depth research into particular aspects of the museum experience. This means that a plurality of audiences must be recognised and studied; and that a separate audience exists for each type of venue. There is as yet no research that has proven the make-up of these separate

²² Ibid., p. 77.

²³ Abercrombie, N., and Longhurst, B., *Audiences*, London 1998, pp. 68-9.

audiences, and how they function. Hence, there is no way to know what similarities they have or what makes them distinct.

Chapter One

The Data

This chapter is split into three sections; the first section describes the tools and application of modern research methods while the second deals with the context of visitor research and exhibition evaluation. The contextualisation of the data and its collection method can suggest an agenda and the climate within which the research was initiated. This has a profound affect on the interpretation of results and the final analysis. The third section deals in detail with the specific data that will make up the main body of this thesis. I will attempt to apply the theoretical criticism and arguments set out in the second section along with the practical data handling points made in the first section to the data gathered in the third.

The implications of the general criticisms of the collection methods, set out in the first part of this chapter, will be explored in relation to the specific data analysis and conclusions reported in chapters two and three. It is important to have a clear understanding of the inherent weaknesses of the research techniques prior to examining the data set out in the reports. There are two main styles of research utilised in this thesis, quantitative research and qualitative research. Just as both of these styles have their own tools and applications, each also has its own advantages and flaws. These two styles of research can be divided further by the duration of the research. Research conducted over a protracted period can be termed 'continuous research.' This is particularly useful to monitor changes and trends, and is frequently used by funding bodies to determine the success of a project or the popularity of a facility. Conversely, research into a one-off event

or undertaken to obtain information relating to a particular issue or problem can be termed 'ad hoc.'¹

Caution must be exercised when comparing sample surveys with one another; this is especially the case between continuous and ad hoc research. The sample survey, though intended to express the nature of a wider group, can not be used as a census of that wider group. The sample survey is a very precise tool and the data collected from this tool are only truly relevant to the questions asked within that survey. Omissions from the responses gathered by the survey are not evidence of an absence of opinion or action, hence it is impossible to prove a negative through survey work. All surveys have boundaries as to what they can be used to prove, and not all surveys lend themselves to comparisons with other surveys. There are however exceptions, surveys which were designed to be used for exactly this comparative purpose, for instance the 1994 and 1998 Scottish Arts Council surveys (SAC). There are also research groups whose main role is to provide data for comparisons over time. An example can be found in the Henley Centre, which specialises in trend research.

Methodologies, Tools and Applications

A distinction must be made between methodology and method. Methods of research include the actual techniques or procedures undertaken to collect and analyse data. Methodology is the analysis of exactly how research should be carried out. This concept relates to the discussions of how theories of research are generated and tested, and what logic or criteria have been satisfied in conducting

¹ Hill, E., O'Sullivan, C., and O'Sullivan T., *Creative Arts Marketing*, Oxford 2000 (reprint of 1995 edition) p. 66.

the research.² The methodology reported in all surveys includes a description of the process by which the data was collected and the steps taken to ensure that a representative sample was ^{of} attained. This includes the 'weighting' of the results after the survey has been completed, which ensures that the responses and the categorisation of responses are correctly representational of the target population. This is necessary as sample surveys study only a small section of the population, and so weighting is required to ensure that undue emphasis is not given to any one group within that target population. The second area of concern is that of the tools utilised within the survey. It is this second area that I shall focus upon, for it is only with a clear understanding of the tools and practices of survey research that accurate criticism of the data becomes possible.

The most abundant data comes in the form of the survey. This usually refers to data gathered from individuals through opened-ended questions or closed questions, both of which can be seen to distort the respondent's answers to varying degrees. The best method for gaining responses with a minimum of bias are the focus group and the in-depth interview. The survey, however, is the only viable method for gaining a very wide response rate.

The visitor survey is a constructed experience that encumbers both the researcher and the audience member with the performance of extraordinary roles. Given then that the survey is an artificial experience, the data gained must be understood to be flawed. This is particularly true of situations where there is a perceived 'correct' response, which is predominantly the case with arts research. The SAC 1998 survey of general attitudes provides examples of this kind of problem, the responses to questions such as 'arts and cultural activity give a lot

² Blaike, N., *Approaches to Social Enquiry*, Cambridge 1993, p. 7.

of pleasure to many people' are therefore less reliable than 'the amount of arts and culture in my area has increased in recent years.'³ The latter is a question of perceived fact, and the answer can be assumed to be an honest account of what the respondent believes. The former, however, has asked the respondent to give an opinion on what the effects of the arts are to society as a whole, and this relies on the respondent having both a good opinion of the arts available and holding beliefs that the arts are a 'good thing.' The generally accepted 'correct' response is that the arts are cultural and therefore good and give people pleasure. This becomes increasingly apparent when a set of statistics are introduced. In a 1998 survey, 96% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the arts provide pleasure to many people, despite only 40% of respondents claiming to be interested in the arts themselves.⁴

There are two main types of question used in visitor surveys, the open-ended question and the closed question. Open-ended questions collect information with a minimum of direction given to respondents. This type of question is a very useful tool if the possible range of responses is very broad.⁵ The open-ended question allows the respondent to use his/her own words, and so to vent any strong opinions, which gives the interviewer a full picture. Probing questions and clarifying questions can then be used to gain a complete picture. The researcher/interviewer must be careful, however, not to ask leading questions or offer prompts or suggestions for clarification, as this will introduce bias. The main problem of such open-ended questioning is the difficulty of

³ These example questions are taken from the 1998 SAC survey.

⁴ *Attendance at, Participation in, and Attitudes Towards the Arts in Scotland*, Edinburgh 1998, *Ibid.*, p. 21.

⁵ Hill., (*et al.*) *Creative Arts Marketing*, p. 89.

'coding' the answers. This problem is experienced at two points: during the interview and during the interpretation of the results. The majority of oral responses contain a level of ambiguity and/or contradiction, which the interviewer must decipher. All responses must then be categorised if the researcher is to analyse the interview. Each type of response is given a code and separated for further analysis. Therefore the respondent's words are not reported but interpreted, initially by the interviewer and subsequently coded and categorised by the researcher.

Closed questions are more limited in the scope of response, and therefore lead the respondent into supplying certain answers far more than open-ended questions. Respondents find answering closed questions easier and quicker, and so spend less time thinking about their responses. Closed questions avoid the difficulty of coding respondent's answers by carefully structuring the questions. Most closed questions are of one of three main types. The 'multiple response' question provides a series of possible responses and can allow a response in just one, or in a number of categories.⁶ 'Scaled questions'; provide a scale on which respondents can express the strength of their attitude or opinions.⁷ The 'ordered question' enables respondents to express preferences of response, and on occasion, to state these preferences in terms of a set of priorities.⁸ These preference-based responses tend to magnify and distort the perceived differences in preference. Equally, the exclusion of a response from the list implies it is unimportant, though there is no way, within the survey, to check this exclusion

⁶ Ibid., p. 89.

⁷ Ibid., p. 91.

⁸ Ibid., p. 92.

was intended or meaningful without further distorting the response with a prompt question. This criticism can be levelled at all closed-questions as the responses cannot be impartially clarified. Opinions, perceptions and attitudes are therefore polarised and equal importance is given to all affirmative responses with no checking mechanism. This is a common criticism of all ordered questions, as it is often assumed that the intervals between ranked items is equal, when in reality this is often not the case.⁹ The first feature may be far more important than the second and the third and fourth feature may only be included in the list because they were presented to the respondent for ranking. There is an in-built assumption that the respondent is equally knowledgeable about all the items on the list and capable of objectively comparing them.¹⁰

The survey report can also blur the distinctions between behaviour, opinion and intention. Intentions to visit and the opinion of visitors may rise while the actual number of visits falls, and predictions of future behaviour are notoriously inaccurate. Careful questioning and reporting are all that is required to avoid these pitfalls. Opinions are a far trickier subject, as these develop and change throughout a lifetime, but also can vary from day to day. Opinions in and of themselves are less important than the factors that shape them, and the underlying structures within society that support them. The people who tend to be most forthcoming with their opinions also tend to be those with the most extreme and unrepresentative ones. This problem is associated mainly with self-completion surveys, and to a lesser extent postal surveys. Both of these are relatively rare in the arts, though a large number of museums and galleries utilise

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 92.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 92.

visitor book comments as a gauge of the public's response to exhibitions. This kind of a gauge is prone to exaggerated opinion, that is to say that the public's response is being guessed at using the most verbal minority as a guide. This is a dangerous evaluation method as it is highly unlikely that the verbal minority will summarise the entire spectrum of views on any particular subject. What they do represent is a glimpse at the issues that concern, excite, motivate and anger them, as well as reveal something of the underlying attitudes that influence their behaviour.¹¹ What is not available in any way is an understanding of why they hold these underlying attitudes, and what influenced and formed them.

Data gathered by survey can be either qualitative, from questions asking respondents how they perceive the arts and what hinders their enjoyment, or quantitative, from questions asking respondents how often they attend and where. These types of questions are predominantly asked either by face-to-face interviews or over the telephone. Both methods have their advantages and critics, as will be seen below. There are other techniques, such as 'mail surveys' and 'self-completion surveys', though these are less evident in arts research. The most successful methods of gaining qualitative research are focus groups and in-depth interviews. The qualitative data provided by open-ended questions is limited in scope due to the restrictions of the analysis techniques of survey questions as described above.

The in-depth interview utilises open-ended questions in a prolonged one-to-one interview. The interviewer has only a checklist of topics to cover, and is free to phrase the questions as seems appropriate. The interviewer will move from general to specific questions and from topic to topic in a logical order. The

¹¹ Ibid., p. 35.

body language of the respondent and the ambient atmosphere are taken into account. This requires an interviewer of great skill and training and is very time consuming. This restricts the volume of people who can be interviewed and so truncates the spectrum of responses gathered.

The focus group usually consists of six to eight people, and so will naturally include a far larger sample size. The essence of a focus group is that the group dynamics are used to draw out individual attitudes, opinions and beliefs. A group will usually express these more freely than a one-to-one interview. This may introduce an element of exaggeration to the expression, and in some cases this may restrict other opinions from being revealed. The interviewer acts as a catalyst and moderator, ensuring that the discussion keeps to the right topics and progresses. Both the in-depth interview and the focus group are rarities in arts research, which may be due to the high cost and the inherent limited representation of opinion.

Face-to-face interviewing is considered one of the best methods of conducting a survey. This method, however, is expensive in both money and time, which can prevent organisations from commissioning such work and lead to prolonged usage of out-of-date reports and a considerable time lag between commissioning research and receiving the final report. This kind of research is ideally suited when the target sample can be identified easily, such as with gallery visitors. Relatively few people refuse to participate in this form of survey, especially with arts surveys, as people who support the arts seem to feel an obligation to respond. The presence of an interviewer has been found to increase the likelihood that a respondent will complete the entire questionnaire, and in the right order. The interviewer can introduce complex routings by using filter

questions which enables categories of respondents to answer different questions and removes extraneous or superfluous questions.¹² The interviewer can also clarify questions that the respondent has difficulties with, and encourage fuller answers to open-ended questions. Visual aids can also be used at particular points in the interview. Despite the high level of guidance that can be given during a face-to-face interview, in the form of 'flash-cards' and diagrams, the questions themselves must be kept simple as the interviewee must understand them aurally and answer immediately. The inter-personal nature of the interview may introduce bias, as the interviewer's non-verbal signals and body language can have a great effect on the responses gained. Added to this is the nature of the selection process whereby the interviewer chooses who to approach. Interviewers will often select only those who they feel comfortable approaching and whom they believe will respond positively. Also, when writing down the responses to open-ended questions, interviewers may have to interpret and paraphrase the actual response.¹³

The telephone interview is a cheaper alternative to the face-to-face interview, but it preserves many of the benefits of the face-to-face interview. The main advantage of the telephone interview is that a wider geographic response can be gained for little extra financial cost. The interviewers can be continually supervised as they are in a central location, which speeds up the collection of data. Some of the inter-personal bias can be removed as the interviewee cannot see the interviewer, which has the added advantage of increasing the likelihood of receiving honest responses in situations where the interviewee is highly aware

¹² Ibid., pp. 53-54.

¹³ Ibid., p. 54.

of what the 'correct' answer should be.¹⁴ The most prominent disadvantage of the telephone interview is the fact that the sample is limited to those people who have a telephone and are willing to be interviewed in this manner. The intrusive factor of telephone marketing and telesales has created a great deal of resistance to all unsolicited telephone calls. This makes it easier for the interviewees to either refuse outright to participate or to terminate the interview before the end.

Exhibition evaluation rarely engages members of the public in a statistically valid manner, and is usually carried out by a professional body. This kind of research describes the effectiveness of exhibits usually in terms of comprehension, accessibility and format, though on occasion a small number of public responses are also included. This may include informal conversations with particular member of the public and observations of the public in general. In-house evaluation of this type, even when it is done by a professional body, is rarely published in academic journals and remains difficult to access for the museum researcher.¹⁵ Exhibition evaluation can be conducted before, during and after the design stage of an exhibition. This is termed 'front-end', 'formative' and 'summative' evaluation. Front-end evaluation can incorporate 'audience analysis' as well as 'design analysis.' Design analysis covers both the practical aspects of readability and space usage as well as more theory grounded comprehension analysis.

The bulk of the data used in this thesis has been gathered by audience surveys, though exhibition analysis has proved pertinent for evaluation of the

¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 54-55.

¹⁵ This problem was highlighted by Hooper-Greenhill, E., in her article 'Counting Visitors or Visitors who Count?' Lumbley, R., (ed.) *Museum Time-Machine*, London 1988.

process of the museum visit. There are two other styles of research that have been used in this thesis, though mainly as background data. The SAC have also produced what can be termed 'desk research'. Desk research is the cheapest and most restrictive type of research. Inherent in this re-usage of old, and often out-of-date data are three main flaws. Firstly, desk research is reliant upon existing data and the availability of said data. Secondly, the research itself will often involve out of date practices in both collection and analysis. Finally, the reliance upon recycled research means that any weaknesses in the original research will be repeated whenever the data is re-used.

It is also important to make distinctions in order to structure the criticisms of the data. A distinction must be made between research and evaluation, as both draw on the same techniques of data gathering. The difference lies in the particular purpose of evaluation as a tool for judgements as opposed to research that usually leads to generalisation. "Thus it is always wrong to treat an evaluation as a piece of research, but not necessarily wrong to treat a piece of research as an evaluation."¹⁶ A distinction must also be made between market research and marketing research. Market research is the study of the markets in general, whereas marketing research is the study of a product or service within a market. Thus a museum may perform marketing research to understand how its product is best sold to the public, whilst the museum itself forms a part of the market which may be researched.

There is an important distinction to be made between the types of venue, and the types of exhibition that the research and the survey work pertain to.

¹⁶ Miles, R., 'Grasping the greased pig: Evaluation of Educational Exhibits', in Bicknell, S., and Farnelo, G., (eds.) *Museum Visitor Studies in the 1990s*, London 1993, p. 28.

These distinctions are not always clear within the surveys and the evaluations that have been conducted. The 1998 SAC survey was the most complete in this sense, as this survey asked respondents whether they attended permanent or temporary exhibitions, and if so which types of exhibitions and at what venues. The types of exhibitions were divided along traditional classifications: painting, sculpture and photography, as well as between amateur and professional exhibitions.

Finally, a distinction must be made between the venues of exhibitions and the content of the exhibition. In the case of museums in particular, this can mean the difference between the museum as an institution and the museum as a building as well as a collection. These semantic distinctions are of great importance when considering responses to questions relating to barriers to attendance. Respondents may consider the building to be oppressive, the collection irrelevant, and the institution elitist, but unless the researcher allows for the above distinctions valuable distinctions within the data may not be realised.

The Climate of Visitor Research

The political and social agenda of the body which conducts or commissions research has a profound effect on the construction and the conclusions of their research. This becomes increasingly apparent when the research is conducted either in response to a governmental initiative, such as the

Anderson¹⁷ report, or in response to pressures from funding bodies. The following section will introduce the political pressures that have changed the focus and the conclusions of research over the past two decades. Not all research is influenced by these central pressures. The research commissioned privately, or conducted by academics or museum professionals, may be entirely independent of political agendas. What is apparent, however, is that all visitor research is influenced by two fundamental factors, the contemporary understandings and assumptions about how the audience behaves within the museum, and the contemporary knowledge about how to conduct a scientific audience study. Political agendas can be seen to impact upon both of these factors, though not to the exclusion of other influences.

A central point to this section is that political pressures to measure the performance of the arts and to justify public funds has led, throughout the last two decades, to an increase in research into the economic impact of the arts. In many respects this emphasis on economic efficiency and accountability has meant that the less tangible benefits have not been measured, or have been taken as granted, and so not researched. The social importance of the arts has been investigated by non-government bodies however. In terms of the UK there has been a great deal of research by consultancy groups, and by Comedia in particular.¹⁸ There is, however, a paucity of research into the social effects of

¹⁷ Anderson, D., *A Common Wealth: Museums in the Learning Age*, A Report to the Department of National Heritage, London 1997. Revised and updated due to the major policy initiatives of the Labour government. The second edition, published in 1999 included a new chapter on the digital museum as part of the cultural network, and on the role of museums in the fostering of creativity in society.

¹⁸ Comedia is an independent research and consultancy organisation specialising in urban and cultural policy. See for example: Landry, C., Maguire, M., and Warpole, K., *The Social Impact of the Arts. A Discussion Document*, Comedia, Stroud 1993; Matarasso, F., *Defining Values: Evaluating Arts Programmes. A Working Paper 1: The Social Impact of Arts Programmes*,

the arts in Scotland. The only factors that have been measured and compared across the sector in Scotland have been attendance rates, budget size, and staff size. This in itself reflects the political agenda of accountability and performance measurement. In 1999 the SAC published a booklet stating that the arts play a critical part in empowering communities, providing jobs, skills and training, regenerating urban areas and promoting health and well-being.¹⁹ This booklet drew on examples from Castlemilk, from a disability project in Glasgow, and the Gaelic arts festivals and Dundee. The report *Creative Scotland*²⁰ argued that since the inception of the new parliament Scotland could use the arts more effectively in tackling national social and economic challenges. As yet, however, there has been little comparable research in Scotland into these issues beyond case study reports.

The requirement to evaluate policies and performance in the publicly funded cultural sector, in the UK, has become increasingly pressing since the Conservative government's Financial Management Initiative of 1982.²¹ This initiative called for greater efficiency, effectiveness and 'value for money' at central and local levels.²² Since 1983 the National Audit Office, though not specifically responsible for cultural services, was responsible for reporting on public spending programmes in England, Scotland and Wales. This has meant that museums and the arts fall within its remit and have been subject to the

Comedia, Stroud 1996; Matarasso F., *Use or Ornament? The Social Impact of Participating in the Arts*, Comedia, Stroud 1997.

¹⁹ Scottish Arts Council, *Arts in Communities*, SAC 1999.

²⁰ Scottish Arts Council, *Creative Scotland*, SAC 1999.

²¹ Selwood, S., 'Access, Efficiency and Excellence: Measuring Non-Economic Performance in the English Subsidies Cultural Sector,' *Cultural Trends*, 1999, pp. 89-137, p. 89.

²² Butt, H., and Palmer, B., *Values for Money in the Public Sector*, Oxford 1985; Clarke, A., *Understanding the Contract Culture and Performance Measurement in the Arts*, London 1991. Quoted in Selwood, S., 'Access, Efficiency and Excellence,' *Cultural Trends*, 1999, p. 89.

philosophy which it represents.²³ A decade later the National Audit Office attempted to assess the quality of service provided to the public by the national museums. It reported that the Department now had doubts about capturing the performance of museums by quantitative indicators alone, and about the appropriateness of making comparisons between museums.²⁴ From the mid-1980s, the Arts Council of Great Britain promoted its funding of the cultural sector in financial terms, describing the arts as a major employer and economic catalyst.²⁵ These notions of the economic importance of the arts were also promoted in arts management literature of the late 1980s and early 1990s.²⁶

There has been research into performance management from outside the government. The Museums Association published guidelines on performance management, which was followed up two years later with research into which aspects of performance management were in regular use amongst its members and which were the most useful.

The drive towards greater efficiency and accountability in the public sector has manifested in the Labour Government's new cultural framework and its related system of funding agreements and monitoring. Despite the National Audit Office's doubts, reported in 1993, the Department of Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) developed in 1999 a set of performance indicators for the cultural sector. The Consolidation Report by the DCMS contained a business model to help analysis of performance management, and the first set of standard

²³ Selwood, S., 'Access, Efficiency and Excellence', *Cultural Trends*, 1999, p. 89.

²⁴ National Audit Office, *Department of National Heritage, National Museums and Galleries: Quality of Services to the Public*, London 1993. Quoted in Selwood, S., 'Access, Efficiency and Excellence', *Cultural Trends*, 1999, p. 95.

²⁵ Arts Council of Great Britain, *Better Business in the Arts*, London 1988. Quoted in Selwood, S., 'Access, Efficiency and Excellence,' *Cultural Trends*, 1999, p. 89.

²⁶ See Myerscough, B., *The Economic Importance of the Arts*, London 1988.

performance indicators.²⁷ This has provided a model against which the government can measure the progress of sponsored museums and galleries towards achievement of its objectives.²⁸ There were over 300 indicators which the museums and galleries could select to assess their individual performance. In February 2001 the DCMS issued guidelines on 22 key performance indicators and formally requested information from all its sponsored museums and galleries.²⁹ These guidelines were developed using a pilot carried out by a sample of government-sponsored museums and galleries in England, Scotland and Wales. The information gathered will be used to compare their performance and to construct targets for their funding agreements with the government. Since the pilot in 1993/4 the Arts Council of England has collected data on: income; expenditure; attendance; attendance ratios (attendance in relation to earned income) and subsidy per attendance; performances, exhibition days, workshops; deficits; demographic composition of organisations and boards; national companies; art form differences, including touring; new work; education for the 14-19 age group; cultural diversity; arts and disability; and equal opportunities.³⁰ The SAC does not collect data for so complete a picture, instead the SAC has published sources of income, and attendance at revenue funded organisations in its annual report. The SMC, however, has produced two situation reports which included surveys of education practice. These surveys do not compare the

²⁷ DCMS, *Efficiency and Effectiveness of Government-Sponsored Museums and Galleries*, London 1999. Quoted in Selwood, 'Access, Efficiency and Excellence,' *Cultural Trends*, 1999, p. 98.

²⁸ Selwood, S., 'Access, Efficiency and Excellence,' 1999, p. 98.

²⁹ Selwood, S., *Ibid.*, p. 89.

³⁰ Selwood, S., *Ibid.*, pp. 101-2.

achievements of individual museums against each other, or attempt to assess the quality of educational work provided.³¹

The introduction of Best Value in April 2000, was part of the Labour Government's strategy for the modernisation of local government. This modernisation stressed the importance of efficient and effective management, and focused upon the performance of local authority services. Local authority museums and galleries will be subject to Best Value despite the fact that cultural services did not feature prominently in the development of Best Value.³² The efficiency of local government will be tested against the extent to which they meet the needs of local people. Traditionally, service satisfaction surveys have always reflected well on the arts.³³ There is, however, a degree of opposition to Best Value and its application to cultural provision. One viewpoint is that the public are neither in the position to judge what services should be provided, nor to estimate the level of success that these services have achieved. To gain the Best Value requires a great deal of information and the comparison of information. Though this may mean the production of more research it may also lead to policy being driven by statistics, and create a vast amount of paper work which may in turn reduce efficiency. Best Value will only affect those museums and galleries which receive local authority support.³⁴

The present government has sought to establish a system of

³¹ Fraser, J., and Wardlaw, V., *Museum Education in Scotland: A Survey of Current Practice*, Scottish Museums Council 1998, p. 15.

³² Selwood, S., *Op. Cite.*, 1999, p. 111.

³³ Selwood, S., *Ibid.*, p. 111.

³⁴ Early reports into the effects of Best Value indicate that the emphasis on forward planning and business management are positive. See Scottish Museums Council *Museum Issues: How Good is your Museum: Joint SMC and CoSLA Conference Edinburgh, 25 February 1999 Conference Proceedings*, No. 9/1999.

'benchmarking', with the aid of Best Value to measure the performance of local authorities, using the same set of indicators. Museums and galleries have developed 'benchmarking clubs' independently, however, to share information and data.³⁵ The data collected by these clubs has been strictly for internal use, indeed Selwood reported that there is a degree of fear amongst museums employees about what might be discovered should this data be released and studied too closely.³⁶

The major issues which have informed performance assessment since the early 1990s have been, 'economy', 'excellence', 'access', 'efficiency', and to a lesser degree 'education'.³⁷ Social issues of combating exclusion and poverty, promoting regeneration, and improving the public's perception of the arts have only recently been formally added to the goals that the sector is supposed to achieve.³⁸ This highlights the fundamental problem with performance indicators and governmental assessment of museums and galleries; the government's criteria for success change.

The political climate within which research is commissioned can be seen therefore to affect directly the focus and tone of study. During the 1980s the Thatcherite ideology of 'value for money', an ethos markedly similar to Best Value, was instrumental in the distinct increase in visitor studies. Along with 'value for money' came the new government language of performance measurement, latterly to become performance indicators. This meant that museums focused on the quantitative factors such as 'visitor numbers', 'spend

³⁵ Ibid., p. 114.

³⁶ Ibid., pp. 127-9.

³⁷ Ibid., pp. 131-2.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 131.

per head' and 'cost per head', rather than the composition of visitors, the quality of their visits and the museum's benefits to the wider public. Research during this time was focused more on the economic position of museums, rather than the social impact of museums.³⁹

To what degree the political climate and government agencies statistics impacted upon the research carried out within the museum sector is unclear. What is apparent is that throughout the 1980s undue emphasis was placed upon the economic impact of museums, and less interest was shown in researching the social importance of museums and their services. The recent shift in both governmental research and museums sector research to a focus on the quality of experience and the learning process is unclear in origin but distinctive in appearance. Despite this shift in research the emphasis on Best Value and the drive to establish performance indicators suggests that economic factors and statistical data are still very much to the fore in government thinking. The formulation of the research, the methods chosen to actually gather the data are informed, however, by two fundamental factors. Firstly the contemporary understandings and assumptions about the audience in general, and secondly the contemporary knowledge about how to conduct audience studies.

In the 1960s there was a move to studying the internal process of communication between the visitor and the exhibition, which resulted in a move away from 'what the exhibits do to visitors' and towards 'what the visitors make of the exhibits.' Their concern was not with studying what was being taught but

³⁹ Sandell, R., 'Museums as Agents of Social Inclusion,' in *Museum Management and Curatorship*, Vol. 17, No. 4, pp. 401-418, 1998, p. 402.

with what and how learning was occurring. They argued against the 'transmissionist' view of education:

namely that the point of teaching is to transmit knowledge to pupils that they do not already know, that this knowledge pre-exists the lesson, that it is composed of propositions and that its transmission is under the control of the teacher.⁴⁰

Instead, knowledge was taken to be produced in the lesson and not transmitted during it. Teaching was not taken to be neutral and teachers were not described as independent arbiters of knowledge and culture. It is now argued by some museologists that meanings are 'created' by the museum through the collection and display of selected art objects and the provision of certain information and this message is transformed by the viewer according to their own understandings and beliefs.

Lawrence has argued that virtually all museum evaluation until the 1990s has remained fundamentally behaviourist, and ignores the processes by which meaning is produced and received/understood in museums.⁴¹ Behaviourism is rooted in a mechanical model of human action, where behaviour is taken to be the result of external stimuli. This understanding of the audience led to the measurement of such factors as the amount of time that visitors spent in front of particular exhibits and what degree of information the visitor retained from such exposure.

⁴⁰ Hammersley, M., 'Heap and Delamont on transmission and British ethnography of schooling,' *Curriculum Inquiry*, 17 (2): p. 235-7. Quoted in Lawrence, G., 'Rats, Street Gangs and Culture: Evaluation in Museums' in Kavananagh, G., (ed.) *Museum Languages: Objects and Texts*, Leicester 1991, p. 17.

⁴¹ Lawrence, G., 'Rats, Street Gangs and Culture', 1991, p 28.

Mathers contends that despite a vocabulary changing to one focused on community awareness and accountability, museums in general do not seem to have actually changed the way they operate in the 1990s. He found that few museums' programmes had been evaluated in any way. Few museums had established criteria for evaluating their programmes, and most museums that had attempted evaluation had used quantitative methods only. He concluded that any practical attempts to implement changes are independent and isolated cases. "Community participation in the development of museum programmes, exhibits and policy remains the exception rather than the rule."⁴²

Hooper-Greenhill has made the point that the fundamental questions of how to run our museums and galleries remain solidly in the hands of the administrators. Decisions which shape the displays, and indeed the entire institution, such as acquisition, are generally made in relation to the existing collection, thus the resulting displays are often out of joint with current values. It remains rare that the public's perceptions and interests are consulted in relation to acquisition and display, instead decisions are made "in accordance with the structures of relevance that exist within the internal concerns of the museum."⁴³

Surveys, by their very nature measure the easily measurable, and the complex factors which inform the action of visiting remain largely unstudied. That is to say that the volume and frequency of attendance may be measured at the national level, and perceptions and attitudes have been surveyed, but the answers to these questions will not reveal what makes the visitor. Research into

⁴² Mathers, K., *Museums, Galleries and New Audiences*, 1996, p. 11.

⁴³ Hooper-Greenhill, E., 'Counting visitors or visitors who count?' in *The Museum Time-Machine*, London 1988, p. 228.

the factors which deter visiting have made some headway, but in Scotland this kind of research has been very limited in scope. Instead, the problem is addressed from the opposite end, what do visitors have in common, how old are they, what gender, class and race are they, what sort of an education do they have and where do they live. In effect the important factors have been identified, but not studied on the kind of scale necessary to prove conclusively theories of visitor motivation. There is, however, no consensus on the exact nature of the experience, indeed there is a great breadth of theories pertaining to the nature of the audience. There is, however, no clear method of measuring exactly what forces induce visiting as opposed to describing the common factors between individual visitors. It is one proposition to measure what visitors have in common, it is another entirely to describe why these factors prompt a person to visit.

The Data 1991 - 2001

There are two main sources for comparable data for the period 1991 to 2001. The first and most reliable source in terms of statistically robust data comes from governmental or quasi-governmental quarters, for example the National Census. There are several governmental departments which produce solid comparable data, such as the Department of Culture Media and Sport and the Department for Education and Employment. The data is very broad in terms of focus, dealing with such issues as attendance at arts events and attitudes towards the arts. The second and only source of regular and highly focused data on the arts in particular comes from the national arts and museums councils.

These councils produce regular (continuous) and detailed surveys of the general populace and their attitudes, attendance and participation. They also commission research into specific issues and occasionally research events (ad hoc research). *Re:source* and its predecessor, the Museums and Galleries Commission have also produced some insightful data, though it is not easily comparable with the arts or museums councils' work, due to differences in method.

There has been a great deal of work by individuals, researching particular issues. These unique research projects have produced non-comparable data, as these studies were predominantly conducted using in-depth interviews, and so it would be almost impossible to compare the results with any other data in a meaningful way. They can, however, be used to illustrate the factors highlighted in other studies. The most recent and complex qualitative research into the experience of audiences and the arts was carried out by Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson, in 1990.⁴⁴ It is highly informative to compare the methodology of Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson with an earlier study of a similar nature by Bourdieu and Darbel, in the 1960s.⁴⁵ Whereas Bourdieu and Darbel relied upon sample survey research and made use of highly complex coding and analysis, Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson used only in-depth interviews. This shift in research style mirrors the change in sociological methodology which has rejected the sample survey as a method of gaining valid responses from individuals.

There have been many studies into the nature of the 'audience' as a discrete entity, whether of the arts or other communication medium. And finally,

⁴⁴ Csikszentmihalyi, M., and Robinson, R.E., *The Art of Seeing: An Interpretation of the Aesthetic Encounter*, Malibu CA 1990.

⁴⁵ Bourdieu, P., and Darbel, A., *The Love of Art: European Art Museums and their Public*, trans. by Beattie, C., and Merriman, N., Cambridge 1991. First published in French in 1969.

there is the work of educationalists and museologists, who have sought to explain the general nature of learning and the didactic function of the museum.

There are, of course, many other groups which produce data on the arts, such as the Group for Education in Museums, Cultural Trends Journal and the Visitor Studies Group. The remainder of this section will introduce the many disparate bodies and organisations that produce the data, research, guidelines and case studies for the arts. Each of these bodies has a particular perception of the arts, and their role in society, and so each piece of research produced by these bodies must be seen in the light of the particular interests of that body. The structure and form of the perceptions and assumptions that inform the visitor study are therefore determined by the specific nature of the group or individual performing the research and the specific criteria/agenda of the research body.

The previous section has described the theoretical flaws in both the techniques used for gathering statistical data and in the construction of the survey. This section will present the problems of data handling from government and central statistics as well as the flaws within the surveys commissioned by the arts councils and the difficulties of making comparisons between survey research.

Statistical data can be used to say whatever is desired; indeed the same statistic can be used to prove not only a multitude of different points but on occasion exact contradictions. This fluidity is of central importance in this chapter. The context for the collection of the data must be known prior to making use of statistics, as in themselves statistics are open to many interpretations. The rest of this chapter will draw in the context which lies behind the production of statistical data in the 1990s.

The statistical data produced by central governmental sources was relatively easy to digest and criticise. The data comes from sources that have designed their gathering techniques to be compatible with other sources and have retained a degree of continuity in their collection methods. Government statistics include some vital though limited information about the nature of the museum public.⁴⁶ The *General Household Surveys* include some figures on museum visiting in analysis of how people spend their leisure time.⁴⁷ More recently, Research Surveys Great Britain has produced the Target Group Index.

One of the earliest examples of in-depth market research into museums was carried out by the English Tourist Board in 1982.⁴⁸ This report identified the core generic characteristics of the museum visitor, characteristics which appear to be common across Europe and America. These factors have also remained constant over time. This report identified the standard demographic characteristics in museum visitors but also showed that this varied between museum types. Dividing museums by governing body, a more socially diverse audience was identified in the local authority museums than in national museums, although the visitors were still more privileged in all aspects in relation to the population in general. Art galleries seemed to attract the most highly privileged people, while infrequent museum visitors were more likely to visit general or site museums. There is some evidence that more women than men visited art galleries whereas in science museums the converse was true.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Hooper-Greenhill, 'Counting Visitors or Visitors Who Count?' 1988, p. 217.

⁴⁷ *General Household Survey*, produced annually by Office of Population Census and Surveys, Social Survey Division, London: HMSO.

⁴⁸ English Tourist Board, *Visitors to Museums Survey*, London 1982, Quoted by Hooper-Greenhill, p. 217.

⁴⁹ Hooper-Greenhill, E., 'Counting Visitors or Visitor Who Count?', 1988, p. 218.

Since the 1980s the visitor profile analysis has become increasingly influenced by market research methodology with the aim of identifying core-visitor groups and non-visitor groups. According to market research practice the visitor survey can be cross-referenced with other aspects of cultural participation as outlined by Zuzanek. Firstly, the extent or rate of participation is taken into account. The aim is to understand how representative the visitors are in comparison to a certain community. Secondly, the intensity of participation is defined. Thirdly, the content of the activity is measured. Fourthly, the context or circumstance of the activity is defined. Finally, the 'attitudinal dimension of participation,' meaning such things as motivations and perceptions, are measured.⁵⁰

This level of complexity has not generally been achieved in arts research on a national scale. Though, in 1992 the Arts Council of Great Britain commissioned an analysis of the correlation between arts attendance and the consumption of other cultural products or services.⁵¹ The academic journal *Cultural Trends* publishes research intended to build up an understanding of the variables in leisure-time and the patterns and general life-style tendencies of the public in relation to demographic figures.

Kawashima has argued that the most fundamental information for visitor profiles remains generally inaccurate and unreliable, at both the national and local level. With individual museums the problem stems from the unreliable methods used to count visitors, and the persistent presentation of these estimates as 'real

⁵⁰ Zuzanek, J., 'Studies of arts and cultural participation: problems and controversies' *Managerial Economics for the Arts*, (eds.) Owen, V.L., and Hendon, W.S., Association for Cultural Economics 1985.

⁵¹ Verwey, P., *Arts Attendance Related to other Consumption/Participation* Arts Council of Great Britain 1992.

counts.⁵² In many museums, warders count visitors with 'clickers', or estimates of visitor levels are gained by multiplying the visitors in one gallery by the number of galleries in the museum.⁵³ Within the Scottish *Visitor Attractions Monitor* the volume of museums whose visitor numbers are 'estimated' currently rests at around 90% (see Table 13, page 89).

At the national level the problems arise from the propagation of sound bites and analogies, with little factual basis. *Re:source* proclaimed in its 2001 inaugural newsletter, "Over 2,500 museums are visited by over 80 million people each year - more people visit museums than attend sporting events and rock concerts."⁵⁴ There are two major problems with this claim, the first being that the source of the statistical information is not disclosed and so unverifiable, and the second is that it blurs the conceptual distinction between number of visits and visitors. It is highly unlikely that in a nation of slightly over 65 million people there could have been 80 million visitors. Thus Kawashima concludes: "authoritative nation-wide visitor figures are not as easily available as one might expect."⁵⁵

The second source of data is more amorphous, being made up of the research work of individuals and market research groups. These bodies perform survey research, commissioned by the arts councils as described above. The two most important factors in dealing with survey research are the completeness of data and the integrity of the analysis. All research should include a complete set

⁵² Kawashima, 'Knowing the Public. A Review of Museum Marketing Literature and Research,' *Museum Management and Curatorship*, Vol. 17, No. 1, 1998, pp. 21-39, p. 23.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 23-4.

⁵⁴ *Re:source news*, Vol. 1, Issue 1, March 2001, p. 2.

⁵⁵ Kawashima, N., 'Knowing the Public. A Review of Museum Marketing Literature and Research,' *Museum Management and Curatorship*, vol. 17, No. 1, 1998, p. 23.

of the data and any supplementary materials used (such as the questionnaire itself and any 'flash cards' used); this allows the reader to check the conclusions that have been drawn from the data, and the tools used. Selective reporting can be misleading in research reports, and so an appendix of all the data is a necessity. During my research this has not always proved the case. For instance the 1998 SAC survey asked what people defined the arts as, yet the report did not include the flash card which respondents were shown. Hence it was not possible to know which answers were spontaneously offered and which were prompted, therefore injecting bias which affects the validity and reliability of the survey.

The integrity of the analysis depends upon the completeness of the data, and upon very careful interpretation. The act of turning numbers into words with accurate and honest interpretation is prone to error and exaggeration. The most common error is the eagerness of researchers to provide the definitive answers or information, when in relation to culture and the arts there frequently are no definitive answers.

The 1990s have seen a dramatic shift in both the funding and the administration of the arts in the United Kingdom; this is particularly true of Scotland, which has seen the single most important shift of power for over two hundred years in the form of devolution. These changes have altered the relationship between government and the arts. There can be seen in the 1990s the fruition of a long running systematic change in the museum world in terms of both the museum-audience relationship and the methods and areas studied, running concurrently with the much swifter political changes. The extent to which both of these sets of changes have actually impacted on research will be explored below.

Between 1990 and 1993 the Arts Council of Great Britain undertook a large-scale policy review, the aim of which was the formulation of a National Arts and Media Strategy. The outcome was the publication of *A Creative Future: National Arts and Media Strategy*, while in Scotland, the Scottish Arts Council produced *The Charter for the Arts in Scotland*.⁵⁶ The Charter sought to identify the main challenges and issues facing the arts in 1993. It was the result of the most extensive consultation and debate ever undertaken on the arts in Scotland to date.

Following the general election in 1992, the formation of a new Department of National Heritage (DNH) gave the arts their first Cabinet minister. This was followed in 1994 by the formation of the Arts Council of England (ACE) and the transfer of funding responsibilities for the arts in Scotland and Wales to the Welsh Office and Scottish Office, which became directly responsible for funding the renamed Arts Council Wales and the Scottish Arts Council. *The Charter for the Arts in Scotland* was a statement of principles and not a strategy. It provided a policy framework within which the Scottish Arts, Museums, and Film Councils, and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (CoSLA) along with other agencies and arts organisations developed strategies. The Charter marked a new era in both the broad scope of its aims and the 'arts' encompassed and the bodies it involved.

The most significant change to the funding structure of the arts in the last decade, however, came in 1994 with the introduction of the National Lottery.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ *The Charter for the Arts In Scotland*, Scottish Arts Council, Scottish Museums Council, Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, and the Scottish Film Council, 1993.

⁵⁷ *Artstat: Digest of Arts Statistics and Trends in the UK 1986/87 - 1997/98*, Arts Council of England 2000, p. 1.

This has meant a reorganisation of arts funding and the introduction of new funding programmes which has made it difficult to extract consistent information over the period.

Funding responsibilities, the categories of support and the interpretation and definitions of arts activities have altered at national and regional levels. In many areas there is no standard system for accounting, categorising and reporting arts funding and attendance data. Even between years, funding bodies have changed their reporting methods and formats, making the comparison of like with like problematic.⁵⁸

This reorganisation of the funding system has meant that any analysis of statistics which straddle this period must take into account the shifts in accounting, categorisation and reporting. At the same time, however, greater interest and higher expectations of accountability for the allocation of public resources has meant that more information and research is available than before. Since 1994 the SAC has spent £85 million from the National Lottery on capital funding for building projects. The SAC has sought to ensure a fair spread of building work throughout Scotland. "The time for concentrating solely on Capital projects is past, the focus is now being shifted towards making the arts available to a much wider public."⁵⁹ The SAC Lottery Fund is being used to work with social inclusion partnerships and local authorities, specifically in two areas, artists and children. Thus the SAC can be seen to have changed its priorities from ensuring a wider provision of services and facilities to consolidating the work being done by arts organisations across the board. This

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 2.

⁵⁹ Wilson, P., exhibition text in *Dreams and Schemes: Celebrating Five Years of Arts Lottery Funding*, City Arts Centre 2001.

may mean an increase in the volume of research into audience development in the future.

There has been a great deal of evaluation of the cultural and financial success of these capital projects, the belief being that “research into the cultural, social and economic impact of the projects to date can inform how best to channel relatively small sums of money to best effect and to ensure that in the future the maximum benefits are gained by as many people as possible from investment in the arts.”⁶⁰ To this end the Strategy for the distribution of Arts Lottery Funding to capital projects in Scotland was drawn up in April 1999. All applicants are now assessed in terms of their contribution to the national priorities, and these include changing the cultural ambitions of the people in Scotland and the geographic distribution of the arts in Scotland.⁶¹

Between 1994 and 1998 the Scottish Arts Council commissioned several research reports with the specific aim of producing a base line of statistical information in order that the effects of targeted funding could be assessed.⁶² This came at a time when the arts and museums councils along with other bodies were pressurising the government to produce a National Cultural Strategy and to place culture higher up the priorities of the Scottish Executive. In 1999, the SAC identified children as a priority for development, and commissioned *Children's Attendance, Participation and Attitudes Towards the Arts Scotland*. This study remains the only sub-group focused research that the SAC has commissioned in

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² *Children's Attendance, Participation and Attitudes Towards the Arts Scotland: Final Report* 1999, Scottish Arts Council 1999, p. 8.

the last ten years. The research examines secondary school pupils' attendance and participation in the arts in and out of school.

The most noticeable factor in the majority of recent research throughout Great Britain into young people's involvement in the arts has been the focus on the 'participatory' activities. This has meant a series of programmes and subsequent reports that deal with the methods and effects of getting young people active in the arts. Thus little has been done to examine the 'consumption' habits and audience roles of young people. The focus has been upon art production rather than art criticism or art history. Policy reports published since the Education Reform Act of 1988 have argued the case for arts predominantly on the grounds of the gains that can be achieved through participation.⁶³ What both the research and the policy reports fail to consider is the:

...contribution that schools and cultural organisations can give to developing discriminating audiences at cultural venues, as a vehicle for sustaining creative and cultural education beyond the age of compulsory schooling.⁶⁴

Although some data are available on the number of children who have experienced the arts, this is outweighed by the volume of work aimed at increasing the participation of young people in the arts. The ability to react discerningly to work, the development of a critical vocabulary which can be applied in and out of school as well as to their own work and that of their peers has been ignored. There are notable exceptions to this criticism, a recent example can be found in the 'Go Wild In Glasgow' scheme, where eleven youngsters

⁶³ Harland, J., and Kinder, K., (eds.) *Crossing the Line: Extending Young People's Access to Cultural Venues*, London 1999, p. 19. See also: DfEE, DCMS, NACCCE, *All our Futures: Creativity, Culture and Education*, London 1999.

⁶⁴ Harland, J., and Kinder, K., *Crossing the Line*, 1999, p. 20.

aged 10 - 14 were invited to work alongside PlayTrain, a Birmingham based consultancy firm, in evaluating a series of summer projects in Glasgow.⁶⁵

The purpose of this chapter has been to express the structure of the visitor study as distinct from the exact findings, to describe the visitor study's make-up and to break down its construction. The present construction of the visitor study is as important in understanding its conclusions as an examination of the results that form the study.

The process of evaluation is a practical one; its construction is, however, saturated in theory. This becomes apparent when comparing the behaviourist survey model with the modern execution of research. The communication and learning theory dominant in the early twentieth century posited the visitor as a passive recipient of knowledge, which was believed to be objective. The communication process was seen as a linear transference of data, from the object to the viewer. In this transaction the museum was a facilitator. The modern viewpoint however is different:

Today, constructivist learning theory plays together with post-structuralist epistemologies and post-colonial cultural politics to position the viewer/learner as both active and politicised in the construction of their own relevant viewpoints.⁶⁶

Hooper-Greenhill can be seen to represent a viewpoint in stark contrast to the transmissionists, who believed that exhibition analysis was devoid of theory and that the audience and exhibition could be studied as independent entities. The positivist understanding of knowledge has been replaced by constructivism and the viewer/learner has supplanted the visitor. The viewer/learner is therefore

⁶⁵ *Information Bulletin: The Scottish Arts Council Bi-Monthly Newsletter February - March*, 2001, p. 7.

⁶⁶ Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Interpretation of Visual Culture*, London 2000, p. xi.

politicised and active in the construction of the stimuli, presented by the museum, into viewpoints that correspond to or complement viewpoints already held. This does, however, suggest that an exhibition cannot challenge the viewpoints of a viewer/learner and that information can only be assimilated if it relates to knowledge already held.

Doering, who directs the Office of Institutional Studies at the Smithsonian, argued that rather than communicating new information, the primary impact of visiting a museum is to confirm, reinforce, and extend the visitors' existing beliefs.⁶⁷ A parallel conclusion was drawn by Ohta, of Arizona State University West, who studied visitor responses to a controversial exhibition about the American flag.⁶⁸ He found that although visitors had moments of deep personal meaning in relation to the exhibition, none of the those meanings resembled each other. The meanings which each visitor extracted in each case were forged from the visitor's own personal identity. What they primarily experienced was neither about the exhibition nor the objects within the exhibition, but about the visitors themselves. Ohta concluded that visitors experienced what they were capable of experiencing.⁶⁹ These issues have been side-stepped by the majority of visitor studies, which continued to rely heavily on empirical tools such as observation and the survey interview to evaluate exhibitions.

⁶⁷ Doering, Z., (1996) Director of the Office of Institutional Studies at the Smithsonian, quoted in Weil, S.E., 'The Museum and the Public', *Museum Management and Curatorship*, Vol. 16, No. 3, pp. 257-271, 1997, p. 265.

⁶⁸ Ohta, R.J., of Arizona State University West studied responses to *Old Glory: The American Flag in Contemporary Art*. Extracts from this study were reported in Weil, S.E., 'The Museum and the Public', *Museum Management and Curatorship*, Vol. 16, No. 3, pp. 257-271, 1997, p. 265.

⁶⁹ Weil, S.E., 'The Museum and the Public,' *Museum Management and Curatorship*, 1997, p. 265.

The methods chosen to gather data, however, have changed only in complexity and analysis. The collection tools of survey and interview remain. Surveys are fundamentally flawed in that they are constructed situations which introduce varying degrees of bias, depending on the types of question and the methods used to ask them. Closed-questions lead the respondent to a greater degree than open-ended questions, but both interpret the respondent's words rather than report them. In-depth interviews and focus groups have begun to offer data with a greater mandate, though the expense incurred and limited number of respondents have prevented these methods from being widely used.

Chapter Two

The Nature of the Audience

This chapter will explore the museum audience as a discrete entity, in terms of the general disposition of the visitor towards the arts and museums. The mechanics of visiting, the motivational forces and the barriers to attendance will be the subject of chapter three. This analysis will not treat all research into the museum audience as research into the same entity. It is my contention that 'the audience' is often used in research reports as an umbrella term for a multitude of distinct audiences, and often with no real understanding of the distinctions between the constituent audiences. I shall therefore, attempt to separate these distinct audiences, and to elucidate upon the complex nature of these audiences.

The first section of this chapter will begin with an exploration of the general museum audiences, with particular reference to the museums and galleries of art in Scotland. This will position the Scottish arts audience within a broad context of the museum audience and in relation to the general British audience. The second section will examine the attitudes and attendance of the Scottish public towards the arts. This will allow the cultural responses of Scotland to be placed into a broader context. I shall then examine the provision of arts venues throughout Scotland at a venue-by-venue level, with an additional analysis of a sample group consisting of 46 venues. This sample group will provide examples against which to evaluate the accuracy of the general trends. The third section of this chapter will conclude with a detailed analysis of the position of galleries and museums of art within the cultural market-place. This

chapter will utilise quantitative data only, though this thesis will not treat the statistical figures as an index for measuring the experience of the 'visit'. I shall show that it is only through the use of qualitative data that truly insightful details of the audience and the action of visiting can be gained. The third chapter, therefore, will explore the research that interprets the visit and the visitor's behaviour.

The Scottish Arts Council (SAC) commissioned research into the nature of the audience and the provision of venues for particular urban centres during the 1990s.¹ The SAC has also produced data considering the attitudes of Scotland as a whole towards the arts, and of the visiting habits and perceptions at a national and sub-national level. They have not produced data on a venue-by-venue basis, or commissioned research into the character of particular audience types, or art forms. Thus there has been no study of ethnic minorities and the arts or the provision of cultural service within areas of poverty. The Scottish Executive has recently produced *The Role of the Arts in Regeneration*, which investigated the role of arts-based projects in local and city-wide partnerships.² It also looked at the long-term and sustainable impacts of arts-based projects on the regeneration of deprived areas and the promotion of social inclusion. This report does not, however, include statistical support for its conclusions and only provides detailed case studies. Although insightful, this information is not comparable with other projects nor with statistical data from surveys.

¹ Earlier studies are available from the Scottish Museums Council, though these contain only very general data on museums and galleries as a defined group.

² *The Role of the Arts in Regeneration*, Scottish Executive Central Research Unit, Edinburgh 2000.

The audience as studied by the SAC has been taken as a homogenous group, with no research dedicated to specific sub-groups. The only analysis of a sub-group of the general population was carried out in 1999. This involved an examination of children in relation to the arts in Scotland, an area which has been identified as a priority but on which the SAC had very little information.³ The SAC also intended to investigate the regional differences and the distinct nature of individual city cultures. Whereas the surveys mentioned above utilised sample groups, this research into the urban centres made use of census data. The advantage that the sample-based surveys have over the census-based data is that each survey was design for a specific purpose with specific questions in mind. The census is a less flexible though far more reliable data source. Whereas the survey work may be based upon the data of, on average, between one thousand and two thousand respondents, the census carries the details of the entire nation. Besides the inflexible nature of the census, the only flaws in the data are those inherent in the census itself, the most notable being that the 1991 census of Scotland did not include questions on social class; instead, a sample was used from which results were generalised. The census data is by its very nature difficult to compile and therefore a lengthy process, making the entire procedure expensive and slow. The data from a census is out of date by the time it is published, usually three years after the census. The wording of questions has been altered over the years, as well as new questions being introduced, both of which make comparisons between different censuses less than straightforward.

³ *Children's Attendance, Participation and Attitudes Towards the Arts Scotland: Final Report, System Three Scotland* commissioned by the Scottish Arts Council 1999.

Quantitative analysis requires very careful distinctions between the quantities that are being examined. It requires distinctions to be made between separate venues and pieces of research and it also requires careful handling of key terms. It is particularly important to make a distinction between statistics of 'attendance' and the complex experience of 'visiting'. The visitors must also be distinguished from the visit, as a single visitor may visit many venues on several occasions. The audience as a term has a variety of applications and is utilised by a wide range of research groups. Just as these organisations change what, and whom they mean by the term 'audience', the audience itself has shifted its perceptions and attitudes towards the arts and its definitions of the arts.

Section One: Provision

This section will examine the provision of services by museums and galleries within Scotland. The SMC has produced a series of reports which examine the educational and outreach services of museums. The SAC has not matched this research with studies into the services provided by its members. There appears to be a greater level of continuity in terms of services provided and priorities identified across the museums sector which may account for the disparity in research.

The Anderson report, however, can shed light on the education work being done within UK museums.⁴ This report was followed up in Scotland by the SMC, which has conducted research of its own into the levels of provision and services offered in Scotland. Anderson reported that in March of 1996 there

⁴ Anderson, D., *A Common Wealth: Museums in the Learning Age*, A Report to the Department of Culture, Media and Sport 1999, p. 37.

were 755 specialised education posts in 375 museum services in the UK. This included 535 full-time and 220 part-time specialist education posts.⁵ This level of provision was approximately double the number of education posts that were estimated in the early 1980s.⁶ In many crucial respects the education function of museums remains uncharted territory, despite the Anderson report. No national statistical data on education policy and provision exists from earlier decades, and there are no national standards against which provision can now be measured.⁷

The Anderson report was compiled with the aid of two surveys into education work in museums. The most startling result of the first survey was that only one-third (210 institutions) of UK museums that responded made some limited provision for education (defined as offering three or more activities from a list, see Table 1), and just over half offered any services whatsoever.⁸ Museums appeared to offer different levels of service to different audiences. The most common forms of provision came in the form of information for schools, educational services for children aged 5 to 12 years, and lectures and publications for adults. In a lower order of priority came services for pre-school children, students in further education and higher education and academic specialists. The lowest priority which in turn received little separate provision were minority communities, groups with disabilities or special education needs and unemployed people.⁹ Only 23% of museums had an education policy, just 15% of museums had a disability policy, and a mere 7% had a multicultural

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

policy.¹⁰ Table 1 below, was compiled from the responses to the first Anderson survey; it represents both the current levels of service provided and the relative importance of these services.

Table 1: Current Educational Provision, and the Importance of Different Educational Activities in the Future, By Percentage.

Educational Activity	No Response	Current Provision		Future Provision		
		Provided	Not Provided	Essential	Desirable	Not Important
Reception and lunch facilities for schools/or other educational groups	20	30	50	19	42	19
Direct teaching services for schools	21	28	51	18	41	20
In-service training programmes for teachers	22	27	51	23	38	17
Provision of printed/audio-visual information and guidance for schools	17	45	38	31	46	6
Provision of activities and/or materials for pre-school children	22	18	60	11	44	23
Service for children (5-12)	17	50	33	41	36	6
Services for teenagers (13-18)	18	39	43	33	44	5
Events for families	20	32	48	21	42	16
Trails and other resources for families	21	26	53	13	46	20
Direct teaching services or courses for FE and HE students	26	20	55	10	41	24
Publications and other resources for FE and HE students	26	18	57	10	46	19
Work experience opportunities for school pupils, college students or museum studies students	19	45	36	13	54	14
Lectures and courses for adults	19	46	35	22	49	10
Publications and other resources for adults	20	43	37	24	49	7
Events/teaching services for special	22	26	52	18	48	12

¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 37-9.

needs groups						
Publications and resources for special needs groups	26	9	65	9	49	16
Events/teaching services for minority communities	27	7	66	9	35	29
Publications and resources for minority communities	29	5	65	6	33	32
Organised research facilities for students, teachers/tutors and academics	21	31	48	24	43	13
Academic conferences, study days and other events	24	22	54	11	40	25
Academic publications and other resources	24	22	54	12	43	22
Loan Services	23	29	49	14	39	25
Exhibition/events with structured education input at planning stage	21	33	46	33	37	9

Source: Anderson, 1999.

The Anderson report provided a unique insight into the work done by museums in their communities. It was the first large-scale review of museum education work in the UK. Anderson's survey included responses from approximately one fifth of the UK's museums, though the larger museums were disproportionately over-represented within this sample. The survey showed that most museums which provided on-site services also provided off-site services. The majority of these off-site services consisted of services to schools, though some also provided services to elderly groups. Very few museums had developed services for minority communities or other groups that are under-represented among museum visitors.¹¹

There were, naturally, significant differences in policy and provision between the types of museums that responded to the Anderson survey. Equally,

¹¹ Ibid., p. 41.

there were differences in provision by geographic area. Scotland appears to compare well with the UK average. The majority of Scottish regions have one museum educator for every 100,000 to 300,000 people, which appears to compare well with the rest of the United Kingdom. Lothian appears better catered for with one educator for every 50,000 to 100,000 people. Conversely Grampian appears slightly worse off in provision of museum educators, with one for every 300,000 to 400,000 people.¹² Scotland, however, is dominated by large rural areas with small populations, which may seem to be reasonably well provided for, when in reality distances and problematic travel may make access to provision difficult.¹³

The national museums were the most likely to view education as an essential aspect of their service, but were also likely to give it a low priority as a function.¹⁴ This may be explained by the fact that educational services were taken to be distinct from exhibitions in the survey. The importance of the collection and the needs of conservation also took precedence over providing educational services. Local authority museums had a larger percentage of education specialists on their staff than all other museum types, and were the most likely to see direct teaching services for schools, loan services and services for minority communities as essential. Local authority museums were also more likely to have special facilities for education than most other types of museum.

Independent museums made up the largest group represented in the sample and tended to the average in most areas of provision. They were,

¹² Ibid., p. 47.

¹³ Ibid., pp. 46-7.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 40.

however, more likely to prioritise adults and families than the other types of museum, and were less likely to evaluate their educational provision. University museums tended to cite 'low priority' rather than 'lack of funds' as the main reason for not providing formal educational activities. Armed services museums were the most likely to neglect educational responsibilities, they were least likely to provide and evaluate any educational services, and they also had the lowest expectations of qualifications for education staff.¹⁵

Education research and studies of good practice were not common. In terms of research, only one in ten had published a research project in a recognised academic publication or professional journal since 1990.¹⁶ Evaluation studies though more common, were still undertaken by fewer than half of museums with education services.¹⁷ The second survey in the Anderson report gained employment histories from the respondents to the first survey. This revealed that two-thirds (61%) of education specialists had five years or less experience as museum educators. Less than 31% of the education specialists had worked previously as staff with non-education functions in museums.¹⁸ This lack of long term experience must be seen in light of the fact that in more than 40% of museums which employed education specialists, these individuals did not earn a salary equal to that of curators with equivalent responsibilities, and in about 30% of these institutions, they did not have equivalent conditions of service.¹⁹

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

Scotland is unique in the UK, in that the local authorities have a statutory duty to ensure that there is adequate provision for cultural activities, including museums, for the inhabitants of their areas. Scotland has not, however, established partnerships with curriculum authorities and the education media comparable with those now emerging in Northern Ireland and Wales. There are links and points of contact on specific aspects of the curriculum between museums and schools in Scotland, and on a wider scale the Scottish Cultural Access Network (SCRAN) provides an example of further collaboration between the museum and education sector.²⁰

The SMC published two reports which included surveys of current practice in museum education. The first report was released in June 1993²¹, and the second in March of 1998. The findings of the 1993 report suggested a general similarity in the provision of services across all the SMC members.²² The 1998 report sought to build upon the situation analysis of the 1993 report.²³ The types of services provided included lessons, mostly within the museums but also off-site, demonstrations of arts and crafts and handling sessions with workshops and occasionally drama and role-play. Most museums also dealt with educational enquiries and provided resources (loan kits, resource packs, slides, tapes, videos etc.) Very few museums had full time education officers and those

²⁰ Ibid., p. 43.

²¹ This report looked specifically at museum provision for schools and did not include details of the national museums. The Local Government Scotland Act (1994) abolished Regional and District Councils and redrew the local authority map of Scotland. The situation review of 1993 therefore required updating, as the establishment of single tier councils placed museums and education within the same authority for the first time.

²² Donnelly, K., *Survey of Current Practice in Museums Education in Scotland: Museum Education Initiatives*, Scottish Museums Council 1993.

²³ Fraser, J., and Wardlaw, V., *Museum Education in Scotland: A Survey of Current Practice*, Scottish Museums Council, Edinburgh 1998.

that did provided additional services, such as instructing teachers in museum education and aiding museum studies students.

The similarity in services provided was not reflected in a unity of needs and priorities. The disparity in staffing and funding levels across Scotland's museums appear to be the main discriminators in relation to the priorities a particular museum placed upon educational services. The main priorities irrespective of the differing staffing and funding levels, can be summarised, as the development of contacts with the formal education sector, and the appointment of staff to meet educational demands. This included professional contact with teachers and schools, and provision for direct contact and liaison advice for teachers, pupils and Regional Authorities.²⁴ Museums which already offered a variety of educational services included more far-reaching priorities, such as evaluation of current services, the establishment of an education policy, the provision of in-service training for teachers, and a greater level of integration between education and exhibitions.²⁵ These priorities were skewed towards schools as this was the main focus of the report, and it did not include the priorities of the national museums. There are two main centres of museum education, firstly the National Museums of Scotland and the National Galleries of Scotland, both of which are centred around Edinburgh. Secondly, the larger local authority museum services such as those in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Dundee which provide the vast bulk of museum education outside of the nationals. The needs and priorities of these institutions were included in the 1998 report.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

The 1998 report sought to build upon the research already generated by the 1993 report and to discover what changes had occurred in the intervening years. These reports were not part of an on-going analysis, instead as stated at the outset, they were attempts to establish a definitive baseline picture of current practice in museum education in Scotland.²⁶ One of the principle aims of the 1998 study was to find out what the effects of the local authority restructuring were in relation to museum education in Scotland.

The 1998 SMC report showed that 75% of its members provided an educational service.²⁷ This figure differs significantly from the Anderson report which reported that only one-third of museums made some sort of provision for museum education. The high proportion of local authority museums within the SMC membership may account for some of the difference between these figures. The 1998 SMC report represented education provision in museums only; the word museum was taken to mean all members of the Scottish Museums Council, which in 1998 meant 199 members representing 331 museums.²⁸ The Anderson report, however, included a broader scope of museums and galleries, which may have included a large number of venues with a lower education priority.

The response rate to the SMC survey equalled 61.8% of its membership and can therefore be assumed to represent the views of its members, but not to give a definitive picture of educational services. The local authority museums represented the largest group, closely followed by the independent museums.

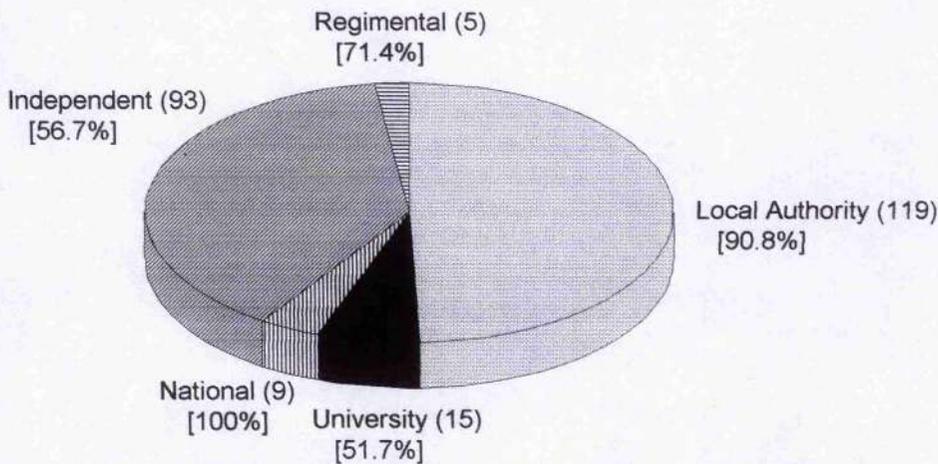
²⁶ Donnelly, K., *Survey of Current Practice*, 1993, p. 6.

²⁷ Fraser, J., and Warlaw, V., *Museum Education*, 1998, p. 6.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

This would tend to skew the results of the research in the direction of these two groups. Hence it would appear that family groups and children (the main audiences for local authority and independent museums educational services) were the main target audiences for the majority of museums. Table 2 (page 61) indicates that the main user for the different types of museums are somewhat broader; with community groups, leisure learners, and special interest audience types ranking highly.

Figure 1: Response Rate to 1998 SMC Survey



**Response Rate by Number of Museums (No. of responses)
[Percent responses of total possible in that category]**

Source: SMC 1998.

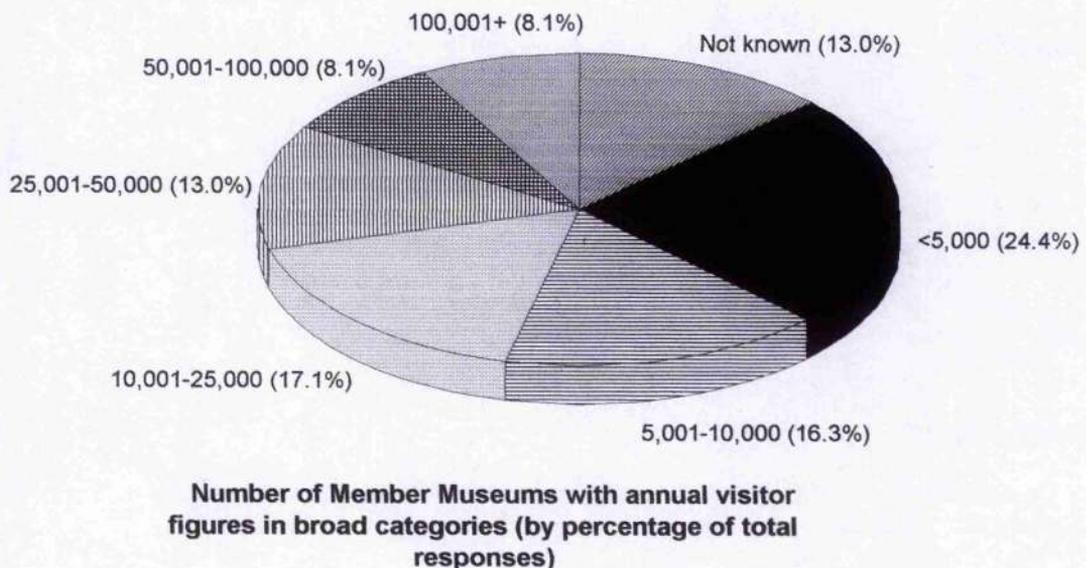
The museums which were members of the SMC employed a total of 48 specialist educators, which was an increase of 50% on the figures from the 1993 report. Less than 5% of museums, however, employed education staff as part of their core staff.²⁹ The loss of Local Education Authority funded staff had contributed directly to an increase in the number of freelance museum educators working in Scotland. Despite local government reorganisation which resulted in the loss of 11 full-time posts and 3 part-time posts, diversification of funding

²⁹ Ibid., p. 6.

has meant an increase of 10.5 full-time equivalent posts.³⁰ However, 75% of museums which provided educational services, did so with staff other than educational specialists.³¹ There were, therefore, only 29 (23%) institutions with full-time education staff.³²

The majority of museums in the SMC report had visitor figures of less than 25,000 per year. This does not mean that these museums had 25,000 or fewer visitors, as the visitor figure counts visits not individual visitors. Figure 2 below, represents the number of museums within broad visitor figure categories.

Figure 2: Number of Museums within Visitor Categories



Source: SMC 1998.

The greatest number of services by all types of museums was provided to schools. The most popular method of delivery was through in-house talks, activity sheets, handling sessions and loans. The latter are often made available in the form of off-site activities. Ten local authority museums and seven

³⁰ Ibid., p. 6.

³¹ Ibid., p. 9.

³² Ibid., p. 9.

independent museums provided a mobile exhibition and resource centre which was mainly targeted at schools, community groups and occasionally at informal learners. Conversely, the least number of services were provided specifically for the pre-5 age group.³³ Table 2 below, represents the highest frequency user groups of services within the SMC membership.

Table 2: Frequency of use of services within Member Museums by visitor type.

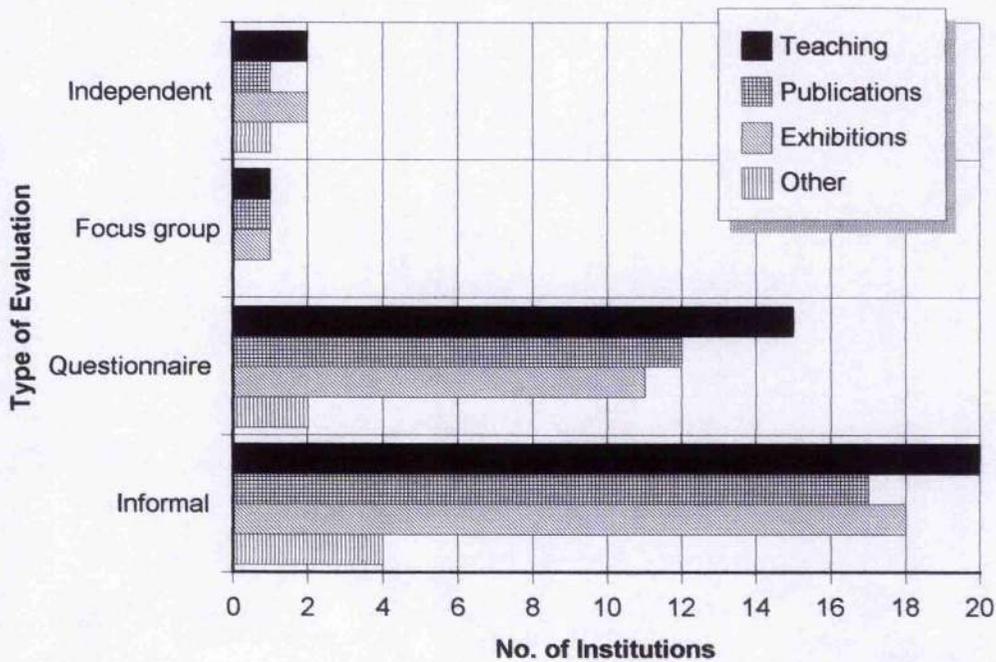
	Local Authority	Independent	University
1	Schools	Schools	HE/FE
2	Community Groups	Families	Specialist
3	Families	Leisure Learners	Schools
4	Leisure Learners	Specialist Interest	Community Groups
5	Specialist Interest	Community Groups	Leisure Learners
6	Special Needs	HE/FE	Families
7	Pre-school	Special Needs	Pre-school
8	HE/FE	Pre-school	Special Needs

Source: SMC 1998.

Only 25.2% of museums that responded to the survey evaluate their educational services.³⁴ The museums that did evaluate their service tended to use informal evaluation methods and questionnaires to assess the effectiveness of direct teaching, publications and exhibitions. In the cases where museums utilised independent evaluators, the direct teaching and exhibitions of the museum tended to be the activities studied. Qualitative techniques such as focus groups were seldom employed. Figure 3 below, presents the findings of the survey in relation to the level of evaluation performed by the member museums of the SMC.

³³ Ibid., p. 13.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 14.

Figure 3: Types of Evaluation

Source: SMC 1998.

Section Two: Art Galleries and Exhibitions: Attendance and Attitudes

This section focuses on the quantitative data that is available for Scotland. This data is divided into three tiers: the national, the regional, and the venue-by-venue. All three of these tiers are centred on two key areas of inquiry, the attendance and the attitudes of members of the public with regard to art galleries. The national level draws on reports by the Scottish Museums Council and the Scottish Arts Council from surveys in 1991, 1994, 1998 and 1999. These reports provide the main points of research for this chapter though they are not the exclusive sources. The national tier will embrace comparisons with the rest of Britain and other European countries.

The SAC provides data that describes the catchment area of the main urban centres of Scotland. This provides a more realistic impression of the character of each of the cities and towns within the national trends, and

contributes to an understanding of the levels of success each urban area has had in attracting visitors. The statistics quoted by the report give no insight, however, into the performance of the venues within the urban area. Indeed, the report does not even state what venues and services there are available within those areas. Instead, the report utilised the TGI index to indicate the percentage of residents within the cities and towns who claim to visit art galleries, which although statistically very reliable, does not actually give a visitor figure. This tier of research will be bolstered by a detailed analysis of the census data.

These broad trends would be unsubstantiated without detailed statistical analysis at a venue by venue level. Specific data on the performance of venues is only available in the *Visitor Attractions Monitor*. The *Monitor* will be used to establish the nature of the attendance at specific sites (from 1996 to 2001)³⁵ which will enable a comparison of the general data with the detailed data.

The National Tier.

There is evidence of a general increase in the number of visits to art galleries and exhibitions in Great Britain from 1986/87 to 1996/97 (see Table 3, overleaf). The data for this increase comes from the TGI index, which used face-to-face interviews. The nature of this survey technique would suggest that these figures are subject to bias, as in a face-to-face interview the respondent is aware of the 'correct answer.'³⁶ The TGI Index, which asked approximately 25,000 adults (aged over 15) in Scotland, England, and Wales what cultural

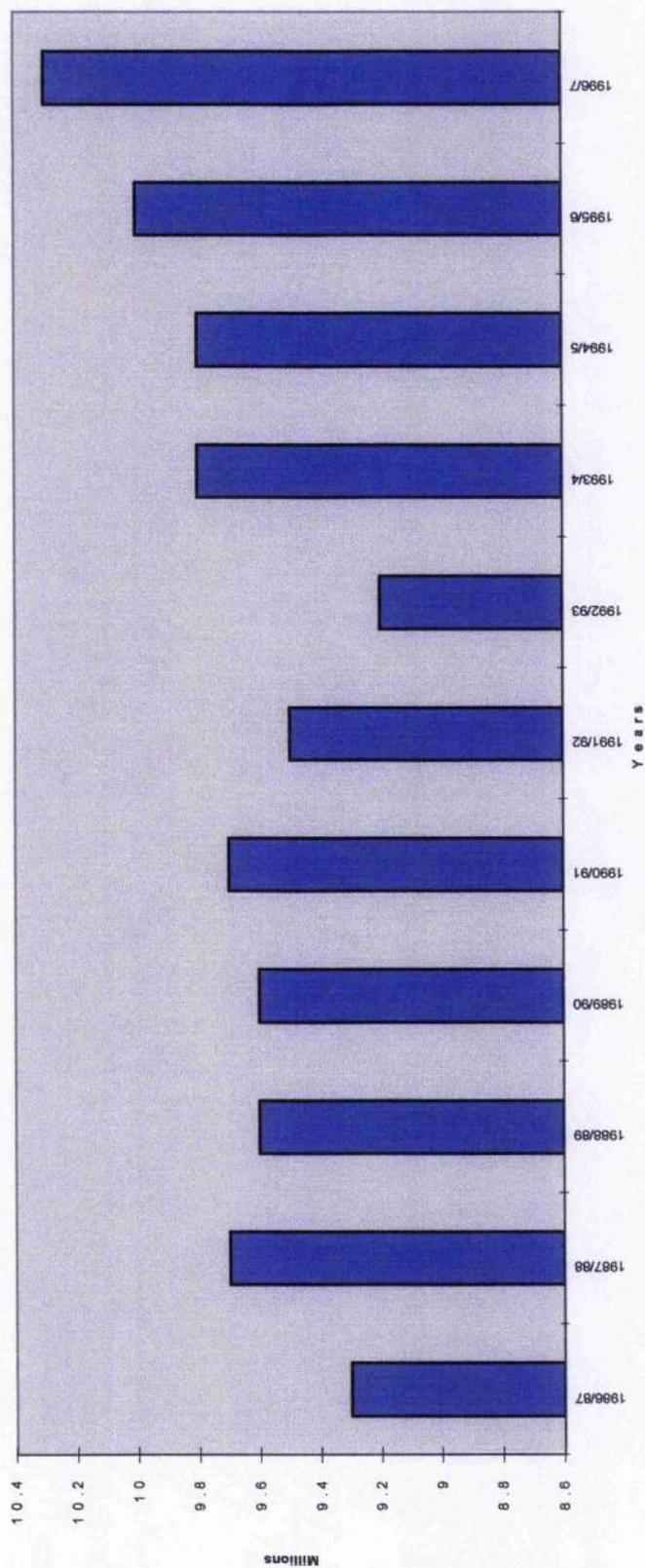
³⁵ Prior to 1998 the *Visitor Attractions Survey*, published by the Scottish Tourist Board provided similar venue by venue visitor figures. Data is available for the period 1986 to 1997, though only for three venues.

³⁶ See Chapter One's discussion on the drawbacks of such techniques.

Table 3: Adult Populations who 'currently attend' Art Galleries and Exhibitions in Scotland, England and Wales 1986/87 - 1996/7

Activity	1986/87	1987/88	1988/89	1989/90	1990/91	1991/92	1992/93	1993/4	1994/5	1995/6	1996/7
Art Galleries/Exhibitions (millions)	9.3	9.7	9.6	9.6	9.7	9.5	9.2	9.8	9.8	10	10.3
% of GB adults	21%	21.60%	21.30%	21.20%	21.40%	21.10%	20.40%	21.60%	21.40%	21.80%	22.40%
Index	100	104	103	102	104	102	99	105	104	107	110

Source: Arts Council of England, 2000.



activities they engaged in and how often, showed that there was a gradual increase in the number of people who considered themselves gallery visitors. In Table 3, the top row gives an estimate of the total number of individuals claiming to attend art galleries 'these days.'³⁷ This does not give an attendance figure, however, as those who attended galleries may visit more than one gallery per year. What this Table does provide is a good idea of the number of individuals who may visit galleries or who may consider themselves gallery attenders. There is an important distinction to be made between the number of people who actually attend and the number of people who consider themselves attenders. When these data ^{are} ~~is~~ compared with the number of visits to individual venues as reported in the *Monitor* it is possible to compare actual attendance figures with the volume of people who claim to be gallery attenders. This provides an illustration of the error factor in the face-to-face interviews of the TGI index.

The second row of the table gives the percentage of the adult population of Great Britain who claim to attend galleries and exhibitions. The third row provides an index of the changes in the number of attenders (with 1986/87 as the base year). The Index illustrates the fluctuations in the number of adults in each year who claimed to attend, measured against the number in the base year.

The RSGB General Omnibus survey of 1991 was a more detailed survey, which encompassed questions on the attitudes and perceptions of the public towards the arts in particular. This survey questioned 8,000 people, 700 of whom were residents of Scotland. Despite the relatively low base number for

³⁷ See Chapter One's discussion on the drawbacks of such a loose term and the supposed advantages.

Scotland this survey is particularly useful because it allows direct comparisons with the average British response. Respondents were asked about their attendance to arts and cultural events. The Scottish respondents appeared slightly less positive about the arts than the British average. Some 50% of Scots claimed to be 'quite' or 'very' interested in the 'arts' compared to the average, which was 54%.³⁸ This less positive attitude carried through to the other questions. When asked whether the 'arts and cultural activities helped to enrich the quality of their lives' 66% responded that they 'agree' or 'strongly agree' compared to the British average of 71%.³⁹ It would be erroneous to conclude that statistically the Scottish respondents enjoyed the arts any less than the rest of Britain, as when asked whether the 'arts and cultural activity' gave them a lot of pleasure and entertainment, 56% of the Scottish sample responded positively compared to the average 55%.⁴⁰ What can be concluded from this survey is that the percentage of residents of Scotland who are interested in the 'arts and cultural activity' is slightly lower than in other areas of Britain.

The Scottish Arts Council has measured the particular nature of the Scottish audience for the arts on an occasional basis throughout the 1990s. Prior to this the Scottish Museums Council (SMC) commissioned research by System Three Scotland, to measure the attitudes and actions of the Scots towards museums and art galleries. The report *A Survey on Museums and Galleries in Scotland*⁴¹ built upon data gathered in 1985. The SMC 1991 survey compared

³⁸ Research Surveys Great Britain, *General Omnibus Survey*, London 1991. Quoted in *Cultural Trends in Scotland*, 1995, p. 9.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

⁴¹ System Three Scotland, *A Survey on Museum and Galleries in Scotland*, commissioned by the Scottish Museums Council 1991.

public attitudes towards art galleries with museums and several other cultural activities. The survey found that the level of interest in art galleries had dropped between 1985 and 1991, from 43% to 41%.⁴² The profile of those interested in museums appeared stable, as can be seen in Table 4, altering very little between 1985 and 1991 (a drop of 1%), with the exception of a decrease of interest amongst AB social classes. In contrast, art galleries had experienced decreases in interest amongst all the social classes, except the DE group.⁴³

Table 4: Interest by Social Class

Social Class	Museums		Art Galleries	
	1985	1991	1985	1991
AB	84	75	58	54
C1	67	67	51	45
C2	58	58	42	33
DE	50	49	31	37

Source: SMC 1991.

The degree of interest in art galleries was broken down into those who were: very interested 12%; quite interested 29%; neither 7%; not very interested 33%; and not at all interested 19%.⁴⁴ This can be compared with the RSGB 1991 survey which found that 50% of the 700 Scots interviewed were 'quite' or 'very interested' in the arts.⁴⁵ This difference between the two results, both from surveys carried out in 1991, illustrates the problems of sample research. The difference in the size of the sample could explain the difference in the results, as could the difference in data gathering techniques used for the two surveys. Table 5 shows a gradual increase in the percentage of those who were interested

⁴² During the period 25-30 April 1991, a total of 1016 adults were interviewed in-home, in some 40 sampling points throughout Scotland. The sample was weighted to ensure it was representative of age, gender and social class.

⁴³ System Three Scotland, *A Survey on Museums and Gallery*, 1991, p. 5.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 1991, Appendix Table 1/2.

⁴⁵ Research Surveys Great Britain, *General Omnibus Survey*, London 1991. *Cultural Trends in Scotland* 1995, p. 9.

in attending both museums and art galleries as the age categories rose. This age-related pattern was not as marked in the 1985 survey.⁴⁶

Table 5: Interest by Age Category

	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	56-64	65+
Museums	50	60	62	66	66	58
Art Galleries	32	34	40	45	51	46

Source: SMC 1991.

The report isolated age and social class as important discriminators of interest and participation, but made no reference to either education levels or family commitments to cultural activities. Analysis of both reference and peer group influence was also lacking. The report's subsequent analysis of opinions towards cultural activities did not draw a distinction between museums and art galleries and so is of less use than later reports. The survey does include details of when the respondents last visited a museum or art gallery. Table 6 shows that the majority of respondents who had visited a museum or art gallery had not been as recently as they had in the 1985 survey. However, the response for 7 to 12 months and 1 to 2 years ago, suggests that a larger number of people had visited in the longer term from the SMC 1991 survey.

The findings of the RSGB 1991 survey were closely matched with those of another carried out in 1994.⁴⁷ This would suggest a continuity of opinion, and reinforce the validity of the responses given in both of the surveys. The 1994 survey was carried out using face-to-face⁴⁸ interviews amongst 1,621 householders, with an extra 582 self-completed questionnaires from residents

⁴⁶ *Museums and Art gallery Survey*, 1991, p. 5.

⁴⁷ *A National and Regional Survey of Attendance, Participation And Attitudes*, Research Results Ltd., commissioned by the Scottish Arts Council 1994.

⁴⁸ Again, details of the criticism of this approach can be found in Chapter One.

(aged over 12) in the sample homes. The results were weighted to reflect the population structure according to the 1991 Census of Scotland. The survey found that 40% of the respondents claimed to be interested in the arts compared

Table 6: Last visit to a Museum or Art Gallery

	1985	1991
Base number	1030	1016
Last Visited		
Within last month	12	13
2-3 months ago	13	6
4-6 months ago	10	5
7-12 months ago	11	19
1-2 years ago	15	18
3-5 years ago	12	11
Longer ago	20	22
Never visited	5	4

Source: SMC 1991.

with only 34% that responded they were not very interested.⁴⁹ This survey found positive attitudes towards the arts even amongst those with no personal interest in the arts, with 93% of respondents agreeing that 'the arts and culture give a lot of pleasure to many people'.⁵⁰ Compared with the results from the 1991 report, which showed 66% of respondents agreed that the 'arts and cultural activities helped to enrich their lives', the 1994 survey found that 65% agreed.⁵¹ This proves both that the statistic is valid, and that the attitudes reported are, if not constant, then certainly stable. There appears to be a high level of pride felt about the arts and other cultural activities which are available in Scotland amongst the general public, which is not restricted to the visiting public. The

⁴⁹ *Attendance, Participation and Attitudes*, 1994, p. 11a.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 1994, p. 9a.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 1994, p. 9a.

survey found that 87% of respondents believed that 'the success of Scottish arts and cultural activity gives the outside world a good impression of Scotland'.⁵²

The Scottish Arts Council reports were aimed at establishing baseline information on key indicators of attitudes towards the arts and participation. These reports were designed to allow comparisons of audience profiles over time, and to allow for the measurement of achievements against objectives.⁵³ The two objectives stated in the report were the increasing of 'numbers' and broadening of 'appeal'.⁵⁴ These objectives reveal a great deal about the criteria by which the activities were to be measured. The most recent research, and by far the most complex research into the general adult population, was carried out in 1998. This research contains a far smaller base number than the TGI data, with some 1,505 Scottish adults (aged over 18), and was carried out using face-to-face methods. This report was design to express sub-national distinctions. The analysis of the data was split into three categories, the national level, three macro regions, and seven area groupings⁵⁵. This survey revealed a general decrease in both those who attend art galleries and museums and the frequency with which they visited.⁵⁶

The general interest towards the arts has decreased slightly between 1994 and 1998 (a 1% drop). This can be seen as marking a success in arresting

⁵² Ibid., p. 9a.

⁵³ Ibid., p. 1.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 1.

⁵⁵ The three macro regions are: Highlands and Islands; East Central Scotland; and West Central Scotland. The seven groups are: Glasgow and surrounding area (Dumbarton and Renfrew); Lanarkshire plus Ayrshire (including Arran and Cumbraes); Fife/Tayside/Central; Edinburgh and the Lothians; Borders (including Dumfries and Galloway); Grampian; Highlands and Islands (including Argyll and Bute).

⁵⁶ *Attendance at, Participation in, and Attitudes Towards the Arts in Scotland*, System Three Commissioned by the Scottish Arts Council 1998, p. 5.

the rapidity of the decline of interest in the arts, but also as a failure, as the trend has not reversed. In 1991 the RSGB survey found 50% of respondents were interested in the arts, while the SMC 1991 survey found only 41% were. The 1994 survey revealed that 40% of respondent were interested. Hence the drop of 1% marks a partial success. These figures show that there has not been a reversal of this trend, which suggest that the 'broadening of appeal' has not occurred. The level of respondents who replied that they were 'not at all interested' or 'not interested' fell by 16%, however, just as those who responded that they were 'very interested' doubled. Female respondents were more likely to indicate that they were 'interested' (47%) compared to the average, which was 44%. The ABC1 social classes were also more likely to respond positively (60%), as were those originating from rural parts of Scotland (65%). Those from social groups C2DE were the only group significantly more likely to respond that they were not interested in the arts and cultural events.⁵⁷

The audience for crafts and contemporary visual arts increased over the two surveys (see Table 7, overleaf). The data can be considered as reasonably robust, due to the careful nature of the sampling. There is, however, a heavy bias towards urban, and to a less extent suburban areas, which made up almost 95% of the respondents.⁵⁸ This may explain the anomalous statistics, for rural respondents. Within this urban bias, Glasgow and surrounding area outweighed all other areas by at least 12%.

The volume of visitors who attended art galleries and museums frequently, (more than twice a year) increased between the 1994 and 1998

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 41-2. Appendix 2: Profile of Respondents.

Table 7: Frequency of attendance

Event Attended	All who ever attend		Once a year or less		2+ times a year	
	1998	1994	1998	1994	1998	1994
Art Galleries/museums	53%	62%	20%	42%	33%	20%
Craft exhibitions	34%	31%	15%	22%	19%	8%
Contemporary painting	21%	13%	9%	9%	12%	4%
Contemporary photography	11%	7%	6%	4%	5%	2%
Contemporary sculpture	8%	6%	5%	4%	4%	2%
Contemporary video/multi-media	5%	4%	3%	3%	2%	1%
Contemporary printmaking	4%	n/a	2%	n/a	2%	n/a
Contemporary installation or performance art	3%	5%	2%	3%	1%	1%

Source: SAC, 1998.

surveys.⁵⁹ This trend continued through the audiences for all the art types distinguished in the questionnaire. The levels of attendance and non-attendance varied by region throughout Scotland. In terms of Art Galleries and Museums Fife/Tayside/Central had the largest percentage of non-attenders. Unsurprisingly Glasgow and Lothian returned the largest percentages of attenders who visited more than twice a year. Fife/Tayside/Central were also above average for non-attendance in craft exhibitions and contemporary painting exhibitions. In terms of low frequency attendance at Art Galleries and Museums Lanarkshire/Ayrshire returned the lowest average of respondents who visited more than twice a year.⁶⁰

The majority of events that respondents attended were temporary exhibitions, the only exception being the permanent collections of Art Galleries and Museums.⁶¹ Based on all those who responded that they attend arts events, the three most popular exhibition types (not including Art Galleries and

Table 8: Attendance at an Exhibition or Gallery
Based on all who attend

	Base	Temporary Exhibition	Permanent Gallery
Art Galleries/Museums	794	21%	78%
Contemporary sculpture	125	66%	30%
Contemporary printmaking	56	77%	21%
Contemporary painting	322	77%	21%
Contemporary video/multi-media	74	85%	8%
Contemporary installation or performance art	44	84%	11%
Contemporary photography	169	88%	8%
Craft exhibition	517	90%	6%

Source: SAC 1998.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 5.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 9.

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 14.

Museums) were craft exhibitions, contemporary photography, and contemporary video/multi media.

The statistics behind these statements are misleading, however, as the base numbers for the percentages vary wildly between the art forms. The percentages for art galleries and museums, contemporary painting and craft exhibitions are based on statistically valid base numbers, and the statistics for contemporary sculpture and contemporary photography are sufficiently robust. The percentages for contemporary installation or performance art and contemporary printmaking are based on attendance figures of only 44 and 56 respectively. The degree of error for these two sub-groups (reliant on such small base numbers) made these statistics less than sound.

There was only a very small minority of 4% who indicated that there were other arts or activities which they enjoyed going to that were not listed.⁶² The reasons given for attending such events has remained relatively static between 1994 and 1998. The main reason given by a very large proportion (42% of respondents) was to 'see a specific performer or event,' the next most popular reasons were 'as a social meeting with friends' (10%) and 'something to do on a special occasion' (9%). A surprisingly low response rate was returned for 'family outing' (4%) and 'it was recommended by a friend or relative' (4%).⁶³ The number of people who responded that they had missed an event due to 'not knowing it was on' has fallen from 46% in 1994 to 31% in 1998.

Discrepancies in the structure of questioning techniques can have a dramatic effect on the results gained. The SAC survey asked respondents

⁶² Ibid., p. 14.

⁶³ Ibid., p. 15.

whether they attend 'at all' with no time limit, while the TGI survey asked respondents to specify the general number of times a year they attended. The SAC questions refer to a broader range of arts events than the TGI. As a result the SAC survey could report that 89% of respondents claimed to attend 'arts events'.⁶⁴ The most visited 'arts event' was the cinema, with approximately two thirds of respondents attending. In terms of art galleries and museums, some 53% claimed to have ever attended.⁶⁵ The survey did seek to quantify the number of regular attenders at these events by asking the respondents whether they visited 'twice a year or more.' Art galleries and museums were amongst the highest in terms of having a 'regular' attending public, with 33%. The highest was the cinema with 57% of respondents claiming to visit twice a year or more.⁶⁶

It is difficult to discern whether research bodies have broadened the remit of 'the arts' in their surveys to bolster the statistical response or as a genuine response to a change in the public's perception of the arts. The Arts Council of England commissioned MORI to investigate the public's definition of the 'arts'.⁶⁷ The SAC has done no similar research and so the only data available comes from England. It is, however, suitably non-specific to be valid for Scotland. When asked an unprompted question on the definition of the arts the response was predictably traditional. The majority of respondents included painting and drawing, some 59%, theatre and drama was also mentioned by 46%, and one in five cited the ballet.⁶⁸ When shown a list of possible answers

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁶⁷ *Public Attitudes to the Arts*, MORI, commissioned by the Arts Council of England 2000.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

the activities included in the term became more numerous. Again, painting and drawing were mentioned by the largest number of respondents (79%), and theatre and drama increased also (77%). Sculpture was included by 70% of respondents, though only 28% believed that video or digital artwork should be included in the term 'the arts.'⁶⁹

There was a split in opinion according to the social class of the respondent. The ABC1 social groups were more likely to include a broader range of activities than any other group except the higher education set. The general response, as indicated by the total column of Table 9, shows that the public's definition of the 'arts' remains traditional.

Table 9: Definition of the Arts: The Top Five Responses

	Total	ABC1	C2DE	GCSE	A-Level	Degree	No Qualifications
Unweighted	1,801	836	962	561	214	255	548
Weighted	1,844	916	928	928	234	287	507
Painting and Drawing	79%	84%	74%	77%	85%	92%	70%
Theatre and Drama	79%	87%	70%	76%	88%	91%	68%
Ballet	77%	87%	67%	74%	86%	92%	66%
Opera	73%	84%	61%	69%	85%	91%	58%
Sculpture	70%	78%	62%	67%	80%	86%	58%

Source: MORI 2000.

Regional Tier

Scotland consists of three distinct geographic regions; the Highlands and Islands, the Central Belt, and the Southern Uplands/Border region. These regions do not divide Scotland into equal comparable population groups.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 3.

Neither do they produce areas with comparable museums and galleries provision. The 1998 SAC report divided Scotland into three macro regions for the purpose of comparing the attitudes and perceptions of the inhabitants. These regions were named; the Highlands and Islands; East Central Scotland, and West Central Scotland. There is, however, a lack of arts research which explores the distinct characteristics of each of these areas in detail. Indeed, there is very little comparable data which deals with Scotland at the regional level. There is also no general research into the attitudes and perceptions of the arts on the regional level. The most significant exception to this is the 1998 SAC report, which does break down its results by region. This analysis is, however, less than complete. The 1998 survey does mark a recent shift in research to include analysis by region.

The 1999 SAC survey into children's attendance found that visiting varied by region. Children attending schools in Scotland's central belt were generally more likely to have attended many arts related events. Schools in this region have the obvious advantage of easier access to such events, while those in the north and south had fewer opportunities available. Children in Edinburgh were most likely to have attended an arts festival,⁷⁰ while children in Glasgow were most likely to have visited an art gallery/exhibition.⁷¹ The greatest difference in children's attendance was not by region but by type of school. Children attending independent schools were significantly more likely to attend art galleries or exhibitions than children from any other type of school.⁷²

⁷⁰ *Children's Attendance, Participation and Attitudes Towards the Arts in Scotland*, Scottish Arts Council 1999, p. 40.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 45.

The events which children stated they would like to attend also varied by region. Children in the north of Scotland were least likely to state that they wanted to go to art galleries or exhibitions.⁷³ In general art galleries and exhibitions were less desirable than plays, pantomimes and music events (not including rock/pop).⁷⁴

The most reliable data on the regional characteristics of Scotland comes from the ACORN *Lifestyles Analysis* data. The data are usually used in the commercial and financial sector to select locations for retail development and in planning the allocation of resources, setting targets and in monitoring performance. The SAC published the data in 1993, and compared it with TGI information on the visiting habits of the Scottish public. The aim of the 1993 report was to provide an “overview of the comparative attendance potential of different cities and towns.”⁷⁵ The report does not include data on the provision of services within these cities and towns. Attendance is, however, reliant upon venues to visit, so by not including statistics on the number of museums and galleries there is no way of knowing to what degree the ‘potential’ has been stimulated by availability.

Traditionally the central belt has dominated the arts scene in Scotland. This can be explained by the two fundamental facts, firstly the majority of the Scottish population lives in this region, and secondly the central belt has the largest number of arts venues, and contains all the national arts venues. The East Central Belt and the West Central Belt, however, have very different socio-

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

⁷⁵ Verwey, P., *Site Report Abstracts (30 Minutes Drivetime)*, Arts Council Great Britain, 1993, p. 1.

economic landscapes. The location of Lothian within the East Central Belt can be seen as the cause of the disparity. Lothian has the largest percentage of adults with higher qualifications (18.11% compared to the national average of 14%⁷⁶) and a significantly higher percentage of social class I (residents in professional occupations), II (residents in managerial and technical occupations), and III (residents in skilled non-manual occupations).⁷⁷

There are many large arts venues outside the two primary cities. Table 13 shows that of the 21 venues which received in excess of 50,000 visits in 2000, 38% (8) were outside of Edinburgh or Glasgow. Of these only 2 were not within the central belt, and all of the national arts venues are situated in one or other of the two primary cities. This domination extends into the contemporary arts scene with the proliferation of smaller venues and the high number of prestigious venues in Edinburgh and Glasgow. This is reflected in the high number of commercial galleries that operate in the central belt. Inroads into the central belt's strangle hold have recently been spearheaded by the DCA which opened in 1999. This venue can boast over 300,000 visits per year. The DCA offers not only a place of exceptional quality for exhibitions to be viewed, but also provides opportunities for the creation of art work.⁷⁸

Edinburgh and Glasgow have by far the largest number of art galleries in Scotland. As can be seen from Table 10 (page 80), these cities received far more visits. The 1993 report, however, does not allow comparisons of this kind as it provides no information on the number of venues within the city areas. The

⁷⁶ 1991 Census: Key Statistics, HMSO, London 1995, p. 164.

⁷⁷ 1991 Census: Key Statistics, 1995, p. 161.

⁷⁸ The DCA contains one of the most up-to-date print workshops in Europe.

Data from the *ACORN Lifestyles User Guide* does allow for a detailed comparison of the make-up of each of the cities and towns included.⁷⁹ The data available for Scotland can also be compared with the data on English and Welsh cities and towns. There are, naturally, far fewer Scottish cities included in the report. The six Scottish cities included, represent a substantial percentage of Scotland's population as a whole. The total population of the six cities in 1991 was 2,572,052, approximately 51.4% percentage of Scotland's entire population. Scotland has a small rural population, 11%, and so it would be very difficult to produce a similar report covering the provision of arts services for rural areas, due to the vast areas of land with very few residents.

The index figure, in Table 10, expresses the comparison between the relevant proportion of adults in the drive-time area who attend art galleries (at least twice a year) and museums (in the last year) and the corresponding proportion of all adults in Great Britain shown in the site report.⁸⁰ For example, in the Edinburgh area 74,380 adults who attended art galleries at least twice a year represent 16.8% of all adults in that area. The average level of attendance in Britain is expressed in the index column as 100, hence in Edinburgh the percentage of adults who visit art galleries twice a year is expressed as an index number of 186, almost double the average. The level of deviation from the average can thus be compared not only between city areas but also between places of attendance: art galleries, museums, the theatre and classical music events. There is, however, no analysis or discussion within the 1993 report.

⁷⁹ *The ACORN Lifestyles Analysis of Target Group Index Data on Attendance at Arts Events 1989/90.*

⁸⁰ Verwey, P., *Site Report Abstracts*, London 1993, p. 7.

Table 10: Number of Attenders.

Numbers of attenders	Edinburgh			Dundee			Glasgow		
	No. of attenders	% of all adults	% as index v GB (100)	No. of attenders	% of all adults	% as index v GB (100)	No. of attenders	% of all adults	% as index v GB (100)
Art Galleries 2 +	74380	16.8	186	14980	9.6	104	148846	13	140
Theatre 2 +	88901	20	118	33928	21.7	128	195620	17.1	100
Classical Music 2 +	20171	4.5	87	6320	4.1	72	58321	5.1	90
Any of the 8 arts 2 +	128734	29	118	40087	25.7	116	260488	22.7	102
Museum in last year	149246	33.6	116	41572	26.6	92	344223	30	103

Source: Site Report Abstracts (30 minute drivetime), 1993.

Numbers of attenders	Perth			Aberdeen			Inverness		
	No. of attenders	% of all adults	% as index v GB (100)	No. of attenders	% of all adults	% as index v GB (100)	No. of attenders	% of all adults	% as index v GB (100)
Art Galleries 2 +	7118	8.8	95	18113	9.3	100	5396	8	87
Theatre 2 +	16979	21	124	44877	23	135	14632	21.7	128
Classical 2 +	3096	3.8	68	23704	12.1	119	7509	11.2	109
Any of the 8 arts 2 +	19801	24.5	111	32838	16.8	116	10454	15.5	107
Museum in last year	20126	25	86	51878	26.6	91	17042	25.3	87

Source: Site Report Abstracts (30 minute drivetime), 1993.

The figures in Table 10 below, are taken from the 1990 TGI index, which means that the number of attenders is gained by asking whether a respondent currently attends, and with what frequency. The figures should not, therefore, be taken to be accurate in terms of actual visits to museums and galleries. What the table do show is that compared with museum attendance, which is relatively stable between the six, attendance at art galleries is far more fluid. The index column in the table shows that for museums the range between the six cities is 30 points compared with 100 points for galleries. This stable level of interest across the main cities may be due to the broader range of interests that museums deal with, and the fact that respondents only had to have visited once in the previous year to be included in this column. Edinburgh and Glasgow have by far the largest number of people who considered themselves art gallery attenders, 16.8% and 13% respectively. Perth (8.8%) and Inverness (8%) had the lowest interest in art gallery attendance, while Aberdeen represented the average British interest in art gallery attendance, with 9.3% of adults visiting twice a year (see Table 10). The level of attendance at 'any of the eight arts events' specified in the TGI index is above the British average across all six cities.

The factors which are generally understood to influence the potential attendance levels for a region are included in the 1993 report, and are represented in the Table 11 (page 84-5). These include employment levels and types, social class, education, and car availability. As the most popular form of transport to arts events, car availability is central to attaining an audience. The information is intended to provide "a more realistic impression of the character of each primary catchment area than might be assumed from the image or

perception of the city or town itself,"⁸¹ and yet the ACORN statistics focus exclusively on social groups that are most likely to attend arts events. These excluded some of the largest sections of society, ACORN E, F, and G, (the council estate residents, which include over 15 million people) ACORN C (residents of older housing of intermediate status and older terraced housing, which include over 12 million people) and ACORN A, (those in agricultural areas, which include nearly 2 million people). In total, the ACORN statistics made available in the 1993 report only included approximately 23 million people, whilst excluding almost 29 million.

What becomes immediately apparent from the ACORN data in Table 11 below, is that Scotland's cities do not have a large mixed race population. Only Edinburgh has a significantly higher than average proportion of students, while Edinburgh, Perth and Aberdeen have significantly higher than average number of people of retirement age. Glasgow and Inverness have dramatically fewer people of retirement age. There does not appear, however, to be any obvious correlation between the socio-economic data and the number of attenders in the city areas. Harland, in his study into attitudes and participation in the arts found that although demographic characteristics had an influence on attending museums and art galleries there is little understanding of how they do so.⁸² In Glasgow for example, there are proportionally fewer residents in all the ACORN profiles which are most likely to visit art galleries and museums, and yet Glasgow has a higher than average attendance for its museums and art

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 1.

⁸² Harland, J., Kinder K., Hartley, K, and Wilkin, A., *Attitudes to Participation in the Arts, Heritage, Broadcasting and Sport: A Review of Recent Research*, A report for the Department for National Heritage 1996.

Table 11: Population and ACORN data within the main cities

Population and ACORN data	Edinburgh			Dundee			Glasgow		
	Number	% of adults	Index v GB (100)	Number	% of adults	Index v GB (100)	Number	% of adults	Index v GB (100)
Total Population (1990)	534584			192245			1423137		
Population Trend 1981-1990	-2.50%		-135	-5.90%		-281	-0.80%		-38
Professional/Managerial (1981)	40190	15.8(e)	96	11610	13.5(e)	82	79579	12.9(e)	78
Non-Manual (1981)	99240	39.1(e)	121	28950	33.6(e)	104	213180	34.5(e)	107
Skilled Manual (1981)	52010	20.5(e)	83	20740	24.1(e)	98	151650	24.6(e)	100
With degree and/or professional/ vocational qualification (1981)	60240	23.7(e)	140	16050	18.6(e)	110	100720	16.3(e)	96
Student (1981)	20341		3.7	7098		3.5	48758		3.2
Retirement age (1981)	101112	18.4	104	37382	18.3	104	247877	16.1	91
Born in New Commonwealth (1981)	6425	1.2	30	2355	1.2	41	14285	0.9	31
Number of unemployed (Jan. 1992)	21289	7.4(lf)	110	10102	10.2(lf)	109	88293	12.3(lf)	131
Car available in household (1981)	99653	48.2(h)	80	35977	46.7(h)	77	218558	40.9(h)	68
ACORN B (1990)	65964	12.3	70	26298	13.7	78	193358	13.6	77
ACORN H (1990)	441	0.1	2	719	0.4	10	9695	0.7	18
ACORN I (1990)	47113	8.8	215	5746	3	73	35221	2.5	61
ACORN J (1990)	83172	15.6	98	22406	11.7	74	125336	8.8	56
ACORN K (1990)	53169	9.9	264	9338	4.9	129	30235	2.1	56

Source: Site Report Abstracts (30 minutes drivetime), 1993.

Percentage of: (e) - people in employment (lf) - labour force (h) - households

Table 11: Population and ACORN data within the main cities cont.

Population and ACORN data	Perth			Aberdeen			Inverness		
	Number	% of adults	Index v GB (100)	Number	% of adults	Index v GB (100)	Number	% of adults	Index v GB (100)
Total Population (1990)	98670			239580			83938		
Population Trend 1981-1990	7.00%		333	3.8		136	11.40%		438
Professional/Managerial (1981)	6600	16.5(e)	100	16780	15.0(e)	91	5050	15.3(e)	93
Non-Manual (1981)	13070	32.7(e)	101	39240	35.0(e)	108	11620	35.3(e)	109
Skilled Manual (1981)	9500	23.8(e)	97	26040	23.2(e)	94	8430	25.6(e)	104
With degree and/or professional/ vocational qualification (1981)	8100	20.3(e)	120	23740	21.2(e)	125	7070	21.5(e)	127
Student (1981)	3126	3.4	103	7488	3.2	99	2276	3	92
Retirement age (1981)	17842	19.3	110	39521	17.1	97	12200	16.2	92
Born in New Commonwealth (1981)	717	0.7	24	2642	1.1	39	527	0.7	25
Number of unemployed (Jan. 1992)	3170	6.5(lf)	69	6899*	5.5(lf)	56	3787*	9.3(lf)	95
Car available in household (1981)	20670	60.8(h)	100	47914	56.3(h)	93	16248	62.9(h)	104
ACORN B (1990)	13228	13.4	76	43593	18.2	103	17361	20.7	117
ACORN H (1990)				496	0.2	5			
ACORN I (1990)	984	1	24	9190	3.8	94	85	0.1	2
ACORN J (1990)	7745	7.8	50	27697	11.6	73	7704	9.2	58
ACORN K (1990)	7232	7.3	194	19437	8.1	215	2021	2.4	64

Source: Site Report Abstracts (30 minutes drivetime), 1993.

Percentage of: (e) - people in employment (lf) - Labour force (h) - households

galleries. This would suggest that there are factors beyond the data made available which are equally important in predicting visiting.

Table 11 includes data from 1981 which is intended to bolster the ACORN profile data. The data are similarly restricted to those sectors of society which are most likely to attend museums and art galleries, professionals, non-manual skilled workers, those of higher education and the retired. Two other statistics are included, the number of unemployed and the number of people born in the New Commonwealth who reside in the particular cities. The latter statistics were intended to suggest the level of multiculturalism within each of the cities.

The fundamental requirements for useful socio-economic information are, that it is available over a period of time, and that it represents comparable data. The 1993 data alone reveals very little about the causes of visitor levels in particular cities, and only a limited amount of data describing the levels of attendance. It does, however, indicate some level of detail in relation to the comparable make-up of Scotland's main cities in relation to the most likely audience groups.

Table 12 below, represents the ACORN profile groups which are most likely to attend arts events, and what percentage of the adult population they represent. These ACORN profiles only represent 33.4% of the adult population of the UK. This is particularly important as, of this small percentage of the total adult population only 21.2% visited art galleries and exhibitions, Though this does compare well with other cultural attractions. Jazz music was attended by 8.4%, the Opera by 6.1%, the ballet by 6.2% and contemporary dance by 3.8%.

Classical music and plays were better attended, with 11.6% and 23.7% respectively.

All of these ACORN groups visit art galleries and exhibitions, the theatre, and classical music beyond the average. The ACORN Lifestyle data suggests that certain sections of society are more likely than others to visit, but Table 11 (page 84-5) shows that museums and galleries within individual cities are not reliant upon these ACORN groups to gain high levels of attendance.

Table 12: Current Levels of Attendance by ACORN Lifestyles Groups

	% of population	Theatre	Classical Music	Art Galleries/ Art Exhibitions	Any of 8 arts event
LD Rural - Affluent Couples/Families	3	121	141	117	117
LE Suburban - Younger Singles	0.9	131	138	142	132
LF Suburban - Older Singles	3	103	159	108	100
LI Suburban - Very Affluent Younger Couples/Families	3.9	153	145	139	141
LJ Suburban - Very Affluent Older Couples/Families	5.8	146	202	152	142
LP Affluent Metropolitan Singles	1.3	123	206	152	116
LQ Affluent Metropolitan Couples/Families	4.1	135	163	162	134
LR Cosmopolitan Inner City Dwellers	2.3	106	127	129	109
LS Traditional Urban - Younger Single	0.8	106	139	137	109
LW Home Sharers - Affluent Areas	8.3	130	136	152	128
% of all adults who attend		35.7% (100)	11.6% (100)	21.2% (100)	45.7% (100)

Source: 1993 Site Report Abstracts (30 minutes drivetime).

There are, therefore, two main problems with comparing regions and their provisions of services. Firstly it is difficult to define the regions in such a way as to make them comparable on a like-with-like basis, and secondly there is a lack of complete data to enable a thorough comparison. Any attempt to audit visual arts provision in Scotland will inevitably run into two main problems.

Firstly, there is the problem of defining exactly what is to be included. Audits of museum services can rely upon the membership of the SMC as representing the vast bulk of museums in Scotland. The visual arts includes a far broader range of activities and venues. These can range from public arts projects, which place art works in streets and other public locations, to national museums of fine art. There is no one membership organisation or registration scheme which includes all the venues and arts activities within Scotland. The SAC channels funding to a large range of activities and collects data and conducts research into a great deal of its work, but there is no way to know how representative this is of the arts in general. This leads onto the second problem facing a potential audit of arts activities and venues. Once a venue has been included in the audit, the services available at that venue must be defined. This is less of a problem at a national museum of art than at a community arts project, for instance, which may or may not exist independently of its members and activities. To establish the arts provision in any one area of Scotland, therefore, is extremely problematic. To establish the quality and success of every arts event and venue in all the regions of Scotland, and the general level of involvement and engagement by the public, is practically impossible.

Venue-by-Venue Tier

The available data for the individual venues in Scotland is insufficient to form a statistical analysis of the entire arts sector. Appendix A represents an attempt at compiling a sample of venues for each of the macro areas of Scotland. Though this list is not exhaustive, it does include the bulk of venues. The Appendix contains details from both temporary arts venues and permanent

art museums. The information on the latter was gathered from the Scottish Museums Council and does represent a fairly comprehensive survey. The *Directory of Exhibition Spaces*⁸³ cites 172 venues in Scotland for contemporary exhibitions, including cafés and lobby areas as well as libraries and art colleges. This represents approximately 10% of such venues in the UK.⁸⁴ For these 172 venues attendance data was available for 46 in the form of the *Visitor Attraction Monitor*.⁸⁵ This covers only the larger venues, those that have defined galleries of art and which keep attendance figures. The *Monitor* also provides details on the entire museums and galleries sector for Scotland. It offers detailed visitor figures for 190 'museums and galleries' in Scotland, but this includes non-arts venues. I shall therefore use the 'museums and galleries' section in the *Monitor* as a broad statistical context for the galleries mentioned in the *Directory*. As the *Directory* provides the names of venues which are available for art exhibitions it is possible to identify only those which display art by cross-referencing these with the *Monitor* (see Appendix A). Below is Table 13 which shows the 46 venues cited in both the *Directory* and the *Monitor* that have designated galleries to show art works.⁸⁶ This table covers a three year period and though this does not provide enough information to show a true pattern it does illustrate the effects of particular events, such as the 'Glasgow City of Architecture and

⁸³ Ross, J., (ed.) *Artist's Handbook: Directory of Exhibition Spaces*, AN Publications 1995. The *Artist's Handbook*, was published in 1995 and so there is an error factor of six year. There have been several key changes in venues for the visual arts since 1995, including the closing of the 'Seagate Gallery' and the opening of the 'Dundee Contemporary Arts Centre,' along with the opening of, for example, the 'Fergusson Gallery' in Perth.

⁸⁴ *Cultural Trends in Scotland*, Policy Studies Institute 1995, p. 4.

⁸⁵ Lennon, J.J., McDiarmid, E., and Graham, M., *The 1999 Visitor Attractions Monitor*, Glasgow 1999, p. 150. The *Visitor Attractions Monitor* is an annual report compiled by the Moffat Travel Centre, University of Caledonia, Glasgow. This replaces the Scottish Visitor Attractions survey, which was conducted by the Scottish Tourist Board between 1982-1997.

⁸⁶ This is reliant upon the data in the sources being complete.

Design' in 1999. This provides a more reliable picture than a single year of attendance figures. Information for long-term analysis is available for ten of Scotland's largest attractions, though only three of these have large art collections.

Table 13: Attendance at 46 Venues 1998-2000

Name	Location	1998	1999	2000	% change
Aberdeen Art Gallery	Aberdeen	232,940	*220,979	*216,147	-7
An Lanntair Galleries	Stornoway	38,928	*33,824	*29,081	-25
Arbuthnott Museum	Peterhead	7,732	*7,539	*6,897	-11
Auld Kirk Museum	Glasgow	N/A	10,515	N/A	N/A
Burrell Collection	Glasgow	343,325	285,089	*294,434	-14
Castle Douglas Art Gallery	Castle Douglas	11,881	*10,132	*11,846	0
City Art Centre	Edinburgh	87,176	*42,418	*76,238	-13
Collectice Gallery	Edinburgh	35,000	*25,000	*36,000	3
Collins Gallery	Glasgow	80,000	*45,000	*56,000	-30
Dean Gallery	Edinburgh	N/A	*115,979	221,918	91
Dick Institute	Kilmarnock	123,000	*107,423	*85,090	-31
Dundee Contemporary Arts	Dundee	N/A	302,199	303,891	1
Elgin Museum	Elgin	9,804	9,133	3,494	-64
Gallery of Modern Art	Glasgow	452,678	*466,326	*396,894	-12
Glasgow School of Art	Glasgow	30,000	*38,000	N/A	27
Hawick Museum & Scott Art Gallery	Selkirk	N/A	7,187	9,774	36
House for an Art Lover	Glasgow	90,000	*100,000	87,761	-2
Hoxa Tapestry Gallery	St. Margaret's Hope	3,776	3,813	3,865	2
Hunterian Art Gallery	Glasgow	112,129	*111,331	107,674	-4
Inverness Museum and Art Gallery	Inverness	90,384	*90,935	*87,239	-3
Kelvingrove Art Gallery & Museum	Glasgow	1,128,455	*1,051,050	*1,003,169	-11
Kirkcaldy Museum and Art Gallery	Kirkcaldy	68,664	*51,663	*58,551	-15
Kittiwake Gallery & Artists Workshop	St. Abb's	14,550	*12,000	*11,000	-24
McKechnie Institute	Girvan	12,610	*12,830	N/A	2
McLean Museum and Art Gallery	Greenock	31,403	*27,631	20,918	-33
McManus Gallery	Dundee	102,380	*86,466	*82,234	-20
Montrose Museum and Art Gallery	Montrose	11,902	9,038	*10,473	-12
National Gallery of	Edinburgh	442,322	*439,928	*421,612	-5

Scotland					
Paisley Museum and Art Gallery	Paisley	56,455	68,295	*60,468	7
Perth Museum and Art Gallery	Perth	64,393	58,795	*54,403	-16
Pier Arts Centre	Stromness	15,751	*16,148	14,729	-6
Robert Burns Centre	Dumfries	24,397	21,005	N/A	-14
Scottish National Portrait Gallery	Edinburgh	209,826	*171,350	*193,828	-8
Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art	Edinburgh	190,060	*174,100	*210,657	11
Shetland Museum	Lerwick	30,549	*29,038	31,952	5
Smith Art Gallery and Museum	Stirling	34,611	40,975	42,247	22
Stable Gallery	Yetholm	2,076	*784	N/A	-62
St. Mungo Museum	Glasgow	153,362	*182,962	175,199	14
Syllayethy Gallery	Alford	560	*635	*736	31
Taigh Chearsabhaigh Museum Art Centre	North Uist	21,776	*21,990	23,430	8
Talbot Rice Gallery	Edinburgh	31,750	*29,000	N/A	-9
The Fergusson Gallery	Perth	13,427	14,641	*15,037	12
The Fruitmarket Gallery	Edinburgh	110,529	*122,630	*119,247	8
The Vennel Gallery	Irvine	4,188	5,038	*4,291	2
Tolbooth Art Centre	Kirkcudbright	12,264	14,668	14,871	21
Tweeddale Museum and Gallery	Peebles	9,109	*11,760	*10,587	16
Total visitor number per year		4,546,122	4,707,242	4,613,882	1
Adjusted Visitor totals per year⁸⁷		4,445,289	4,405,043	4,309,991	-3

Source: The 1999 and 2000 editions of the *Visitor Attractions Monitor*.

The visitor figures from venues which provided an estimated number have been marked with an [*]. The high level of venues which provided estimated visitor figures makes the percentage change column a less reliable method of comparison. The inaccuracy in the estimate is not quantifiable and so the level of inaccuracy in the percentage change is difficult to gauge. The venues which provided estimated figures for 1998 were not indicated within the 2000 edition of the *Monitor*. The percentage change column in Table 13

⁸⁷ The adjusted figure row deducts all venues' attendance figures if data is not available for all three years. Thus the adjusted totals row expresses the actual comparable change in visitor figures over the three years.

represents the change between the 1998 column and the 2000 column only. This list shows a general increase in attendance figures across all the venues at approximately 1%. The general attendance trend, however, as expressed in the adjusted visitor totals row is downward. The opening of new museums and galleries, however, has ensured that the number of visits per year has increased. The complex trends within these visitor figures can be broken down and systematically analysed. The most important factor is the stability or instability of the attendance level. The fluctuation in attendance levels is expressed in Table 14. This Table splits the venues into those who received in excess of 50,000 visits per year and those that do not. Within this distinction it is possible to appreciate such factors as the geographic location of a venue, and the socio-demographic make-up of that area.

Table 14: Fluctuation in Attendance 1998 to 2000

Percentage Change	Number of Larger Venues		Number of Smaller Venues		Total
	Increase	Decrease	Increase	Decrease	
< 10%	3	6	7	2	18
11% to 30%	2	9	5	5	21
31% to 50%	0	1	2	1	4
50% >	1	0	0	2	3
Total	6	16	14	10	46

Stability in attendance figures does not depend on a large volume of attendance. Of the 18 venues which fluctuated by less than 10% there was an exact split between large and small venues. The small venues, however, had the healthier attendance levels as their rates tended to fluctuate upwards, whilst the opposite appears to be the case with the larger venues. The high number of venues, both large and small in terms of attendance levels, which experienced a

fluctuation of attendance of between 11% and 30%, suggests a high degree of instability. The fact that 18 (39%) out of the 46 venues' attendance levels fluctuated by 10% or less, however, shows an underlying stability. The smaller venues were more likely to increase their attendance than the larger venues. This pattern must be seen in the context of the actual attendance figures involved. The smaller attendance figures of local galleries are by definition subject to 'percentage change' more readily than the robust attendance figures of the national institutions. This makes the dramatic dropping off of attendance for these larger venues doubly worrying, as the actual numbers behind the percentage must be far larger. For example, the National Gallery of Scotland experienced a decrease of 5% in attendance between 1998 and 2000, representing in terms of visits a drop of 20,710, whereas the Pier Arts Centre in Stromness lost only 1,022 visits during its 6% decrease in attendance.

Location appears central to the stability and level of attendance that a venue received. Over half of the venues in Table 13 (pages 90-91) were located within a city or major town (26 out of the 46). Glasgow dominated the larger venues, with Edinburgh coming a close second. No large venue was located outside a major urban centre, with the exception of the Dick Institute. The Dick Institute is located in Kilmarnock, which is well situated to receive visitors from Glasgow. Location alone, however, does not guarantee a large visitor number. There were five small venues that were located in one of the main urban areas, though of these, three received approximately 30,000 visits between 1998 and 2000.

The *Monitor* can provide information that is statistically viable due to the large base number; it contains the details of some 190 venues in the

'museums and galleries' sector. As this includes museums in general, the data can be used as a reliable general gauge for 'cultural activities' in Scotland. The figures in Table 13 (pages 90-91) reveal a steadily decreasing volume of visitor to the venues from which reliable⁸⁸ data can be gathered. This contradicts the survey research in Table 3 (page 64), that suggests an increase in the number of people who consider themselves gallery attenders, and instead reflects the data that suggests a steadily declining interest in the arts. This contradiction can partly be explained by the fact that Table 3 refers to research gathered across the entire UK, whereas the SAC surveys and the above research from the *Monitor*, refers solely to data gathered in Scotland.

In an analysis of the audience it is vital to have a clear understanding of the venues and art forms that are available. This will ensure that each piece of research is compared on an equal level, and that venues are not examined out of context. Attendance figures should be a useful guide to the behaviour of the audience and suggest a level of public interest in the activities and displays of particular venues.

Scotland is dominated by visitor attractions that receive fewer than 50,000 visits per year. As has been shown above, the art galleries do not fit this trend. However, it must be noted that it is the larger venues which are most likely to keep visitor figures and there are many smaller venues which simply do not appear in statistical reports because of their size. There are only three museums in Scotland which receive more than one million visits per year, and of these, only one, the Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum, is within the arts

⁸⁸ The authors of the *Monitor* assert that the data in their research is gained in good faith, though they also present their reservations about the validity of the figures from certain venues.

sector.⁸⁹ Table 13 (pages 90-91), therefore, represents a cross section mainly of the medium and larger venues.

In terms of the general composition of venues in Scotland the 'museum and galleries' sector is unique in that there are more free venues than charging ones. There were 416 visitor attractions that responded to the *Monitor* that charged for entrance as opposed to 318 which did not. The 'paid' attractions saw a larger decrease than the 'free' sites in 2000.⁹⁰ In terms of actual visitor figures there was a general trend towards larger visitor numbers for the free sites. There were 25,107,611 visits to the free sites compared to 15,690,211 to the fee charging sites. In terms of visits there were far more to the free museums and galleries than to the charging ones, 7,948,243 visits to the 132 free venues compared with only 1,591,581 to the 75 venues charging admission.⁹¹ This in part explains why the museums and galleries sector earns the poorest revenue from its visitors. The average spend per person at visitor attractions in Scotland for 1999 was £11.84, for the free museums and galleries the average spend was just £3.51, whilst the admission charging sites did a little better with an average spend per head of £5.07. At a national level the expenditure of visitors in the Scottish visitor attractions sector is worth in the region of £475 million per year.⁹²

The majority of visits to Scotland (from other UK countries) occur in the summer months, with some 71% between April and September.⁹³ This departs

⁸⁹ *Monitor*, 2000, p. 7.

⁹⁰ *Monitor*, 2001, p. 3. This statistic was based upon a common response of 618 venues between 1999 and 2000.

⁹¹ *Monitor*, 2001, p. 6.

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 19.

⁹³ *Monitor*, 2000 Op. Cit., p. 12.

from the British trend, which shows a shift away from seasonal fluctuations. The museums and galleries sector in Scotland deviates from the visitor attractions average by a considerable margin and so is more in line with the British trend. In 1999 the museums and galleries of Scotland (as reported in the *Monitor*) received 63% of their visits in the summer months (April to September); this figure fell marginally to 61% in 2000.⁹⁴ The average for Scottish visitor attractions, however, remained constant at 71% in the year 2000. This statistic would appear to be very stable, as the Scottish Tourist Board report that 71% of visits to Scotland occurred in the summer months (April to September) in 1997.⁹⁵ The decreased level of seasonality in museums and galleries may be due to the fact that the larger venues are open all year round, and that almost all galleries are indoors.

There are far more museums and galleries in Scotland than any other single type of visitor attraction. The *Monitor* expressed figures for 207 'museums and galleries' that responded to their survey, with the closest rivals being 'interpretation and visitor centres' (115), then 'castles' (63) and 'historic houses' (60).⁹⁶ The total attendance for museums and galleries in Scotland in 1999 was reported as 9,539,824 and a little under half of these visits were to venues in the 'art' sector. This can be measured against the total number of visits in 1999 to attractions in Scotland, which was reported as 38,649,635.⁹⁷ Museums, therefore, made up 25% of the visitor attractions attendance in 1999. The 2000 edition of the *Monitor* reported a drop of 7% in attendance at

⁹⁴ *Monitor* 2001, p. 142.

⁹⁵ Scottish Tourist Board, *Visitor Attractions Survey*, Edinburgh 1997, p. 80.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

'Museums and Art Galleries' between 1999 and 2000.⁹⁸ This was reflected in all visitor attractions in Scotland, with only 'Gardens' (1% rise) and 'Transport Related' attractions returning a rise in visitor figures (2% rise). With an 'across the board' pattern such as this, macro influences must be seen as causal factors in the decline; the *Monitor* suggests the strength of the pound, and the high cost of fuel as influential.⁹⁹

Section Three: The Market-Place

This section returns to a broader view of the museums and galleries sector. The information in this section compares the act of visiting with other cultural activities, and introduces general factors that have affected museum and gallery visits. This section will bring together research on these external factors from market research, and present the changing climate of the arts throughout the 1990s.

The contextualisation of the statistical data concerned with the gallery visit is a relatively novel practice. This kind of analysis was not present in the SAC 1991 survey, and has subsequently increased between the SAC 1994 and 1998 surveys. The 2001 survey by *re:source* measured museums and gallery attendance against several other cultural activities, to show that the museum visit exists within a competitive market-place.¹⁰⁰ The addition of social and economic factors provides a set of data: concerned with 'cultural activity' against which to measure the gallery visit. The report states that museums are

⁹⁸ This figure is based on a common factor of 175 museums and art galleries, that responded to both the 1999 and the 2000 monitor. *Monitor*, 2001, p. 5.

⁹⁹ *Monitor*, 2001, p. 5.

¹⁰⁰ MORI, *Visitor to Museums and Galleries in the UK*, *re:source*, February 2001, p. 5.

amongst the most popular activities in the UK, with just under three in ten residents having visited at least once during 1999. Despite this general level of popularity, the report describes a clear downward shift in the overall pattern of museum visiting, culminating in a close examination of the year 1999. This general trend is not restricted to the museums sector, however, as all the major cultural activities had experienced a drop in attendance. The reasons given for this downturn relate to this notion of a 'market-place' of cultural activity, and to the situation of the museum visit within general tourism patterns.

This 'market-place' of cultural activity incorporates the cultural sector: museums, ballet, and theatre with tourism and leisure activities. The notion of cultural activity as involving only the traditional arts has been attacked as elitist, with the 'high arts' studied to the exclusion of more popular activities. There has been a trend, therefore, for surveys to include a broader remit of study. Thus the recent *re:source* survey includes data on 'rock concerts' and the 'cinema'. Despite the arguments over what should be included in cultural activity surveys, there is a consensus on the fact that museums and galleries have to compete for visitors within a much broader market-place than just the cultural sector. In terms of tourism, the most important factor in the 1990s was the dramatic rise in the number of people who travel abroad for their holidays. The *re:source* report asserts that 45% of visitors to museums and galleries stated that they visited whilst on a holiday or short break in the UK.¹⁰¹ Almost one third of international visitors are motivated to visit the UK because of the nation's museums.¹⁰²

¹⁰¹ *Re:source, Visitor to Museums and Galleries*, 2001, p. 5.

¹⁰² McCormick, T., *International Visitors to UK Museums and Galleries*, Museums and Galleries Commission, London 1999, p. 8.

Museums also suffer from the competition of the leisure market, and a general reduction in the amount of leisure time available. There are two distinct points here, firstly the rise of new leisure attractions including the advent of Sunday shopping. The leisure market has experienced a period of massive growth over the last twenty years, with an ever broadening range of activities available. Key points of growth have been health centres and fitness clubs, the invention of the Internet and computer games. The second point is the actual and perceived reduction in the amount of 'leisure time' that individuals have or believe they have. Recent research has suggested that there is a trend towards a decrease in leisure time, which goes against the received notion of an exponential growth in leisure. Whether leisure time is on the increase or not, there is a definite trend towards viewing leisure time as increasingly precious, and so any venue attempting to attract visitors must offer 'value'. The question of 'value for money', has recently been rephrased as 'value for time.' This reflects the understanding that in the future the wealthy will be 'time poor' and the poor will be 'time rich'. Museums must, therefore, address this issue of offering value for time to certain sectors of society, and value for money to others.

The problem of 'value' is a question of image as much as a question of the quality of experience. The negative image of museums, within some sectors of society, is one of the largest barriers to attendance that museums face. This question is dealt with in more detail in the next chapter, though it is worth noting here that the vast majority of attenders (85% in 1998) of all arts events

felt they received value for money.¹⁰³ This statistic includes the theatre and ballet and other attractions which traditionally cost money to attend. However, with the majority of the visual arts being free to access, the question returns to quality of experience and value for time.

The UK is the only member of the European Union where the length of the working week increased significantly over the past decade¹⁰⁴. Furthermore, the European Commission has estimated that throughout the EU there are almost 7 million men who work more than a 48 hour week, and the UK accounts for more than half of them.¹⁰⁵ In general museums and galleries receive an equal number of male and female visitors, though more women claim to be interested in the arts than men. This trend is most notable in the *British Art Show 2000* survey into attendance at contemporary art venues/exhibitions, where the gender division was 56% female against 44% male.¹⁰⁶ Again, this may come back to the manner in which the statistics were gained, and the pressure for an interviewee to give the perceived 'correct' response.

Whether the negative effects of the image of museums and galleries as elitist and irrelevant, or the reduction of leisure time is the cause, there is a general downward trend in attendance for all the established arts.¹⁰⁷ Indeed, the *re:source* report indicated that there was a general downturn in attendance at a

¹⁰³ *Attendance, Participation, Attitudes*, 1998, p. 18. This statistic refers to value-for-money at the most recent arts event that the respondent had to pay for. Most museums and galleries in Scotland are free to enter, though some temporary exhibitions have an entrance charge.

¹⁰⁴ *Trends to 2006*, 1995, p. 25.

¹⁰⁵ *Trends to 2006*, 1995, p. 25-26.

¹⁰⁶ *British Art Show In Edinburgh 2000*, prepared for the British Art Show Galleries Consortium by Lynn Jones Research Ltd., Edinburgh 2000, p. 5.

¹⁰⁷ MORI, *Visitor to Museums and Galleries*, *re:source*, 2001, p. 4.

whole range of attractions across the entire UK. Well known parks or gardens appear to have experienced a decline of 8%, stately homes, castles, and palaces have suffered a decline of 7%, and cathedrals and churches have undergone a 9% decline.¹⁰⁸

The trend can be seen to have affected a wide variety of places and events during 1999. There were two surveys carried out by MORI, at the beginning and at the end of 1999. The results can be seen in Table 15 below. An important consideration in relation to these two surveys carried out by MORI was the proximity of the Millennium celebrations. The build-up, and to a certain

Table 15: Visits to Places or Events in the Past 12 Months

Venue	Feb. 1999	Nov/Dec 1999	Change +/-
	(2,454)	(4,461)	
Cinema	59%	52%	-7%
Museum/ Art Gallery	35%	28%	-7%
Well-Know Park or Garden	36%	28%	-8%
Stately home/ Castle/ Palace	32%	25%	-7%
Theme Park	28%	25%	-3%
Theatre/ Opera/ Ballet	30%	24%	-6%
Famous Cathedral or Church	32%	23%	-9%
Zoo/ Wildlife Park/ Reserve	33%	23%	-10%
Live Sporting Event	26%	23%	-3%
Pop/ Rock Concert	16%	16%	--
Classical Concert	12%	9%	-3%
None of these	16%	20%	

Source: MORI 2001.

extent anxiety, of these celebrations meant vast sums of money was spent on advertising leisure activities that, although not directly in competition with museums and galleries, may have had an unquantifiable impact. McCormick's study into international visitors to UK museums and galleries, reported that 50%

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 4.

of museums were planning events or activities for international visitors for the Millennium.¹⁰⁹ In explaining this general decline the report states that:

Although there are no clear reasons for a decrease in the proportion visiting museums and galleries, it is likely that it is due to a combination of factors, many of which have long term implications for the popularity of heritage related attractions in general.¹¹⁰

This statement was followed in the report by a list of cultural and social changes that have occurred in the 1990s in the UK. These factors are outlined in a very general manner with even more non-specific statistical support. The analysis of the 'market-place' within the *re:source* report is little more than a veneer, making references to trends without any kind of analysis. An understanding of the social and economic forces which shape visiting patterns and behaviour can only be gained from sources dedicated to researching cultural, economic and social forces.

Detailed economic and demographic analysis presents a mixed forecast for the future of museum and gallery visiting. Cultural and social forecasting sources analyse the past as well as predict trends for the future. Data on these issues can be gained from a variety of sources, though the predictions are only as reliable as their source material. The Henley Centre prepared a report in 1995 for the Arts Council of England, the Scottish Arts Council and the Arts Council of Wales.¹¹¹ It outlined predictions for the main trends in social structure, economic developments, and attitudes and technology. These predictions were

¹⁰⁹ McCormick, *International Visitors*, 1999, p. 9.

¹¹⁰ *Visitors to Museums and Galleries in the UK*, MORI commissioned by *re:source*, London 2001.

¹¹¹ *Arts Council's Study: Trends to 2006*, Henley Centre for Forecasting commissioned by the Arts Council of England, Scottish Arts Council, and the Arts Council of Wales, 1995.

based on a variety of in-house material and Arts Council research.¹¹² The changes to the demographic composition of Britain show a 'greying' of society, with a sharp decline in the 25-34 age group, and an increase in the 35-44 and 55-64 age group, along with a rise in the number of elderly (75 and over). The proportion of young people staying on in schools post-16 appears likely to continue to rise, and participation in post-18 and post work-experience education seems likely to rise.¹¹³ Both of these factors are encouraging, as in terms of museums and galleries the 45-54 age group (with no children) was the most frequent attenders reported in the 2001 *re:source* report. Education has also been recognised as a central force in the creation of a visiting public. The trend towards suburban and rural settlement and away from inner city living that characterised the 1970s and 1980s appears likely to halt.¹¹⁴ There is a move towards regeneration of the cities, and museums and galleries have a role to play not only in ensuring the success of such schemes but also in taking advantage of them.¹¹⁵ Central Clydeside, however, is amongst several large metropolitan areas in the UK which is experiencing de-urbanisation.¹¹⁶ Table 11 (page 84-5) indicates that three of Scotland's main cities have experienced de-

¹¹² The report was prepared from the following in-house material, *Planning for Social Change*, the main annual syndicated research report and service produced by HC, which covers broad structural trends in the UK economy and social structure and is based on major surveys of public attitudes and consumer behaviour. This draws on both a HC survey (with a sample size of 2000 UK citizens) and official statistical sources. *Frontiers*, is a parallel report which covers several European Union countries including the UK, this also draws on a HC survey (with a sample size of 7000 EU citizens in five countries) and official statistical sources. *Media Futures*, another annual syndicated report service which examines new communications and entertainment media and developments in information technologies. Finally *Leisure Future, Planning for Consumer Markets*, which is a consultancy project which reports on direct marketing, consumer attitudes and behaviour in specific markets.

¹¹³ *Trends to 2006*, 1995, p. 3.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹¹⁵ See *The Role of Art in Regeneration*, Scottish Executive 2001.

¹¹⁶ *Trends to 2006*, 1995, p. 11.

urbanisation between 1981 and 1990, Edinburgh (-2.50%), Dundee (-5.90%), and Glasgow (-0.80%). Perth (+7%), Aberdeen (+3.8%) and Inverness (+11.40%), however, experienced growth in this same period. The growth of urban settlement, and the return to established urban areas is good news for the galleries within those cities and towns.

The economic forecasts contain a mixed message for museum visiting. The baseline economic project for the UK, prepared by the Henley Centre, appears encouraging, with steady but moderate GDP growth (2.75% per annum on average).¹¹⁷ Consumer spending, however, may lag behind and the trend is towards more 'defensive' expenditure. This means spending on insurance, private health care, private education and pensions will rise¹¹⁸, which may mean a decrease in more cultural expenditure. This 'defensive' spending is linked to the continuing changes in the labour markets, where the trend is towards increased flexibility but with decreased security. Women are playing a greater role in both full-time and part-time employment, and there are likely to be fewer prospects for lower-skilled workers. The number of small firms or self-employed people will rise substantially, which means greater financial risk across many of the social groups.¹¹⁹ All this will make for a greater degree of time flexibility and at the same time a greater proportion of people continued re-training and education.¹²⁰ These upheavals in social structure may render the social class definitions of culture unusable. The increased fluidity of social

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 26-27.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

structure may also present problems for museums in identifying audience groups.

There is also a wide variety of cultural changes that will have a dramatic effect on both the act of visiting museums and on the attitudes of the visitors themselves. These range from specific developments in media and technology to broad social and cultural trends. The effects of technological change on the arts are an established area of study. The Henley Centre's publications suggest that the audience for media and IT will generally continue to fragment, with older and lower income groups more 'technophobic' than younger, more affluent groups. The new forms of artistic expression developed through these new media have been accepted by different social groups at different paces. IT-based media technologies could pose a threat to live arts as they offer a low cost option for diverse entertainment. This may simply make the live experience a more desirable luxury. Experience suggests that new media may not be in direct competition with other forms and may simply expand the overall market.¹²¹

The social effect of the proliferation of TV and radio channels, and the explosion of the 'information superhighway' seems likely to be the erosion of shared aesthetic values. However, the stereo-typical perception of the arts as the preserve mainly of the more educated and affluent middle classes appears to remain.¹²² The *1994/5 British Social Attitudes Survey* asked respondents which areas of government spending ought to receive more funding. The responses showed a clear class divide. Among the professional group one in seven wanted more money spent on the arts, whereas among the working class group this

¹²¹ Ibid., p. 4.

¹²² Ibid., p. 96.

figure fell to just one in twenty.¹²³ This can be compared to data gathered exclusively in Scotland for the Scottish Arts Council. In 1994 70% of respondents to the SAC survey believed central government had a responsibility to support the arts and culture, though only 51% supported their local government spending money on the arts and culture in their area. Support for both central government spending and local authority spending has increased significantly over the past decade. The 1998 SAC survey revealed that 83% of respondents believed central government had a responsibility to support the arts and culture, and 68% supported their local authority 'spending money on the arts and culture' in their area.¹²⁴ This increase in support is not necessarily the result of an increase in arts and cultural provision throughout Scotland, as only 33% of respondents to the 1998 survey believed that 'the amount of arts and culture in my area has increased in recent years'. This is a smaller percentage than the 1994 survey, where 41% believed there had been an increase in arts and culture in their area.¹²⁵

The change in attitudes towards government and local authority support for the arts may be due to differing definitions of the arts. It has already been shown that the traditional definition of the arts is still prevalent, but that a broader understanding of new art forms is occurring slowly. There has been an explosion in arts festivals in the UK since the 1970s, though many would not perceive some festivals, such as the Notting Hill Carnival, as part of the 'arts.'¹²⁶ The Scottish Executive, however, is active in its support of the arts festivals in

¹²³ *1994/5 British Social Attitudes Survey*, Quoted by *Arts Council's Study: Trends to 2006*, 1995, p. 96.

¹²⁴ *Attendance, Participation, and attitudes*, 1998, p. 26.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

¹²⁶ *Trends to 2006*, 1995, p. 97.

Scotland, as a part of cultural provision and tourism. The Fringe Festival has grown into the world's largest festival which attracts over 500,000 visitors in just 23 days.¹²⁷ The Fringe, and other Scottish festivals are seen as a way of increasing Scotland's links with other countries, and attracting international events. The Scottish Executive aims to provide wider opportunities for cultural access, domestically and abroad, and is committed to maximise the social benefits of culture.¹²⁸

The USA's dominance in new media seems likely to continue and to increase the cultural influence of that nation. There is, however, a concurrent trend amongst middle class groups towards 'Europeanisation'.¹²⁹ The increase in Continental holidays and flexible working patterns can be seen as causal factors in this. There can be perceived a growth in cultural nationalism, which is especially strong in Scotland and Wales. The increased influences from both the USA and Europe have been accelerated by the dramatic increase in mobility made available by the cheapening of travel. There has been a ten-fold increase in the distance travelled by car over the past 40 years, along with approximately 70% of the population owning a car.¹³⁰ The car was reported as the most popular method of travel to events and shows in 1998. This preference has grown since 1994, when 53% of attenders responded that they had travelled to their last show or event by car, compared to 64% in 1998. Public bus and coach travel to events and shows has declined since 1994, when only 17% travelled by this method, to only 11% in 1998. Walking, travelling by train, private

¹²⁷ Scottish Executive, *Creating Our Future*, Edinburgh 2000, p. 37.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

¹²⁹ *Trends 2006*, 1995, p. 5.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

bus/coach and taxi travel were used by less than 10% of attenders in both 1994 and 1998.¹³¹ Cheap air flights have made long distance travel more accessible. This makes travel less of a barrier to attendance than ever before for both international visitors to Scotland's museums and galleries, and for Scots to experience other nation's museums. Cultural tourism has been described as an increasing force and can only be seen as a positive factor in encouraging cultural participation, including attendance at museums and galleries.

It would be erroneous, however, to focus on the USA and Europe to the exclusion of the rest of the world. Recent statistics from MORI¹³² have shown that significant growth in population between the present (this report was published in October 1999) and 2025 will be in the developing world. Most growth will be in Africa, Asia and Latin America, with less in the USA (and much of this growth will come from Asians and Hispanics), and the former USSR, and hardly any growth in Europe.¹³³ This means that although Europe is

Table 16: The Top Ten Countries Supplying Visitors for the UK.

1. USA
2. Germany
3. France
4. Netherlands
5. Scandinavia (group)
6. Australia
7. Canada
8. Japan
9. Belgium
10. Spain

Source: Museums and Galleries Commission 1999.

¹³¹ *Attendance, Participation, and Attitudes*, 1998, p. 16.

¹³² Worcester, R., *Socio-Cultural Currents Affecting Heritage Site Visit Considerations*, English Heritage Director's Forum 14th October, York 1999, pp. 1-7.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

now the prime source of museum and gallery visitors, this may change in the next quarter of a century. Table 16 shows the top ten countries supplying visitors to the UK.

If the World Tourism Organisation's, *Tourism 2020 Vision*¹³⁴ projections are correct, then by 2020, Scandinavia, Australia and Belgium will be replaced in this list by China, the Russian Federation and Italy as the world's top outward bound countries. This provides a list of 'key international markets' for museums and galleries, and from this list all except the USA included Scotland in their favoured regions of the UK.¹³⁵ London topped the list for every country with just under 50% of all visitors favouring this destination. The countries which included Scotland in their list were; Germany (8.9% of German visitors favoured Scotland) France (4.9%) Netherlands (4.2%) Australia (18.7%) Japan (7.5%).¹³⁶

Within the UK, the distribution of international visitors has remained static over the last decade.¹³⁷ In general tourism terms 'seasonality' has gradually been eroded and the duration of visits has shortened, though the frequency has increased. The effect is more goal directed tourism, with a general decrease in level of expenditure. Scotland's share of the UK tourist market is approximately 8%.¹³⁸ Although a small percentage, in real terms it represents a profitable sector,^{and} it has been estimated that tourism is worth £2.5 billion to the Scottish economy and supports 17,000 jobs.¹³⁹

¹³⁴ World Tourism Organisation, *Tourism 2020 Vision*, 1998.

¹³⁵ McCormick, T., 'Appendix 8: Key International Markets for Museums', in *International Visitors to the UK*, pp. 193-196.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 193-196.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

¹³⁹ Scottish Executive, *Creating Our Future*, 2000, p. 33.

In general tourism terms, there has been a steady rise in both the volume of people going on holiday and in the number of holidays taken. The market for short holidays tends to be skewed towards 'upmarket' households, adults aged 25-44, and households with children.¹⁴⁰ All of these groups are key audiences for museums, for example 28% of short holidays were taken by adults from AB households (compared to 17% in the adult population) and the AB are amongst the most likely to attend art galleries.

¹⁴⁰ *Trends 2006*, 1995, p. 91.

Chapter Three

The Mechanics of the Audience

This chapter presents the available research describing the details of the mechanics of the audience and the act of visiting. The focus will be on the factors that have been isolated as barriers to attendance, as well as the factors that have been described as influences to visit. Any analysis of why certain groups visit museums and galleries and others do not requires an understanding of what the visit entails, how the museum is experienced, which parts of the experience draw visitors and which parts repel visitors. This, however, is an area which is generally ignored as a topic for research. Instead, research has focused upon asking individuals why they choose not to visit, or why they choose to visit. These questions provide useful information in understanding the image of the museum, and the public's perception and attitude towards the arts and cultural sector. What is rarely asked is how they made sense of the exhibitions, and what is rarely studied is how they constructed meanings within the exhibitions. What is particularly conspicuous in its absence in relation to exhibitions of art, are studies into how and why the public enjoyed the exhibition.

The research in this chapter will examine the audience. It would be erroneous, however, to assume that all research into the audience is an examination of the same people, with the same beliefs, perceptions and attitudes. The audience is made up of different 'social groups', within which are 'sub-groups'. The ACORN Lifestyle Profiles in the previous chapter offer useful

social groupings, and sub-groups. Reactions to museums and galleries and their collections, however, are not uniform even amongst these social groups and sub-groups. The influence of reference groups on visiting habits is another area which has received very little attention. The factors which influence the individual to visit or to stay away can, therefore, be studied on these three levels. Research into broad social groups can, therefore, only offer general responses, whereas the research into sub-groups can provide insights into the conflicting and concurrent trends within the general responses.

Section one of this chapter will begin with the general attendance profile of visitors to museums and galleries in the UK. The research at this general level does not have room for distinctions to be made between the types of venues which are visited by each of the profiles. Different types of venue naturally attract different types of audience, and for distinct reasons. Just as there is a definable distinction between the visitor profile for museums and the visitor profile for art galleries (see chapter two, page 67) it is possible to prove that within art galleries there are distinct audiences for each of the main types of gallery. Section one will not attempt to prove this between all types of art gallery as there is not enough research available. What will be shown is that there is a distinct visitor profile for contemporary art venues, and that this profile is sufficiently different from the general profile for art galleries to make the distinction valid.

The power and the role of the exhibition as a teaching tool is an area of professional debate, though one fundamentally lacking in research.¹ Visiting museums and galleries is a complex social and cultural action. Hooper-Greenhill has described in her book how museums are constructed in particular ways, according to distinct rationales.² This refers to the collection and display of objects in a culturally meaningful manner. The decoding of these displays is a cultural process which requires prior initiation into the rationales of the museum's construction and the process of the museum. Meaning is constructed in relation to the collections and displays within the museum. Objects, however, are mute and therefore open to interpretation. This interpretation is structured firstly through narratives which are constructed through the display and secondly through the methods used to communicate these narratives.³ Museums produce a visual environment for experience and learning, where visitors deploy their own interpretative strategies.⁴ These strategies includes the use of a repertoire of interrogation devices, or a series of standard questions on the form, function, and aesthetic value of the exhibits.

Exhibitions are produced to communicate meaningful visual and textual statements, but there is no guarantee that the intended meaning will be achieved. Visitors to museum exhibitions respond in diverse ways. They may or may not perceive the intended meanings, and, perceiving them, they may or may not agree with them, find them interesting, or pay attention to them. For example, where art exhibitions may be put together to show art historical schools or movements, visitors may be operating within much more personal frameworks of interpretation.⁵

¹ Hooper-Greenhill, E., *Museums and the Interpretation of Visual Culture*, London 2000, p X.

² See Hooper-Greenhill, E., *Museums and the Shaping of Knowledge*, London 1992.

³ Hooper-Greenhill, E., *Museums and the Interpretation of Visual Culture*, 2000, p. 3.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

This reaction of the visitor to the displays in museums and galleries, and to the venue in general is a topic of research that has suffered from neglect in the UK, and Scotland in particular. There are examples of sociological research into the enjoyment of visual culture, and the mechanics of visual interpretation. Abercrombie and Longhurst's study into the mechanics of the audience as a cultural phenomenon provides a highly informative survey of the theories behind the mechanics of the audience.⁶ Little has been done on a similar scale with the public's experience of museum and galleries. The only example that I am aware of that utilises the museum of art as a setting for such research is Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson's work, *The Art of Seeing: An Interpretation of the Aesthetic Encounter*.⁷

Research into the 'audience' for museums and galleries has frequently ignored the 'general population' outside of the museum. It is only in recent years that non-attending, and in particular minority groups, have been targeted for examination. In Scotland the most recent study of both the attenders and the non-attenders of museums was performed in 1994.⁸ This survey sought to avoid the situational bias that characterises most museums research and was therefore performed on the streets.⁹ Just as it is a recent occurrence to analyse the non-

⁶ Abercrombie, N., and Longhurst, B., *Audiences: A Sociological Theory of Performance and Imagination*, London 1998.

⁷ Csikszentmihalyi, M., and Robinson, R.E., *The Art of Seeing: An Interpretation of the Aesthetic Encounter*, Malibu CA 1990.

⁸ Prentice, R., Davies, A., and Beeho, A., 'Seeking Generic Motivations for Visiting and Not Visiting Museums and Like Cultural Attractions,' *Museum Management and Curatorship*, Vol. 16. No. 1, 1997, pp. 45-70, p. 49.

⁹ The Survey was compiled from response gained from 875 adult residents of Lothian and Fife, the residents being selected randomly from passers by. 51.6% responded that they had visited a museum in the previous twelve years.

visiting public so it is also novel to focus exclusively on minority groups. There has been no study in Scotland during the 1990s which focused exclusively upon ethnicity and cultural action. The most recent research into ethnic minority attitudes towards the arts was completed in 1999 by the Arts Council of England. This highly informative report addressed the issues of defining the perceptions of the arts and the patterns of attendance among the United Kingdom's ethnic minority groups.

Scotland, however, does not have a large ethnic minority population. In the 1991 census 5.5% of the population of the United Kingdom was described as belonging to an ethnic minority group. Over half of this number lived in the South East of England, with Scotland only accounting for 2.1% of the ethnic minority population in the UK.¹⁰ In terms of the residents in Scotland, there were only 1.25% reported in the 1991 census as being from ethnic groups other than white. Forecasts suggest that the proportion of people from ethnic minorities is likely to increase by at least a fifth over the 1991 to 2001 period, and will continue to grow until the middle of the 21st century.¹¹ The figure for Scotland alone has been predicted to rise to 3% in the next decade, which means the number of people from ethnic minority backgrounds will double.¹² The Scottish Arts Council recognises that ethnic minority audiences are under-represented in Scotland, and co-funds Glasgow's Cultural Diversity Officer, and yet there is still

¹⁰ Jermyn, H., and Desai, P., *Arts - What's In A Word? Ethnic Minorities and The Arts*, London 2000, p. 5.

¹¹ Owen, *Towards 2001: Ethnic Minorities and the Census*, Centre for Research in Ethnic Relations, University of Warwick 1996. Quoted in Jermyn, H., and Desai, P., *Arts*, 2000, p. i.

¹² *Information Bulletin: The Scottish Arts Council's Bi-Monthly Newsletter*, 'Multicultural Multiplicity', February/March 2001, pp. 8-9, p. 8.

a lack of detailed information on ethnic minority attitudes and attendance within Scotland.

The methods used for gathering data in this section will be seen to be dominated by the qualitative study. Even though this method relies upon the responses of usually no more than 150 interviewees it is believed to be far more insightful than the responses gathered from survey research due to the respondents' ability to discuss their opinions and actions rather than simply reporting them. Qualitative research also allows the respondent to define the arts in their own terms. It is this ability for each individual to express his/her perceptions of the arts that gives the responses greater validity. There has, however, been very little qualitative research conducted in Scotland by the arts and museums councils. In museums and galleries there is an emphasis on quantitative evaluation, which is in part due to the ease with which variables such as visitor figures can be measured. Audience evaluation and development, however, is best measured through qualitative research. The extent to which an audience engages with the museum, or the extent to which a project meets the needs of the audience, can best be ascertained through descriptive evaluation.¹³

This chapter will be divided into two sections; the first will examine the available data which pertains to Scotland, the majority of which is quantitative. The findings of these reports will then be contextualised, in section two, by a brief survey of the arguments and qualitative research surrounding barriers and motivations to attendance in the UK.

¹³ Museums and Galleries Commission, *Building Bridges: Guidance for Museums and Galleries on Developing New Audiences*, London 1998, p. 18.

Part One

This section will draw upon the research findings of reports which describe the barriers and motivations to attend arts event in Scotland. This limited scope will allow a more detailed analysis of the individual groups that make up the audience. This will require a study of research into what drives the motivations for visiting and what stalls that process. I will utilise the insights gained from the American 'life-cycle' model to explore the current research available in Scotland. A similar model has been adopted in some recent research in the UK.

The 2001 *re:source*, report *Visitors to Museums and Galleries in the UK* divides its focus into five core visitor groups or 'Life Stage Profiles.' These are: 'students'; 'families'; 'middle aged 35-44 without children'; 'middle aged 45-54 without children'; and 'older adults 55 and above without children'. Belk and Andresen contend that the family life-cycle is the key explanatory factor since it integrates age, income and employment.¹⁴ The 'life-cycle' model stresses the movement through time as a structural element to arts attending. They also argued that life-cycles can reasonably predict leisure patterns because the available time and the types of general leisure activities each segment group can choose to be engaged in are shaped by the stages of life. Table 17 below, shows the complete life stage breakdown from the MORI survey, including those life-stage profiles which were not seen as core visitor groups. Adults aged 25-35 and 35-44 (without children) were not included as core life stage profile groups due

¹⁴ Belk R., and Andresen, A., 'The Effects of Family Life Cycle on Arts Patronage,' *Journal of Cultural Economics* 6(2) 1982, pp. 25-35.

to the relatively small number of people who fell into these categories (9% and 5% respectively), and the equally small percentage of the visitors they made up.

Table 17: Visits to Museums and Galleries - Life Stages

	% of UK population	% of visitors to museums and galleries	Average frequency of visits p.a.	Estimated % of all visits
Base: All (4,461)	%	%		%
Adults 65+	19	15	2.97	16
Adults 55-64	11	14	3.1	15
Adults 45-54	11	13	3.22	14
Adults 25-44 (with children aged 5-10)	14	14	2.59	13
Adults 25-34	9	10	3	11
Adults 25-44 (with children aged 4 or under)	12	9	2.55	8
Adults 35-44	5	7	3.2	7
Young Adults 16-24	9	9	2.46	7
Adults 25-44 (with children aged 10+)	8	7	2.42	6
Students	4	6	2.49	5
Young Adults 16-24 (with no children)	7	4	2.53	4

Source: MORI 2001.

The estimated percentage of visits column shows that older adults account for the most visits and that as the age categories decrease so does the volume of visitors per category. This takes into account the proportion of people in each of the categories, the frequency of their visits, and the proportion of people in each life stage who make a visit.¹⁵ The Life-Stage profiles used by *re:source* make fewer claims for predicting visitor habits. Though they do express the degree to which the attendance profile is determined by age, and social situation. The *re:source* report discusses Britain as a whole; there are

¹⁵ MORI, *Visitors to Museums and Galleries in the UK*, commissioned by *re:source*, February 2001, p. 9.

however reports which focus on Scotland in particular, such as Prentice (*et al.*). This section will conclude with an analysis of the generic motivations to visit and barriers to attendance within Scotland.

The five core 'Life Stage Profiles' used by *re:source* show not only the broad patterns of visiting, but also the component parts in relation to one another. The data was gathered from 175 constituencies in Great Britain, and attention was paid to choose a representative selection by "country, region, class, voting patterns and other variables."¹⁶ The definitions of the life stages are unique to this report, which makes direct comparisons with other reports impossible. Indeed, this report does not treat childhood as a unique life-stage; instead the analysis of children is included with 'families.' This causes further complications for comparisons, as no other report discusses the family as a unit in this fashion.

The five core stages are a useful rough division of the general audience of the museum and galleries visitor in the United Kingdom. The profiles provide data at the most general level, and so can be used as general trend data or as 'averages' against which to measure the levels of deviation by sub-groups. It can be assumed that each life stage will encounter different barriers and experiences, different incentives and encouragements to visit, though information on this is not included in the *re:source* report. There is some discussion on the types of venue that particular life-stage groups prefer, though the data which supports this discussion is not included. The data from the

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 26. These other variables included gender, age, employment, and household tenure.

re:source report are very general and the base number is too low to provide truly insightful statistics on Scotland as a discrete entity within the UK. I shall therefore supplement this data with highly specific research carried out by the SAC and other bodies mentioned above.

The Scottish Arts Council report on children as an audience for the arts contains detailed statistical data on the art forms and regularity of children's attendance. The data can be used to describe the nature of children's attendance and attitudes as distinct from the family unit. As has been described in chapter one, the emphasis on developing children's interest in the arts is dominated by participation and the development of critical audience skills is often over looked. Current research within the UK seems to suggest that attendance at art events declines as children progress through their teens. This trend can be seen in the SAC report *Children's Attendance, Participation and Attitudes Towards the Arts in Scotland* which presents a marked dip in attendance by 14-15 year olds.¹⁷ This pattern was repeated when the children were asked what events they would like to go to.¹⁸ The mid-teens appear to be especially associated with particularly low levels of audience involvement, but evidence from the early twenties seems to show a reverse in this trend. Harland and Kinder's explanation of the shifting pattern is that:

As children mature into the mid-teens, increased desire for independence, peer group influences and new forms of social interaction, along with pressures of examinations make it less acceptable to attend cultural venues with parents. In the early twenties, often with the demands and financial constraints of tertiary

¹⁷ *Children's Attendance, Participation and Attitudes Towards the Arts Scotland*, Edinburgh 1999, p. 36. This statistic refers to events attended out of school time.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

for overhead projectors) at the new much lower price of 65p?

Yes

No

4) How often do you buy photocopy cards or acetates for overheads from the Photocopy Assistant?

Never

Less than once per term

Once or twice per term

More than twice per term

5) Waiting times. Do you consider the average time you may have to wait for a Photocopier to be:

Very Reasonable

Quite Reasonable

Reasonable

Quite Excessive

Excessive

Comments and suggestions for improvements to service.

red corn - white
line please



education behind them, more young people, especially those who have inherited cultural capital, re-engage and re-define them as part of their own emerging independent life style, meaning and social network.¹⁹

Attitudes to the arts appear to be formed at a young age, and it is evident that these attitudes are formed in a wide context, among family, friends and teachers.²⁰ O'Brien described parents as one of the formative elements in the shaping of children's attitudes and perceptions towards cultural activity. This has been termed the family osmosis affect by Harland (*et al.*).²¹ It appears to be most prevalent amongst women and those who attained high educational levels, for these groups were the most likely to cite their parents, and particularly mothers, as significant influences.²² This was a particular trait of the middle-class families, twice as many interviewees from professional families described being 'turned on to' the arts by their mothers. Unlike other authority figures, parents were rarely described as being a 'turn off' for interest in the arts.²³

Within the *re:source* report there was no distinction made between the types of museums or galleries that respondents visited. This has meant that the life-stage profiles can only provide the most general information. The detailed data on the attendance at the British Art Show in Edinburgh 2000, however, provides a statistical breakdown on the audience. Although the volume of visitors is smaller than the number of respondents to the *re:source* report, the

¹⁹ Harland, J., and Kinder, K., *Crossing the Line: Extending Young People's Access to Cultural Venues*, London 1999, p. 36.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 33.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

British Art Show data can offer an illustration of the profile of arts attenders to a specific type of venue in greater detail.

The British Art Show report analysed the visitors to eight exhibitions held at eight venues across Edinburgh in 2000. Although the show consisted of contemporary art only, it was held at a variety of venues of high profile, including national museums of art, and so achieved far more visitors than the average contemporary arts show. The dangers of comparison between these reports stem from the incompatibility of their respective collection and analysis techniques. These reports were never meant to be compared with one another and the data divisions are not entirely compatible. The report's classifications of the differing groups varied, as did the methods of gathering the data, therefore, a perfect match is impossible.

What can be seen, however, is that age remains central as a visiting characteristic for all types of audience. Table 18 (page 125) shows that most visitors to the contemporary art exhibitions were under 44 years of age, and that the largest single age group was the 25-34 age group. This can be compared with Table 5 (page 67) in chapter two, which clearly shows that as the age of respondents increased so did the likelihood of them being interested in both museums and art galleries. The contradiction may be due to the differing survey methods employed, but it is not possible to accurately gauge this.

Re:source identified students as a 'core' group for museums and galleries in general. Of the students in the *re:source* survey, 37% had visited a museum or gallery in the last 12 months, though students tended to be infrequent visitors, with only around one third (34%) having visited three or more times in the 12

more times in the 12 months preceding the survey. This compares adversely with the average visitor where 53% had visited a museum more than three times in the preceding 12 months.

Students appear in the Art Show research as the second largest group to visit all eight venues, see Table 19 (page 127). This figure fluctuates between the venues, but they form the largest group at the Collective gallery with 40% (compared with the average across all eight, which was 23%). Whereas, at Inverleith House students only made up 17% of the visitors, perhaps explained by its distance from student areas of the city. The unusually high number of students and unusually low number of 'working full time' visitors at the Collective Gallery can partly be explained by its status as an artist-run space.

Families with children tend to be infrequent visitors, with an average of 2-3 visits per year (See Table 17, page 118). Adult visitors (aged over 25) without children tend to visit at least three times a year, though whether a person has a family or not appears to have little influence over their opinion of the value for money of visits, or their likelihood of recommending museums or galleries to a friend.²⁴ Of those families which have children, it is the children between the ages of 5 and 10 who appear to have slightly more influence over family museum visiting than children under 4, or over 10 years old.²⁵

The middle aged 35-44 without children category was one of the highest frequency attenders, with more than one-third (34%) having visited at least five

²⁴ MORI, *Visitors to Museums and Galleries*, 2001, p. 10.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

times in the preceding 12 months.²⁶ Members of this group were more inclined to visit alone, though this only meant 27% compared with the average 17%. This group visited all types of museums, with no one type standing out as the most significant.²⁷

The middle aged 45-54 without children group was the most frequent museum visitor type, with 36% having visited 5 or more times in the preceding 12 months.²⁸ This group visited two types of museum most frequently, decorative/applied and fine art museums or social/local history, visited by 45% and 41% respectively. Just over half (51%) of this group visited museums and galleries whilst travelling abroad, compared with the average 35%.²⁹

Older adults, aged 55 plus, account for the largest proportion of all museum and gallery visits in the *re:source* report. This group were frequent visitors (visiting around 3 times per year), though on average slightly less than the 35-54 year olds.³⁰ In accordance with this, this group was the most likely to have a favourite museum or gallery, 23% compared with the average 16%. This group was also the most pleased with the visit, with just 2% considering it of poor value.³¹ Equally, this group was the most likely to recommend their latest museum or gallery visit to a friend, 34% compared with the average 28%.³²

These general profiles do not prove accurate when compared to the specific data on a particular type of venue. The general profiles offered by the

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 12.

re:source report exclude the age groups 25-34 (without children), 35-44 (without children) and young adults aged 16 to 25, as they do not visit museums with sufficient regularity or in sufficient numbers to be included as core visiting groups. Research into the visitors to contemporary art venues proves that these exact groups are the most likely and the most numerous to visit modern art exhibits. Hence, specific research by type of venue is required to supplement the general research, otherwise discrepancies such as these would not be highlighted. It can be assumed therefore that specialist venues with distinct audiences will not be represented in the visitor profiles, due to the small quantity of such venues and the small proportion of the visiting public which frequent such venues.

Tables 19 and 20 (pages 126 and 127), express the characteristics of the modern art audience, which can be seen to deviate from the general visitor profiles provided by *re:source* in a number of key ways. The vast bulk of visitors to the contemporary arts are made up of one of people who attended alone (41%). People attending with family members (25%) or friends (22%) were far less numerous. There are relatively few who visit with a spouse (17%) and practically none with organised groups (3%). Interestingly, there appears to be a lack of mixture between these groups: visitors attending with family and friends amounted to 1% for instance, and the number of visitors accompanied by both a spouse/partner and a friend was less than 1%. The age range for the Arts Show was highly restricted, with the vast bulk of visitors aged under 34 (51%).

The 1994 survey into generic motivations to visit and principal barriers to attendance, represented the youthful white collar profile to be expected from central Edinburgh. This research can be assumed, therefore, to be more

Table 18: Employment Status of Visitors

Employment Status	All respondents	City Art Centre	Fruitmarket Gallery	Collective Gallery	Stills Gallery	Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art	Dean Gallery	Talbot Rice Gallery	Inverleith House
	N = 1438	N = 227	N = 182	N = 88	N = 93	N = 273	N = 268	N = 63	N = 244
Working full time (30+ h p/w)	51%	52%	51%	35%	58%	51%	52%	46%	52%
Full time education	23%	21%	29%	40%	24%	20%	24%	27%	17%
Working part time (<30 h p/w)	10%	11%	7%	14%	6%	10%	10%	16%	9%
Retired	9%	9%	7%	3%	6%	10%	9%	2%	13%
Housewife or mother	3%	3%	0	2%	2%	6%	1%	3%	7%
Unemployed	3%	3%	5%	2%	3%	1%	2%	6%	2%
Other	1%	1%	1%	2%	0	1%	1%	0	<0.5%
Refused to state	<0.5%	0	0	1%	0	0	1%	0	0
Social Class	All respondents	City Art Centre	Fruitmarket Gallery	Collective Gallery	Stills Gallery	Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art	Dean Gallery	Talbot Rice Gallery	Inverleith House
	N = 1260	N = 204	N = 167	N = 81	N = 86	N = 218	N = 224	N = 55	N = 225
AB	42%	35%	33%	31%	30%	54%	53%	45%	38%
C1	48%	55%	57%	60%	58%	35%	40%	45%	48%
C2	4%	5%	3%	1%	5%	4%	2%	0%	7%
DE	6%	5%	7%	7%	7%	8%	5%	9%	6%

Source: British Art Show In Edinburgh 2000.

Table 19: Sex of Visitors and Age of Visitors

Sex	All respondents	City Art Centre	Fruitmarket Gallery	Collective Gallery	Stills Gallery	Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art	Dean Gallery	Talbot Rice Gallery	Inverleith House
	N = 1438	N = 227	N = 182	N = 88	N = 93	N = 273	N = 268	N = 63	N = 244
Female	56%	52%	53%	59%	54%	54%	56%	52%	67%
Male	44%	48%	47%	41%	46%	46%	44%	48%	33%
Age	All respondents	City Art Centre	Fruitmarket Gallery	Collective Gallery	Stills Gallery	Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art	Dean Gallery	Talbot Rice Gallery	Inverleith House
	N = 1438	N = 227	N = 182	N = 88	N = 93	N = 273	N = 268	N = 63	N = 244
15 - 24	23%	22%	26%	38%	27%	19%	21%	35%	15%
25 - 34	28%	28%	36%	24%	30%	26%	29%	33%	23%
35 - 44	19%	21%	14%	19%	22%	16%	18%	17%	24%
45 - 54	15%	15%	15%	10%	11%	18%	15%	10%	16%
55 - 64	9%	9%	5%	7%	5%	12%	10%	5%	13%
65 +	6%	4%	4%	2%	5%	8%	6%	0	8%
Refused to State	<0.5%	<0.5%	0	0	0	<0.5%	1%	0	1%

Source: British Art Show In Edinburgh 2000.

Table 20: Type of Visiting Group

Visiting with	All respondents	City Art Centre	Fruitmarket Gallery	Collective Gallery	Stills Gallery	Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art	Dean Gallery	Talbot Rice Gallery	Inverleith House
	N = 1438	N = 227	N = 182	N = 88	N = 93	N = 273	N = 268	N = 63	N = 244
Alone	41%	54%	49%	52%	57%	39%	31%	52%	24%
With family members	25%	12%	9%	10%	11%	14%	17%	5%	29%
With spouse/partner	17%	14%	14%	11%	8%	19%	22%	10%	19%
With friends	22%	16%	23%	22%	20%	22%	18%	25%	20%
With family members and friends	1%	1%	1%	1%	0	1%	1%	0	3%
Organised group	3%	3%	4%	3%	4%	3%	1%	6%	3%
With spouse/Partner and friends	<0.5%	0	0	0	0	<.5%	0	2%	1%
With working colleagues	<0.5%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	<0.5%
Not stated	<0.5%	0	0	0	0	<0.5%	0	0	0

Source: British Art Show In Edinburgh 2000.

representative of the modern/contemporary arts audience. The make-up of the sample was predominantly either single (46.8%) or couples with no children

(19.6%)³³ aged under 30 (49.2%)³⁴ and non-manual or professional.³⁵

The limitations of the methodology are made clear in the report: “the survey relies on *remembered* reasons and behaviour, and *rationalisations* of remembered behaviour.”³⁶ The advantages are made no less clear: “even if memories are in part reconstructed, the motivations remembered are implicitly meaningful to the individual concerned...”³⁷

The paramount characteristic of the mechanics of visiting was that respondents were more likely to give multiple reasons for visiting, than for not visiting. This may be explained by flaws in the survey process; people only need to give one good reason why they don't do something, but feel the need to persuade others that they have good rational reasons for doing something. More importantly, it is likely that an individual will not visit for one reason only, whereas a visitor may visit on different occasions for different reasons. The survey, however, has no mechanism for discovering whether this is the case as the survey cannot ask respondents to qualify and explain their responses in the same manner as other research techniques, such as the focus group. The multi-

³³ Compared with only 24.1% of respondents who were couples with children and 9.5% who fell into the other category.

³⁴ There was a substantial number of respondents aged between 31 and 50, 29.2%, the 50 and above category only accounted for 22.2%.

³⁵ The largest single social class by employment was the intermediary managerial (20.8%), followed by the non-manual supervisory and clerical (19.4%). The professional and higher managerial group comprised a surprisingly large 15.3%, and students made up a substantial 26.1%.

³⁶ Prentice, R., (*et al.*) ‘Generic Motivations,’ *Museum Management and Curatorship*, 1997, p. 51.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

attributed nature of visit motivation was bolstered by social factors. Surprisingly, self-fulfilment was less important than general interest, meaning that the number of respondents with specific interest in collections (45.3%) or intellectually led motivations were fewer than those who were seeking a 'day out' (60.4%).³⁸ A motivational force unique to museums and galleries, as opposed to other general leisure activities, is that of supporting a venue or scene. Within the cultural sector this factor was more important to museum visitors than to other venues' audiences, with 58.2% of respondents stating that they visited museums 'to contribute to preserving the attraction for future generations' compared to 47.1% for theatre visitors, and 48.2% for industrial attractions for instance.³⁹

Specifically museums are visited frequently to gain general knowledge, out of curiosity and as part of a general day out, escaping routine by relaxing with family and friends; all supported by a longer term view that this activity will aid the preservation of the museum for future generations.⁴⁰

The above conclusions refer mainly to the motivations and activities of museum visitors as opposed to specific visual arts venues, such as contemporary art gallery visitors or craft exhibition visitors.

There has been very little work done in Scotland on why people do not visit museums. However, the 1994 survey provides some key data on the attitudes and perceptions of residents of Scotland. Interestingly 'no interest' in the museum (33.8%) and museums not reflecting their personality (11.9%) were not the reasons given with the most regularity. A lack of time (36.9%), and

³⁸ Ibid., p. 53.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 53.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 53.

preference for other activities (26.7%) made up the largest proportion of responses. The very low proportion of respondents who stated that they felt they were unable to understand museums (2.9%) and that museums were of no interest to people in their social group (5.7%) may be explained by the embarrassment of agreeing with these responses in an interview situation. The respondent will also be aware of what the 'correct' or socially desirable answer would be. Criticisms of this type of survey question are outlined in chapter one.

Motivations to visit and not to visit museums and galleries are generally believed to be independent of the socio-demographic groupings into which visitors are traditionally placed.⁴¹ However, the particular situation of an individual within a life-cycle appears of fundamental importance. Prentice (*et al.*) found that age could be used as an index against which to measure motivations to visit. 57.8% respondents aged over 50 expressed a specific interest in a particular museum's contents as both directly and strongly motivational for visiting. This can be compared to a figure of only 36.9% of those aged under 31, who responded likewise. The figure for those under 31 is particularly striking as it is substantially below the average (45.3%).⁴² This pattern of those in older age groups responding in greater numbers to particular motivations was mirrored in the response rates for other motivations such as a general day out and contributing to the preservation of a museum for future generations. Equally,

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 55. Prentice, R., (*et al.*) cite three sources for this statement, Holloway, J.C., and Plant, R.V., *Marketing for Tourism*, London 1988; Davies, S., *By Popular Demand. A Strategic Analysis of the Market Potential for Museums and Galleries in the UK*, Museums and Galleries Commission, London 1994; and Wertheim, M.E., 'Market Research for Heritage Attractions' *Journal of Vacation Marketing* 1, pp. 70-74, 1994.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 55.

Table 21: Proportion of Respondents who had Visited an Attraction in the Previous Twelve Months giving Reasons for Visiting

	Museum Visitor	Theatre Visitor	Industrial Attraction Visitor
<i>Percentage of visitors citing</i>			
A general day out	60.4	55.7	69.7
A specific interest in such attraction	45.3	53.2	38.6
Getting away from normal routine	54.3	62.9	52.6
To spend time with family and friends	52.3	62.7	56.1
To meet other people	24.9	33.7	29.8
To accompany a friend/family member with a specific interest in such attractions	48.6	54.4	45.6
To broaden one's general knowledge	79.4	59	71.5
To satisfy one's general curiosity	68.7	54	64.5
To rest/relax	53.6	69.8	47.4
To fill in spare time	43.5	36.4	42.1
To tell friends about	23.2	36.4	28.9
To feel comfortable	44.6	46	29.4
Something which one ought to do	26.7	24	28.1
To gain a feeling of self-fulfilment	43.1	42.2	36.8
To contribute to preserving the attraction for future generations	58.2	47.6	48.2
Other	6.1	4.1	7.9

Source: Prentice (e. al.) Sample survey 1994.

younger visitors were less likely to visit out of a feeling of comfort, or to escape daily routine than were older visitors. Spending time with family and friends was a disproportionately important motivation for those museum visitors aged 31-50 (39.1% compared to 17.7% of those under 31). It was those over the age of 50 who cited this motivation as very important with the most frequency.⁴³

The other traditional divisions of respondent, such as social class and household type, proved not to be as decisive a discriminator between motivations

⁴³ Ibid., p. 55.

for visiting or not, as is generally believed.⁴⁴ This would lend support to the life-cycle or life stage profile, with its emphasis on age and employment as being the best method for categorising museum visitor motivations. Students were an exception in the Prentice (*et al.*) study on two counts. Firstly, there is a disproportionately large number of students in Edinburgh, and secondly students are usually younger than other adults so it is difficult to discern whether age or social class is the discriminatory factor. The proportion of students who cited a specific interest in a collection as an important reason for visiting was well below all other groups, 22.0% professional or managerial households, and 18.8% of visitors from other households.⁴⁵ A similar pattern was shown for other motivations which were otherwise 'class' divisible, such as aiding in the preservation of the museum and collection for future generations. Students appear therefore to act as a social class outside of the normal, or predictable, patterns of behaviour.

Household type had only a limited effect on the responses gained in the study. However, visitors with a child in their household were more likely than other groups to rate spending time with family and friends as very important in their reasons for visiting (44%). This can be compared with couples with no children (30.1%) and single people (14.9%) who responded that time with family and friends influence their decision greatly.⁴⁶ Gender was found to be of limited importance in affecting motivations. For example, the proportion of male

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

museum visitors who cited a specific interested in the collection (22.9%, compared to 12.5%) or in broadening ones general knowledge (46.9%, compared to 39.1%) was higher. Females were, by contrast more likely to cite being with family or friends (30.3%, compared to 20.6%) as a very important motivation in museum visiting, and to cite meeting other people as important (31.4%, compared to 13.7%).⁴⁷

The motivations for not visiting museums were equally difficult to divide by socio-demographic patterns. Age, however, was the greatest exception, for example, non-visitors under 31 years were more likely than older non-visitors to cite lack of interest as a reason for not visiting a museum(40.2%, compared to 28.0% of non-visitors aged 31-50, and 23.3% of non-visitors aged over 50 years).⁴⁸ This younger age group was also more likely to cite not having thought to visit a museum than the two older age categories, 27.1% of the under 31 age group compared to 16.9% of the 31-50, and 5.5% of the 50 plus age group.⁴⁹ Unsurprisingly, the difficulties of access were of more concern to the elderly museum visitor, though interestingly this group was also the most likely to state a reason other than those listed on the schedule of reasons for not visiting (19.2% of the elderly cited other reasons compared with 4% of all the younger non-visitors). Conversely, the non-visitors under the age of 31 were more likely to see no urgency in visiting (20.6%) compared with the non-visitor aged 31-50 (16.9%) and those aged over 50 years (4.1%).⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 57.

⁴⁸ Ibid., pp. 57-59.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 59.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 59.

Table 22: Proportion of Respondents who had not Visited an Attraction in the Previous Twelve Months Giving Reasons for Not Visiting

	Museum Non-visitor	Theatre Non-visitor	Industrial Attraction Non-visitor
<i>Percentage of non-visitors citing</i>			
No interest	33.8	35.3	53.9
Attraction of this type do not interest people in respondent's social group	5.7	7.1	4.8
No time	36.9	25.4	21.5
Admission prices too expensive	8.1	32.8	6.8
Difficulties in getting to such attractions	4.8	7.1	13.8
No such attractions in respondent's area of residence	6	6.2	9.3
Do not usually think of visiting such attractions	20.5	15	25.2
Prefer to spend time on other activities	26.7	22	22.1
Consider visiting such attractions only on holiday	11.9	7.3	10.5
Can always go in the future	16.7	13	9.9
Unable to afford to visit	8.3	26.8	7.6
Feel unable to understand such attractions	2.9	1.7	4
Attraction thought to be unreflective of personality	11.9	7.9	9
Difficulties in visiting through ill health	2.1	2.3	2.6
Unsatisfied on a previous visit	5	4	3.1
Other	6.7	7.9	4.5

Source: Prentice (*et al.*) sample survey 1994.

Social class and of the makeup of the household (whether there is a child in the house, etc.) are important factors in discriminating between the motivations for either visiting or not. A factor which is often taken to be central to the staying away of young people, namely that museums do not reflect their personality, was in fact disproportionately cited by the middle-age group.

The nature of the 1994 survey meant that it identified singular barriers, and so did not address the deep-seated social issues, or 'hidden barriers.' As will be shown in the second section of this chapter, the survey is a fundamentally flawed tool when examining complex cultural actions, attitudes and perceptions. Many respondents in the 1994 survey cited motivations and barriers that masked deeper reasons. Factors which act as barriers to attendance can also act as barriers to the expression of these factors. There are social pressures to give certain responses to questions on the value of cultural institutions, and within this a cultural reticence to express barriers.

The survey found that the 'no interest' and 'no time' were the most common reason for non attendance, both of which reveal very little about why the respondent has no time or interest for these activities. Vital information has not been recorded because the survey format does not allow the interviewer to interpret the question or ask for a qualifying statement. Only through such techniques as the focus group or the in-depth interview can such bland statements as 'lack of time' be replaced by truly meaningful responses which enable museums to act to rectify the situation.

Part Two

This section will focus on the arts in general but on the barriers to attendance in detail. The previous section has described the motivations and barriers unique to particular audience profiles, and to Scotland alone. This section will examine the barriers to attendance in the broader context of the UK,

and so draw upon a far larger body of research. There have been many studies into low attendance and non-attendance in the 1990s in the UK, though relatively few include data gathered in Scotland. There does appear to be a common range of generic barriers including practical and psychological issues which appear in most research. There is an assumption that museums and galleries are open to all because they do not charge for admission. This is not the case; while there may not be a direct financial barrier, there exist a range of deterrents and hidden costs. These deterrents tend to act more as barriers for the poorer members of society and for ethnic minorities.⁵¹

The most prominent amongst the practical barriers are cost of travel, child-care problems, lack of time and lack of information. The most commonly cited psychological factors involve deep-seated perceptions about the image of the arts, who they are for, and their relevance to people's lives. Merriman divided these barriers into cultural and structural constraints.⁵² The structural constraints included the amount of leisure time, money and energy at the individual's disposal. These constraints were considered the easiest to deal with, and were constraints common at the general level. The cultural constraints tend to be linked to the individual in a more personal manner, and so require a more complex approach. The cultural constraints include an individual's attitude to the museum and its collection and the value (positive or negative) that he/she placed on the experiences within museums and galleries.

⁵¹ Moore, J., 'Poverty and Access to the Arts: Inequalities in Arts Attendance,' *Cultural Trends*, Vol. 8, Issue 31, 1998, pp. 49-71, p. 53.

⁵² Merriman, N., *Beyond the Glass Case: The Past, Heritage and the Public in Britain*, Leicester 1991, p. 57.

The Museums and Galleries Commission (MGC) guidelines on developing new audiences described all barriers in relation to access.⁵³ These guidelines discussed the building up of relationships with the multiple audiences of museums and the disparate groups of non-attenders. The MGC made the point that once this process had commenced the dialogue between museum and audience must be maintained. This dialogue would aid groups in accessing the museum's services and so increase the sophistication with which these groups used the museum. The MGC's re-phrasing of the question of 'barriers to attendance' with 'barriers to access' makes a subtle though important distinction. There are issues in relation to low and non attendance which emanate from society as a whole, the cultural constraints, rather than from the museum itself. Equally, there are structural issues which are centred within the museums themselves, which tend to be issues that exclude possible attenders. Thus, a museum must address those issues which exclude audiences or preclude access to the museum. The deep-seated psychological issues that deter people from museum usage are society-based problems. These issues include the perceptions and attitudes that non-attenders have about the museum. It has been argued that many of these perceptions and attitudes are developed at the structural levels of society and are inherited or learned from parents and reference groups. Therefore, marketing campaigns can only do so much, and a widespread cultural change must be initiated.

⁵³ Museums and Galleries Commission, *Building Bridges: Guidance for Museums and Galleries on Developing New Audiences*, London 1998.

The Research Surveys Great Britain and Target Group Index data express a high correlation between arts attendance and social class. The 1996/7 TGI information reported in *Artstat* showed that 32.5% of people attending 'arts events'⁵⁴ in Great Britain were from social groups A and B compared with only 17.2% from groups D and E.⁵⁵ This dichotomy is emphasised by the fact that social groups A and B account for only 21.3% of the population whereas social groups D and E account for 28.5%.⁵⁶ Of the eight 'arts events' included in the TGI questionnaire, 'galleries and exhibitions' attendance was amongst the most representative of society as a whole, and received the second largest percentage of social grade D and E visitors. There is however a clear A B bias - of the 5,037 adults who responded that they visited galleries and exhibitions 39.4% were from the highest social grades with only 14.5% from grades D and E.

There is clear evidence that people living on low incomes, or classified as living in areas of poverty are less likely to visit museums and galleries. In understanding why this might be the case there are a great many theories, but there have been few in-depth studies. What is apparent from the research that has been conducted is that impressions and perceptions of the arts are of central importance in influencing the decision making process.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ The 'arts events' that were included are as follows: any performance in a theatre; plays; ballet; contemporary dance; opera; classical music; jazz; and art galleries and exhibitions.

⁵⁵ *Artstat: Digest of Arts Statistics and Trends in the UK 1986/87 - 1997/98*, Arts Council of England, London 2000, p. 104, Table 6.5.

⁵⁶ *Artstat*, 2000, p. 104, Table 6.5.

⁵⁷ Moore, J., 'Poverty and Access,' *Cultural Trends*, 1998, p. 59.

Table 23: Social Class and Gallery Visiting

	All adults	Art galleries and exhibition	Any of the 8 'arts events'
Sample	25,386	5,037	11,324
Grade %			
A and B	21.3	39.4	32.5
C1	27.6	32.2	32.2
C2	22.5	13.9	18.1
D and E	28.5	14.5	17.2
Total	100	100	100
Men	48.6	47.2	45
Women	51.4	52.8	55
Total	100	100	100

Source: BMRB International - Target Group Index 1997.

The influence of friends and peer groups on arts consumption has been identified as significant. Harland and Kinder found that dissonance with self or group identity and anticipation of negative reactions from others formed a barrier to attendance. This social dimension to arts consumption shows that a supportive family environment can promote arts attendance, whereas apathy or antipathy on the part of relatives and friends can cement barriers. Indeed, it has been argued by Harland and Kinder that the support network of teachers, youth workers and arts workers is "every bit as important as the experience itself."⁵⁸

Non-attending parents are likely to refer to 'barriers' such as lack of time, children's behaviour and concern for the best value for money.⁵⁹ Prentice argues that the perception of museums as educational establishments prevented less educated parents from visiting with their children due to fears about being unable

⁵⁸ Harland, J., and Kinder, K., *Crossing the Line*, 1999, p. 37.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

to interpret the exhibition to their children.⁶⁰ Wood placed the blame for this situation squarely at the door of the museum management stating that museums “are relying on parents to supply or interpret knowledge of displays to children” and that they may not be “encouraging and helping them to do so” sufficiently.⁶¹ This type of barrier to attendance can be considered not only as cultural but as inherited. Children are not taken to museums and galleries due to their parents’ self-doubts, which propagates the view of the museum as ‘not for them’ and decreases the likelihood of the child identifying with the museum. Adult respondents in the *Mass Observation Survey* (1990) described childhood experiences as influential in shaping attitudes, stating that “unless you’re brought up in those sorts of circles, you’re not educated to go...[to the arts.]”⁶²

It would be wrong to assume that there is one homogenous group of ‘the poor,’ who experience barriers to attendance. Equally, it would be wrong to assume that there is one homogenous group from an ethnic minority, who experience barriers to attendance. There are barriers to arts attendance which appear to cut across cultural and ethnic divides. Equally, there are also barriers which appear to be specific to ethnic and cultural groups. Studies which focused on the attitudes of people from ethnic minorities suggest that there is a ‘cultural

⁶⁰ Prentice, R., ‘Perceptual Deterrents to Visiting Museums and other Heritage Attractions’ *International Journal of Museum Management and Curatorship*, 1994, 13, pp. 264-279. Quoted in Harland, J., and Kinder, K., *Crossing the Line*, 1999, p. 33.

⁶¹ Wood, R., ‘Museum Learning: A Family Focus,’ in Durbin, G., (ed.) *Developing Museums Exhibitions for Lifelong Learning*, London 1990. Quoted in Harland, J., and Kinder, K., *Crossing the Line*, 1999, p. 33.

⁶² Mass Observation Ltd., *Art in London: A Survey of Users and Non-Users*, Great London Authority, London 1990. Quoted in Harland, J., and Kinder, K., *Crossing the Line*, 1999, p. 33.

dimension' to explaining inequality in arts attendance.⁶³ This cultural dimension can be explored through research into ethnic perceptions and attendance and through class distinctions. Research into ethnic minorities is severely hampered by the lack of national figures of attendance at arts events by ethnic minorities. The RSGB omnibus survey suggests that adult attendance levels among ethnic minority groups at museums and galleries are below average.⁶⁴ However, the sample of ethnic minority adults in the survey was small and contained an above average representation of people who had taken their full-time education beyond the age of 19 years.⁶⁵

The 'cultural' dimension to low arts attendance is not fully explained by a simple distinction between ethnic minority visitors and white visitors. Ethnic minority groups cannot be seen as homogeneous, with common values and common barriers. Jermyn and Desai highlighted distinctions between the many ethnic groups and explored the barriers to the individual groups. In a general sense social barriers were more important to the younger groups and to women of ethnic minority origin. The lack of interest by husbands and in some cases their active disapproval was a particular problem for Asian women in general and Pakistani women in particular.⁶⁶

A qualitative study, conducted in 1993, into the behaviour and motivations of infrequent arts attenders from ethnic backgrounds found the usual

⁶³ Jermyn, H., and Desai, P., *Arts - What's In A Word? Ethnic Minorities And The Arts*, London 2000, p. 17.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. iv.

barriers of cost, travel and child-care as factors which limit attendance.⁶⁷ This research also identified a fundamental difference between two broad ethnic groups. The Asian respondents predominantly socialised as family groups and participated in activities that were locally organised. The Asian women tended to dominate the decision process in regards to arts and cultural attendance. The African/Caribbean respondents were inclined to socialise with friends away from the family and to take part in activities on a more loosely-structured basis.⁶⁸

A similar study by Jermyn and Desai, was conducted in 1999. This research, however, can only be informative of perceptions in general, and contains no data on attendance. Hence there is no way to separate the views and intentions expressed from the actions themselves. This research was carried out using focus groups, with population size as the criterion for selecting communities.⁶⁹ This ensured that the ethnic minority populations of the United Kingdom were represented equally. The focus groups were held with two different age and life-style ranges: 18 to 24 year olds who were single with no children, and 25 to 50 year olds who were married or partnered with children living at home.⁷⁰

Barriers such as 'lack of time,' 'lack of information,' and 'availability problems,' were found to be amplified by language difficulties and a perception

⁶⁷ Harris Research Centre, *Black and Asian Attitudes to Arts in Birmingham*, London 1993.

⁶⁸ Jermyn, H., and Desai, P., *Arts*, 2000, p. 15.

⁶⁹ There were 13 group discussions attended by 104 people in total. The groups contained a cross-section of people in terms of socio-economic background and level of interest and participation in the arts. It was ensured that at least half of the respondents in each group were arts attenders and none of the respondents were complete rejecters of the arts. The field work was conducted in Birmingham, Bradford, Leicester, Manchester, Slough and London during November and December 1999.

⁷⁰ Jermyn, H., and Desai, P., *Arts*, 2000, p. 20.

of the arts as 'not for them.'⁷¹ The 'lack of time and money' cited by many respondents as a cause for their low or non attendance could also be seen as a screen for a deep seated distrust of and discomfort with museums and galleries. These feelings, however, were the result of limited contact with the arts, though many admitted that even with more time and money they would be unlikely to attend mainstream arts events. "People did not want to 'waste' their money on something they would not enjoy and attending unfamiliar events involving an element of risk."⁷² This involves other barriers such as the 'irrelevance' of arts and the negative view of the audience experience. Many felt that attending arts events would be a passive experience; this was particularly found to be the case with young people. Favoured activities often involved an element of social interaction and participation. While there may be validity to these barriers, Jermyn and Desai argued that though lack of time and expense may limit attendance, these explanations can mask other issues concerning the level of interest people have in particular events.⁷³ The National Campaign for the Arts has argued that to remove one barrier may merely divert attention to another, and thus simultaneous strategies may be needed to address the deep-seated discomfort with the arts.⁷⁴

The issue at the heart of these 'barriers' is that of the definition of the arts. The young were found to have particularly strong stereotypical images of who the arts were 'for.' The 'typical' arts attender, as perceived by the ethnic

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 56.

⁷² Ibid., p. iii.

⁷³ Ibid., p. 53

⁷⁴ National Campaign for the Arts, *Encouraging Access*, London 1999.

minority groups was described as “White, middle class or upper class, over 35 years old and a serious-minded, intellectual or ‘arty’ type.”⁷⁵ The arts themselves were seen as dominated by western ‘high’ arts. Many of the interviewees’ principal exposure to these arts was through the television and other media, which reinforced the image of the arts as exclusive and elitist. This echoes findings by the Harris Research Centre that found that people were conscious of their minority status within the arts venue.⁷⁶ This was felt to be more acute due to the composition of the venue’s audience. In some cases the publicity materials produced by mainstream arts venues reinforced the images and fears of minority groups.

An earlier study, by Francis in 1990, stated “ethnic minority groups tend to limit their attendance at arts activities due to perceived discrimination in the wider society.”⁷⁷ The lack of knowledge about their culture and consideration given to the contributions of African, Caribbean and Asian people to both the historical and contemporary British culture has had the effect of marginalising these communities. This has left the mainstream of art and culture of little relevance or interest to these communities.⁷⁸

Some of the perceived ‘social’ barriers are common to non-ethnic minority groups of social class D and E. There has been little direct research into whether social classes D and E feel marginalised in the same manner as ethnic

⁷⁵ Jermyn, H., and Desai, P., *Arts*, 2000, p. 59.

⁷⁶ Harris Research Centre, *Black and Asian Attitudes to the Arts in Birmingham*, London 1993. Quoted in Jermyn, H., and Desai, P., *Arts*, 2000, p. 61.

⁷⁷ Francis, J., *Attitudes of Britain’s Black Community Towards Attendance at Arts, Cultural and Entertainment Events: A Qualitative Study*, London 1990. Quoted in Jermyn H., and Desai, J., *Arts*, 2000, p. 16.

⁷⁸ Jermyn, H., and Desai, P., *Arts*, 2000, p. 16.

minority groups, but it does appear likely. The pressures of work and in some cases the long hours of work coupled with the responsibility of child-care heightened the sense of the arts as a luxury they could not afford, and the preserve of the more affluent classes. The necessity of a successful experience for repeat visiting is common to groups of all ethnicity and class, however, it is more extreme with ethnic minority groups as it is felt by the entire class range within these groups.

The fundamental barrier to attend museums is psychological access; where sections of the population feel disenfranchised due to a sense of alienation from the dominant social discourse of the museum.⁷⁹ This alienation is a cultural phenomenon, which is most evident in the studies of ethnic minority groups, but which is not restricted to these groups. The structural barriers, such as the practical issues of travel, cost and physical access only constrain those who wish to attend. The cultural barriers, therefore, are the forces which influence whether or not an individual wishes to attend. Bourdieu argued that the contents of a museum only have meanings for those who have the ability to decode the experience of looking at objects.⁸⁰ The ability to decode the experience relies upon cultural capital, that is sufficient knowledge of the culture that encoded the experience. This knowledge is gained through certain forms of socialisation; through education and family upbringing.

This chapter has shown that there are key discriminating factors that may shape the visiting public. The full nature of these factors has not been studied,

⁷⁹ McLean, F., *Marketing the Museum*, London 1997, p. 75.

⁸⁰ Bourdieu, P., *Distinction*, London 1984, p. 2.

nor is it possible to discern whether all the key factors have been identified. What is clear, however, is that of those factors that have been isolated, age appeared to be the most important. As table 17 from this chapter and table 5 from the previous chapter show, the older sections of society were the most likely to visit museums in general. These tables also show that the same is not true of art galleries, instead there is a very different and more complex pattern. Harland and Kinder have suggested that teenagers do not visit cultural venues as much as people in their early twenties. Harland and Kinder found that this reluctance to visit cultural venues subsided after tertiary education, and once young adults found a means of self-finance. Though this return was more likely in young adults who had previously been inculcated with cultural capital. What all this shows is that a discriminating factor is reliant upon the nature of the venue. That each type of venue has a series of correlating discriminatory factors, though there has not been any direct study of this to date.

Conclusion

There are two central questions in visitor studies: firstly, which data can be gathered to describe the visitor experience, and secondly, how to gather it and interpret it? These questions are linked, however, as the method chosen to gather data will inevitably have a profound effect on what data are compiled. The survey will produce statistical data, suggesting that age, class and education are core discriminators, whereas the focus group or in-depth interview will produce a wide spectrum of opinion and attitude towards visiting, suggesting that the decisions on visiting are made from a cultural perspective. A synthesis of the data produced from these two collection methods would seem to provide a more complete picture, and yet as this study has shown, comparisons between the data from different collection methods produces more contradictions than conclusions.

There are flaws in both the survey and the focus group as methods, which render the use of the data from these sources subject to questioning. There can be defects in the collection of data and there can be errors in the analysis of data, but the fundamental issues raised by surveys and focus groups appear valid. The survey work by the SMC and the SAC has produced a body of research which delineates the main characteristics of visitors and their attitudes and perceptions towards the arts. There has been a lack of focus group and in-depth interview work in Scotland, but the general points raised by studies from throughout the UK would seem to present the main forces that motivate and deter visitors behaviour. What are less clear, however, are the fine workings of these complex patterns of behaviour. What has not been resolved are the fundamental criteria

for the action of visiting and the process of the experience. There have been isolated studies into the mechanics of visiting, conducted throughout the world, but these vary in time and location and the methods used to gather the data and the theoretical framework which informed the analysis vary too widely to allow any kind of meaningful comparison of finding and method.

The fundamental characteristics of the museum visitor involve the interplay of age, social class, education, and to a certain extent ethnicity. These characteristics do not operate in a fixed way, however; just as there is no average visitor there is no average museum. Hence there is no one pattern of characteristics which describe all visitors to museums and galleries. There has not been sufficient research in Scotland to establish the exact formation of the central characteristics of the museum visitor for each type of museum. The averaging of socio-demographic characteristics between the entire visiting public, which has been the general method of divining the 'universal visitor', has had the effect of creating an average visitor where one has never existed. The museum and galleries community is not made up of equal numbers of each type of venue, and each type of venue is not visited by an equal number of visitors. This means that the particular nature of specialist venues, and their corresponding audience profiles are often lost in generalisations.

There are broad types of venue, which provide broad types of services, and which attract broad types of audiences. The visitor profile of a particular venue should incorporate the socio-economic characteristics of the visitors to that venue, compared with the catchment area within which it operates. This information alone, however, is not enough to explain why these groups attend and others do not. It could mean that particular age groups, or people of a

particular education level or class are the ones that are most catered for by that venue or that these groups are predisposed to visiting museums. Qualitative research can supply information on these issues, but the right questions must be asked. Unless the relative pertinence of the attitudes, interests, perceptions and constraints of the visitors are known, any conclusions drawn from their responses may be misleading.

Access to museums and galleries can be stalled by structural and cultural constraints. The structural constraints prevent attendance in practical ways, whereas the cultural constraints involve aspects of alienation and disenfranchisement. These barriers will only be broken down if the attitudes of museum professionals change.¹ The involvement of local communities in the research, design, and execution of exhibitions is central to ensuring their relevance to the people who are supposed to visit. Society has come to view the role of the museums and galleries in an increasingly pluralistic manner:

As a place of scholarship, it should be accessible above all to the observant eye, to an experienced public and the holders of pre-existing cultural knowledge. As a place of education, it should provide a store of images, and be ready to illustrate pedagogical concepts, while as a place of entertainment, it has to be a touristic attraction for the successful marketing of a certain range of leisure products.²

Each of these functions places the public in a different relationship with the

¹ McLean, *Marketing the Museum*, London 1997, p. 80.

² O'Neill M., and Dufresne-Tasse, C., 'Looking in Everyday Life/Gazing in Museums,' *Museum Management and Curatorship* vol. 16, No.2, 1997, pp. 131-142, p. 131.

museum or art gallery. Each of the functions can be measured and analysed, but an understanding of all is necessary to describe the role and value of an individual venue. The museum, of course, has another role, namely teaching the public how to use the services that the museum provides. And it is only through doing so, that they will breach all the barriers.

Appendix A.

Breakdown of Arts Venues in Scotland, by three Macro Regions

The abbreviations for the funding bodies are taken from the Scottish Arts Council report, *Exhibition Venues in Scotland*; and the *Visitor Attractions Monitor*. Where no funding body is indicated there was no information provided.

LA = Local Authority

CFO = Core Funded Organisation

OGD = Other Government Department/Agency

OTH = Other

HPS = Historical/ Preservation Society

OT = Other Trust

NTS = National Trust for Scotland

The Maximum Attendance column presents the highest attendance figure (rounded to the nearest hundred) that the venue attained between 1996 and 2000. The Permanent and/or Temporary column shows whether a venue displays works from a permanent collection and/or exhibits temporary exhibitions. This data has been gathered from the *Directory of Exhibition Spaces* and Scottish Arts Council's *Exhibition Venues in Scotland*.

Area 1: Highlands and Islands

Aberdeen and the East Highlands

Funding Body	Location	Name	Maximum Attendance	Permanent and/or Temporary
LA	Aberdeen	Aberdeen Art Gallery and Museum	291,000	P/T
CFO	Skye	An Tuireann		T
LA	Arbroath	Arbroath Library Art Gallery		P/T
	Arbroath	Arbroath Museum		P/T
LA	Peterhead	Arbuthnot Museum	8,000	P/T
CFO	Inverness	art.tn		T
	Dunkeld	Atholl Gallery		T
LA	Dundee	Barrack Street Museum	77,000	P/T
OT	Shetland	Bonhoga Gallery	10,000	T
LA	Carnoustie	Carnoustie Library Gallery		T
	Dundee	Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art		T
CFO	Dundee	Dundee Contemporary Arts		T

CFO	Inverness	Eden Court Theatre Art Gallery		T
HPS	Elgin	Elgin Museum	10,000	T/T
LA	Perth	Fergusson Gallery, The	15,000	P/T
LA	Forfar	Forfar Museum and Art Gallery	21,000	P/T
	Perth	Frames Contemporary Gallery		T
Private	Forteviot	Gallery Forteviot		T
Private	St. Margaret's Hope	Hoxa Tapestry Gallery	4,000	T
LA	Inverness	Inverness Museum and Art Gallery	91,000	P/T
LA	Kingussie	Iona Gallery		T
CFO	Aberdeen	Lemon Tree		T
	Lyth	Lyth Arts Centre		T
LA	MacDuff	MacDuff Arts Centre		T
LA	Dundee	McManus Gallery	127,000	P/T
LA	Forfar	Meffan Institute		P/T
LA	Montrose	Montrose Museum and Art Gallery	13,000 ¹	P/T
CFO	Aberdeen	Peacock Printmakers Gallery		T
LA	Perth	Perth Museum and Art Gallery	64,000	P/T
CFO	Stromness	Pier Arts Centre	19,000	T
	Scone	Scone Studios		T
CFO	Lumsden	Scottish Sculpture Workshop		T
LA	Lerwick	Shetland Museum	35,000	P/T
LA	Wick	St Fergus Gallery		T
OTH	Shetland	Sunburgh Airport		T
LA	Thurso	Swanson Gallery		T
Private	Alford	Syllayethy Gallery	1,000	T
OTH	North Uist	Taigh Chearsbhaigh Museum Art Centre	22,000	T
	Helmsdale	Timespan Gallery		T
OTH	Shetland	Unst Leisure Centre		T
OTH	Perth	Upper Springburn Theatre Gallery		T
OTH	Shetland	Whalesay Leisure Centre		T
OTH	Shetland	Yell Leisure Centre		T

Note: Forteviot Gallery is a private gallery showing contemporary art, though it is committed to holding at least two 'non commercial' exhibitions every year.

Area 2: The Central Belt

Edinburgh

Funding Body	Location	Name of Venue	Maximum Attendance	Permanent and/or Temporary
LA	Kirkintilloch	Auld Kirk Museum	84,000	T
LA	Cumnock	Baird Institute		T
	Bathgate	Balbardie Gallery		T
	Bishopbriggs	Bishopbriggs Library		T
OTH	Musselburgh	Brunton Thatre		T
	Glasgow	Bulkhead		T
LA	Glasgow	Burrell Collection	343,000	P/T
	Falkirk	Callendar House		P/T
LA	Cathcarston	Cathcarston Visitor Centre		T
CFO	Glasgow	Centre for Contemporary Arts (270 Sauchiehall Street)		T
	Stirling	Changing Room, The		T
LA	Edinburgh	City Art Centre	122,000	T
CFO	Edinburgh	Collective Gallery	35,000	T
OTH	Glasgow	Collins Gallery	80,000	P/T
	Glasgow	Compass Gallery		T
LA	Glenrothes	Corridor Gallery		T
	Stirling	Cowane Gallery		T
CFO	St Andrews	Crawford Arts Centre	22,000	T
	Dalkeith	Dalkeith Arts Centre		T
LA	Clydebank	Dalmuir Library		T
OT	Blantyre	David Livingstone Centre	45,000	T
OGD	Edinburgh	Dean Gallery	116,000	P/T
LA	Kilmarnock	Dick Institute, The	123,000	P/T
LA	Dunfermline	Dunfermline Museum & Small Gallery		P/T
OTH	Edinburgh	Eastern General		P/T

		Hospital		
	Edinburgh	Edinburgh College of Art		T
CFO	Edinburgh	Edinburgh Printmakers Workshop	16,000	T
	Falkirk	Falkirk Community Arts Project		T
CFO	Edinburgh	Fruitmarket Gallery, The	123,000	T
LA	Glasgow	Gallery of Modern Art (Queen Street)	561,000	P/T
LA	Glengarnock	Garnock Valley Arts Resource Centre		T
LA	Glasgow	Glasgow Art Gallery and Museum (Kelvingrove)	1,128,000	P/T
CFO	Glasgow	Glasgow Print Studio		T
OTH	Glasgow	Glasgow School of Art	38,000	P/T
LA	Irvine	Harbour Arts Centre		T
LA	Glasgow	House for an Art Lover	100,000	P/T
LA	Livingston	Howden Park Gallery		T
	Glasgow	Hunterian Art Gallery	112,000	P/T
	Coatbridge	Ironworks Gallery		T
LA	Kirkcaldy	Kirkcaldy Museum and Art Gallery	67,000	P/T
Private	St. Abbs	Kittiwake Gallery & Artists Workshop	24,000	T
LA	Milngavie	Lillie Art Gallery		P/T
LA	Lochgelly	Lochgelly Centre Gallery		T
LA	Ayr	MacLaurin Art Gallery		P/T
CFO	Stirling	MacRoberts Arts Centre Gallery		T
	Edinburgh	Mathew Architecture Gallery		T

LA	Girvan	McKechnie Institute	14,000	P/T
LA	Greenock	McLean Museum and Art Gallery	37,000	P/T
LA	Glasgow	McLellan Galleries	216,000	T
OGD	Edinburgh	National Gallery of Scotland	543,000	P/T
	Glasgow	Original Print Shop		T
LA	Paisley	Paisley Museum and Art Gallery	68,000	P/T
LA	Dunfermline	Pittencrieff House	23,000	T
NTS	Glasgow	Pollock House		P/T
CFO	Edinburgh	Portfolio Gallery		T
OTH	Edinburgh	Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland Gallery		T
	Edinburgh	Royal Scottish Academy		T
LA	Ayr	Rozelle House Museum & Gallery	23,000	P/T
OGD	Edinburgh	Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art	217,000	P/T
OGD	Edinburgh	Scottish National Portrait Gallery	210,000	P/T
LA	Stirling	Smith Art Gallery and Museum	62,000	P/T
LA	Glasgow	St. Mungo Museum	183,000	P/T
CFO	Edinburgh	Stills Gallery	23,000	T
CFO	Glasgow	Street Level		T
CFO	Edinburgh	Talbot Rice Gallery	33,000	P/T
CFO	Glasgow	Tramway		T
CFO	Glasgow	Transmission		T
LA	Irvine	Vennel Gallery, The	5,000	T

The Aberdeen Art Gallery and Museum drew the second highest visitor number of non-central belt venues, after the DCA. Interestingly the Aberdeen Art Gallery held this position despite a steadily falling number of visitors.

Area 3: Lowlands and Border Area

Funding Body	Location	Name	Maximum Attendance	Permanent and/or Temporary
LA	Galashields	Christopher Boyd Gallery		P/T
LA	Hawick	Hawick Museum & Scott Art Gallery	7,000	P/T
	Galashields	Old Gala House		T
LA	Peebles	Peebles Picture Gallery		T
LA	Selkirk	Robson Gallery		T
LA	Peebles	Tweeddale Museum and Gallery	12,000	P/T
LA	Castle Douglas	Castle Douglas Art Gallery	12,000	T
LA	Dumfries	Gracefields Arts Centre	28,000	P/T
LA	Dumfries	Robert Burns Centre	39,000	T
LA	Stranraer	Stranraer Museum	15,000	P/T
LA	Kirkcubright	Tolbooth Art Centre	15,000	P/T

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