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The Political Institute
of Action Research

Museums Without Borders:

A Preliminary Exploration into the
Concept of Peripheral Museums
and their Accessibility

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Abstract:

This research undertakes a thorough examination of peripheral museums, which are often overshadowed by their more prominent counterparts, to uncover their unique roles, challenges, and contributions to cultural heritage, especially concerning accessibility. Peripheral museums – a notion adapted from the field of anthropology in contrast to more centrally located, better funded, and touristic “central” museums – have distinct characteristics that set them apart from mainstream cultural institutions. This study seeks to shed light on the diverse narratives, community engagement strategies, and socio-cultural impacts associated with these museums.

The investigation employs a mixed-methods research approach, incorporating local surveys to capture the multifaceted nature of peripheral museums. The research explores how these institutions navigate locational access and disabilities, and how they leverage these challenges as opportunities for creative and innovative programming.

Museums have not only proved to be part of local culture and identity, but are part of our sensory system and stimuli, shaping our psychosomatic interactions with the world. This research on the accessibility of peripheral museums will prove beneficial to how we perceive access to people of all walks of life. Furthermore, this study not only contributes to the academic understanding of peripheral museums, but also aims to provide practical insights for museum practitioners, policymakers, and local communities. It advocates for the recognition of peripheral museums as vital components of the broader cultural landscape, deserving of support and integration into discussions surrounding cultural heritage preservation and dissemination.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This research has highlighted some points that deserve to be discussed. It is necessary to state that the study did not aim to acquire statistical significance, but rather to identify the features of peripheral museums and identify critical areas that must be taken into consideration in further research.

Firstly, the term *peripheral* is closely linked to the field of social anthropology; this raises a diverse array of questions by differentiating peripheral museums from the more commonly discussed rural museums. Peripheral museums are not only defined by their location and connection with the local community, but also by the availability of funds and a potentially divergent narrative that defines them as a separate entity from the *core*.

Following this, our analysis has attempted to investigate an issue crucial in the current discussion on museums: accessibility. The features to consider are many, and we tried to include most of them in the brief survey. We also took notes of issues that can be included in a future examination. Although we cannot be sure that the responses acquired from the survey refer to peripheral museums, the findings are nonetheless interesting and informative, and it is possible to focus the analysis in future research.

The findings of the study demonstrate that the public is aware of the need to consider accessibility as a key point in museums discourse. The insights gained from the public show that a general dissatisfaction is felt concerning navigation to/from the museum, with a call to improve public transportation.

This study, being a preliminary analysis, does not expect to issue definitive recommendations, but some insights can still be inferred. Firstly, it's important to define the local context of peripheral museums and their identity; increased attention must be directed to the availability of funds and resources, and to reachability. Furthermore, the community is a powerful asset in evaluating the accessibility and services offered by museums. It is important to keep an open mind to the community's opinion and gauge this opinion with accurately designed enquiries. Finally, although augmented by recently increasing attention, accessibility and peripheries are fields of study that are still largely untapped. A call to action for future research will hopefully bring insights into these topics.

Table of Contents

1.0 INTRODUCTION.....	5
2.0 RELEVANT LITERATURE	6
2.1 Review and Models of Disability.....	6
2.2 Museum Accessibility.....	8
2.3 Peripheral Museums.....	10
3.0 METHODOLOGY.....	11
4.0 RESULTS.....	13
4.1 Preliminary Data	13
4.2 Transport.....	14
4.3 Environment.....	15
4.4 Facilities	17
4.5 Open-Ended Question.....	18
5.0 CONCLUSIONS	19
6.0 BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	21
7.0 APPENDICES	24
7.1 Appendix A.....	24
7.2 Appendix B	24
7.3 Appendix C.....	24

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The recent attention to disability accommodation across services of all kinds in Western societies is unprecedented. This shift demonstrates that institutions are making an effort to recognise and respond to the varied needs of people and communities. However, the issue of accessibility entails a depth and complexity that is not easy to appraise at first glance.

Museums are among the public institutions developing innovative measures to allow a greater number of visitors to access their services. These efforts are relevant because museums are widely recognised as beneficial to visitors and communities in many ways. People who choose to invest their free time visiting museums do so because they want to learn something new, get in touch with culture, and spend time either relaxing alone or interacting with their peers. While these are just some of the reasons why people visit museums, they show the range of potential impacts museums can have on people's lives (Falk & Dierking, 1992). However, considerable challenges emerge when museums do not have the necessary resources or expertise to approach the challenges of accessibility. Even more problems arise for museums that are not part of major touristic flows, or that present a different narrative than the one promoted by "central" institutions. 'Peripheral museums' – a notion we adapted from the field of anthropology – may struggle more than their major counterparts to respond to accessibility issues. Considering this definition, it is important to note that peripheral museums are not necessarily hard to reach or pertain uniquely to rural areas; rather, specific features identify them as museums that are in varying degrees detached from mainstream cultural narratives or touristic flows.

The expectation is that peripheral museums' resources to approach issues such as accessibility are insufficient. We determined that a survey aimed at local communities was the first step to understand whether peripheral museums are perceived as accessible. The public, one of the pillars of cultural heritage, can offer interesting first-hand insights into current levels of accessibility, as well as prompting changes in practice, optimising the improvement process. This preliminary study showcases an exploration of the perceived compliance of peripheral museums with accessibility guidelines. The objective was twofold: firstly, to test the survey and highlight potential improvements for a larger-scale study and, secondly, to understand the features of a peripheral museums and how to convey that concept to the public.

This report first analyses the themes of this enquiry, delving into the following topics: 1) the relevance of understanding disability, 2) how museums are responding to an increased awareness of accessibility by investigating the concept of Universal Design, and 3) features that may identify a peripheral museum. Our methodology is discussed by highlighting the design of the survey used for the data collection, including challenges that emerged during its composition and during data collection, as well as ways these challenges can inform improvements over its design. In the next section, the methods and results are showcased in detail, so as to offer a comprehensive view of the data gathered. The report closes by analysing the findings and proposing further steps in research concerning this topic.

2.0 RELEVANT LITERATURE

2.1 Review and Models of Disability

According to the World Health Organization, around 1.3 billion people live with a form of disability, accounting for 16% of the world's population (World Health Organization, 2022). This percentage is expected to grow due to many different factors. Among these, one can find the increasing mean age of the population and adverse environmental factors. Addressing the latter, it is well known that many actors are responsible for noxious chemical discharges in the environment and food chain. Studies show that chemicals can interfere with development, and thus be deemed responsible for the emergence of lifelong neurocognitive, motor, and sensory impairments (Koger et al., 2005; Grandjean & Landrigan, 2014; Mendola et al. 2002). Other elements contribute to the increased percentage of people living with a disability, since the term "disability" also encompasses mental and emotional disorders: traumatic episodes seem to be on the rise and are can be responsible for conditions such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and, equally treacherous, mood disorders like depression are an ever-relevant topic, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic (Nemeroff, 2020; Ustun, 2020). Additionally, more people identify with having a disability now than at any other point in history, regardless of whether they have received an official diagnosis. This shows that accessibility is a topic that is growing in relevance as there is more awareness on what constitutes a disability. Consequently, institutions have the opportunity to meet the needs of a more varied and composite public than ever before.

Disability is currently heavily scrutinized, producing a complex discussion that encompasses many different topics, from its definition to the issues of access and identity. For the most part, definitions of disability in policy lean more on the legal or clinical aspect of this issue: according to the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, this means “a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activity” and the UK’s Equality Act of 2010 defines people with disabilities as those who “have a physical or mental impairment that has a ‘substantial’ and ‘long-term’ negative effect on [their] ability to do normal daily activities” (ADA, 2019; Gov.UK, 2010). A different approach is presented by the World Health Organization opening statement in their overview of disability, clearly stating that disability is part of being human and further arguing that “Disability results from the interaction between individuals with a health condition [...], with personal and environmental factors including negative attitudes, inaccessible transportation and public buildings, and limited social support.” (World Health Organization, 2022).

The variety of terms and definitions used to discuss this issue exemplifies the plethora of interpretations which one must consider while evaluating policies aimed at disabled people. Ware et al. (2022) provide an updated overview of the models used to tackle accessibility in museums, although a knowledge of the models is relevant across many fields. An early approach is the so-called *medical model* of disability, which tries to find solutions to the “problem” that is disability; similarly, the *charitable model* attempts to appeal to the non-disabled population by showing the disabled population as needing and deserving of help. Both these outtakes are increasingly being supplanted by the *social model* of disability (Oliver & Barnes, 2010). This modern perspective shifts the attention to problematic access, asserting that people are disabled because of the barriers (physical, social, psychological) that they encounter in their everyday life. Even more progressive, the *identity model* is a person-first approach where people choose to identify with a disability (Retief & Letšosa, 2018). Disability is no longer a state (or a condition) in this definition, but part of what makes a person who they are; since it is an element of what composes one’s own identity, disability is seen as fluid (Ware et al. 2022). The language used to define disability reflects both self-awareness and allo-awareness. The two latter models, social and identity, are reflected in the current WHO definition of disability (World Health Organization, 2022).

2.2 Museum Accessibility

An identity-first approach reflects the current accessibility practices and guidelines enacted by institutions, in this case, by museums. “Nothing about us without us” is a recurring slogan which shows the desire of people with disabilities to be part of the process of reform and change. As Braden puts it, disabled people are living independently and exploring their communities in greater measure than before (2016). Consequently, they understandably feel like actors in the changes that will interest their participation in society. In general, current research approaches appear to mostly foster this perspective, by including disabled people as consultants in focus groups, employing appropriate research methodologies such as Participatory Action Research (i.e. a flexible and participant-informed methodology), or understanding specific needs and issues on a deeper psychological and physiological level.

Throughout the past years, research in the field of museum studies has proposed the adoption of the Universal Design (UD) framework. This concept was put forth in 1985 by the architect Ronald L. Mace, and its aim is to allow for unimpaired access to structures. This design is intended to allow people with any kind of disability to be able to make use of all spaces and services with the same ease as non-disabled people, without the need to adapt or specialize the design (Hartley 2015, p. 42). Including Universal Design in the restructuring or building of spaces also prevents further interventions, which may cost considerable time, effort and money, especially for those museums in peripheries or with limited funds (Rappolt-Schlichtmann & Daley, 2013). Furthermore, the implementation of UD can benefit all visitors, who feel more engaged and motivated to participate (Braden, 2015). The seven principles of UD are widely known and can be recognized across many institutions. These principles are 1) equitable use, 2) flexibility in use, 3) simple and intuitive use, 4) perceptible information, 5) tolerance for error, 6) low physical effort and 7) size and space for approach and use. Universal Design in museums is an ever more common practice, with solutions such as lifts, ramps and widened access to exhibition spaces showing that, in many cases, museums have gone further than required by legislation with the aim of allowing for increased access (Tokar 2004).

These basic principles are utilized to ensure that people of all abilities can access museums with ease. The first four principles, “equitable in use”, “flexibility in use”, “simple and intuitive use”, and “perceptible information”, can be related to how museums appeal to people, especially those with disabilities (Braden, 2015). The implementation of these principles benefits both museum goers and the museum itself.

If museums are properly advertised with sufficient and correct information about their facilities, then they are likely to increase their engagement. Similarly, if museums introduce structural changes such as ramps, seating, rest areas, and informational and directional signposts, this will lead to increased ease in the use of facilities, both primary and auxiliary, which opens use to all, regardless of physical and mental capabilities or prior experience.

The sixth and seventh principles, “low physical effort” and “size and space for approach and use”, relate to specific physical accommodations that museums should strive for (Braden 2015). Corresponding design would limit the amount of physical effort required to access museum facilities, with the most basic designs including ramps, elevators, and open doors. Additionally, a universally accessible space would allow for the proper amount of space to accommodate all body sizes and supportive equipment, with spaces promoting overall comfortable use. The survey created and carried out in the next section of this report seeks to explore the accessibility or lack thereof within peripheral museums, using these principles of Universal Design as a guideline for questions and considerations.

However, full access to the contents of a museum not only entails removing structural barriers, but also concerns the methods used for conveying information to the visitors in learning according to their specific needs (Rappolt-Schlichtmann & Daley, 2013; Trotta, 2023). *Universal Design for Learning* is a parallel framework that is often paired with Universal Design. Designed in the early 1990s as a response to the issue of disability in public schools, this approach is focused on creating a learning environment that meets the needs of as many users as possible. Universal Design for Learning summarizes relevant findings across learning sciences (Chita-Tegmark, et al., 2012), employing a three-pronged approach which includes multiple means of representation, expression, and engagement and that finally reflects pedagogy (Vygotsky, 1978), and neuroscientific research on learning (Rivoltella, 2011). As for other approaches to accessibility design, UDL benefits largely from the apportion of the community, which informs how to shape learning practices. The goal is not to create a single solution fit for everyone, but rather to offer a variety of different, complementary measures that address the learning variability of users, in this case disabled museum visitors (Rappolt-Schlichtmann & Daley, 2013).

2.3 Peripheral Museums

This analysis focuses specifically on decentralised museums, which are referred to as peripheral museums. It is not uncommon for museums in areas far from metropolises, or those disengaged with main touristic flows, to face several challenges. Considerable issues may arise in relation to funding, access, and programming (Hartman & Hines-Bergmeier, 2015). However, it can be argued that museums that operate locally and or in a secondary touristic destination still provide a great service to the community by safekeeping the local identity, exhibiting local practices, and offering educational assistance to the community.

While trying to determine which definition best conveys the identity and issues faced by these museums, we concluded that an appropriate term for such sites could be “peripheral museums”, a definition inspired by Appadurai (1986) and by anthropological-sociological studies that investigate the comparison between core and periphery (Azaryahu, 2020). According to Susan Mayhew, “The core—a central region in an economy, with good communications and high population density, which conduce to its prosperity—is contrasted with the periphery—outlying regions with poor communications and sparse population” (2022). Thus, we propose that the definition “peripheral museum” effectively describes the focus of this analysis. Such definition is also hereby used instead of the more commonly found “rural museum”, by considering additional foci in the issue. For example, other than a mainly geographical identification, factors that determine the peripheral status of a museum may include the focus on a specific identity (which may not be confined to local customs, but interest a broader area), the number of visitors compared to major cultural destinations, limited funding to cover costs and additional initiatives, and a decentralised narrative. The latter feature resulted from an exploratory interpretation of literature on Central Europe museums but further analyses is needed to shed more light on its validity (Golinowska, 2014; Veszprémi, 2018).

Peripheral museums have great potential and some examples have shown the results of their integration with satisfactory results, especially by analysing the connections that these museums builds both with their local communities and with stakeholders (Hartman & Hines-Bergmeier, 2015). However, while the responsibilities of peripheral and rural museums are similar to those of major institutions, the resources at their disposal are limited in comparison to their “major” counterparts (Travers, 2007). Seeing the range of challenges that the peripheral museum must face, it is important to optimise

strategies that respond to the need of potential visitors with disabilities, by considering the application of a Universal Design and Universal Design for Learning. Accessibility is thus an opportunity to tear down barriers by implementing sustainable solutions that accommodate all visitors according to their needs while reaching out to the community. In turn, visitors and communities can actively participate in the design and implementation of such measures, creating stronger bonds with the museum as well.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this report was to evaluate the current levels of accessibility of peripheral museums and investigate what can be improved upon. The intended use of the survey was to provide a basis of information on peripheral museums and experiences that could support further research. We decided upon a short survey, open to all who have had visited museums in the past, to gain insight on the experiences of museum goers. The main point of this survey was to highlight peripheral museums, as opposed to those in major city centres or densely populated areas. This is due to the fact that peripheral museums tend to get less funding and focus, especially when it comes to ensuring that the facilities and concerning information are universally accessible (Hartman & Hines-Bergmeier, 2015; Travers, 2007).

Before participants filled out the survey, it was imperative that we defined peripheral museums, specifically what we considered to be ‘periphery’. In the description of the survey, before the questions, we defined peripheral museums to be “Museums that operate outside of major centres, i.e., metropolitan areas with high population densities”. This definition is integral to the survey, as it informs participants on which specific museum visits to form their responses on. Unfortunately, there is no sure method to ensure that participants draw on experiences from peripheral museums rather than major metropolitan ones, but we hope the definition functioned to reduce confusion between the two and limit the number of responses based on misconceptions of key terms. After careful consideration, we have concluded that a better way to reach potential respondents with peripheral museum experience would be to advertise the survey within several peripheral museums.

The first part of the survey contained questions about demographics. We asked about respondents' occupations and frequency of museum visits per year, as these can shape the needs of museum goers, as well as their perception and recollection of museum

experiences. We also made sure to ask if the respondents identified with having any disabilities. Though the survey was open to people of any abilities, we highlighted the importance of reaching people with disabilities and hearing their opinions as well, as a lack of accessibility tends to highly affect the experience of those with disabilities. It was important to know if we had any proportion of responses from those who do identify as having a disability, as they can provide first-hand insight on the quality of museum facilities concerning accessibility. Finally, it was asked what method of travel participants used to reach these museums. This was added to better understand the spread of travel methods to inform the questions asked later regarding accessibility of travel to museums.

The second section collected quantitative data regarding the overall accessibility of peripheral museums and their facilities. For the first three questions in this section, a Likert Scale was utilized from one to five, with one representing the least accessible and five representing the most accessible. These questions regarded general accessibility of peripheral museums, accessibility of websites, and accessibility of transport to the museums, respectively. We believed that a Likert scale was the best choice for collecting data from these questions, as it is an easy way of gauging opinions without requiring any previous knowledge. The scale was selected to be five points, as the opposite ends of the scale are very easy to define, as “Not accessible” and “Very accessible” respectively, with the third point becoming a middle-ground, the second and fourth representing a slight leaning towards their respective end points. Upon further reflection, it may have been useful to label all five points, to provide participants with a clearer interpretation of the scale. The second half of the second section asked respondents to evaluate the sensory comfort and the accessibility of specific facilities within peripheral museums. These questions provided another five-point Likert scale, however this time with specific labels for each point (see Appendix C). This allowed for us to look deeper into the specific experiences peripheral museums provide, focusing on sensory comfort within their exhibits and accessibility of auxiliary facilities throughout the museums, such as toilets and seating. By asking participants to respond based scales of comfort and accessibility, it made it easy to get a grasp on how these features come together to shape experiences of museum goers.

For the final part of the survey, one qualitative question was added for participants to add their thoughts on how peripheral museums could improve their accessibility. This

was included to allow respondents to express any concerns or suggestions they had that were not already covered within the quantitative questions.

The data collection period ran for circa 10 days, in which the survey was shared with multiple groups and colleagues in and out of the University of St Andrews. In all, the survey received 23 responses. For validity of findings and a successful sample size, it was hoped that we would have received more responses, yet time constraints limited our ability to do so. However, we deemed the survey successful as a preliminary exploration into the highly specific topic of peripheral museums and their accessibility. This survey functions to provide context and background knowledge to inform and drive literary-based research of accessibility of museums, while also serving as a small-scale real-world application of the topic.

4.0 RESULTS

4.1 Preliminary Data

The survey we designed was a preliminary exploration of this topic and is expected to highlight issues that can become the focus of a larger analysis. The limited sample size (n=23) does not have statistical significance, but an in-depth analysis of the results can still inform relevant insights into how to further investigate this theme.

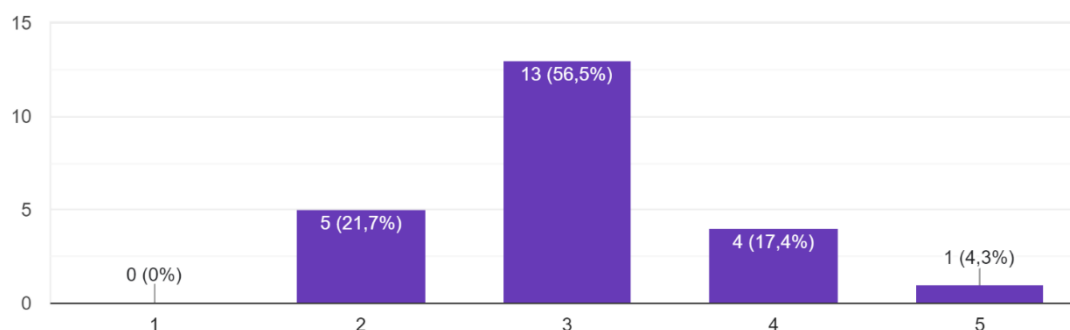
The majority of respondents were students (82.6%) while the remaining participants were all employed (17.4%). None of the respondents selected the options *Retired* or *Other*. We also decided to include a question on whether the participant identified with any disability. All participants responded either *No* (73.9%) or *Yes* (26.1%), and none selected the option “Prefer not to respond”. The respondents who identified with a form of disability (n=6) were all students.

Responses to the question “How frequently do you visit museums in a year?”, which was presented as a 5-points Likert Scale, show a bimodal distribution, with the modal value being 3 (n=9, 39.1%). The second highest response is to value 5, accounting for 21.7% of the total respondents (n=5). This distribution shows that many respondents visit museums on a regular basis. The responses to the question “On a scale from 1 to 5, how accessible do you consider museums in the periphery?” (graph.1) highlighted that museums in peripheries are perceived as mediumly accessible, with 56.5% of the

respondents selecting the value 3 on the 5-points Likert Scale (n=13). The other responses were distributed toward both the positive and negative ends (value 2: 21,7%, n=5; value 4: 17,4%, n=4; value 5: 4,3%, n=1). However, none selected option 1 on the Likert Scale, showing that, among the respondents, no one thought that museums in peripheries are completely inaccessible.

On a scale from 1 to 5, how accessible do you consider museums in the periphery?

23 risposte



Graph.1

4.2 Transport

The optional questions in the survey, “How accessible do you find the websites of peripheral museums?” and “Do you perceive the transportation to these museums as accessible?” have not been responded to by all participants. The first question was answered by 47.8% of the total respondents (n=11) and the second by 60.8% (n=14). Answers to both questions are symmetrically distributed, with the mode being the value 3 on the 5-points Likert Scale; this value was selected by 45.5% (n=5) of the respondents to the question regarding website accessibility and by 71.4% (n=10) to the question on accessible transportation to the museums.

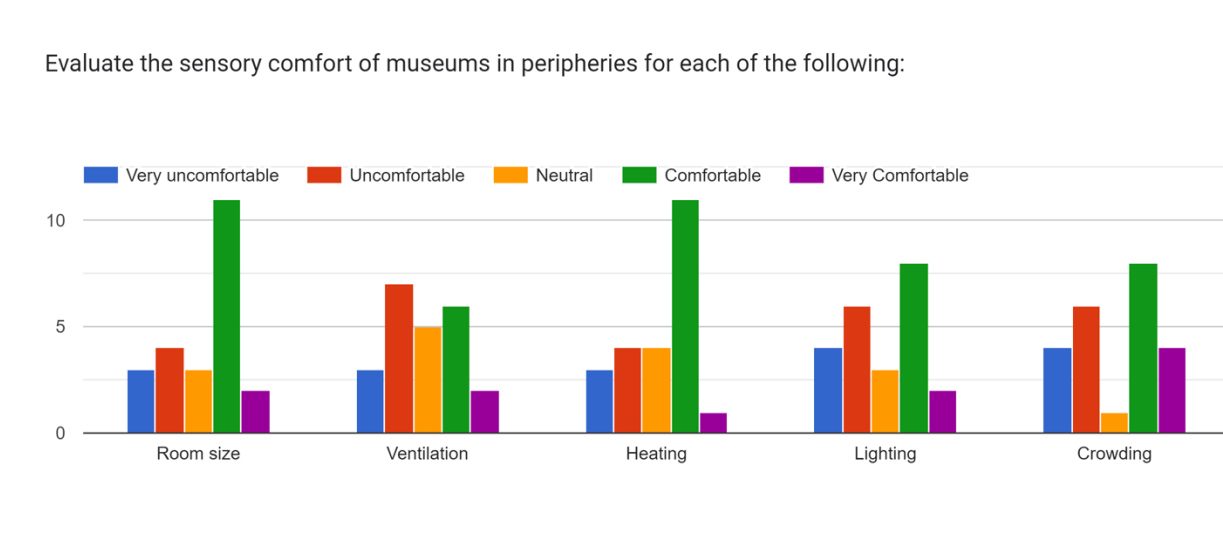
Regarding the latter question, respondents did not select the extremes of the scale, potentially indicating a general neutrality with room to improve the services. Interestingly, transportation was a concern in the free answer question, accounting for 13% (n=3) of the answers. If we consider only the number of people who responded with personal insights in the free answer question (n=14) the percentage of the incidence of

public transportation as an issue to respondents rises to 21.4% of the total answers. An interesting highlight is that two of the respondents who chose to focus on transportation in the free answer identify with a disability (P06 and P21); they proposed that peripheral museums should be made the focus of public transportation as a more direct option and, thus, easier to reach.

According to responses to the question “How do you usually travel to reach peripheral museums?”, where participants could select more than one option, it seems that public transportation is the preferred means of commuting to museums, accounting for 69.6% (n=16). Another popular choice for reaching a peripheral museum, according to the survey, is using a private car (52.2%, n=12). Respondents could also add other answers to this question; this resulted in the addition of the method of walking to these museums, chosen by 2 participants (8.7%). In a future study, it could prove beneficial to include the option to commute by walking from the start, as well as adding other, more specific options, such as “Car sharing”, “Taxi”, “Train” or “Bus”.

4.3 Environment

Respondents to the survey were asked to rate the sensory comfort of specific environmental conditions of museums in peripheries. The following conditions were considered in the survey: *Room Size*, *Ventilation*, *Heating*, *Lighting*, and *Crowding*. The parameters for the analysis were arranged on a 5-points scale which ranged from Very Uncomfortable to Very Comfortable (graph.2)



Graph.2

Room size was considered as generally comfortable (Comfortable: 47.8%, n=11) with other answers gravitating toward the more positive end of the scale. Negative responses, both comprising the voices Very Uncomfortable (n=3) and Uncomfortable (n=4) accounted for 30.4% of the total, while neutral or positive answers, comprising the parameter Comfortable, but also Neutral (n=3) and Very Comfortable (n=2) instead cover 69.5% of the total answers. Similar results can be found in *Heating*, where the percentage of positive and neutral versus negative responses (positive: 69.5%, negative: 30.4%) show the same distribution. No considerable deviations are apparent when analysing the responses of people who identified with a disability.

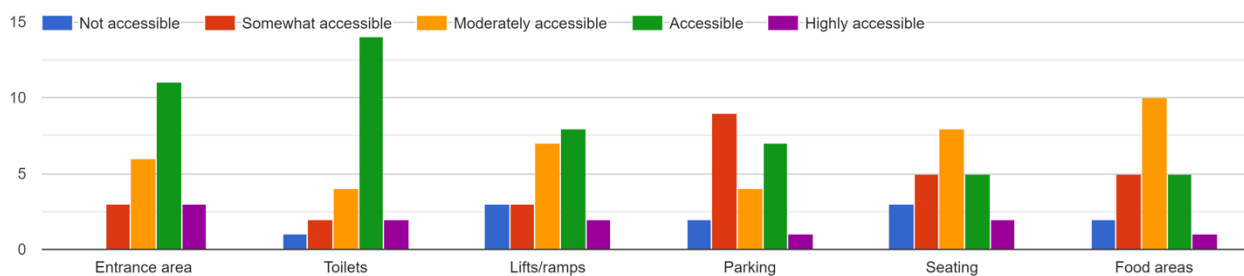
Ventilation is well distributed, leaning toward the “uncomfortable” end of the parameters. However, when considering the responses issued by people who identified with a disability, most of them rated *Ventilation* as very uncomfortable (among the six respondents who identified with a disability, n=2) or uncomfortable (n=1), while the others rated it neutral (n=2) and comfortable (n=1). This leaning toward the more uncomfortable end of the spectrum may suggest guests with disabilities may be particularly sensitive to poor ventilation. A broader analysis is needed to better understand this issue. *Lighting* finds a similar distribution. In this regard, responses lean more toward either a positive or negative stance, with less neutrality (n=3), compared to *Ventilation* (neutral: n=5). However, respondents who identified with a disability tend to rate *Lighting* in peripheral museums more negatively (very uncomfortable: n=1, uncomfortable: n=3).

The condition *Crowding* shows a bimodal distribution, with only 1 response saying they are “neutral” (interestingly, the answer is issued by P23, who identifies with a disability). Negative answers total with 43.4%, while positive responses account for 52.1%. Responses from participants who identify with a disability are distributed across all parameters, showing no analytical leaning towards this condition within museums. Further investigation into the impact of crowding on museums, especially in peripheral ones, is needed.

4.4 Facilities

Respondents to the survey were asked to rate the perceived accessibility of a series of accessory facilities and services in peripheral museums. The following facilities and services were considered in the survey: *Entrance Areas*, *Toilets*, *Lifts/Ramps*, *Parking*, *Seating*, and *Food Areas*. The parameters for the analysis were arranged on a 5-points scale which ranged from Not Accessible to Highly Accessible (graph.3).

Evaluate the accessibility of the following facilities in peripheral museums:



Graph.3

According to the survey, the feature with the strongest accessibility in peripheral museums, presented as left-skewed, is hygienic services (or *Toilets*), deemed accessible by 60.8% of the respondents (n=14). All participants who identified with a disability also gave a positive evaluation of this service. Likewise, the accessibility of *Entrance Areas* is generally well perceived, with the graph showing a similarly left-skewed distribution of responses. The mode for this response is the “accessible” voice, selected by 47.8% of the respondents (n=11). On this voice, no strong deviation is found in respondents who identify with a disability.

The graphs for the voice *Lifts and ramps* also show a left skew, although with a broader distribution of answers on all parameters. Still, according to the mode, these are relatively accessible (34.8%, n=8), although many also don't feel particularly strongly about the accessibility of these services (Moderately accessible: 30.4%, n=7). A service that records more division in the answers is *Parking*. This shows a bimodal distribution, with more answers stating that it's somewhat accessible (39.1%, n=9), selected also by

three (n=3) respondents who identify with a disability. Seven total responses (30.4%, n=7) say that parking is accessible.

Finally, *Seating* and *Food Areas* see a symmetrical distribution, peaking at the parameter moderately accessible: 34.8% (n=8) for Seating, 43.4% (n=10) for Food Areas. The rating for Food Areas, however, is particularly widespread considering the answers from people who identify with a disability provide answers ranging across all the parameters, including “not accessible” and “highly accessible”. This discrepancy calls for a more in-depth analysis. Seating, however, seems to be a concern for all visitors, including those who do not identify with a disability.

4.5 Open-Ended Question

Not all respondents decided to answer the optional open-ended question at the end of the survey “What recommendations do you have for improving accessibility in peripheral museums?”. Of all the respondents, those who wrote their answer here are 60.8% of the total (n=14). Nonetheless, there are some interesting insights to be gained from these answers.

A major priority for respondents seems to be the need to signpost accessible services within the museum and on the website. 5 participants (n=5, 35.7% of actual respondents to the question) gave similar unprompted answers on this issue. Three respondents (n=3, 21.4% of actual respondents to the question) highlighted the need for improved transportation to the museum, making it more central in public transportation destinations. Two of these answers came from people who identified with a disability (P06, P21). Similarly relevant, three respondents (n=3) also said that museums should convey information about the collection in a more accessible way. Other relevant issues involve a more general awareness of accessibility within structures (n=2) and improved seating (n=1).

5.0 CONCLUSIONS

The inconclusive survey report on peripheral museums underscores the complexity and varied nature of these cultural institutions. Despite efforts to discern patterns and draw definitive conclusions, the diverse contexts and unique characteristics of individual

peripheral museums have led to an absence of clear generalizations. However, several key observations and considerations have emerged from the findings:

- **Heterogeneity of Peripheral Museums:** The lack of conclusive trends indicates that peripheral museums seem to be equally accessible to both non-disabled and disabled students and adults. However, the research does seem to indicate that there are some correlations between transportation accessibility and entrance accessibility, suggesting that the general public has an issue with the navigational issues of peripheral museums.
- **Local Context Matters:** The inconclusiveness of the survey highlights the importance of recognizing and understanding the local context in which each peripheral museum operates. Location regional identity plays pivotal roles in shaping the priorities and outcomes of these institutions.
- **Resource Constraints and Innovation:** A prevalent theme is the resource constraints faced by peripheral museums. While financial limitations and geographic isolation pose challenges, the inconclusive findings suggest that these constraints can also foster innovative solutions and unique programming that cater to average needs.
- **Community Involvement:** Despite the lack of conclusive evidence, there is a recurring theme of the vital role that community involvement plays in the sustainability and success of peripheral museums. Collaboration with residents and students emerges as a potential strategy for overcoming challenges and enhancing the impact of these museums.
- **Need for Further Research:** The inconclusiveness of the survey points towards the need for more targeted and context-specific research on peripheral museums. Future studies should delve deeper into the specific challenges and opportunities faced by these institutions within distinct regional and cultural contexts.

In conclusion, museums provide unique modes of learning because they engage with one's senses and physical body to a large degree. One's experience at a museum is contingent not just on the quality of information presented but also on, for instance, the layout of the museum, the building's ventilation and temperature, and features such as ramps and elevators to ensure that every visitor can access all parts of the building. These characteristics of accessibility contribute to the museum's ability to fulfill its purpose and educate its visitors. Thus, while the survey did not yield definitive insights into

peripheral museums as a uniform category, it underscores the importance of embracing the diversity and unique characteristics of these institutions. It also highlights the importance of constant innovation to cater to the needs of those for whom peripheral museums are less accessible. Acknowledging the inconclusiveness of the findings provides a foundation for more nuanced and targeted research, ultimately contributing to a richer understanding of the roles and potentials of peripheral museums in the broader cultural landscape.

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7.0 APPENDICES

7.1 Appendix A

Survey Link (Blank copy, no data)

<https://forms.gle/PmdpiuvLxPQYRkhi7>

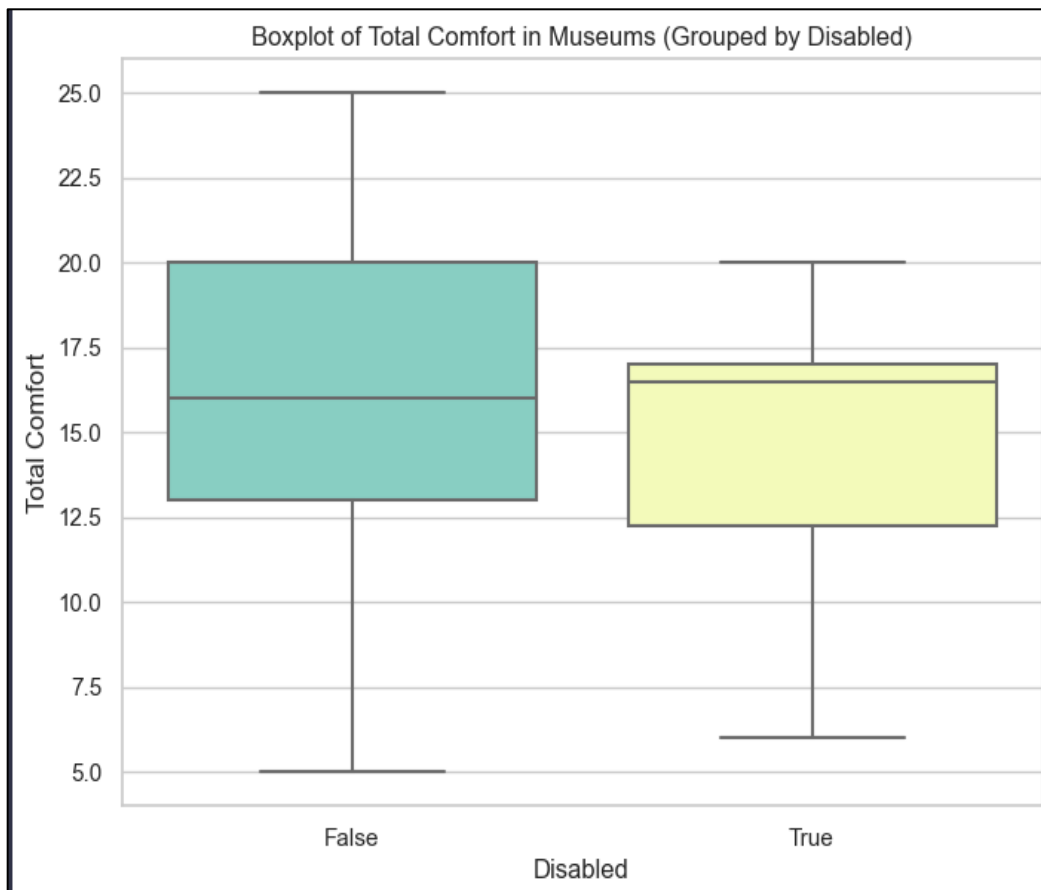
7.2 Appendix B

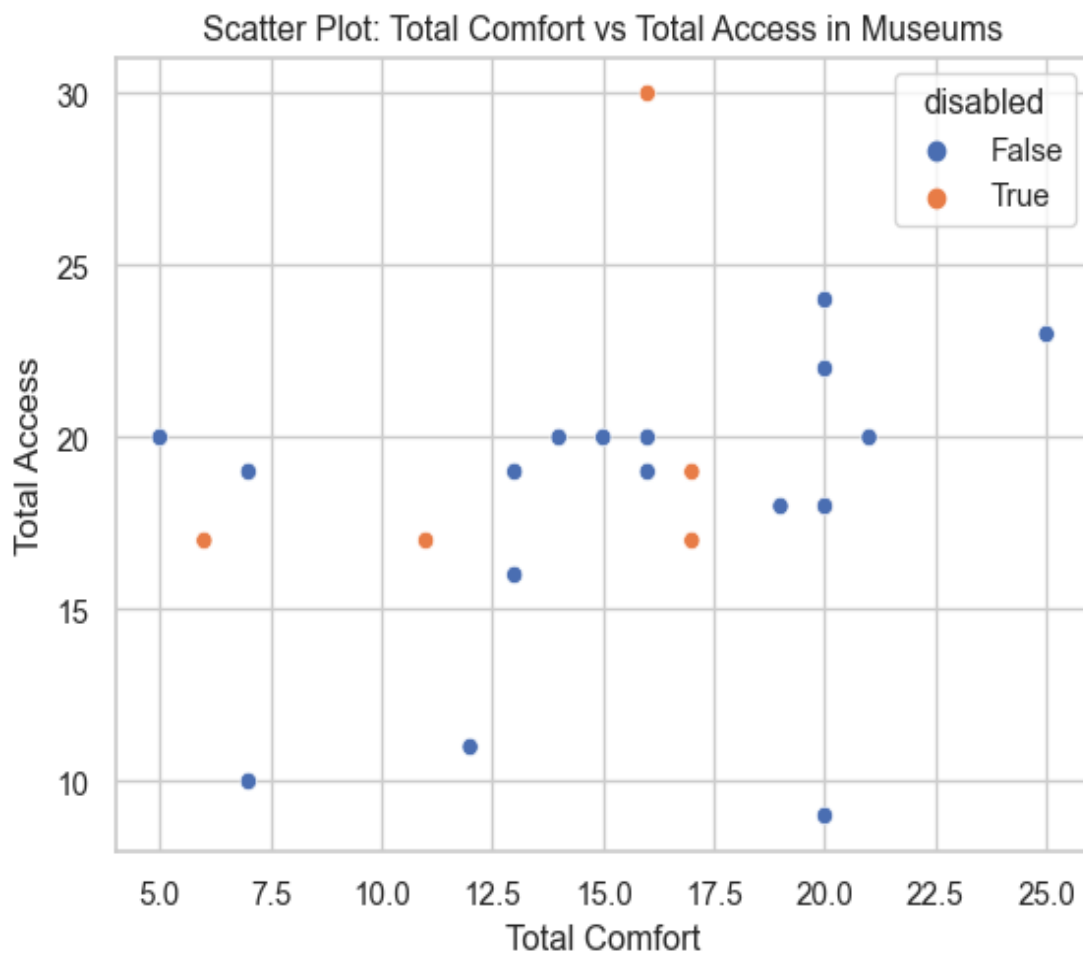
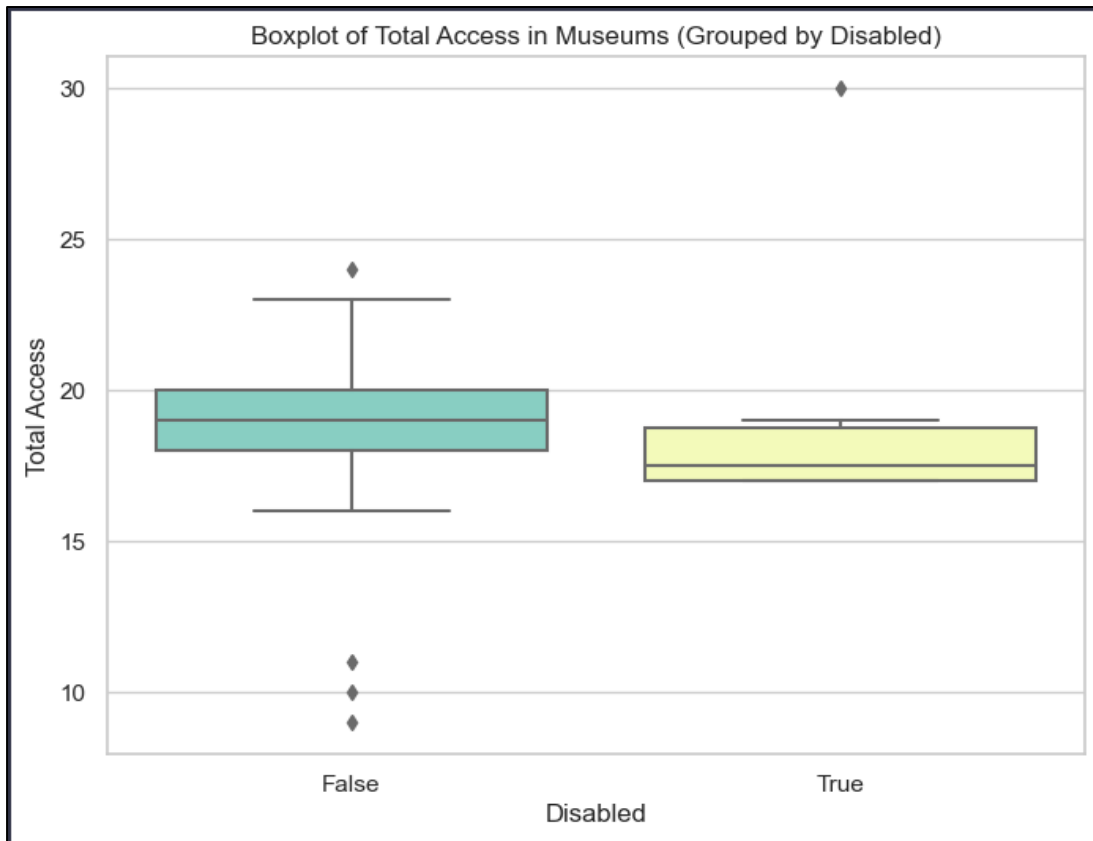
Raw Survey Data

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1XRvKO2ogV96_dxXBuaEfn2VP3VziXMdc4_hN0b4Abp8/edit?usp=sharing

7.3 Appendix C

Graphs:







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December 2023*