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**Museum Promotion and Cultural Salience: The Agenda of the Athenian Acropolis  
Museum**

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## **Museum Promotion and Cultural Salience: The Agenda of the Athenian Acropolis Museum**

### **Abstract**

This case study examines a process of agenda building in the context of cultural organizations. We chose the Acropolis Museum, as a new, emerging cultural organization in the European periphery which engages in public actions, in the form of symbolic initiatives, in order to set a specific cultural agenda for Greek and international media. We scrutinize seven symbolic initiatives publicized by the museum, as attributes that influence media content. We conclude that development of cultural/educational services, advertising and marketing, visitor/customer relations, partnerships, symbolic actions, special events, and supporting services constitute significant cultural attributes, which strategically become a part of the media agenda, thereby contributing toward the building of a museum agenda.

Keywords: Acropolis Museum, Agenda Setting, cultural actions, Museum Promotion, Museum Salience

## Introduction

Over the past 30 years, museums have evolved as sophisticated cultural industries, while undergoing significant transformations in terms of their public presence and the conceptualization of their mission. Those museum alterations involve primarily communication with diverse segments of the public (Hooper-Greenhill 1992; Hooper-Greenhill 1999). Because museum images are comprised of symbolic attributes conveying the notion of significance, marketing and public relations have become necessary for museum promotion (Kotler et al. 2008; Kolb, 2005). This communication-oriented transformation has become evident as museums have been increasingly cut off from public funding sources, forcing them to seek support in the private sector. As funding for cultural causes has steadily declined, the cultural sector has been subject to intense competition for both private and public funds. According to Twitchell (2004, 197), only 60% of American museums ‘‘have enough income from their endowment to cover their operating costs. So, competitive branding is inevitable.’’ Furthermore,

the Europeans face the same dilemma, but with a difference. They have a long history of last-minute state support. Thatcherism, which cut loose English museums from what was sometimes 90 percent funding, has spread to the continent. Until 1993, the Louvre was entirely state-funded. Now the national museum must find 30 percent of its yearly operating costs on its own.  
(p. 197).

In a constantly changing environment, establishing a solid identity among different constituencies empowers organizations as they pursue their mission. Therefore, researchers investigate processes of image building in the cultural sector (Tubillejas et al. 2011; Dates and Illia 2009; Caldwell and Coshall 2002).

In the current project, we have designed a case study for an emerging museum in Greece, -- a small southern European economy but with a long cultural tradition. The new Acropolis Museum captures the history of the Athenian Acropolis, widely recognized as a

universal symbol of democracy. On this famous Athenian hill, the Parthenon reminds both the knowledgeable researcher as well as the casual traveler of ancient glories and enduring memories. It constitutes a popular destination for millions of tourists, seeking to discover the traces of the Greek classical age, combined with popular, sometimes stereotypical, narratives associated with modern Greece and its natural environment.

From the beginning, the new Acropolis Museum was hailed as a significant cultural asset, a modern landmark of the troubled Greek capital. As it was opening its doors to the public, a severe financial crisis was unfolding throughout the country. Despite the adverse financial conditions, it has attracted over a million visitors every year, while the international press has described it as one of the 25 most significant museums of the world (Exhibition & museum attendance figures 2011). The Acropolis Museum has emerged as one of the most prominent Greek museums. Envisioned almost 35 years ago by then Prime Minister Constantine Karamanlis, to exhibit some of the most prominent treasures of Greek antiquity, it opened its doors to the public in 2009. The museum captures the history of the Athenian Acropolis, widely recognized as a symbol of democracy. The Greek state needed more than three decades from the museum's initial inception until its official public opening to complete the project, overcoming numerous obstacles – bureaucracy, political upheavals and legal disputes. Designed by architects Bernard Tschumi and Michael Photiadis, the new Acropolis Museum was built next to the Acropolis hill. Its imposing glass structure provides the visitor an uninhibited view of the Parthenon and the surrounding temples. As the ambitious construction neared completion, the new museum received significant media attention, in relation with the return of the Parthenon marbles (Βαλέντζα, 2011). The sculptures were removed from the temple by Lord Elgin, between 1801 and 1805, and are on display in the British Museum, while other Parthenon artifacts are kept in other museums around the world.

Since the early 1980s, this issue has received significant international attention, as consecutive Greek governments have led public campaigns requesting the return of the Parthenon marbles to Athens. (Φιλίππου, 2011; Hitchens, 1998; Merryman, 2006; Greenfield, 1995). Just before the museum's official public opening, international media brought this issue into the spotlight (Βαλέντζα, 2011).

The New Acropolis Museum was established as a legal entity with “semi-public” status. As such, it enjoys a significant degree of freedom from state authorities. Its nine-member board, including the museum's president, decides the overall management and strategy of the organization (Φιλίππου, 2011). In contrast to other Greek museums, the Acropolis Museum has a clear communication and promotion strategy. Its “Communications and Marketing” department is of strategic importance to the museum's management structure. It is comprised of staff specializing in new media technologies and marketing/promotion training. According to its website,

“The role of the Acropolis Museum's Communications and Marketing Department is to promote the Museum in Greece and abroad. The development and successful implementation of effective external communications includes, among other things, the Museum's website, electronic newsletters, publications, and communication in writing with the general public and the media. It requires ongoing collaboration with other staff members and departments of the Museum, and contributes to the Museum's general communications policies.”

(<http://www.theacropolismuseum.gr/en/content/organisational-structure>)

In this project, we set out to examine a set of communication initiatives designed and implemented by museum officials whereby this emerging organization aims to develop and sustain a media agenda. To analyse the museum's agenda, we follow in the footsteps of Rindova et al (2007) through a case study, and explore how different symbolic actions, promoted in museum press releases, can be traced in media content. Although we focus on press releases as a systematic, written record of museum communication, it constitutes only

one dimension of its overall promotion/PR strategy. Finally, we discuss the implications of this case study in the cultural sector.

### **Media and Cultural Organizations**

The media play a gatekeeping role as organizations strive to be visible to the public. In this context, they engage not just in reporting information about an organization, but they make sense of a multitude of content related to the organization. Media's function is particularly important when there is no adequate information about the organization (Lounsbury and Glynn 2001; Rao et al. 2000). Institutional and cultural accounts provided by different media are of particular significance as they record the appropriateness and desirability of specific actions (Elsbach 1994). Thus, the media influence the visibility of an organization by directing the public's attention to organizational attributes which thereby affects its public image.

In the current project, we draw primarily from media theory in order to examine how a cultural organization can influence the content of media coverage as a salience-building mechanism. Previous research on the agenda-setting tradition examines different research questions pertaining to the transfer of salience – the characteristic of 'standing out' in the public's mind – in this case from the museum to the media. We argue that when an organization sets its agenda for the media, in some cases this process constitutes a strategic choice for building its own public image. We follow Rindova et al (2007) who carried out a case study of emerging corporate organizations which proactively attempted to build their public image, which provide useful examples of new organizations following different strategies in an attempt to influence media content. In our study, we follow a similar course of action in order to test this model and its possible applications for cultural organizations, and to assess its preemptive capacity for salience building. We focus on the new Acropolis

Museum as an emerging cultural organization while investigating certain attributes of its strategy for salience development.

While drawing from media theory, scholars utilize agenda-setting theory while conceptualizing interactions between corporate and media organizations as the latter form impressions about the former. The core hypothesis of agenda-setting theory deals with the transfer of salience from the media to the public. As they explored their research question, McCombs and Shaw (1972) proposed that the media influence the salience of particular issues while establishing their importance in the public mind. In other words, these researchers contended that people attribute significance to issues that receive extensive media attention – first level agenda-setting (McCombs and Shaw 1972; Funkhouser 1973) – and that they pay more attention to certain issues that receive wide coverage by the media – second level agenda-setting (Ghanem 1997; McCombs, Lopez-Escobar and Llamas 2000; McCombs and Ghanem 2001).

The term media salience was defined by different researchers as attention, prominence, and valence (Kiousis 2004), but in most cases, simply as attention—the extent of media coverage given to a particular issue. The original Chapel Hill study (1972) became the key reference of agenda-setting theory, as it provided researchers with the basic terminology and conceptual understanding pertaining to the transfer of salience. Scholars began exploring different versions of the initial agenda-setting hypothesis from different viewpoints and in different international contexts. Thus, researchers have refined the hypothesized influences, and used different methodological approaches to analyse agenda-setting phenomena in an increasingly mediated world. In the course of its forty-five-year history, agenda setting was explored not only in terms of media influencing public perceptions, but media influencing other media – known as “intermedia agenda-setting” (Reese and Danielian 1989). In the 1990s, media researchers began exploring the second-



level agenda-setting, while shifting their attention from issues— known as ‘‘objects’’— to attributes or frames. Examining which particular attributes enhance object–issue salience, in conjunction with individual frame salience also led to a new round of agenda-setting explorations (Ghanem 1997).

In their case study, Rindova et al (2007, 41) examined a different facet of agenda-setting, namely corporate organizations influencing the media agenda. They recognized five categories of symbolic corporate actions – attributes or frames – aiming at influencing media content. Specifically they recognized: ‘‘new service development,’’ ‘‘marketing,’’ ‘‘customer relations,’’ ‘‘partnering’’ and ‘‘symbolic actions.’’ Then, through case study and content analysis techniques, they matched symbolic patterns of corporate promotion related to those five categories of symbolic actions as three emerging corporate organizations attempted to influence media content. One of the main research questions posed was: ‘‘what did the firms do and what did the media say about them?’’ Thus the agenda-setting process was examined as corporate organizations strategically generated information while attempting to influence media content in an effort to promote particular images about themselves. In the current study, we measure similar types of symbolic actions undertaken by a new museum and recorded in its press releases, and then assess which of those actions were selected by Greek and international media as indicators of image building.

### **Research Questions**

As in previous research, we set the following exploratory research questions:

1. Is there an observed correspondence between museum generated content and media coverage in terms of the museum’s symbolic actions/initiatives?
2. Which specific museum attributes can be traced both in museum and media content?

- (a) What particular types of identified symbolic actions does the museum pursue?
- (b) Which particular actions aid the museum in establishing its media salience?
- (c) What other events (not recorded in museum press releases) attract additional media attention?

**Method**

A longitudinal case-study design was deemed appropriate to explore our research questions, as different scholars favor case studies both for purposes of replication as well as broad explorations (Rindova et al. 2007; Yin 1994). We chose the new Acropolis Museum for our research, in part because it is an emerging cultural organization trying to establish its public image both at the national as well as the international level. Furthermore, despite being newly established, the Acropolis Museum already enjoys wide recognition in Greece and abroad.

**Data Collection and Content Analysis**

We conducted a content analysis of organizational, symbolic actions derived from the museum’s press releases. An open coding technique was used for exploratory research. We then developed a pattern matching analysis by observing common content between press releases and newspaper articles. First, we categorized all content in a chronological sequence and then we developed our categories of organizational actions, drawing from previous research. Coders were trained to strictly rely on operational definitions for each category of actions.

Data were gathered from different sources, providing information for media coverage and promotion. Data were collected from June 2009 to June 2012, the first three years of museum operation. Furthermore, we gathered data from media content (both Greek and

international newspapers) while conducting content analysis of media content focusing on the new Acropolis Museum.

### **Table 1 about here**

We gathered press releases which the museum distributed for promotional purposes and were available on both the museum website as well as on its Facebook mirror. Both media content and museum press releases were gathered during the same three-year period (2009-2012).

Our content is comprised of 123 press releases which were distributed by the museum during the time period of our analysis, and 679 news articles from three leading Greek and three elite international newspapers. We chose some of the most significant Greek newspapers both in terms of circulation, history and recognition: *Kathimerini*, *Ta Nea* and *To Vima*.

Furthermore, we selected three international newspapers because of their role as international gatekeepers: *The Guardian (UK)*, *The Times (UK)* and *The New York Times (USA)*. Those six media enjoy wide recognition at the national and international level respectively.

Because of their history as well as their readership, they influence the content of other media around the world and they are significant gatekeepers affecting political decisions, policies and public opinion (Shoemaker and Reese 1996). In the context of our case study, the six newspapers represent cultural gatekeepers and we assume that their coverage of the Acropolis Museum influences public knowledge, perceptions and even behavior both in Europe and around the world.

The coding was conducted by one of the authors, and to assess intercoder reliability, two experienced coders recoded 10% of the population of media articles and press releases. Four variables were identified in the entire content of press releases and newspaper articles.

#### **(a) Type of Media Coverage**

This variable was designed to answer a basic question: What prompted the museum coverage by the media? Through an open coding technique, coders identified the particular news,

events, actions, public relations endeavors or other content that prompted the coverage of the museum.

**(b) Media Tone/Valence**

Articles were coded as “positive” if the museum was described as an active and progressive institution. An article was classified as “negative” if there were references to poor visiting experiences including low-quality exhibits or services provided by the institution. Articles were coded as “negative” if the museum received poor reviews by critics and visitors alike, including references to complaints, problematic behavior, such as lawsuits, delays, low-quality services, economic problems, low-quality infrastructure, and so on. Articles were classified as “neutral” when the museum was mentioned, but it was portrayed in neither a favorable nor an unfavorable manner. In other words, certain events pertaining to the museum were simply reported, without further elaboration.

**(c) Organizational/Cultural Actions promoted by the Museum (In Press Releases and Media Content)**

We identified five categories of symbolic, corporate actions aiming at influencing media content. Specifically emerging corporate organizations promote (1) new service development, (2) marketing, (3) customer relations, (4) partnering and (5) symbolic actions. Based on operational definitions provided by Rindova et al (2007), coders were instructed to identify similar action in museum press releases and newspaper articles. This study provided the conceptual framework of organizational attributes, promoted by emerging organizations as they strive to influence the media agenda.

**(d) Media Coverage not Controlled by the Museum**

Coders recognized media coverage generated by journalists and other media sources, which is not related to any museum initiative/action or other public relations endeavor undertaken

by the organization. In contrast to the previous variable, this is coverage not generated by museum communication, but by other media sources.

### **Intercoder Reliability**

The entire content was coded by two independent coders. Overall there was a high level of agreement:

- (a) **Type of Media Coverage:** the level of agreement was 96.8% and 0.856 (Scott's Pi measure)
- (b) **Media Tone/Valence:** the level of agreement was 93.5% and 0.888 (Scott's Pi measure)
- (c) **Organizational/Cultural Actions Promoted by the Museum (Press Releases):** the level of agreement was 91% and 0.866 (Scott's Pi measure)
- (d) **Organizational/Cultural Actions Promoted by the Museum (Newspaper Articles):** the level of agreement was 96.8% and 0.788 (Scott's Pi measure)
- (e) **Media Coverage not Controlled by the Museum:** the level of agreement was 90.3% and 0.849 (Scott's Pi measure)

### **Analysis**

Our open coding process yielded seven categories of organizational actions promoted in museum press releases. According to Rindova et al (2007), emerging corporate organizations promote:

- (1) New service development, which describes changes in service functionality, such as the buying process, transactions, new products, services etc.
- (2) Marketing, which describes changes in pricing, discounts, advertising campaigns, and promotion campaigns in general.

(3) Customer relations, refers to services providing opportunities for interaction with museum visitors.

(4) Partnering, which describes building alliances with other organizations.

(5) Symbolic actions, referring to any other institutional resources used for promotion.

We assessed all five categories of corporate actions in museum and media content.

Furthermore, through the same method, we identified additional actions which are applicable in the museum or cultural context. Thereby a total of seven actions were extracted from organizational and media content:

(1) Development of cultural/educational services describes the same category as “new service development” but the coders recognized museum specific “cultural” services, such as educational programs, children’s programs etc.

(2) Advertising and marketing refers to ticket prices, special promotions, restaurant offers, or advertising campaigns organized by the museum.

(3) Visitor/customer relations describes services that provide opportunities for interaction between the organization and its public – such as the association of the friends of the museum.

(4) Partnerships, as in the corporate environment, identify strategic alliances between the museum and other organizations, private or public.

(5) Symbolic actions describe any tactic that capitalizes on institutional advantages as the museum utilizes its resources – e.g. volunteering.

The coding process yielded additional categories of actions. These are:

(6) Special events, such as lectures, musical performances, film and book presentations, innovative multimedia applications.

(7) Supporting services, such as visitor information services, medical help for visitors, a parent support room, and other supporting services.

We used a pattern-matching technique to engage in critical assessments between press releases and newspaper articles. From the seven categories of organizational actions, the most significant is the category “development of cultural/educational services,” followed by “advertising/marketing” and “supporting services.” The least significant categories receiving small or marginal attention in museum press releases are “special events,” “visitor relations,” “partnerships” and “symbolic actions”.

### **Pattern Matching**

As we engaged in a parallel analysis of organizational actions in press releases and newspaper articles (Neuman 1989), we observed a correlation of those particular attributes in both streams of content. In Figure 1 there is a descriptive parallel assessment of press releases and newspaper articles focused on the Acropolis Museum, throughout the three-year period, documenting strong media attention from the very beginning, while the media started following systematically all museum generated actions from the third trimester and thereafter. A Pearson Correlation between the number of press releases and newspaper articles shows a strong relationship (0.756, statistically significant at the 0.005 level). Figure 2 depicts all organizational actions traced in museum and media generated content throughout the three-year period, demonstrating a parallel movement of content which indicates that the museum plays an active role in setting the media agenda in terms of the actions it promotes.

### **Figures 1 and 2 about here**

In Table 3 we document all actions covered by specific newspapers, as well as other news about the museum which the organization did not promote. There are significant differences in the agenda of Greek and international newspapers, as Greek newspapers follow closely the agenda of the museum – namely the actions it promotes – while international newspapers promote an independent agenda of museum coverage. The vast majority of international

coverage follows an independent agenda, paying minimal attention to museum's press releases. On the other hand, Greek newspapers are more balanced between covering the museum's actions versus following their own independent agendas. 58.9% of the total media attention is devoted to issues/themes not promoted by the museum.

**Table 3 about here**

A slight majority of the coverage follows an independent media agenda which does not seem to be subject to museum influences. On the other hand, 41.1% of the total coverage is attributed to organizational actions promoted by the Acropolis Museum from the beginning of its public existence. This portion of media attention is indicative of an aggressive campaign on behalf of the museum for the promotion of its public image. Table 4 demonstrates a direct correspondence – pattern matching – between press releases and newspaper articles in regards to organizational actions. We correlated all published organizational actions in press releases and newspapers throughout the three-year period, which yielded a strong relationship between museum promotion and media attention of all symbolic actions (Pearson: 0.868, statistically significant at 0.01 level).

**Table 4 about here**

It is evident that the museum makes a proportionately large effort to promote its actions while a significant portion of its content becomes salient in media content. Table 5 shows the volume of organizational actions and other events not controlled by the museum in a longitudinal base, demonstrating a consistent effort on the part of the organization to control the media agenda. Nevertheless, there is a substantial stream of media coverage which the museum cannot control at all.

**Table 5 about here**

We thought it important to analyse not only actions promoted by the museum but also all media coverage not following the museum agenda. Table 8 indicates that 28.3% of this



coverage provides information about the museum without the information originating from the museum itself. Furthermore, in 15.3% of the total coverage, there are references in passing about the organization without any evidence that the organization controls this independent coverage. The most significant category of coverage not originating in museum press releases deals with the Elgin Marbles issue (15.3% of the total coverage) a highly contested issue, involving politics, international relations and ideological arguments. Although the museum does not promote this particular discussion (as is evident from its press releases), different Greek and international media attribute significance to this issue. The differences between Greek media coverage and international media coverage of the Elgin Marbles are also significant as 50% of international newspaper articles referred to the Elgin Marbles, while only 10% of Greek newspaper articles paid attention to this issue. It is evident that international media covered the museum because of the Elgin Marbles while the Greek media paid minimal attention to the dispute.

After the newly designed Acropolis Museum opened its doors, international attention focused on the fact that the very existence of such a state-of-the-art cultural organization puts additional pressure on the British Government for the release of the artifacts to the Greek state. There was international coverage of this issue. In terms of our press release analysis there are not any references to this particular issue. This international discourse continued throughout the three-year period, showing an increasing trend as the museum was establishing its presence. In terms of gatekeeping theory, this independent influence on the media agenda constitutes an example of how external media influence the content of specific outlets (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996).

Overall, the museum established a positive public image from the beginning of its existence. It enjoys positive media coverage in the first trimester, but the proportion of positive coverage recedes during the following trimesters of our three-year analysis. The

percentage of positive coverage exceeds by far all negative coverage, which is indicative of a strong and continuous public relations endeavor during the first three years of the museum's public existence, while maintaining a large proportion of neutral media attention.

### **Tables 6 about here**

In Table 6, valence is scrutinized by medium, demonstrating that Greek media retained a more positive stance toward the Acropolis Museum, while international media established a more neutral tone. Of the total media attention, 45.2% was coded as positive, 8.1% as negative, and 46.7% as neutral. The positive/neutral frame exceeds by far all negative tone toward the organization. If we divide the valence category according to organizational actions, it becomes evident that “development of cultural/educational services” as well as “special events” and “supporting services” received more positive or neutral valence as they received more attention overall.

### **Discussion and Implications**

Our core research questions dealt with the ability of an emerging cultural organization, which sets out to influence the media agenda through the promotion of symbolic organizational actions. While competing for media attention in the context of powerful actors, political and corporate, the new Acropolis Museum emerges as a significant gatekeeper of cultural information. In contrast to other cultural organizations which encounter a great deal of difficulty in engaging the media and manage their own image, the Acropolis Museum has proved itself from the beginning to be a powerful player in the symbolic media arena. It utilizes its strategic advantages, such as its location, situated next to the Acropolis at the center of Athens, the value of its collection, managing some of the most significant artifacts in the world, and its previous media exposure, partially due to the Elgin Marbles controversy. However, other organizations of similar value and exposure lack a clear strategy for media

promotion and reputation building (Zakakis et al. 2012). The new Acropolis Museum invested in media relations from the outset, which is documented longitudinally both in the domestic as well as the international arena. Our content analysis shows a long-term promotional strategy of organizational actions, providing the media with cultural content. This consistent provision of organizational actions in the form of press releases became a significant part of the media agenda. The museum's press releases became available on different digital platforms, through the museum's website as well as its Facebook mirror site. This stream of information directed toward the media agenda did not preclude media organizations from promoting other agendas, such as the Elgin Marbles issue, which provides ideal opportunities for public consumption – international conflict, controversies, heated arguments, ethnic disputes. Our press release analysis shows that the museum has refrained from taking part in the Elgin Marbles discussion, but found itself in the position of receiving media attention because of it. This is an example of media gatekeeping, as extramedia/ideological influences guide media selections (Shoemaker and Reese 1996).

There are some useful lessons to be derived from our analysis. First, cultural organizations are not by nature weak in establishing a media agenda. However, despite its consistent implementation of its strategy, the museum was unable to fully control other agendas, as well as preventing ideological issues from interfering with its own agenda.

The second core research question dealt with attribute analysis, as specific symbolic actions are traced both in museum and media content. Following in the footsteps of a similar case study, derived from the corporate domain, there is preliminary evidence demonstrating that the museum seems to use similar promotional tactics as some emerging corporate entities. Corporate organizations seem to capitalize on certain symbolic actions in order to invest in their future reputation. The Acropolis Museum seems to follow similar practices. For example, Rindova et al (2007, 45) argue that “visibility may be an important component

of reputation because it reflects the level of awareness and exposure a firm enjoys.” The Acropolis Museum heavily invested in its visibility in the Greek and international media environment. Rindova et al (2007) argued that, as an emerging firm, Amazon.com promoted specific symbolic actions, with a primary emphasis on development of new services and customer relations. The Acropolis Museum strategically seemed to make similar choices as the development of new services, special events as well as advertising/marketing became their focus of their promotion strategy. Rindova et al (2007, 44) point out that “new firms engage in different levels and types of market actions following their entry into an emerging market.” The same finding applies in the case of the Acropolis Museum as there is a similar pattern detectable during the first trimester. Rindova et al (2007, 49) draw from social cognition research, arguing that “the frequency of action is associated with perceptual dominance.” Furthermore, “a firm’s level of actions increases journalists’ exposure to stimuli pertaining to the firm and makes the firm and its actions potentially more available in their memories.” This arguably explains the easy and total access to museum’s press releases by lay individuals, including journalists. Accessibility to press releases seems to be a strategic choice. Rindova et al (2007, 54) highlight the value of “innovative actions” in generating “positive evaluations.” They thereby differentiate among actions in terms of their symbolic value. The museum’s emphasis on new service development is arguably indicative of good use of strategy research (Moran and Ghoshal 1999).

Overall, Rindova et al (2007, 58) recognize two processes which arguably apply to the Acropolis Museum as well. First, investing in market actions is related to the salience of the organization. Second, actions are related to “value creating potential”, which in turn generates positive evaluations and finally, emphasizing innovative actions which make the organization “highly distinctive” and therefore likely to acquire esteem. Cultural organizations can benefit from these findings as they attempt to build their media agenda.

However, in this case, there is evidence that the Acropolis Museum is in control of the domestic media agenda, while it seems weaker in its ability to influence the international media agenda. The study shows that international media mostly follow independent agendas as they cover this organization. The current study therefore concludes that the development of the museum's public image pertains primarily to national segments of the public, while international audiences learn about the museum from independent sources. Although this finding merits additional attention, arguably museum managers should explore alternative communication tools in order to influence international media agendas.

Although additional research is needed to explain this web of influences in the context of the cultural sector, these preliminary findings corroborate existing research, in the realm of the emerging field of cultural agenda setting (Bantimaroudis et al. 2010; Zyglidopoulos et al. 2012). Our case study approach provides only preliminary evidence in regards to the museum's capacity to set its primary agendas. Therefore, we remain hesitant to generalize these findings to other contexts both at the national or international level.

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## Tables and Figures

**Table 1** *Total Media Coverage*

| Newspapers         | Number of Articles | Percentage |
|--------------------|--------------------|------------|
| Kathimerini        | 301                | 44,3%      |
| Ta Nea             | 216                | 31,8%      |
| To Vima            | 55                 | 8,1%       |
| Guardian           | 34                 | 5%         |
| The Times (UK)     | 35                 | 5,1%       |
| The New York Times | 38                 | 5,7%       |
| Total              | 679                | 100%       |

**Table 2** *Museum Actions*

| Trimester | Development of cultural/educational services | Visitor/customer relations | Special events | Partnerships | Supporting services | Advertising & marketing | Symbolic actions |
|-----------|----------------------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------|--------------|---------------------|-------------------------|------------------|
| 1         | 11                                           | 0                          | 3              | 0            | 1                   | 11                      | 0                |
| 2         | 7                                            | 0                          | 4              | 0            | 0                   | 1                       | 0                |
| 3         | 0                                            | 0                          | 0              | 0            | 3                   | 0                       | 0                |
| 4         | 4                                            | 0                          | 1              | 0            | 2                   | 1                       | 0                |
| 5         | 1                                            | 0                          | 1              | 0            | 1                   | 0                       | 0                |
| 6         | 4                                            | 3                          | 1              | 0            | 1                   | 0                       | 0                |
| 7         | 5                                            | 2                          | 0              | 0            | 0                   | 0                       | 0                |
| 8         | 6                                            | 0                          | 0              | 0            | 2                   | 0                       | 0                |
| 9         | 6                                            | 0                          | 4              | 2            | 0                   | 2                       | 1                |
| 10        | 5                                            | 0                          | 0              | 0            | 2                   | 0                       | 0                |
| 11        | 3                                            | 0                          | 0              | 1            | 0                   | 0                       | 1                |
| 12        | 8                                            | 2                          | 3              | 1            | 2                   | 2                       | 2                |
| 1-12      | 60 (48.8%)                                   | 7(5.7%)                    | 17(13.8%)      | 4(3.3%)      | 14(11.4%)           | 17(13.8%)               | 4(3.3%)          |

**Table 3** *Cultural/Organizational Actions of the Acropolis Museum Covered by Greek and International Newspapers*

| Newspapers         | Development of cultural/educational services | Visitor/customer relations | Special events | Partnerships | Supporting services | Advertising & marketing | Symbolic actions | Other news not promoted by the museum |
|--------------------|----------------------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------|--------------|---------------------|-------------------------|------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Kathimerini        | 62                                           | 4                          | 31             | 3            | 30                  | 8                       | 0                | 163                                   |
| Ta Nea             | 34                                           | 0                          | 20             | 0            | 22                  | 10                      | 0                | 130                                   |
| ToVima             | 15                                           | 0                          | 3              | 0            | 6                   | 4                       | 2                | 25                                    |
| Guardian           | 2                                            | 0                          | 2              | 0            | 1                   | 0                       | 0                | 29                                    |
| The Times (UK)     | 3                                            | 0                          | 4              | 0            | 2                   | 0                       | 0                | 26                                    |
| The New York Times | 6                                            | 0                          | 3              | 3            | 2                   | 0                       | 0                | 27                                    |
| Total              | 122(18%)                                     | 4(0.6%)                    | 63(9.3%)       | 3(0.4%)      | 63(9.3%)            | 22(3.2%)                | 2(0.3%)          | 400 (58.9%)                           |

**Table 4** *Organizational Actions in Press Releases and Newspaper Articles*

|           | Development of<br>cultural/educational<br>services | Visitor/customer<br>relations | Special<br>events | Partnerships | Supporting<br>services | Advertising<br>& marketing | Symbolic<br>actions |
|-----------|----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|--------------|------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|
| <hr/>     |                                                    |                               |                   |              |                        |                            |                     |
| Press     |                                                    |                               |                   |              |                        |                            |                     |
| Releases  | 60 (48.8%)                                         | 7(5.7%)                       | 17(13.8%)         | 4(3.3%)      | 14(11.4%)              | 17(13.8%)                  | 4(3.3%)             |
| Newspaper |                                                    |                               |                   |              |                        |                            |                     |
| Articles* | 122(18%)                                           | 4(0.6%)                       | 63(9.3%)          | 3(0.4%)      | 63(9.3%)               | 22(3.2%)                   | 2(0.3%)             |

\* The remaining 400 newspaper articles (58.9%) cover the museum because of other independent events, not promoted by the museum.

**Table 5** *Media Coverage of the Acropolis Museum*

| Trimester | Because of actions | Because of independent events not controlled by the museum |
|-----------|--------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1         | 74                 | 204                                                        |
| 2         | 46                 | 32                                                         |
| 3         | 5                  | 18                                                         |
| 4         | 13                 | 16                                                         |
| 5         | 28                 | 13                                                         |
| 6         | 14                 | 20                                                         |
| 7         | 22                 | 8                                                          |
| 8         | 19                 | 19                                                         |
| 9         | 18                 | 20                                                         |
| 10        | 6                  | 8                                                          |
| 11        | 11                 | 18                                                         |
| 12        | 23                 | 24                                                         |
| 1-12      | 279 (41.1%)        | 400(58.9%)                                                 |

**Table 6** *Valence Divided by Medium*

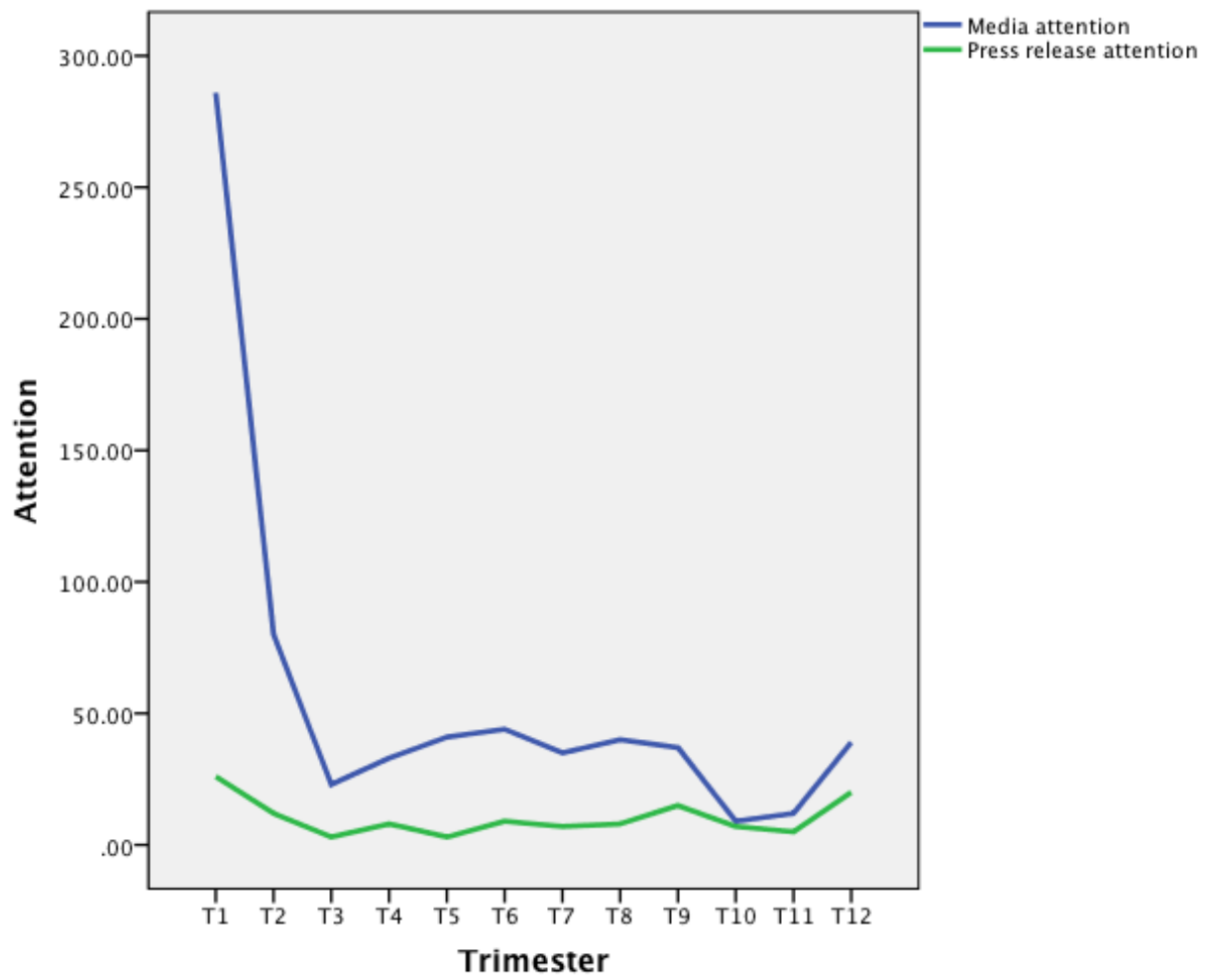
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| Newspapers         | Positive    | Negative  | Neutral     |
|--------------------|-------------|-----------|-------------|
| Kathimerini        | 146         | 34        | 121         |
| Ta Nea             | 97          | 8         | 111         |
| To Vima            | 23          | 7         | 25          |
| Guardian           | 9           | 4         | 21          |
| The Times (UK)     | 16          | 2         | 17          |
| The New York Times | 16          | 0         | 22          |
| Total              | 307 (45.2%) | 55 (8.1%) | 317 (46.7%) |

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**Figure 1** *Newspaper Articles and Museum Press Releases*



\* Note: Pearson Correlation (0.756, statistically significant at the 0.005 level).



**Figure 2** *New Acropolis Museum Cultural/Organizational Actions and Actions Coverage*

