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**Renegotiating the image of a city in the context of the European Capitals of Culture: A  
focus on Marseille-Provence 2013 and Pilsen 2015**

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## MA Programme Euroculture

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## **Abstract:**

The programme of European capitals of culture initiated in 1985 is considered one of the most popular policies of the European Union. Each year, it gives the opportunity to two European cities to organise a large-scale event lasting all year long, with the objective to stimulate its local cultural sphere by the erection of new buildings, establishment of new international partnerships and by hosting multiple events. Through the repetition of this event each year and the evolution of the European Union from the 1980s the programme has evolved to change in order to integrate newer European policies, and developed trends regarding its implementation. This thesis, by focusing on two cases with obvious differences in size, location and history, delve into the strategies employed to conduct successfully a European capital of culture. Therefore, the thesis is conducted on the two cases of Marseille-Provence 2013 and Pilsen 2015. By analysing the initial design of these cultural capitals made in the documents submitted during their application process, as well as documents produced after the cultural, the research illustrates these trends by finding out the commonalities and differences found in both cultural capitals.

The study conducted found that the cultural capitals in both cases noticed great similarities in the manner the programme is implemented in each city. Flagship constructions are influenced by similar trends in city-making, such as R. Florida's theory of the creative class. Similar motifs to design cultural events are found in the two cultural capitals such as the usage of local history, or the integration of minorities. The main differences appeared in the content itself of the cultural year, due to historical, political and cultural idiosyncrasies which resulted in a different programme in each cultural capital.

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**Keywords: European capital of culture, Marseille, Pilsen, Mega-event, creativity, Marseille-Provence**

**Table of abbreviations:**

**European capitals of culture: ECoC**

**Marseille-Provence 2013: MP2013**

**Plzeň/Pilsen 2015: P2015**

**European Union: EU**

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## Introduction

Considered by some as the most prestigious and popular European cultural event<sup>1</sup>, the initiative of the European cultural capitals was initiated in 1985 by Greek minister of culture Melina Mercouri after a discussion with her French counterpart Jack Lang. Such proposition made in a period when the main focus of the European Community was in the field of economics was meant to stimulate the feeling of belonging to Europe for the citizens of the community which suited the goals of the Adoninno Committee<sup>2</sup>. The original conception of the project had the objectives to “highlight the cultural wealth and diversity of the cities of Europe whilst emphasising their shared cultural heritage and the vitality of the arts”<sup>3</sup>. Thus, during its first phase of implementation, the focus of these annual cultural capitals was directed towards cities recognised as cultural hubs starting with Athens as a first ECoC in 1985. However, this initial vision gradually evolved following certain experimentations in the programme of certain cities who used this opportunity as a manner to reinvent themselves, in particular with the influential case of Glasgow in 1990. The case of the Scottish city became a well-known example of urban restructuring through the ECoC programme<sup>4</sup> which slowly shifted from a programme taking place into international and recognised cultural hubs to cities wishing to develop their auras and correct local flaws through the ECoC project.

Indeed, for local actors, the ECoC initiative is perceived as a valuable opportunity to boost the image of a municipality by allowing it to gain some recognition internationally. By the promotion and enhancement of their local cultural sphere, cultural capitals aim to trigger a process to enhance the international aura of the city. This initiative permits the physical construction of new cultural infrastructures erected in time for the event, the reinvestment of certain derelict areas and to temporarily occupy public space with public activities. For cultural actors, it gives the opportunity to create new local and international networks through the establishment of new partnerships which can last beyond the cultural year and possibly create new cultural events in the urban area, transforming the city image. A ECoC falls under the definition of a cultural mega-event, a nomad celebration of fixed duration meant to be attractive for the public, to be widely covered by media which comes as a great cost and which has a

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<sup>1</sup> Jürgen Mittag, *Die Idee der Kulturhauptstadt Europas: Anfänge, Ausgestaltung und Auswirkungen europäischer Kulturpolitik* (Klartext Verlag, 2008).

<sup>2</sup> Beatriz García and Tasmin Cox, “European Capitals of Culture: Success Strategies and Long-Term Effects” (European parliament, November 2013).

<sup>3</sup> Council of the European Economic Community, “Council Resolution 85/C 153/02,” Pub. L. No. 85/C 153/02, 2 (1985).

<sup>4</sup> Beatriz García, “Deconstructing the City of Culture: The Long-Term Cultural Legacies of Glasgow 1990,” *Urban Studies* 42, no. 5–6 (n.d.): 841–68.



significant impact in its local environment and on the population<sup>5</sup>. The cultural year consists in the implementation of events of variable scale produced for or integrated to the ECoC programme. Ultimately, the success of these events to enhance the image of the city depends on their appeal on both the locals and the tourists participating to the event.

Beyond the sole interest of hosting cities to enhance their reputation, the programme of ECoCs also benefits the European Union in its process of integration. As defined by the European Commission, the aim of the European capitals of culture is to “highlight the diversity and richness of cultures in Europe” and “increase European citizens’ sense of belonging to a common cultural area”<sup>6</sup>. Thus, the cultural capitals are meant to develop the attraction of the citizens for other European countries, which fits the objective of culture as a motor of European integration - To quote the famous remark by Jacques Delors “*You cannot fall in love with the single market*”<sup>7</sup>. Indeed, in their programme, cultural capitals stimulate the local cultural scene, invite and display other European artists and even allow for “starting a dialogue with more distant cultures”<sup>8</sup>. The European and international collaboration strategy for the ECoC became a key-player in the integration strategy of former countries of the Eastern bloc as since 2009 the EU designates two ECoCs rather than one. One of the cultural capitals takes place in one of the “older countries” of the Union, whereas the other one occurs in one of the ten countries who joined the Union after 2004<sup>9</sup>. Thus, the ECoC programme is meant to bring a modernisation to a city and its infrastructure, to create a “European standards” for cities, perceived as beneficial for city makers. However, this aspect has been criticised for unifying European cities by expecting them to produce culture with similar values and applying the same ideas when reconstructing the urban environment<sup>10</sup>.

It appears that in the process of the ECoC, cities engage in a *quid pro quo* process with the European Union. On the one hand, participating municipalities engage in a cultural capital allow the stimulation of its local cultural scene, by establishing new partnerships, starting new

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<sup>5</sup> Martin Müller, “What Makes an Event a Mega-Event? Definitions and Sizes,” *Leisure Studies* 34, no. 6 (November 2, 2015): 627–42, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02614367.2014.993333>.

<sup>6</sup> Anonymous, “European Capitals of Culture,” Text, Creative Europe - European Commission, May 4, 2016, [https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/actions/capitals-culture\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/actions/capitals-culture_en).

<sup>7</sup> Jacques Delors, “Address given by Jacques Delors to the European Parliament,” January 17, 1989.

<sup>8</sup> García and Cox, “European Capitals of Culture: Success Strategies and Long-Term Effects.”

<sup>9</sup> “Decision No 649/2005/EC of the Parliament and of the Council of 13 April 2005 Amending Decision No 1419/1999/EC Establishing a Community Action for the European Capital of Culture Event for the Years 2005 to 2019,” Pub. L. No. 649/2005/EC of the European parliament and of the council of 24 October 2006, accessed May 28, 2020, [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dec/2005/649\(1\)/oj](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dec/2005/649(1)/oj).

<sup>10</sup> T. Lahdesmaki, “Cultural Activism as a Counter-Discourse to the European Capital of Culture Programme: The Case of Turku 2011,” *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 16, no. 5 (n.d.): 598–619.

projects or by the construction of new infrastructure. Beyond cultural institutions, the renovation process concerns entire strategic areas which are renovated for the capital year. On the other hand, the cultural capital engages its population in the European integration process by submitting their local culture to the European cultural sphere and aiming to reach what is perceived as “European standards” for cities.

For the writing of my Euroculture M.A. thesis, I decided to focus on the European capitals of culture programme, and more specifically on the two cases of Marseille-Provence 2013 and Pilsen 2015. As detailed later in the dedicated section of this thesis, the settings in which these cultural capitals took place is drastically different. Culturally, geographically and demographically they can be perceived as two almost-opposite cases. However, both have in common the desire to change their outside and inside perception. By hosting a cultural year, they join the same programme with ambitions perceivable as similar. By comparing these two cases, this master’s thesis will try to understand what their commonalities and differences are, and consequently what do this underline regarding the ECoC programme. As such, studying two contexts with stark differences with similar end-goals taking place in the close time-period motivates the selection of the two cases of MP2013 and P2015. Thus, the research question motivating the writing of this thesis could be formulated as *“In the context of Marseille-Provence 2013 and Pilsen 2015, what are the strategies used by both these cities in order to redefine their images through the European Capitals of Culture programme?”*

Before detailing the local contexts in which this master’s thesis takes place, it is worth delving into the academic discussion concerning European capitals of culture to frame the topic and then detail the methodology employed for its writing.

## D) Conceptualisation of the research

### Literature review:

Overall, the European capitals of culture have been extensively studied and discussed in academic literature. The scholarly debate has focused on numerous aspects surrounding this ambitious cultural programme, which developed various trends and areas of analysis of the cultural capitals. As they involve a wide range of actors, contribute to the cultural development of a city and are pushed by the European Union, they offer great room for possible studies. Two main approaches to this topic are usually adopted for the study of the European cultural capitals. A first one consists in focusing on different aspects found in the ECoC programme as a whole or a group of specific iterations of it. This literature offers a wide variety of possible areas of study, with possible focus on subjects such as the governance process behind the European capitals of culture<sup>11</sup>, the use of the cultural programme as an enhancer of the European integration for territories<sup>12</sup>, or by focusing on the trends of representation of local culture and/or history found in the cultural programme<sup>13</sup>, and many other topics. The other approach adopted by the literature on the topic is a focus on a specific ECoC, studying one aspect of it (e.g. the impact on a city infrastructure), or to develop a holistic approach for the study of this mega-event.

One of the reasons which could explain why the subject of the ECoCs has been so heavily studied is probably the substantial amount of data this subject offers. The event is repeated each year, and since 2009 it takes place in two different cities in two different countries at the same time. However, one has to notice that the literature delving into European capitals drastically vary depending on the topic analysed. A significant part of the literature dedicated to a cultural capital is produced by the scholars of that same country, in the national language. As an example, the case of the ECoC Leeuwarden 2018 has been studied by Meekes, Buda and de Roo of the university of Groningen<sup>14</sup>, or the Finish case of Turku2011 studied by T.

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<sup>11</sup> Ágnes Németh, "European Capitals of Culture – Digging Deeper into the Governance of the Mega-Event," *Territory, Politics, Governance* 4, no. 1 (January 2, 2016): 52–74, <https://doi.org/10.1080/21622671.2014.992804>.

<sup>12</sup> Alexandros Sianos, "European Capitals of Culture: A 'Soft Power' Resource for the European Union?," *International Journal for History, Culture and Modernity* 5, no. 1 (February 6, 2017): 127, <https://doi.org/10.18352/hcm.496>.

<sup>13</sup> Nicole L. Immler and Hans Sakkers, "(Re)Programming Europe: European Capitals of Culture: Rethinking the Role of Culture," *Journal of European Studies* 44, no. 1 (March 2014): 3–29, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0047244113515567>.

<sup>14</sup> Jasper F Meekes and Dorina M Buda, "Leeuwarden 2018: Complexity of Leisure-Led Regional Development in a European Capital of Culture," *Tijdschrift Voor Economische En Sociale Geografie* 1, no. 108 (2017): 129–36.

Lähdesmäki of the University of Jyväskylä. Yet, certain cases have acquired a great focus by academics and city planners alike and work as flagships for the ECoC programme. Among such famous cases are Glasgow 1990 and Liverpool 2008, since both these cases offer good example of urban regeneration by a city suffering from a local derelict economy<sup>15</sup>. On the contrary, certain smaller European capitals of culture have received little academic work dedicated specifically to their study, a fact even more accentuated in international literature. However, thanks to the international aspect of the European capitals of culture, it is still possible to find a substantial amount of work on each cultural capital. Thus, for the literature review of the scholarly work produced on European capitals of culture, it is necessary to discuss specific aspects of this programme. This differentiation on the amount of secondary literature explain why the subject of MP2013 and more significantly P2015 have been in the majority of studied by scholars of their own countries.

A concept which lies at the core of the approach behind the ECoC project, and the actual trend behind the politics aiming at developing the attractiveness for cities are the idea of “creativity” as defined by Richard Florida in his work *“The rise of the creative class”*<sup>16</sup>. The author argues in this book that due to a shift of the economic paradigm it is possible to observe the emergence of a new social class defined by its “creativity”. This rather blurry definition encompasses workers from a wide range of professional fields, such as those employed in the fields of engineering, education, music, arts, etc. The creative economy could be defined as an economy based on the production of information and knowledge. The particularity of this new social class is that for the first time in history, workers are not drawn to a specific place because of employment opportunities, but it is rather the individuals of this class who, by their presence and work, are the spearheads of local economy. As a consequence, even the term “creativity” remains unclear regarding the class associated to this concept which according to Florida, is at the centre of the modern economic system. Cities are encouraged to stimulate this new class by giving them a suitable environment in which creative workers can thrive and develop local life. Thus, cities get set in a context of territorial competition for the most attractive location to appeal to this-said class. In that configuration, culture plays a key-role in the manner a city can distinguish itself. This relates to what Guy Saez<sup>17</sup> has labelled the “metropolitan turn of cultural

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<sup>15</sup> Sianos, “European Capitals of Culture.”

<sup>16</sup> Richard Florida, *The Rise Of The Creative Class: And How It’s Transforming Work, Leisure, Community And Everyday Life* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2002).

<sup>17</sup> Guy Saez, “Le Tournant Métropolitain Des Politiques Culturelles,” in *Les Nouveaux Enjeux Des Politiques Culturelles. Dynamiques Européennes*, ed. Michel Hollard et Guy Saez, Territoires Du Politiques (La Découverte, 2012), 23–71, <https://hal.archives-ouvertes.fr/hal-00825851>.

policies, as cities now play a key-role in defining and funding cultural policies. Florida's conception of culture as a redeeming tool for cities correlates the observations of Bonet and Négrier<sup>18</sup> on the evolution of the usage of culture. Focusing their work on investigating cultural policy objectives in western countries in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, they concluded that from the 1980s the approach to culture has adopted an emphasis on aspects such as international cooperation, cultural diversity and cultural production and diffusion, and at the same time featured an extrinsic facet stressing the goal of competitiveness, economic growth and employment.

Florida's work has proved to be extremely influential for city makers and impacted the manner cities deal with their own local culture. This led to various trends of urban policies such as the appeal for urban regeneration, especially in the spaces associated with the industrial economy. According R-M Trifa<sup>19</sup>, such transformation operates as a palliative measure for solving problems generated by de-industrialisation, as well as having a symbolic role as it permits a reinvention of the space, marking an obvious transformation of the territory. By their transformation, the city transforms itself as a "post-industrial" or "creative city", explaining the appeal of recycling this type of space. The stimulation of creative culture in those former brownfield sites can be integrated in local politics as the artists found in those places are expected to participate in the life of their neighbourhood and ultimately have a sociocultural impact. It is interesting to note that these spaces often permit the integration of what has been considered as *Off* culture (Alternative/underground), in the institutionalised culture (*The in*)<sup>20</sup>. Moreover, they are supposed to have an indirect economic effect, by the attraction of tourists and the targeted group of the creative class, permitting the opening of surrounding business such as shops or cafés. It seems the process of creativity and the usage of culture can serve as a manner for a city to re-invent itself and flagship of this trend knew a certain success over the years, such as the *Kulturbrauerei* in Berlin or the case of *la Friche de la Belle de Mai* in Marseille which will be commented upon in the thesis.

However, the concept of creativity and its strong influence on urban-planners, and its alleged role for a prosperous local economy raised criticisms from both the right and left of the

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<sup>18</sup> Lluís Bonet and Emmanuel Négrier, "The End(s) of National Cultures? Cultural Policy in the Face of Diversity," *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 17, no. 5 (November 2011): 574–89, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10286632.2010.550681>.

<sup>19</sup> Raluca-Maria Trifa, "Preservation and Transformation: The Role of Industrial Heritage in Urban Regeneration," *Civil Engineering* 61, no. 3 (2018): 12.

<sup>20</sup> Boris Grésillon, "Les «friches culturelles» et la ville : une nouvelle donne ?," *L'Observatoire*, no. 2010/1 (2010): 50–53.

political spectrum, as identified by Peck<sup>21</sup>. Florida's vision sees creativity rather as something manageable than something relying on a local context and the stimulation of creativity is seen as a business-oriented manner to solve the problems found in a city<sup>22</sup>. The systematic need of city-makers to orient local cultural strategies to appeal to Florida's creative class pushed Schlesinger<sup>23</sup> to describe urban cultural regeneration policies as something "banal". Moreover, certain scholars have criticised the cluster effect<sup>24</sup> that such policies have by regrouping that-said class in a concentrated area. B. Grésillon<sup>25</sup> has commented concerning the revitalisation of former industrial areas that ultimately the new economy created in that place will never replace those lost due to the deindustrialisation. Furthermore, he argued that not all revitalised sites have the necessary size to carry on with the ambitions of local politics with socio-cultural goals. In this perspective, he also fears that the integration of *Off* culture in city politics by the revitalisation process could be a trend and may be perceived someday as an old-fashioned approach to the city.

ECoCs are to be considered as a continuation of the creativity discourse. Festivals and mega-events are perceived as an efficient manner to contribute to the image-making of a city as explained by Barthon<sup>26</sup> and are set in the competitive space between cities described before according to Mutman<sup>27</sup>. According to Lähdesmäki<sup>28</sup>, ECoCs work in a similar fashion: They create a horizon of expectations for both the inhabitants of the city and outside individuals and contribute to the objectives of transforming the city space<sup>29</sup>. However, she also argues that despite the EU's objective of bringing fore and celebrate local culture by the aspects linking ECoCs to concepts of creativity, the events tend to have an effect of creating a standardisation

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<sup>21</sup> Jamie Peck, "Struggling with the Creative Class," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 29, no. 4 (December 2005): 740–70, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2427.2005.00620.x>.

<sup>22</sup> Cian O'Callaghan, "Urban Anxieties and Creative Tensions in the European Capital of Culture 2005: 'It Couldn't Just Be about Cork, like,'" *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 18, no. 2 (March 2012): 185–204, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10286632.2011.567331>.

<sup>23</sup> Philip Schlesinger, "Creativity: From Discourse to Doctrine?," *Screen* 48, no. 3 (October 1, 2007): 377–87, <https://doi.org/10.1093/screen/hjm037>.

<sup>24</sup> Elsa Vivant, "Et si les politiques d'attractivité des industries créatives étaient contreproductives?," *Nectart* 6, no. 1 (2018): 108.

<sup>25</sup> Boris Grésillon, "Les <<friches culturelles>> et la ville : une nouvelle donne ?" *L'Observatoire*, no. 2010/1 (2010): 50–53.

<sup>26</sup> Céline Barthon et al., "L'inscription territoriale et le jeu des acteurs dans les événements culturels et festifs : des villes, des festivals, des pouvoirs," *Géocarrefour* 82, no. 3 (July 1, 2007): 111–21, <https://doi.org/10.4000/geocarrefour.2155>.

<sup>27</sup> Demet Mutman, "Urban Regeneration: Tools, Catalyzors and the Outcomes," n.d., 18.

<sup>28</sup> Tuuli Lähdesmäki, "European Capital of Culture Designation as an Initiator of Urban Transformation in the Post-Socialist Countries," *European Planning Studies* 22, no. 3 (March 4, 2014): 481–97, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09654313.2012.752438>.

<sup>29</sup> Lähdesmäki.

of urban policies among European cities. As explained by A. Gombault<sup>30</sup>, the economic dimension attached to the creative discourse can be found in the vocabulary of the bid-documents of European capitals of culture by the usage of elements such as “job creation”, “tourist income” or “marketing of the city”. However, such policies, and their economic impact, has been contested by scholars such as Garcia<sup>31</sup> or Campbell<sup>32</sup>, who studied the aftermath impact of Glasgow 1990 and Liverpool 2008 ECoCs, especially concerning the creation of jobs in the creative sector. Both observations concluded that the event had little influence on the subject they focused on. Such a thing pushed Campbell to question the rhetoric of creative policies which promises both success and prosperity for each case, a common criticism for those sceptical of the narrative of creativity.

Not all elements of the academic discussion focused on the cultural capitals delve into the analysis of the creative discourse and its effect on the city. Other aspects not entirely related to the local modification of a city infrastructure have been developed in academic literature, such as the overall question of culture and the process of Europeanisation through the capitals of culture. Jürgen Mittag<sup>33</sup> argued in 2008 that the ECoC programme was having more impact on the image of the city (Due to the amount of tourist it attracts) than it has on the fostering process of European integration. A report produced by the Palmer-Rae associates known as the Palmer-report<sup>34</sup> published in 2004 have noticed that if the European dimension can be expressed in the document bids of the cultural capital, it often lacks in the final cultural programme. This absence of a strong European dimension in the cultural programme of the ECoCs have been acknowledge and discussed at the institutional level as shown in a decision taken by the European Commission in 2006<sup>35</sup> following a report by the European Commission published in 2010<sup>36</sup>.

If during the 2000s decade the general consensus have noted the lack of a European dimension in European capitals, overshadowed by the goals that cities had to reposition

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<sup>30</sup> Anne Gombault, “Social Participation Issues in Becoming a Creative City: Learning from European Capitals of Culture,” in *The Creative City, Vision and Execution* (Abingdon-on-Thames: Taylor and Francis, 2015).

<sup>31</sup> García, “Deconstructing the City of Culture.”

<sup>32</sup> Peter Campbell, “Creative Industries in a European Capital of Culture,” *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 17, no. 5 (November 2011): 510–22, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10286632.2010.543461>.

<sup>33</sup> Mittag, *Die Idee der Kulturhauptstadt Europas*.

<sup>34</sup> Robert Palmer, “European Cities and Capitals of Culture” (Brussels: Palmer-Rae Associates, August 2004).

<sup>35</sup> “Decision No 1622/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 October 2006 Establishing a Community Action for the European Capital of Culture Event for the Years 2007 to 2019,” Pub. L. No. 32006D1622, 304 OJ L (2006), <http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec/2006/1622/oj/eng>.

<sup>36</sup> European Commission, “Summary of the European Commission Conference ‘Celebrating 25 Years of European Capitals of Culture’” (Brussels, 2010).

themselves as creative cultural capitals, recent works have, on the other hand noted how more recent capitals of culture possesses a greater emphasis of elements of interculturality in their bids. Such fact has been noted by Nicole L. Immler and Hans Sakkers<sup>37</sup> who delved into the bid programme of various ECoC bids to find various common trends in the manner competing cities represent their cultures. For instance, all of them, no matter their geographical position on the European map, would present themselves as being in a central position in Europe, to emphasise on their multiculturalism. A similar trend is found in the values featured in the bid documents. A. Gombault<sup>38</sup> states that bid documents feature lexical fields related to social cohesion and interculturality with the usage of words such as “integration”, “respect”, “links”, “bridges”, “mutual understanding”, “social inclusion”, etc... Beyond the textual aspect, the similarity of certain visual cues in official documents related to the European union has been underlined as well by Giorgia Aiello and Crispin Thurlow<sup>39</sup> who performed visual analysis on a wide number of visual elements used for communication purposes of various ECoCs. They found that despite a display of certain idiosyncratic elements found in each city (Specific landscapes, buildings, etc.) these texts never escape a form of uniformity using what the author refers to as the semiotics “*of an institutionalised look of a European Capital of Culture candidate*”. She argues that the “*Europeanness*” is stylised and inscribed for a cross-cultural audience through the repetition of generic cultural details or identity markers. For them the creation of these elements is a fertile ground for a cross-cultural construction of the European identity. Analysing the application bids of cities from former communist countries (Riga, Pilsen and Warsaw), Corina Turşie found in similar fashion common aspects in these bid documents<sup>40</sup>. The commonalities are found in the elements related to specific criteria for the selection process, on the questions of integrating the “European dimension” and “City and Citizens” dimension required as selection criteria since 2010. She insists that the manner cities answer these criteria are extremely similar, insisting on themes such as multiculturalism, ecology or digitalisation. She argues that such thing makes the whole application process a very technical one, “similar to filling a European checklist [...] leaving little room for diversity.”

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<sup>37</sup> Immler and Sakkers, “(Re)Programming Europe.”

<sup>38</sup> Gombault, “Social Participation Issues in Becoming a Creative City: Learning from European Capitals of Culture.”

<sup>39</sup> Giorgia Aiello and Crispin Thurlow, “Symbolic Capitals: Visual Discourse and Intercultural Exchange in the European Capital of Culture Scheme,” *Language and Intercultural Communication* 6, no. 2 (May 15, 2006): 148–62, <https://doi.org/10.2167/laic234.0>.

<sup>40</sup> Corina Turşie, “The Unwanted Past and Urban Regeneration of Communist Heritage Cities. Case Study: European Capitals of Culture (ECoC) Riga 2014, Pilsen 2015 and Wrocław 2016,” *Journal of Education Culture and Society* 6, no. 2 (January 2, 2020): 122–38, <https://doi.org/10.15503/jecs20152.122.138>.



Beyond the application bids and their uniformity in the manner they aim at representing their city in the European context both visually and ideologically, the whole question of city marketing has been commented as well in the literature dedicated to the ECoCs. Indeed, by presenting their cities in the bid-document, cities wish to engage in a specific narrative used to encapsulate the spirit of the city. A. Gombault<sup>41</sup> states that in this process the city must define what it is at heart, to play on its “internal identity” as well as perceiving what is its perceived image, a process called in marketing “positioning”. To pursue on that explanation, N. Maisetti<sup>42</sup> explains that city marketing difficult lies in the difficult balance between the creation of a distinction for the territory aimed to seduce economic actors while strengthening the feeling of belonging for local inhabitants. This process is then bound to create a tension between external and local actors in the labelled city. He explains as well that in the context of the European capital of culture, the city showcases its weaknesses- and how it created its local identity. These negative aspects of local life featured in the bid-document aimed to be corrected through the process of the cultural capital, hence motivating the application process.

The multiple levels of governance influencing the capitals of culture offers great room for literature as well, whether dedicated to the study of the relationship between the European Union and the programme or focusing on local actors involved in a cultural capital. The top-down relationship between the European Commission and the programme of cultural capitals have been studied and commented quite extensively as well. Alexandro Sianos<sup>43</sup> argues that the programme has served as a soft power tool for the European Union (Using Joseph S. Nye’s definition). As he explains, Central and Eastern European states started to consider western European states as “reference cultures”<sup>44</sup>. As the process of European capitals is perceived as a manner to fill the gap existing between “older” and “newer” states of the European Union, cities are more inclined to follow fundamental principles of the EU, such as democracy, pluralism and the rule of the law. If this cultural event seems to be a manner used by the Union to be an influential cultural actor, one should not forget that culture remains an ancillary domain in the

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<sup>41</sup> Gombault, “Social Participation Issues in Becoming a Creative City: Learning from European Capitals of Culture.”

<sup>42</sup> Nicolas Maisetti, “City branding et fragmentation métropolitaine : l’impossible recherche d’une marque territoriale dans le cas du territoire marseillais,” *Communication & langages* 2013/1, no. 177 (March 2013): 95–118, <https://doi.org/10.4074/S033615001301106x>.

<sup>43</sup> Sianos, “European Capitals of Culture.”

<sup>44</sup> Joris Van Eijnatten and Joris Van Eijnatten, “Beyond Diversity. The Steady State of Reference Cultures,” *International Journal for History, Culture and Modernity* 3, no. 3 (n.d.): 1.

European legislation. As argued by Patel<sup>45</sup>, the European Union only has narrow competences in the cultural field (in opposition to others such as agriculture or the common market). He argues that due to the influence of a certain networks of international experts (Such as Palmer or Garcia who has been mentioned earlier in this literature review), the programme has benefitted from a refocus to its “European integration” purpose rather than being simply a tool for urban regeneration in the mid-2000s<sup>46</sup>. Patel argues that the ECoC programme benefits from not being associated too closely to the EU and leaves the definition of the “European dimension” open for each programme to the actors, explaining the heterogeneity between each cultural capital due to local idiosyncratic cultural dynamics. The little intervention made by the EU in the governance process of the ECoC programme comes from a rather small financial support by the Commission. Ágnes Németh<sup>47</sup> argues that this fact pushes for the co-operation and inclusion of numerous actors, which dilutes even further the top-down process of governance in the ECoC project.

Local governance processes have been extensively studied in the academic literature as well. According to A. Németh<sup>48</sup>, the change which has been highlighted the most in recent literature is the interdependencies between the organisations of the project which compels the actors to negotiate with each other, due to a light support from the EU which forces the many actors to cooperate. Thus, controversies often emerge around the power and the roles of the actors in the process of governance. The controversies and tensions between local social cultural and economic actors are rarely emphasised in the reports and bid documents of the ECoCs<sup>49</sup>. Ultimately, this led to questioning the nature of the community integrated in the programme and celebrated during the cultural year asked by scholars such as Mooney<sup>50</sup> when he studies Glasgow 2004 and Liverpool 2008. Finally, the involvement of the actors in such a project do not necessarily mean their adhesion to the project as explained by R. Lefèbvre<sup>51</sup>. Moreover, he demonstrated how certain actors use the ECoC for their own ends, just like the mayor of Lille,

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<sup>45</sup> Kiran Klaus Patel, “Integration by Interpellation: The European Capitals of Culture and the Role of Experts in European Union Cultural Policies: Integration by Interpellation,” *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 51, no. 3 (May 2013): 538–54, <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.12009>.

<sup>46</sup> Palmer, “European Cities and Capitals of Culture.”

<sup>47</sup> Németh, “European Capitals of Culture – Digging Deeper into the Governance of the Mega-Event.”

<sup>48</sup> Németh.

<sup>49</sup> Gombault, “Social Participation Issues in Becoming a Creative City: Learning from European Capitals of Culture.”

<sup>50</sup> Gerry Mooney, “Cultural Policy as Urban Transformation? Critical Reflections on Glasgow, European City of Culture 1990,” *Local Economy* 19, no. 4 (November 1, 2004): 327–40, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0269094042000286837>.

<sup>51</sup> Rémi Lefèbvre, “Lille 2004: Une Capitale Européenne de La Culture. Des Usages Politiques et Territoriaux de La Culture,” in *Action Publique et Projet Métropolitain*, L’Harmattan (Paris, 2006), 269–89.

Martine Aubry, who benefitted greatly from the ECoC Lille 2004 to claim legitimacy as mayor of this city. First elected in 2001, she is still the city mayor at the moment of the redaction of this master's thesis. N. Maisetti, a geographer specialised in the city of Marseille has put a great emphasis in his study of the Marseille-Provence 2013 event on the governance process behind this event<sup>52</sup>, highlighting the great weight of the private sector in this event. A. Nemeth<sup>53</sup> distinguishes two types of power relations which ultimately influences the behaviour of the actors involved in the process of European Capitals of Culture. She distinguishes between externally determined and internalised power relations to explain the relations between the actors. The externally determined power relations are "legally assumed", can be openly declared and transparent. Whereas the internalised power relations refer to the internalised consciousness of the different bodies about themselves and their situation (e.g. stereotypes on certain groups or the feeling of powerlessness expressed by certain minorities of civil groups). A. Nemeth argues that these power relations have an impact on various processes of governance such the inclusion of certain actors, their co-operation and possible conflicts.

Finally, it is interesting to note that after 2009, the legislation concerning the organisation of ECoCs has evolved in order to feature two cities per year. As such, since 2009, one of the two cities receiving the title of cultural capital have always been from one the countries which joined the EU after the eastern enlargement of 2004, and the other being from one of the "older" countries of the Union. However, despite the integration of Central and Eastern European countries in Europe in the early 2000s, a gap between Western and Eastern Europe remain, as described by Emanuel Crudu<sup>54</sup>. The integration of these cities and their culture inherited from the cold-war period has been the subject of various pieces of academic literature, in the continuation of the study dedicated to the changes following the collapse of the Eastern bloc in post-socialist countries. Lähdesmäki<sup>55</sup> found out that every programme of ECoCs in former socialist cities (Including P2015) were featuring elements concerning heritage of the communist period. For her, the European cultural experience is extended in these cities as they allow the addition of the European history. If the gap still exists between newer and

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<sup>52</sup> Nicolas Maisetti, "Jouer collectif dans un territoire fragmenté: l'économie politique de la capitale Européenne de la culture dans la recomposition de la gouvernance urbaine," *Gouvernement et actions publiques* 4, no. 2015/1 (January 2015): 61–85.

<sup>53</sup> Németh, "European Capitals of Culture – Digging Deeper into the Governance of the Mega-Event."

<sup>54</sup> 'The European Identity And The Persistence Of The East/West Slope', *Euroacademia* (blog), accessed 27 November 2019, <http://euroacademia.eu/presentation/the-european-identity-and-the-persistence-of-the-eastwest-slope/>.

<sup>55</sup> Lähdesmäki, "European Capital of Culture Designation as an Initiator of Urban Transformation in the Post-Socialist Countries."

older European states, these events allow to bring these countries to the rest of Europe. However, by the fact there remains an urge for these countries to reach the Western-European standards, it underlines the hierarchy remaining between countries in the European Union.

The literature dedicated to the study of the European capitals of culture seem to follow two trends: A first trend is focused on the city itself. Focusing on the transformation in its infrastructure to reach its objectives of transforming in a modern European city, often influenced by the standards of creativity. The study of local powers at play or the need for a city to define its image. However, a second trend of academic literature focuses more on the programme content for the cultural year. Studying the ideological roots of the programme, its “Europeanness” on display and the effect the programme has on local cultural life. Both trends are intertwined, and each element commented upon in this literature review are to take in account when studying an ECoC. This thesis deals with the manner these aspects of the ECoC programme are found in the cases of MP2013 and P2015. For the continuation of the thesis, it is now necessary to delve into the study of the actual context in both these cities. From the study of local context, it is possible to understand what are the elements which motivated these cities to apply for the cultural capital programme.

## Methodology

In order to answer the research question, adopting a case-study approach is a relevant method for answering the research question. Using S. B. Meriam<sup>56</sup>'s conception of the case-study as a delimited object of study with a substantial number of first-hand sources and literature allow us to consider the two cases as separate case-studies which need to be compared for research purposes. For the completion of this thesis, the data gathering is ensured by the qualitative methods of close reading of the ECoC bid documents and semi-structured interviews conducted during the research phase. In order to analyse the data gathered for the thesis, Mats Lindberg's<sup>57</sup> approach to ideational analysis and his VDP triad methodology will be applied.

Collection method 1: The method of close reading relies on the personal interpretation of the text by the searcher to obtain detailed analysis of various trends found in texts at structural, semantical and cultural levels in light of the analyst's knowledge. With this method, the researcher aims at a "mindful, disciplined reading of an object with a view to deeper understanding of its meanings", as described by B. Brummett<sup>58</sup>. Thus, the method of close reading permits the analysis of the bid programmes submitted by both studied ECoCs. To complete the close reading approach to texts, the analysis of the bid-documents will be ensured by Lindberg's methodology for ideational analysis using his VDP triad. The author has defined this qualitative method as an attempt to find the thought content with a unified analytic frame meant to analyse speech content, to be used in descriptive idea-analyses scrutinising idea-criticism<sup>59</sup>. Lindberg considers ideas (Or ideological thought content) as an inherent element in all social and political debate, communication, messaging, thought and language; normally concealed by rhetorical figures of speech. According to him, stylised generalisations of the thought patterns of idea traditions are morphological reconstructions, that he refers to as "Ideal types"<sup>60</sup>. If the content of these patterns varies depending on the personal ideology of the speaker, they however share a common inner formal structure or morphological composition. As such, Lindberg offers a methodology to find the thought content of action-guiding ideas for

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<sup>56</sup> Sharan B. Merriam, *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education: Revised and Expanded from Case Study Research in Education*, Revised edition (San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons, 1997).

<sup>57</sup> Mats Lindberg, "The VDP-triad in Ideational Analysis:," *Statsvetenskaplig tidskrift* 120, no. 2 (December 7, 2018), <https://journals.lub.lu.se/st/article/view/18125>.

<sup>58</sup> Barry S. Brummett, *Techniques of Close Reading* (Los Angeles: SAGE Publications Inc, 2009).

<sup>59</sup> Lindberg, "The VDP-triad in Ideational Analysis."

<sup>60</sup> Mats Lindberg, "Qualitative Analysis of Ideas and Ideological Content," in *Analyzing Text and Discourse: Eight Approaches for the Social Sciences* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2017).

qualitative analyses of thought content, relying on what he calls the “three dimensions of thought”. According the author, ideas are expressed through three statement:

- A value statement (V) an expression of values or a value judgement expressed in various ways (Ideals, goals, preferences, interest, etc.)
- A descriptive statement (D) a description or judgement of reality expressed in forms such as narrative accounts, descriptive assertions, situational analyses, etc.
- A prescriptive statement (P), a practical proposal for actions. A statement expressed in manners such as a normative or practical conclusion, policy suggestions, etc.

For this master’s thesis, Lindberg’s approach will be used to conduct an idea criticism performed on both bid-documents. The literature review permitted to obtain information on the various trends which influence the ECoC programme, such as the theory of the creative class or the expression of European values in the presentation of the city. As such, this master’s thesis consists in what Lindberg refers to as “Idea criticism”<sup>61</sup>, a content-oriented and critical analysis aiming at scrutinising ideas found in a text by underlying single ideas and their combinations.

Bid documents are submitted by participating cities to the selection panel with the aim to be selected five years prior to the cultural year. They are long documents (214 pages for MP2013; 246 for P2015), stylised and informative at the same time as they must appeal to the reader (the selection panel) by their aesthetics qualities and their informative values. These documents are designed to answer the question on how the participating city intends to answer the series of requirements for the ECoC programme resumed in two criteria: the planned impact on the city and its development (City and citizens) or how will the international, European and extra-European dialogue will be developed throughout the year (European Dimension). As such, bid documents contain the first outline of the cultural programme as imagined by the organisers. However, this programme is a draft susceptible to change for various reasons either internal (A difficult collaboration with a partner) or external (Unexpected events or the selection panel requires a change). A relevant example of an external change impacting the planned programme of the ECoC is found in the MP2013 case, when the Arab spring in 2011 impacted established partnerships in several Mediterranean countries. However, despite the difference between the bid-document and the implemented programme, these bid-documents serve as initial guidelines for the coming cultural capital. Hence, bid documents have political and diplomatic goals and offer a policed vision of the city they aim to present. The assessment of

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<sup>61</sup> Lindberg.

the situation presented in the document is influenced by certain political goals which motivated applicant cities to apply for the ECoC programme. Bid-documents are also extremely codified as they follow a strict procedure to respond to the requirements of the selection panel by answering a series of questions in dedicated sections and subsections. These documents contain the objectives and ideas behind the implementation of the ECoCs and will be analysed as such in regard to the trends found in the programme as described in the literature review section.

Collection method 2: If the bid-documents may represent the *before* of the European capitals of culture, their analysis will be compared with the interviews conducted for this thesis, which can be considered as the *after*. If the first document is meant to be impersonal and as thoroughly descriptive as possible, the interview focuses on the experience of a single actor and features only certain points depending on the questions asked by the interviewer and what the interviewee is willing to share. These two types of documents used for this thesis are extremely different in their nature but allow to adopt a qualitative approach to the topic studied. They answer to one another, and the interviews have been drafted after initial research and reading of the bid-documents.

For the completion of the thesis, two interviews have been conducted with both programme directors of the studied cultural capitals, Jiří Sulženko (P2015) and Ulrich Fuchs (MP2013). The interviews were conducted online using Steinar Kvale's semi-constructed interview method<sup>62</sup>. J. Sulženko's interview took place on April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2020 and lasted approximately 50 minutes. He joined the P2015 organisation team in 2013 at a time he refers to as "The peak of the crisis"<sup>63</sup> when the monitoring panel expressed high concerns regarding P2015. Jiří Sulženko now works as curator of Prague riverbanks, the culture department for the Trade Centre Praha a.s.. Prior to the ECoC event, J. Sulženko was working as the manager of a cultural centre in the suburb of Prague and got reached out by a head-hunter for the P2015 event. The interview with U. Fuchs took place on May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020 and lasted approximately 1h 10 minutes. Mr. Fuchs is not a native French however, and is rather born in Germany. U. Fuchs joined the MP2013 organisation team as programme director in May 2010, immediately after finishing his work at the similar position of the Linz09 ECoC. However, he had previous contacts with the MP2013 association in charge of organising the cultural capital prior to the mega-event and was collaborating informally with MP2013 since September 2009<sup>64</sup>. Following

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<sup>62</sup> Steinar Kvale, *Doing Interviews* (1 Oliver's Yard, 55 City Road, London England EC1Y 1SP United Kingdom: SAGE Publications, Ltd, 2007), <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781849208963>.

<sup>63</sup> Jiří Sulženko, Interview with author, Online, April 22, 2020.

<sup>64</sup> Ulrich Fuchs, Interview with author, Online, May 8, 2020.

the event, he joined the selection panel of European capitals of culture, and works as an independent academic researcher and cultural manager. These interviews are conducted several years after the implementation of the events with key-actors of these projects. As such, it is possible that the interviewees do not recall certain details or wish not to delve into sensitive subjects. However, the insight they offer is extremely valuable as Mr. Sulženko and Fuchs were primordial actors with a broad vision of both study-cases.

Both types of documents studied for the thesis contrast greatly by many aspects. Bids documents are structured, formal argumentations presenting the city, while interviews are conducted in a rather informal context and are partial, since they relate to one personal experience. As a consequence, an interview is biased by nature. However, analysing both types of documents for the thesis offer considerable advantages for this case study. Firstly, possessing this type of data permit to delve into the *before* and the *after* of the cultural years. Secondly, this also permits to confront the difference of perception between the initial team and one of an influential actor years after the completion of the programme. An interesting aspect with that cultural year is that both cultural directors joined their ECoC programme during its implementation, and thus have not been involved in the writing of the bid-documents. Conducting an interview *after* the event displays the actor's perception regarding the initial idea for the event in a qualitative methodology in which interviewees more openly express their opinions. However, due to their biased natures either resulting from the fact that the interviews were conducted years after the cultural year event and since they only reflect a point-of-view/personal experience, to these interviews will be added the analysis of these events from secondary literature, or reports about these ECoCs. For the reports completing the *after* section, the ex-post evaluations produced by the European Commission will be notably used. Even if they may obscure certain facts (such as the nature of the criticisms formulated against a cultural year), they remain a very reliable document on the event. Of course, comparing the data gathered during the research phase with relevant facts concerning the cultural year *during* its implementation is not excluded in the analysis section as part of the case-study approach, as it proves relevant in certain sections. However, the thesis will not present such thing as listing every proposition made in the *before* and compare to what has been implemented *during* the cultural year, as doing such a thing would have very little relevance. Thus, analysing the *before* and the *after* of both cultural capitals and then comparing the two cases of P2015 and MP2013 will allow to perceive what are the commonalities and differences of both these cultural events in order to answer the research question.



Now that the methodology has been mapped out, it is necessary to delve into the description of the case-study to understand what the dynamics at play in each ECoC case are.

## II) Description of the case-study

### Description of the cities

#### Marseille, the Phocaeen city

The history of Marseille is the one of a Mediterranean city which has always found itself as a liminal space between Northern and Southern culture in the Mediterranean region. The city is usually described as a space marked by cultural dichotomies<sup>65</sup> - Europe/Africa, France/Colonies, Christianity/Islam. The city was founded approximately in 600 B.C. under the name “Massalia” by Greek merchants from the Phocaeen region (actual Anatolia) in a space which was dominated by the Celtic culture (hence its nickname “the Phocaeen city”. Marseille and its region, the Provence, only joined the French kingdom at the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The city possesses an important harbour, the largest in France and fourth one in Europe in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century<sup>66</sup>, which attracted several waves of migration through its history. In the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the majority of migrants in Marseille originated from Italy and since the decolonisation process in the 1960s and the end of the Algerian war, from the African continent (Maghreb and sub-Saharan region)<sup>67</sup>. It seems Marseille is deeply rooted in its Mediterranean identity, defined by scholars as a space characterised by its continuous interconnectivity between cultural groups as described by Fernand Braudel in his famous thesis as “a space with multiple identities, [...] a connected closed space”<sup>68</sup>.

Geographically speaking, the city of Marseille is located in the Provence region, the 7<sup>th</sup> most populated region of metropolitan France<sup>69</sup>. The municipality itself is the second biggest of France, with a population of 860,000 habitants approximately<sup>70</sup>. The city itself manages to maintain its strong regional Mediterranean identity reinforced by popular culture with international cultural figures attached to the city such as the writer Marcel Pagnol. However,

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<sup>65</sup> Angela Giovanangeli, “Marseille, European Capital of Culture 2013 Ins and Offs: A Case for Rethinking the Effects of Large-Scale Cultural Initiatives,” *French Cultural Studies*, n.d., 15.

<sup>66</sup> Simon Ronai, “Marseille : une métropole en mutation,” *Herodote* n° 135, no. 4 (2009): 128–47.

<sup>67</sup> André Donzel, “Regeneration In Marseilles: The Search for Political Stability,” *Urban Affairs Reviews* 37 (1990).

<sup>68</sup> Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II: Volume I* (University of California Press, 1995).

<sup>69</sup> INSEE, “Populations Légales : 5 021 928 Habitants En Provence-Alpes-Côte d’Azur Au 1<sup>er</sup> Janvier 2016 - Insee Flash Provence-Alpes-Côte d’Azur - 47,” accessed June 3, 2020, <https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/3683296#consulter>.

<sup>70</sup> INSEE, “Populations Légales 2017 – Commune de Marseille (13055) | Insee,” accessed June 8, 2020, <https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/4269674?geo=COM-13055#consulter>.

Marseille is usually depicted negatively by media, both French and foreign<sup>71</sup>, due to a history tied with crime, drugs and violence found in certain of its urban areas in particular the northern suburbs (*banlieues nord*s). As a consequence of their endemic violence due to drug-trafficking these neighbourhoods create a commonly negative portrayal of the city in media and pop-culture which ultimately affects the perception of the entire metropolitan area. However, this poor reputation is correlated with concerning socio-urban dynamics originating from its local economy. Indeed, as mentioned above, the city occupied the comfortable position of the 4<sup>th</sup> largest European harbour in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century<sup>72</sup>. However, since the 1970s, Marseille has been deeply affected negatively by the economic transformations of the second half of last century, similarly to various other harbours in the Mediterranean region<sup>73</sup>. Consequently, the Marseille harbour's activity fell drastically, shifting from the global position of the 24<sup>th</sup> largest port in terms of container traffic to the 84<sup>th</sup> position in 20 years because of the competition with other locations, especially in Northern Europe. As a consequence of the decline of economic activity, the city population shrank as well, with a decrease of 15% of its inhabitants between 1975 and 1999<sup>74</sup>. Following this economic downfall, the poverty rate in Marseille now reach 26% of the population<sup>75</sup> (16.8% European level<sup>76</sup>) and unemployment affect 18.3% of the local population (8.1% in France in 2019<sup>77</sup>).

Thus, it seems the economic situation of Marseille reaches a concerning level which requires to propose innovative solutions to overcome its difficulties. Among these proposals to create dynamism at a local level, the city launched the *Euroméditerranée* project in 1995, presented as the “largest urban renewal project in southern Europe<sup>78</sup>”. This large-scale project of renovation and creation of infrastructure was supported by the French state and conceived as an answer to the decline of local industrial economy, meant to attract 35,000 jobs and up to

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<sup>71</sup> Phil Hoad, “Corrupt, Dangerous and Brutal to Its Poor – but Is Marseille the Future of France?,” *The Guardian*, June 8, 2017, sec. Cities, <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2017/jun/08/corrupt-dangerous-brutal-poor-marseille-future-france>.

<sup>72</sup> Ronai, “Marseille.”

<sup>73</sup> Jesús Pedro Lorente, “Urban Cultural Policy and Urban Regeneration: The Special Cases of Declining Port Cities- Liverpool, Marseille, Bilbao,” in *Global Culture: Media, Arts, Policy, and Globalization* (London: Routledge, 2002).

<sup>74</sup> Ronai, “Marseille.”

<sup>75</sup> “Comparateur de Territoire Commune de Marseille 13055- | Insee,” accessed June 8, 2020, <https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/1405599?geo=COM-13055>.

<sup>76</sup> Eurostats, “Income Poverty Statistics - Statistics Explained,” accessed June 8, 2020, [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Income\\_poverty\\_statistics](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Income_poverty_statistics).

<sup>77</sup> “Au Quatrième Trimestre 2019, Le Taux de Chômage Passe de 8,5 % à 8,1 % - Informations Rapides - 36 | Insee,” accessed June 16, 2020, <https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/4309346>.

<sup>78</sup> Euroméditerranée Marseille, *Euroméditerranée, the Largest Urban Renewal Project in Southern Europe - YouTube*, 2015, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P3c\\_aegc2ME](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P3c_aegc2ME).

40,000 inhabitants to the city by the time of its completion in 2015. The MP2013 ECoC have been perceived by some scholars such as L. Andres<sup>79</sup> as the manner to add a cultural dimension to this regeneration project which was lacking at first. Indeed, the state of local culture in the urban area of Marseille has been commented by several experts as lacking a certain coherence. A good example would be the comment S. Girel<sup>80</sup> made on Marseille cultural situation prior to the ECoC, as being “atypical and paradoxical”. The city offers a significant number of museums for the city, festivals with international recognition and a good international visibility for the cultural actors. However, despite these facts, the lack of coordination of cultural actors have been noted by specialists. Museums in Marseille had a low attendance for a city with such a large population, and these same museums are not recognised or well-known by both local and outside population of the city. Moreover, in Marseille’s fashion, some of the museums were hit by scandals too<sup>81</sup>.

Now that the context in which MP2013 took place has been framed, for the continuation of the thesis, it is now necessary to do the same exercise for the city of Pilsen.

### **Pilsen, industrial city in western Bohemia**

Located in western Bohemia, in the eponymous region, the city of Pilsen (*Plzeň* in Czech) is the main city of its district. It reached a population of 169,000 inhabitants in 2015<sup>82</sup> making it the 4<sup>th</sup> largest city in Czech Republic. The region of Pilsen (*Plzeňský kraj*) is constituted of 584,000 inhabitants and mostly composed of small settlements and cities located around Prague-Pilsen axis, where 57 towns represent 67,2% of the region population<sup>83</sup>. As a consequence, the city of Pilsen alone gathers 30% of the region’s population. Consequently, because of its demographic importance in the area, Pilsen is the transportation hub, economic and cultural centre of West-Bohemia<sup>84</sup>. The city is located on the road from Prague to the German city of Nuremberg, which played a key-role in the history of its development as this

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<sup>79</sup> Lauren Andres, “Marseille 2013 or the Final Round of a Long and Complex Regeneration Strategy?,” *The Town Planning Review* 82, no. 1 (January 2011): 61–76.

<sup>80</sup> Sylvia Girel, “Marseille et ses musées en année Capitale. La re(co)naissance d’une scène muséale,” *Public(s)*, October 5, 2016, 20.

<sup>81</sup> Mickaël Penverne, “La double billetterie des musées devant le tribunal,” April 15, 2014, <https://www.20minutes.fr/marseille/1352189-20140415-double-billetterie-musees-devant-tribunal>.

<sup>82</sup> Population.city, “Pilsen · Population,” accessed March 5, 2020, <http://population.city/czech-republic/pilsen/>.

<sup>83</sup> “Pilsen region,” *BusinessInfo.cz* (blog), accessed June 10, 2020, <https://www.businessinfo.cz/en/about-the-czech-republic/basic-data/regions/pilsen-region/>.

<sup>84</sup> “Plzeň | Czech Republic,” *Encyclopedia Britannica*, accessed June 8, 2020, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Plzen>.

axis existed since medieval times under the name *Via Carolina* and nowadays the E50 motorway. It is also noteworthy that four rivers, the Úhlava, the Úslava, the Radbuza and the Mže are found in the city of Pilsen (Which influence the design of P2015 cultural programme as detailed in the third chapter). The *Plzeňský kraj* region is part of the Donau-Moldau (*Dunaj-Vlatva* in Czech) Euroregion along with the south-Bohemia region in Czech Republic, the upper-Palatinate and the lower Bavaria regions in Germany and the Upper-Austria region which allow for closer cooperation between these regions of central Europe<sup>85</sup>.

From the historical perspective, the presence of settlements in the area is mentioned for the first time in historical records from the 10<sup>th</sup> century. It was founded as a city by king Wenceslas II in 1295, who granted Pilsen the authorisation to brew its own beer. The link between the alcoholic beverage and the Bohemian city remains strong since the Pilsner lager is, as its name suggests, was first produced in this place. The history of Pilsen is deeply connected to its local industry, as during the 19<sup>th</sup> century the city witnessed the creation of major industrial sites. Pilsen still plays a key-role in Czech industrial economy today, as various internationally recognised brands originate from this city. From the industrial period, the brewery Pilsner Urquell was founded in 1842 by Josef Groll, and the industrial conglomerate Škoda (in *Czech Škodovy závody*) was created in 1895. The main industries of this city are part of the sectors of engineering, food, construction materials, energy generation and distribution, as well as the steel and iron industry<sup>86</sup>. The city is attractive to both domestic companies as well with international ones. Companies with foreign capitals represent 3.4% of the total number of industries in the region, twice the national Czech average. For example, the Japanese company Panasonic produces some of its flat panel display screens, heat pumps or Blu-ray players in Pilsen<sup>87</sup>. As a consequence of this strong industrial economy, the city knows a very low unemployment rate, estimated at 1.9% in 2019 (2.9% for national rate<sup>88</sup>). As such, the city of Pilsen cannot be conceived like Marseille as a city facing strong problematic issues requesting an ambitious large-scale plan to correct flaws in the local area.

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<sup>85</sup> "Evropský Region Dunaj Vltava | Evropskyregion.Cz," accessed June 10, 2020, <https://www.evropskyregion.cz/uvod.html>.

<sup>86</sup> European Commission, "EURES - Labour Market Information - Plzensky Kraj - European Commission," accessed June 10, 2020, <https://ec.europa.eu/eures/main.jsp?catId=2761&acro=lmi&lang=en&countryId=CZ&regionId=CZ0&nuts2Code=CZ03&nuts3Code=CZ032&regionName=Plzensky%20kraj>.

<sup>87</sup> "Panasonic," accessed June 12, 2020, <https://plzen.cz.panasonic.com/en>.

<sup>88</sup> "Czech Republic Unemployment Rate | 1990-2020 Data | 2021-2022 Forecast | Calendar," accessed June 12, 2020, <https://tradingeconomics.com/czech-republic/unemployment-rate>.

It is necessary to focus on the cultural scene in Pilsen to understand the motivations which drove the city to apply for the ECoC programme. The city possesses a series of local cultural institutions, touristic attractions, various historical landmarks in the city and in its surrounding areas, as well as numerous hiking tracks. In Pilsen, the most touristic historical landmarks are the old Water Tower in the city centre built in 1532, the Pilsen underground tour built is composed of galleries dug in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, and the St Bartholomew cathedral in the main plaza. The surrounding area possesses numerous Baroque buildings available for visitors. However, more recent cultural institutions exist in the city, such as the West Bohemia gallery erected in 1954, or the Patton Museum to commemorate the 1945 liberation of the city from Nazi troops by American G.I.s built in 2005. The city has also offered some space for alternative artists with the re-appropriation of several former industrial sites such as the Moving Station, a former railway station in Pilsen used since the early 2000s by the association *JOHAN* for cultural activities (Dance, exhibitions, etc) and renovated during the P2015 event<sup>89</sup>. Pilsen has a cultural industry in steady development in the years before its application to the ECoC programme, and organising P2015 was part of the municipal plans to keep on developing the state of culture in that city. Indeed, the motivation for the organisation of the cultural year is found in the willingness to change the perception of the city's image. As stated by a member of the Pilsen Tourism board for an interview in the French newspaper *Le Figaro*<sup>90</sup>: *For (too) long, Pilsen was known only for two things: its lager beer and the Škoda factories. And that's too little.* The aim of the cultural year is to create a new perception for the city. From its image of an industrial hub, it aims at being recognised internationally and be considered as a cultural destination. The end-goal of the P2015 project was to operate the shift between these two perceptions. More than an exercise of city-marketing, making Pilsen an attractive city also grants this industrial hub its integration in the “creative economy”.

At first glance, both cities studied in this master's thesis offer two remarkably different situations regarding their local demography, economy or state of culture. Marseille is a great metropolitan centre in one of the “old countries” of the European union, which needs to tackle its local socio-economic problems. The industry sector has declined since the 1970s, which created a fragile economy in the city centre. In stark contrast, Pilsen is one of those “new

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<sup>89</sup> Petra Boudová, “Industrial Heritage Objects as New Centers of Art and Culture for Local Community in Sustainable City” (4th International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conference on Social Sciences & Arts SGEM 2017, Bulgaria, 2017), 8.

<sup>90</sup> Jean-Louis Tremblais, “De Pilsen à Marienbad, vie de Bohême et histoires d’eaux,” *Le Figaro.fr*, September 25, 2015, <https://www.lefigaro.fr/voyages/2015/09/25/30003-20150925ARTFIG00238-de-pilsen-a-marienbad-vie-de-boheme-et-histoires-d-eaux.php>.

countries” of the EU where the industrial economy still proves to be relevant and attractive to foreign investments. Pilsen is by no means perceived as problematic as Marseille for an outside observer.

However, in both these cases, it is possible to see that the desired goal is the same in both cities: To redefine their image and to be more attractive. The goal of the MP2013 is to accompany the politics of attractiveness the city has implemented since the 1990s in order to be relevant again in the contemporary economy. The city of Pilsen wishes to differentiate itself from the goods manufactured there and to open-up to outside culture. Indeed, during my research in non-Czech newspapers articles dedicated to the P2015 event, the city was always associated with its lager or its factories. The goal of the P2015 cultural year was then to put on display local culture, to help it gain international recognition to finally offer for the outsider more than the pils lager as an image to that city. Beyond the sole enhancement of attractiveness for both cities via the ECoC, the question of local economy is found in the application to this programme. As described earlier in the literature review section of this master’s thesis, culture is perceived by city-makers as a tool to attract the newest form of economic actors which ultimately impacts the manner the programme of the ECoC is conceived.

Now that the situation in both cities have been mapped out as well as their common goal for image redefinition, it is time to delve into the cultural capitals themselves. The next subsection will be dedicated to the study of general facts surrounding the cultural capital event in both cities. In this subsection, the focus will be on their implementation in the local context, defining elements of the programme and various figures attached to both ECoCs.

### **Descriptions of the ECoCs, implementation, programme and figures**

#### **“Marseille-Provence 2013, “European and Mediterranean”**

The application of Marseille to the ECoC programme is meant so satisfy two goals for the city which could be grossly described as internal or external goals<sup>91</sup>. As said earlier, the stimulation of cultural activities in the city is meant to enhance its quality and ultimately change its external perception. In addition to this, the programme was conceived to enrich the cultural

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<sup>91</sup> Nick McAteer et al., “Ex-Post Evaluation of the 2013 European Capitals of Culture” (Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, December 2014).

elements of the Barcelona process by being a point of convergence for cultures of the Mediterranean region. The Barcelona process (Also called the Euromed partnership) started in 1995 as a cooperation project between the EU and outside Mediterranean countries. As such, the selection panel has applauded the Euro-Mediterranean aspect of the programme, in addition to its other qualities<sup>92</sup>. Given that the selection process until 2010 is mostly composed of nationals (After this year, it is then composed by a European jury), it can partially explain the emphasis on the Euro-Mediterranean region the initial programme had in the bid application submitted in 2008<sup>93</sup>. Indeed, N. Sarkozy was elected president of France in 2007 and proposed to reinvigorate the Euromed partnership. As such, the MP2013 proposition fits the goal for southern cooperation. The implementation of the project knew no major difficulties, except for a few recommendations from the panel monitoring the project pointing out the predominance of high culture and advocating for the inclusion of the whole territory during the capital year<sup>94</sup>.

As the title of the event suggests, during the cultural capital year some events which took place outside the municipality of Marseille, which offered the possibility to include other participating municipalities such as Aix-en-Provence or Arles. However, the clear focus of the programme was held onto the Phocaeen city, with 66% of the events related to the cultural year implemented in Marseille metropolitan area<sup>95</sup>. Moreover, the majority of constructions and renovations associated with MP2013 took place in Marseille urban area. The cultural year had as a core policy an emphasis on public participation. Therefore, 55% of the projects associated with MP2013 were free to the public and about 40% of the events of that cultural year took place in the public area. A special attention was held on attracting a part of the population who do not normally engage with cultural venues and events or those living in disadvantaged parts of the territory. A good example practices tied to this ambition would be the *quartiers créatifs* project which brought an artistic presence in different neighbourhoods (Onto 14 of these *quartiers* proposed, 6 took place in Marseille urban area). As part of the physical legacy for the event, the cultural capital permitted the construction of the MuCEM (*Musée des civilisations de l'Europe et de la Méditerranée*) as a flagship project. In addition to the museum, much of

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<sup>92</sup> Selection panel, "Designation of a European Capital of Culture for 2013," 2008.

<sup>93</sup> Maisetti, "City branding et fragmentation métropolitaine : l'impossible recherche d'une marque territoriale dans le cas du territoire marseillais."

<sup>94</sup> The Monitoring and Advisory Panel for the European Capital of Culture 2013, "Report for the Second Monitoring and Advisory Meeting for the European Capitals of Culture 2013," May 2012.

<sup>95</sup> McAteer et al., "Ex-Post Evaluation of the 2013 European Capitals of Culture."



the efforts of construction and renovation of the urban Marseille area have been focused primarily on the city waterfront, a space of great importance for the image of seaside cities<sup>96</sup>.

The MP2013 ECoC benefitted from a 98 million euros budget for the implementation of its programme, making it one of the best funded ECoC to date. Moreover, to insist on the importance that the urban renovation bear in this particular cultural capital, an overall budget of approximately 660 million euros was gathered for the renovation or construction of new cultural institutions. The cultural year in Marseille met a certain success during its implementation with a great participation from both the inside and outside population, with its opening ceremony gathering 600,000 participants<sup>97</sup>. The cultural year benefitted from an extensive media coverage which ensured its success. Tourism knew a significant raise during the cultural year, with an increase of 17% of the amount of foreign tourists visiting the city, coming mostly from neighbouring countries (Germany, Italy, UK, Belgium, Spain, Switzerland). In total, 8,8 million tourists have visited the Phocaean city during 2013. 600 projects were produced or co-produced by the MP2013 organisation team, and 350 more used the label of the cultural year as part of their communication.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that the other cultural capital this year was the city of Košice in Slovakia.

### **“Pilsen, Open up!”**

The motivation for Pilsen to host the ECoC programme in its city could be summed up by its slogan “*Otevřete si Plzeň!*”- Pilsen, open up! An elaborate pun in Czech playing on the word used for a Pilsen lager beer and the city of Pilsen. In its original language, the slogan invites the reader to open their Pilsner beer; while commanding the Bohemian city as well to open, metaphorically, itself<sup>98</sup>. Such slogan and ambition aimed at differentiating the goals of the P2015 ECoC in comparison to other cultural capitals who rather possess a strong emphasis on correcting urban flaws such as Liverpool 2008 or MP2013. Thus, the end-goals of the P2015

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<sup>96</sup> Maria Elena Buslacchi, Sylvia Girel, and Nicolas Maisetti, “Le Musée Des Civilisations de l’Europe et de La Méditerranée (MuCEM) à Marseille Succès et Controverses Autour d’un Équipement Culturel de Développement Territorial,” in *Musées d’art et Développement Territorial, Espace et Territoires* (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2015).

<sup>97</sup> McAteer et al., “Ex-Post Evaluation of the 2013 European Capitals of Culture.”

<sup>98</sup> Šárka Havlíčková and et al., “Otevřete Si Plzeň!: Přihláška Města Plzně Na Titul Evropské Hlavní Město Kultury 2015 [Pilsen, Open Up!: Application of the City of Pilsen for the Title of European Capital of Culture 2015]” (City of Pilsen, 2010).

ECoC are mostly behavioural, aiming to change the perception of both the inhabitants of Pilsen towards outside cultures, and at the same time changing the outside perception of Pilsen. The Pilsen city council agreed to join the competition of Czech cities to be appointed ECoC in September 2007, and the city was appointed the title of the 2015 Czech cultural capital on September 8, 2010. The selection panel praised the city of Pilsen for its balance between cultural projects and the regeneration of the city in the application document<sup>99</sup>.

However, it has been commented that the municipality of Pilsen has a relatively small size in comparison to the standard of usual cultural capitals despite its high position among Czech largest cities<sup>100</sup>. This small size is reflected as well in the budget allocated for the programme of the cultural year of 18 million euros. Despite this number being relatively low, the programme director of P2015, Jiří Sulženko, has commented on that aspect that, by Czech standards, this budget was high enough and that despite obvious restrictions it nevertheless permitted to implement certain projects that would not have been produced in Czech Republic otherwise<sup>101</sup>. However, the small size of the city is considered as one of the reasons for the lack of international partnerships local cultural actors had established prior to the event, leading to some of the difficulties P2015 met during the preparation of the cultural year. Nonetheless, it should be noted that cities of similar sizes have been hosted ECoC events and managed to reach their initial objectives such as the Hungarian city of Pécs 2011 or Maribor 2012 in Slovenia.

The implementation of the P2015 ECoC has been chaotic for various reasons through its implementation. The cultural programme designed at first for the application process was perceived as too much rooted in local culture. The monitoring panel has expressed his concerns during the implementation of P2015, noting a lack of “senior management”, a “relatively low budget” and a lack of international partnerships<sup>102</sup>. Beyond structural problems which appeared during the preparation of the project, other difficulties arose during the preparation years. One of the main flagship projects for this ECoC was the revitalisation of a former industrial site, the Světovar brewery. The purpose of that flagship project was to transform the former brewery in a space dedicated to the creative economy and a cultural site (Meant to host a museum notably). However, constructions on the site found the presence of asbestos in the building which

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<sup>99</sup> Selection panel, “Selection of the European Capital of Culture for 2015 in Czech Republic” (Prague, September 8, 2010).

<sup>100</sup> T Fox et al., “Ex-Post Evaluation of 2015 European Capitals of Culture.” (Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2016).

<sup>101</sup> Sulženko, Interview with author.

<sup>102</sup> The Monitoring and Advisory Panel for the European Capital of Culture, “Report on the Second Monitoring and Advisory Meeting for the European Capitals of Culture 2015,” April 2014.

prevented the completion of the initial project. A solution was found when the Světovar project evolved in the creation of the DEPO2015 in a former tram depot owned by the city.

In total, the P2015 event managed to attract a total number of 1.2 million visitors to the events organised in Pilsen and its region that year. Among this total number, it has been estimated that 60% of the participants were local Pilsners, 20% of the participants were from the Pilsen region, and attendees from Czech Republic represented 15% of the total attendance. Studies conducted by outsider bodies have noted that the percentage of foreign visitor which attended the P2015 event reached 5% of the total attendance (62,680 visitors)<sup>103</sup>. However, these numbers regarding the presence of an international audience were contested by J. Sulženko during the interview conducted for the thesis. He stated that the figures obtained by the P2015 implementation team following the event and using a different methodology found a different result, as he commented that the overall international night stays reached a total 160.000 reservations<sup>104</sup>. P2015 low budget has been perceived as an explanation for the lack of international media coverage of the event, which resulted in a relatively low attendance of international tourists<sup>105</sup>. Generally speaking, the event received an enthusiastic reaction from the local population which in its majority perceived that the event helped at establishing valuable cooperation in Europe and managed to develop local culture<sup>106</sup>. The ECoC permitted to create lasting cultural events in the city, such as the Festival of lights which still takes place to this date. As part of its heritage, the P2015 cultural year permitted the construction of new cultural institutions in the city of Pilsen. Notably, it permitted the construction of a modern theatre, the *Nové Divadlo* (New theatre) inaugurated in September 2014<sup>107</sup>, composed of two rooms for representations with respectively 461 and 120 seats. Moreover, the DEPO2015 permitted the city to receive a space dedicated to creative industries and remain today an important cultural hub for the city of Pilsen. P2015 also offered the opportunity to revitalise certain areas in the city, such as the Štruncovy sady area.

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<sup>103</sup> Tereza Raabová and et al., "Evropské hlavní město kultury Plzeň 2015: Dopady výdajů návštěvníků na ekonomiku ČR [European Capital of Culture Pilsen 2015: Impacts of visitors' expenditures on the Czech economy]" (Brno: Economic impacT v.o.s., 2016).

<sup>104</sup> Sulženko, Interview with author.

<sup>105</sup> Fox et al., "Ex-Post Evaluation of 2015 European Capitals of Culture."

<sup>106</sup> Jiří Ježek et al., "Evropské Hlavní Město Kultury, Plzeň, Ekonomické Efekty, Evaluační Výzkum (European Capital of Culture, Pilsen, Economic Effects, Evaluation Research)," *Regionální Rozvoj Mezi Teorií a Praxí*, 2016.

<sup>107</sup> Agionet cz- spravce, "New Theatre - DJKT - Divadlo J. K. Tyla v Plzni," accessed April 14, 2020, <https://www.djkt.eu/en/the-new-theatre>.

In addition to the city of Pilsen, the ECoC programme was held as well in the Belgian city of Mons, which possesses a smaller size than Pilsen (95,000 inhab.<sup>108</sup>) yet possessed a budget of 72 million euros for its own cultural year<sup>109</sup>.

Now that both cities and cultural events have been mapped out, the thesis will delve into the analysis of the sources to answer the initial research question: *In the context of Marseille-Provence 2013 and Pilsen 2015, what are the strategies used by both these cities in order to redefine their images through the European Capitals of Culture programme?*

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<sup>108</sup> IWEPS, "WalStat - Détail de l'entité MONS (Commune)," accessed June 25, 2020, [https://walstat.iweps.be/walstat-fiche-entite.php?entite\\_id=53053](https://walstat.iweps.be/walstat-fiche-entite.php?entite_id=53053).

<sup>109</sup> Fox et al., "Ex-Post Evaluation of 2015 European Capitals of Culture."

### **III) Analysis of the sources**

#### **Motivating the engagement in the ECoC programme**

The bid-documents are meant to convince their readers about the necessity to organise a cultural capital in the city. They engage in the justification of its application to the ECoC programme, which motivates key-decisions regarding the outline of the programme for the cultural year. To analyse the motivations for the city, as stated in the methodology, I will proceed to the analysis of the justification given for the application of the cities in their respective bid-documents by using Lindberg's VDP theory.

For both documents, the values found at the core of these documents are those defended by the European Union. Namely, values of equality, human rights, democracy, etc. These principles serve as a common basis for the expression of values in both documents and are worded differently depending on the organising city. Each applying city must integrate a "European dimension" as part of the requirements to its candidacy which explain this common aspect in each of the ECoC programme.

#### **Marseille Provence 2013: Overcoming local issues**

The city of Marseille justifies its application to the cultural capital programme as a manner to assess perceived shortcomings in the city. The document has a dedicated section assessing each of the problems according to the organisation team and proposes solutions to overcome them. Four types of observations are advanced in the prologue of the application document to motivate the application to the cultural capital problem, which serve as the descriptive statement (D) described in Lindberg's theory.

Political observation: The document states that the percentage of voters that rejected the project of a European Constitution during the 2005 referendum is higher than in the rest of the French population, which, according to the bid document, confers to the local Marseille population "a reputation of "bad Europeans"<sup>110</sup>.

Economic observation: The bid-document comments on the increasing weight of cultural activities in the economy and their impact on employment. Moreover, it comments that "the economies of knowledge, innovation and creation are becoming key factors of development".

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<sup>110</sup> Association Marseille Provence 2013, "Marseille-Provence 2013, European and Mediterranean, Application to Become the European Capital of Culture Under the Tutelage of Albert Camus, Who Would Have Been 100 Years Old in 2013," 2008, 7.

Both elements echo the notion of the creative class described in the literature review which considers culture as a tool to attract the spearhead of economy. As such, the document emphasises on the implication of “main figures of local economy”<sup>111</sup> which gathered to create the “Club Ambition Top 20” association in 2006, to enhance the perception of Marseille. As such, this club and its name was created after the publication of a report published by the DATAR<sup>112</sup> (*Délégation interministérielle à l'aménagement du territoire et l'attractivité territoriale*) ranking European cities in terms of attractiveness. Marseille was found at the 23<sup>rd</sup> position in that report, which prompted the involvement of actors of local economic such as Jacques Pfister, the head of the local chamber of commerce, to get involved in local politics in order to enhance the attractiveness of the Phocaeen city. The involvement of private actors and the governance process of the cultural capitals will be commented in a dedicated section.

Demographic observation: The bid-document comments on the importance of intercultural dialogue and the growth of problems linked to “community identity”. Multiculturalism in France is especially perceived as problematic in this state which possesses a strong central Jacobin approach to governance and towards its own minorities in order to promote the idea of a strongly united country. This promotion of a united governance has been emphasised during the presidency of N. Sarkozy (2007-2012)<sup>113</sup> whose potential influence in the design of the ECoC has been commented earlier on during the thesis. As a consequence, the document perceives the nation-wide and European-wide rise of communitarianism as a problematic issue (D). Pursuing on that idea, it insists that the local history of immigration and interculturality of Marseille makes the city is a “unique European testing ground for integration and intercultural exchange”<sup>114</sup>, offering a first glimpse at the prescriptive statement (P) on the manner to solve problems related to the perceived issue of community identity.

International observation: The international observation contains the normative aspect of the justification for Marseille application to the ECoC programme. The document emphasises the role of culture in the EU international relations. It confirms its will to integrate several international cultural agenda such as the European one defined for 2007-2013, the May 2007

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<sup>111</sup> Association Marseille Provence 2013, 7.

<sup>112</sup> Céline Rozenblat and Patricia Cicile, “Les villes Européennes, analyse comparative” (Montpellier: Université Montpellier III, n.d.).

<sup>113</sup> Florent Villard and Pascal-Yan Sayegh, “Redefining a (Mono)Cultural Nation;” in *Challenging Multiculturalism, European Models of Diversity* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 20.

<sup>114</sup> Association Marseille Provence 2013, “Marseille-Provence 2013, European and Mediterranean.”, 8.

Communication on a “European agenda for culture in a globalizing world”<sup>115</sup> and the third element of the Barcelona Process. Such texts work as the international factor motivating the insistence of international partnerships for the MP2013 with a special focus on the Euro-Mediterranean region.

The bid document completes this list of observation which motivated the application to the ECoC programme by an assessment of the city’s shortcoming, reminiscent of the locals problems described earlier in the chapter dedicated to the description of the city of Marseille such as the lack of cultural coordination at a local level or the fragile local economy. The ambition of the MP2013 application is to overcome the various perceived shortcomings found in the Phocaeen city, which constitute the descriptive statement (D) in Lindberg’s theory. It conveys a local aspiration to correct local faults found in a Marseille such as its fragile economy and by doing so, to become more attractive to outsiders. Hosting the cultural capital is seen as the prescriptive statement in Lindberg’s theory (P), the manner to overcome problems of the city by the organisation of the cultural year. Once more, we are observing what has been described in the literature review when discussing Florida’s notion of creativity- using culture as a manner to attract a said-creative class, presumably the spearhead of economy, to correct local issues.

### **Pilsen 2015: Dealing with the problematic history of the city**

The motivation for Pilsen to apply to the ECoC programme is presented in its bid-document through a problematised approach of the history of the region. As said earlier, the city does not perceive itself as problematic, especially when compared to the other case studied in this thesis and insisting on local flaws when submitting its application would be counter efficient. Rather, the city adopts the stance of problematising its local history of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to justify its application- Local Pilsen history; National Czech history; history of the East bloc. As said earlier, the core value of P2015 is openness, found from the very beginning with its slogan “Pilsen, open up!”. This will to open the city is a metaphoric statement on the necessity to open the minds of its inhabitants to outside values, the goal of this ECoC, echoing general European values (V) of democracy and freedom. As such, the prologue of the bid-documents consists in a text which metaphorically compares Pilsen to a woman and tell her (its) story

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<sup>115</sup> Commission of the European Communities, “Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on a European Agenda for Culture in a Globalizing World,” May 10, 2007.

through the 20<sup>th</sup> century<sup>116</sup>. From a wounded position after the second world war, she opens up to the world (“Americans, Englishmen, Belgians and Frenchmen all kissed her”) until the Russian occupation brutalises her and stop this process of opening up (“DJ Kremlin [...] changed the tune and forced her to sing a different song. He locked her up at home, dressed her in overalls, shaved her head and abused her to satisfy his lust for power”).

The document problematise a perceived lack of openness of Pilsen locals as a consequence of its 20<sup>th</sup> century history and the occupation of Czech lands by two totalitarian regimes which results in a fragile democracy. This observation serve as the descriptive statement (D) in Lindberg’s theory. This totalitarian experience is described in the document as a disruptive event which forcedly removed Pilsen from international exchange or democratic values- as will be detailed further in the document concerning the usage of history in the ECoC bid. The following quote from the prologue give more insight to its reader about the objectives of P2015:

“Just as other women and other cities of the Eastern Bloc have done, she must once more find her place in society, rediscover herself, emphasise her virtues and admit her shortcomings, tell her story [...] and again step onto the path of transformation to being a self-confident woman of European culture.”

As such, the prescriptive statement (P) to overcome the grim legacy of the totalitarian experience lies in the organisation of the ECoC event in the city of Pilsen as the manner to return the Bohemian city on the mental European map and proceed to a metaphorical return to the west.

As stated earlier, both cities engage in the cultural capital programme with the ambition to redefine their internal and outside image. Both documents perceive a need to correct certain faults found at a local level through the organisation of a cultural mega event. Unsurprisingly, the value statement (V) and the prescriptive statement (P) of these two cultural capitals remain similar, as they both apply for the same programme coordinated by a political institution with ideological values. However, the descriptive statement (D) made in these application documents, taking the form of an assessment of the local situation which justifies the application process to the ECoC programme, differs strongly from a case. Marseille’s bid document redaction is justified by the perceived need for a European city with such a size to be more attractive, whereas Pilsen aims at overcoming consequences from its own local history, a

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<sup>116</sup> Havlíčková and et al., “Otevřete Si Plzeň!”, 3.



process perceived as necessary to overcome the gap between other European countries and those who were part of the Eastern bloc.

As the justification for the application to the programme has been compared for both cases, it is now necessary to investigate the programme of both ECoCs to see how it tries to answer the descriptive statement and reach the objectives set by both cities.

**Comparison of the programmes**

**Main streams of the initial cultural programmes**

As said earlier, the programme of Marseille Provence emphasises its Euro-Mediterranean identity. The initial project for MP2013 revolved around two main axes (referred to as strategies in the bid document<sup>117</sup>) for its programme named “The Sharing of the South” (*Le partage des Midis*) and “The Radiant City” (*La cite radieuse*). The *Sharing of the South* section of the programme was meant to convey the international aspect of the cultural capital programme and integrate the Barcelona process, whereas the Radiant City was focused on the issue of urban renewal through the usage of culture. As such, each strategy offered the following themes for cultural events:

- Sharing the south: - Migrations and memories
- Values and Beliefs
  - Genders or Genres
  - The sharing of water

- The Radiant City: - Art in the public Arena
- Walkers – Nomads- Territory
  - One Thousand and One Nights
  - Everyone is involved

As the themes lack a clear definition in the bid-document, I managed to isolate keywords for each of them by taking a close look at the events designed for the themes, and obtained the following results:

<b>Theme title</b>	<b>Keywords</b>
<i>Strategy 1: Sharing the South</i>	
Migrations and Memories	History; Immigration; Mobility; Minorities; transmission of cultures
Values and Beliefs	History; Religion; Shared space
Genders or Genres	Minorities; Genders; Representation
Sharing the water	Shared space; Water

<sup>117</sup> Association Marseille Provence 2013, “Marseille-Provence 2013, European and Mediterranean.”

<i>Strategy 2: The Radiant city</i>	
Art in the public arena	Arts/exhibitions/installations; Public space
Walkers- Nomads - Territory	History; Physical space
One Thousand and One Nights	Public space; Nightlife
Everyone is involved	Local population; Public space; Inclusion of all spaces of the city

In addition to these themes MP2013 had the ambition to implement between 200-250 artistic workshops throughout the territory of the future implementation of the cultural capital. This project called *Ateliers de Euroméditerranée* (Euromediterranean workshops) were meant to be implemented as early as 2008 until the completion of the cultural year. These workshops permitted the collaboration with international artists. For instance, this project included the artist residency hosted in *La Friche de la Belle de mai* cultural hub in Marseille; trainings for young photographs were meant to be provided by the *Centre européen de la photographie* (European Photography Centre) in Toulon. The aim of this project, as mentioned by the document, is to make Marseille-Provence a “European hub of cultural cooperation” and insists on gathering artists from “South and North”<sup>118</sup>, an element repeated throughout the application document. One interesting aspect of this project is the wide variety of actors it aims at mobilising. Thus, the bid-documents states that private companies, laboratories and schools are implicated in the project, with events planned such as a musical based on the history of the German confectionary Haribo<sup>119</sup> (Which was not implemented during the cultural year). The relationship between private actors and both implementation teams will be discussed in the chapter dedicated to this aspect of cultural capitals.

MP2013 gave up this initial plan for activities during its implementation with its two strategies, and rather used the term “Sharing the South” as a catchphrase in its programme<sup>120</sup>. Rather, the programme for the cultural year has been divided in three period throughout the year. As mentioned earlier, the programme between its initial conception to its implementation is bound to change, however, comparing this programme with the one implemented in Pilsen reveals several interesting elements.

<sup>118</sup> Association Marseille Provence 2013, 17.

<sup>119</sup> Association Marseille Provence 2013, 146.

<sup>120</sup> Marion Andrieux, “Marseille-Provence 2013 Capitale Européenne de la culture,” 2013.

The cultural programme for P2015 is initially constructed around four main axes, to parallel the four rivers crossing the city of Pilsen. As such, they are referred to as “programme streams” in the bid document. Those four streams are the following:

- Arts and technologies
- Relationships and Emotions
- Transit and Minorities
- Stories and Sources

Using the same methodology as for the analysis of keywords for the themes in the MP2013 programme, I reached the following result regarding the streams of P2015:

<b>Stream title</b>	<b>Keywords</b>
Arts and technology	Creativity; Innovation; Education
Relationships and emotions	Creativity; Openness; Society; History
Transit and minorities	Openness; Migrations; Minorities; History
Stories and Sources	Creativity (Revitalisation); History; Water; Ecology

The creativity aspect is at the fore in the P2015 programme and the bid document does not shy away from this aspect as it is integrated fully with the openness ambition of the cultural capital. One has to note that the initial flagship project, the revitalisation of the Světovar brewery and the creation of the “To beer or not to beer network” was part of the “Stories and Sources” stream.

Isolating keywords from both programmes permit to visualise what are the common themes employed by both ECoCs to implement their programme. History comes as a cornerstone in the design of many activities. Physical sites of history, such as monuments, churches and even former factories offer ideal sites to display for outsiders or to make locals rediscover them (Such as with the “Walkers- Nomads – Territory” theme of Marseille Provence, designed to highlight sites of heritage throughout the ECoC territory). Moreover, history in its global sense is a good source of inspiration for the design of cultural activities, either by highlighting artists or movements with ties to the city, or by a display of the city’s past. As seen in the justification part of the programme, organising an ECoC also offers the possibility for locals to deal with problematic parts of a local history. The utilisation of local history will be discussed further in the section dedicated to this issue in both MP2013 and P2015. Values

associated with liberal democracies such as freedom of movement, inclusion and representation of minorities (both sexual minorities and ethnic minorities) and cohabitation (Found in keywords of that lexical field such as Openness, minorities, shared space, etc) also constitute an influential trend in the early design of programmes for cultural capitals. If the innovation aspect is emphasised notably in the “Arts and Technology” stream of P2015, it is present as well throughout the MP2013 bid document. Organising an ECoC give the opportunity for cultural actors to showcase the latest technological innovation in the field of art and public performances in order to receive an enthusiastic response from the audience. Finally, a common element in the two cultural capitals is the usage of water (The sea in the case of Marseille, and rivers for Pilsen) to create the artistic imagery in order to design activities. This last commonality is surely coincidental but highlights the concept described by G. Aiello and C. Thurlow<sup>121</sup>, of the utilisation of idiosyncratic geographical features made in the communication for cultural capitals despite a certain form of uniformity in them.

Even if a cultural programme is meant to change through the preparation process of the cultural capital, it is a great manner to perceive the elements emphasised for the first draft of the programme. However, as stated in the methodology section, this cultural programme is bound to go under great changes from its initial conception to its application five years later. Cultural capitals are supervised in their implementation, which allow the supervision panel to address recommendations regarding the type of events featured during the capital year. As stated earlier in this thesis, Marseille has been advised to lessen the focus on high culture, whereas Pilsen has been recommended to reduce its emphasis on local culture. Both cultural directors interviewed for the writing of the thesis have commented upon the initial cultural draft of their event, in which they did not take part in the initial writing. Despite the major changes to the programme of MP2013 between its first draft and its implementation described earlier, U. Fuchs stated that he believed to have respected its “background, its ideology, its philosophy, its ethic”<sup>122</sup> when implementing the cultural year. Regarding P2015, J. Sulženko noted in particular that the programme featured an abundance of small scale projects and lacked big flagship events. As such, he stated that part of his job has been to reduce the amount of planned event, rather than adding new ones<sup>123</sup>.

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<sup>121</sup> Aiello and Thurlow, “Symbolic Capitals.”

<sup>122</sup> Fuchs, Interview with author.

<sup>123</sup> Sulženko, Interview with author.

### Flagship constructions of P2015 and MP2013

The programme of cultural capitals does not limit itself at the mere implementation of events for the upcoming year. Cultural capitals events offer the opportunity for city makers to add in the ECoC programme the construction of building or the revitalisation of others in their attempt to stimulate local cultural life. Certain constructions are used as flagships when drafting the cultural programme for the upcoming year, but beyond the cultural year they physically inscribe the heritage of the mega-event in the cityscape.

As commented earlier, MP2013 is a special situation within the context of the ECoC programme regarding construction works as it possessed the biggest budget allocated to construction works, a total of 660 million euros. In a similar fashion to cultural events, the wide majority of constructions associated with the MP2013 project took place within the Marseille urban area. For example Among the few constructions carried out outside of the Phocaeen city the city of Arles had its museum dedicated to its own Antiquity period received a 800 m<sup>2</sup> extension. Within the city of Marseille, the cultural year permitted to redefine the city waterfront area with the creation of cultural sites, the revitalisation of former industrial constructions originally part of its harbour or the moving of existing cultural institutions in the area. Different works carried out in other parts of the city should be mentioned as well before delving into the redefinition of Marseille waterfront carried out for the cultural year. As such, the palais Longchamp and the museum of natural history have been renovated for the ECoC. *La Friche de la Belle de Mai*, a former tobacco factory mentioned in the literature review section when discussing the importance of revitalisation in the creative theory, has received an extension with the Tour-Panorama constituted of two buildings hosting several businesses and an exhibition space<sup>124</sup>.

Most of the efforts in Marseille have been conducted towards the redefinition of its waterfront area with the *Cité de la Méditerranée* project found between the neighbourhood of the Old Port and the Arenc. This focus on this area was meant to transform the port façade as a “unique hub reflecting Mareille’s role as a major metropolis of crossroads of cultural and economic exchange between Europe and the Mediterranean”<sup>125</sup>- A project with the objective to transform the former industrial harbour into a new area fitting France second biggest city. In an area of less than 6 km<sup>2</sup>, The *Cité de la Méditerranée* consisted in the erection and renovation

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<sup>124</sup> “The Tour-Panorama • Friche La Belle de Mai,” accessed July 23, 2020, <http://www.lafriche.org/en/venues/the-tour-panorama>.

<sup>125</sup> Association Marseille Provence 2013, “Marseille-Provence 2013, European and Mediterranean.”, 106.

of 5 different buildings. A former grain elevator was turned into a concert hall (*Le Silo*); the J1 site, commented as “strongly influenced by contemporary creativity” with a goal to “hosts exhibitions, welcomes artists, provides the public with information and hosts popular gatherings, as the Tri Postal did in Lille during 2004”<sup>126</sup>. The city inaugurated a new museum of 5,000m<sup>2</sup> dedicated to contemporary arts, the FRAC (Regional Contemporary Art Fund). The J4 port has been reconfigured to host both the CeREM (Regional Mediterranean Centre), and the most important construction of MP2013: The MuCEM (Museum of European and Mediterranean Civilisations). This museum offers a space of 45,000 m<sup>2</sup> and has a multidisciplinary approach to its mission as a cultural institution with an artistic and cultural objective, offering a place of debate, with an educational value as well as hosting archives. Initiated at the end of the 1990s and opened for the cultural year, this museum managed to attract a total of 2.6 million visitors during its first year of implementation despite the initial scepticism regarding the project. One of the peculiarities of this museum is the fact that it is the first national museum to be located exclusively outside Paris. S. Girel, (and several other geographers) has dedicated several of her academic writings to this museum and the effects of its erection on the Marseille cultural scene, and especially among local museums<sup>127</sup>. As argued earlier, the cultural scene in Marseille was perceived as lacking coordination and recognition among locals and outsiders, a fact noted in the descriptive statement made in the application for the ECoC programme. According to her, this museum was the starting point of a new scale of cognition regarding the museum scene in Marseille, as well as an institution which created new standards for communication and public policies regarding similar local institutions. As such, other museums had to adapt to the new level of exigence set by this new institution. However, as S. Girel argues, this new approach to the museum sphere in Marseille creates a competition between these cultural institutions as they must reach new requirements, and it displays the issues existing between a public policy for museum set in competition with a local sphere which is less potent, funded and consequently, innovative<sup>128</sup>. This museum (along with all the other aforementioned constructions in the *Cité de la Méditerranée* area) was meant to lead to a change of the image of Marseille and boost the attractiveness of the surrounding area. During the interview, U. Fuchs has acknowledged how deeply the surrounding neighbourhood has been impacted and how strongly the image of the city evolved, joining the opinions of others

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<sup>126</sup> Association Marseille Provence 2013, 107.

<sup>127</sup> Buslacchi, Girel, and Maisetti, “Le Musée Des Civilisations de l’Europe et de La Méditerranée (MuCEM) à Marseille Succès et Controverses Autour d’un Équipement Culturel de Développement Territorial.”

<sup>128</sup> Girel, “Marseille et ses musées en année Capitale. La re(co)naissance d’une scène muséale.”

specialists such as S. Girel. Marseille managed to develop its cultural tourism industry; a fact illustrated with the figures of the museum attendance which tripled from 2012 to 2013 and has been increasing ever since<sup>129</sup>. Such remarkable change is the result of an unusual amount of budget allocated for constructions in the ECoC context, which U. Fuchs described as “exceptional”. However, this large amount of money spent for the erection of new infrastructures did not go without creating issues at a local level, especially in regards to the gentrification problem (Acknowledged by the interviewee). Criticism towards the gentrification process in the MP2013 will be commented upon in the section dedicate to the issue of criticism in the cultural year context. Geographers have also commented on the normative aspect of how a project such as the MuCEM, and by extension the other sites of the waterfront area, affect the perception/the image of the city As port municipalities make their waterfront the façade of their cityscape, the construction of cultural institutions such as the MuCEM consisted as an economic development project and an architectural creation which constitute an example of urban image renewal through public intervention<sup>130</sup>. These geographers see in this process the usage of culture as a tool in the erection of buildings through large projects that neomarxist literature call “flagships”. They claim that these creations are conceived with the idea of trickle-down economics in mind applied to urban dynamism through high-scale projects which ultimately creates urban standards by the repetition of this model.

Organising P2015 permitted the city of Pilsen to coordinate various construction works through its urban areas as described earlier. Beyond the renovation of certain areas of the city such as *Struncovy Sady*, or the construction of new infrastructure such as the New Theatre. For P2015, the central flagship project was the revitalisation of the Světovar brewery into a cultural shopping and office hub. This ambitious project was central in the drafting of Pilsen application –mentioned a total of thirty times in the application document. Beyond the revitalisation aspect of this project, the initial plan was to launch as well a European network of revitalised breweries for which Pilsen flagship revitalisation would serve as a blueprint. The idea of both the revitalised brewery and the network it was supposed to initiate was abandoned when the project was changed to the creation of the DEPO2015 in a revitalised tram depot after the finding of asbestos in the planned site of construction. The construction of the DEPO2015 project was less ambitious than the initial Světovar project in terms of infrastructure (The initial project was notably meant to host a museum of fashion and design), however J. Sulženko judged the second

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<sup>129</sup> Girel.

<sup>130</sup> Buslacchi, Girel, and Maisetti, “Le Musée Des Civilisations de l’Europe et de La Méditerranée (MuCEM) à Marseille Succès et Controverses Autour d’un Équipement Culturel de Développement Territorial.”



project of better quality in comparison to the first one<sup>131</sup>. He emphasised notably the location of the Světovar as potentially harmful to its success since it was too remote from the city centre in comparison to DEPO2015. The revitalised tram depot is still in use today as a cultural hub and coworking space<sup>132</sup>. It proposes several cultural projects such as art exhibits and is involved in international cooperative cultural project such as the European project “Baroque region Bohemia Bavaria”, meant to showcase the common heritage between these two regions. The cultural hub hosted an interactive exhibition at the end of 2018 notably for this project. The site also pursues the cultural heritage of the cultural year in its premises, as it keeps on hosting the European Neighbours’ Day each year<sup>133</sup>. Beyond the cultural and coworking hubs, the DEPO2015 hosts several businesses as well (From a café to a “Green” cosmetic shop), and its usage will be further discussed in the section of the thesis dedicated to the notion of creativity in both cultural capitals. The fact that the project of renovating an industrial brownfield has been carried out nonetheless despite major difficulties encountered during its implementation underline the importance that having a renovated site had for the city of Pilsen. Once more, it constitutes a demonstration of the importance of creativity in the conception of the cultural year in the Bohemian city.

Construction works are an integral part of the cultural year. They allow for the physical inscription of the ECoC heritage in the city and are meant to influence for the desired image development of the city. As such, in these cases, the *Cité de la Méditerranée* permitted to modify the façade of the city to enhance its attractiveness, and the MuCEM had a strong influence on its museum sphere which drove cultural institutions to adapt to these new standards. Pilsen on the other hand, developed its local creative scene by the creation of a site strongly associated with the theory of the creative class.

### **Festivals and public events**

Major public events such as key moments in the cultural year or festivals constitute a good manner to efficiently carry out to the objectives of cultural capitals. But their large scale and their public display, they offer good publicity for the event and often related to peaks of activity during the calendar cultural year such as their opening ceremony. U. Fuchs considered all the events which took place in the public space as the events which met the most success during

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<sup>131</sup> Sulženko, Interview with author.

<sup>132</sup> J3W&S4W, “DEPO2015 | DEPO2015 Plzeň,” accessed March 30, 2020, [www.depo2015.cz/en/](http://www.depo2015.cz/en/).

<sup>133</sup> J3W&S4W, “The European Neighbours’ Day | DEPO2015 Plzeň,” accessed July 21, 2020, [www.depo2015.cz/en/nase-projekty-ag102/eds-a2378](http://www.depo2015.cz/en/nase-projekty-ag102/eds-a2378).

the cultural year. For him, large scale projects in the public space help to attract a part of the population which is not usually concerned with cultural events<sup>134</sup>. Large scale events mark key-dates throughout the cultural year. A good example of such temporal markers is, the opening ceremony which always serve a strong moment which gathers a large audience. The week-end of the opening ceremony in Marseille had an attendance of 600,000 people<sup>135</sup>. In Pilsen, the opening ceremony managed to attract a total of 43,000 visitors during the three days of its implementation (January 16-19)<sup>136</sup>. The peak of the opening ceremony, the Symphony of Bell alone managed to attract 23,000 people and was broadcasted live on Czech television.

A good strategy for advertising on the cultural capital lies in the organisation of festivals, in order to gather a high number of visitors. A reutilisation of public space is permitted during the cultural year and several projects tied to cultural capitals and its festivals use public space as a playing ground for their creation. A good example of such a thing is the *Métamorphoses* festival which took place in Marseille. This festival proposed the installation of several temporary pieces of arts in the key sites of the city of Marseille from September 20 to October 6 2013<sup>137</sup>. For example, the *St-Jean* train station has been included in the programme of that festival, or the Bergemon plaza saw the erection of temporary cardboard buildings for the *Ville éphémère* project of the festival (See Annex 1). According to G. Mattei, festivals were the spearheads of the MP2013 programme<sup>138</sup>. When focusing on this aspect of the cultural programme in the Phocaeen city, he counted a total of 4 festivals produced specifically for the cultural event, 20 using the ECoC label, and 53 were co-produced during that year and received varying support from the organisers. The author noted that most of the festivals adopted a multidisciplinary approach and can hardly be described as festival of a specific genre (Eg. Music, cinema, etc.) as they present a blend of aesthetics and types of performance. The festival of lights which took place in P2015 during the month of February served as an opportunity to put on display contemporary pieces of art from both Czech artists (Such as David Černý who installed his work of art “Speederman” in the city) and foreign artists (Japanese, French, German and Irish). The festival of lights proved to be a success during the cultural year, and was kept as a legacy of P2015, an event reoccurring each year which J. Sulženko describes as

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<sup>134</sup> Fuchs, Interview with author.

<sup>135</sup> McAteer et al., “Ex-Post Evaluation of the 2013 European Capitals of Culture.”

<sup>136</sup> Fox et al., “Ex-Post Evaluation of 2015 European Capitals of Culture.”

<sup>137</sup> Lieux publics, “Dossier de presse métamorphose,” 2013.

<sup>138</sup> Gabriel Mattei, “La place des festivals dans l’évènement Marseille- Provence Capitale européenne de la culture,” *Public(s)*, October 5, 2016, 31.

a “gate for the audience to get in touch with contemporary visual arts on the European level”<sup>139</sup>. Integrating outside festivals prove to be an efficient manner to attract visitors to the cultural event. For instance, the Rock for People festival organises an annual event since 1995 in the city of Hradec Králové, and has the habit to integrate international artists in its line-up. The festival had an extra event attached to the P2015 event “Rock for People Europe” which took place on July 3-5 and featured international artists such as Parovoz, Motörhead or Pete Doherty.

However, due to their visibility the organisation of public events can counter-benefit the ECoC and attract criticism if an event is perceived as too alien or problematic in a local context. In the case of Marseille-Provence, among the criticisms which have been formulated against the cultural year was a strong reaction against a concert given by David Guetta for which he was meant to receive a total of 400,000 euros as a subvention for a public concert organised on June 23<sup>rd</sup><sup>140</sup>. This high funding sparked a scandal during the month of January, as local artists felt pushed away in favour of an international artist and publicly voiced their deception. Even if the artist renounced to this amount of money in light of the scandal, and U. Fusch when questioned about this episode has claimed that the sum of money meant for the artist was coming from a municipal funding, and thus not from the ECoC budget<sup>141</sup>; this episode nonetheless negatively impacted the image of the cultural capital.

In both cases, festivals and public events serve in the strategy of the ECoCs as peaks of activity throughout the cultural year. Their successes are primordial for a capital year to reach its goals, by both media coverage and attendance. Moreover, they can be integrated in the immaterial heritage of the cultural year following the enthusiasm of the locals.

Analysing the programmes for each cultural capital reveal several commonalities in the strategies employed by the implementation teams. It is possible to find similar keywords for the themes of the programmes; Public-events and festival are keys to a successful cultural year; Flagship constructions are primordial in the design of the cultural year. However, despite these

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<sup>139</sup> Sulženko, Interview with author.

<sup>140</sup> Raphaël Bosse-Platière, “David Guetta à Marseille : le financement qui dérange,” *Le Figaro*, February 13, 2013, <https://www.lefigaro.fr/musique/2013/02/13/03006-20130213ARTFIG00443-david-guetta-a-marseille-le-financement-qui-derange.php>.

<sup>141</sup> Fuchs, Interview with author.

commonalities, a further analysis on the trends mentioned in this part reveal different approaches by the cultural capitals on the content of these events. These elements will be analysed in the following chapters of the thesis, starting with the notion of creativity.

## **Creativity in the context of MP2013 and P2015**

After a focus on the programme of both cultural capitals, I propose for the continuation of the thesis an analysis of the impact that the theory of the “creative class” has on the design and implementation of both studied ECoCs.

### **Creativity and constructions in the context of the European capitals of culture**

Focusing on the constructions associated with the programme of both cultural capitals, it was possible to witness the influence that the concept of creativity had on the design and presentation of several sites. The revitalisation of several industrial sites is found in both programmes, with the Silo or the J1 area in Marseille and even in the extension of the Friche de la Belle de Mai. The pre-eminence of creativity found in the erection of cultural institutions in Pilsen is perceivable with the importance that the DEPO2015 revitalisation had in the programme of the cultural year.

When focusing on the *Cité de la Méditerranée* in Marseille in the previous chapter, the bid-document presents the J1 project in its description as strongly influenced by “contemporary creativity”, influenced by the previous example of the *Tri Postal* in Lille. Such example illustrates the influence borne by cultural institutions integrating the creativity serving as examples from a cultural capital to the other. However, one of the most striking examples of the creativity concept applied to a cultural site in Marseille is found in *La Friche de la Belle de Mai* mentioned previously for the extension project carried on for the cultural year. *La Friche de la Belle de Mai* is a heritage from the industrial past of the Phocaeen city. Originally, the site was a tobacco factory created in 1868 which knew a decline of activity from the 1970s before it closed in 1990. The site had a great importance in the economy of its surrounding neighbourhood, *la Belle de Mai*, as its closure led to the loss of approximately a thousand jobs<sup>142</sup>. The site was reopened in 1992 under the name *La Friche de la Belle de Mai* as an alternative artist housing project and derives its inspiration from already existing similar cultural locations (Especially from Barcelona). Unlike other spaces of alternative cultures which have emerged spontaneously, the Friche de la Belle de mai results from a political decision<sup>143</sup>. After its opening, the space has progressively integrated a wide range of activities

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<sup>142</sup> Boris Grésillon, “La reconversion d’un espace productif au cœur d’une métropole : l’exemple de la Friche de la Belle de Mai à Marseille,” *Rives méditerranéennes*, no. 38 (February 15, 2011): 87–101, <https://doi.org/10.4000/rives.3977>.

<sup>143</sup> Grésillon.

such as hosting the municipal archives or serving as studios for various audio-visual productions such as the French soap-opera *Plus Belle la vie*. The project has gathered criticism however, as it is not conceived as an urban project meant to rehabilitate its neighbourhood which suffers from poor socio-urban conditions. The site is conceived firstly as a metropolitan artistic project (Even national and international to some extent) than a space oriented towards the surrounding areas<sup>144</sup>. The MP2013 bid document noted that a “network of professions” was created through the gathering of activities linked to the creative sector<sup>145</sup> (Training, design, production and the fields of audio-visual, cultural heritage, etc...). Without naming it creativity, the document is rooted in the ambition of city-makers to gather activities considered as “creative” in a single place to stimulate these networks of professionals. As such, the MP2013 bid document project for this site stated its ambition to lead the Friche de la Belle de Mai in what is referred to as new phase of its development by the addition of new elements to the former factory. Whether this new phase has been initiated or not is a question open for discussion, but this ambition underlines the importance that creativity bears in the conception of project in MP2013 which wishes to accelerate the implementation of this new form of economy in its territory.

Pilsen offered a situation where the sector of creativity felt as need to integrate in the local economy. As described earlier, the ambition to develop the creative industries in the Bohemian city is strongly associated with the revitalisation project of an industrial site. As commented previously, recycling industrial brownfields is in an urban trend which helps at the process of changing the perception of the city, inscribing it as a post-industrial and creative city while requalifying a space which has lost its initial utility. The project of revitalising a former industrial site to convert it in space associated with creativity borne great importance in the P2015 plans as Pilsen did not offer a similar space until its cultural year<sup>146</sup>. J. Sulženko was in charge of designing the DEPO2015 project after the discovery of asbestos Světovar construction. During the interview, he commented that he decided to change the main focus of the project in comparison to the initial plan<sup>147</sup>. According to him, Světovar had a strong focus on being a place dedicated to art, hosting exhibitions and artists, as well as offering a space for cultural NGOs. He commented however, that the aforementioned NGOs were “self-sustainable

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<sup>144</sup> Grésillon.

<sup>145</sup> Association Marseille Provence 2013, “Marseille-Provence 2013, European and Mediterranean.”, 113.

<sup>146</sup> Patrícia Glinská, “Srovnání kulturního vývoje Ostravy a Plzně od kandidatury na Evropské hlavní město kultury 2015 [ Comparison of cultural development of Ostrava and Pilsen from candidacy for the European Capital of Culture 2015]” (Master thesis, Brno, Janáčkova Akademie Múzických Umění V Brně, 2015).

<sup>147</sup> Sulženko, Interview with author.

in a way in Pilsen and we would start a competition with them in Světovar”. J. Sulženko stated that consequently, he rather held the focus on the implementation of creative industries integrating elements in DEPO2015 such as the creation of a fab lab (fabrication laboratory) or a creative incubator for start-ups. During the design of the DEPO2015, J. Sulženko collaborated with other international networks of revitalised spaces such as Trans Europe Halles, or was in contact with collaborators from other revitalised cultural spaces such as the *Spinnerai* a revitalised cotton mill in Leipzig. He commented that during the preparation of the project, he came to the personal conclusion that “there was no single model that you can use” due to the local specificities either from the site (Location, surface, etc) or from outside local context (Economy, varying local politics). However, despite this statement, it is definitely possible to analyse the DEPO2015 renovation project as extremely similar to other creative sites, influenced strongly by a trend. Comparing the *Friche de la Belle de Mai* and DEPO2015 allows to find many similarities between the two sites. Both work as a cultural hub and coworking space which have played a primordial part in the programme of their cultural year – Both sites have hosted visiting artists during the cultural year and kept on doing this activity. They adopt the same approach to creative industries as both sites propose a coworking area for startups and a fab lab. Both of them host commercial venues of similar types – Bistro, restaurants, bookshops. Finally, both La Friche and DEPO2015 feature cultural institutions such spaces for artistic exhibitions, cinemas featuring international and independent movies, and concert halls. Both sites feature strong similarities when considered as a whole - their difference lies mainly in their size and their cultural programme.

### **Creative language in the application-documents**

As the creative aspect found in the constructions associated with the cultural year has been described, I propose to delve into the influence that the concept of creativity has on the application of both ECoCs. The application submitted to the selection panel is a diplomatic document which must justify the creative aspect of the bid in a local and European context. Studying this justification offers insight on the importance of the creativity theory bear for city makers.

I propose to start discussing this notion starting with the case of Pilsen as the creativity aspect is much more prominent than in the application of the Phocaeen city. The concept of creativity appears in the P2015 bid documents throughout numerous occurrences found in the

manner the programme justifies the application to the city to the ECoC programme. Among the documents presented by the preparation team as inspiration for designing the event, the Green Paper published by the European Commission “Unlocking the potential of cultural and creative industries<sup>148</sup>” is directly mentioned. The P2015 team used this diplomatic document to underline how they follow the call to emphasise the creative aspect to cultural policies and projects. Consciously or unconsciously, the term “Creative” is used as a label for a variety of projects or actions initiated through its project to anchor this term and its meanings to the overall P2015 project. To insist on the presence of the creative aspect in the programme, various projects featured the term creative in their title, such as the *Creative stays* event organised by the Alliance française of Pilsen meant to host artists from France and other European countries for two weeks in Pilsen. The importance of the creative class theory becomes notable in the application of the Bohemian city, is when the notion of creativity is seen as the manner to overcome the trauma of the past totalitarian experiences, by being a supposed enhancer of open-mindedness and local democracy. To understand this approach to the creative class, it is necessary to return to the presentation of the programme made in the bid document. As described in the subsection dedicated to the analysis on the programme, each streams of the programme conveys a dimension linked more or less to the concept of creativity. The “Arts and technology” stream links the innovation aspect and creativity. The “Stories and sources” stream is linked with the revitalisation projects associated with P2015, notably Světovar. The transit and minorities stream is not presented through the angle of creativity to advocate for democratic values, it however envisions culture as a mean to help with the problem of a perceived lack of integration of minorities in Czech society, joining the idea that culture is a tool which needs to be applied to encourage dialogues between cultures, and thus overcome local issue. The stream “Relationships and emotions” is the most connected part of the programme to the concept of creativity in the conception of P2015. The stream presents itself with the goal of creating a “creative individual”<sup>149</sup> through the establishment of connections, which echoes the perceived importance of physical proximity for creative professionals in order to create professional networks, as shown with *La Friche de la Belle de mai*. This stream is described in the bid document by quoting Richard Florida and its participation to the Prague Forum for Creative Europe in March 2009 when he declared the “We are in for a global restart of society”. Rather than an utopian project to revolutionise society, the P2015 project sees creativity as the natural

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<sup>148</sup> Publications Office of the EU, “Green Paper - Unlocking the Potential of Cultural and Creative Industries” (Brussels: European Commission, April 27, 2010).

<sup>149</sup> Havlíčková and et al., “Otevřete Si Plzeň!”, 111.



evolution from its totalitarian state to a modern European democracy. As such, this particular stream wants to present itself as a key initiator for a discussion whose theme would be “From totalitarianism to creativity”<sup>150</sup>, with the goal to use the results of that discussion as an influencer for future cultural policies and studies. This stream also presents projects which are both focused on the local totalitarian experience and projects of European cooperation. For example, this stream proposed projects such as the an exhibit called Freedom of “Expression and the power of Totalitarianism” in collaboration with the Pilsen Philharmonic Orchestra a project of public readings of works of literature combined with a musical representation (A project which has been implemented and renamed “The Artist and Totalitarianism “freedom of speech and the Power of Totalitarianism” – the Stalin Era” for the cultural year). Therefore, the P2015 implementation team gives to the concept of creativity an ideological aspect. It is perceived as a solution to overcome the scars of its history and reach the wished result of an open European and democratic city.

Concerning Marseille, the notion of creativity is not as present in its application as it is in the P2015 bid document. Unlike the Czech city, the city already possessed spaces strongly associated with creativity and were designed to host the economic activities tied with the creative class (Such as the Friche de la Belle de Mai). The words “Creative” and/or “Creativity” are mostly used as adjectives to describe workshops, techniques, artistic creations etc, with no relation to Richard Florida’s theory. The creativity aspect in its economic and social aspect is found in the use of other derived terms such as “Knowledge economy”. This economic aspect is mentioned as a factor of development for which the city shows its enthusiasm. The usage of terms used in relation with the creative class theory mostly appear when the document discuss its implication in official policies- especially when associated with the term "Creative Europe". This enthusiasm for a stronger involvement in the knowledge economy is based on the will of the MP2013 to be integrated in both local and international policies, such as the Lisbon Agreement or the *Schéma de Cohérence Territoriale* (Social cohesion blueprint) produced by the city of Marseille for the 2008-2016 period which has a goal to stimulate “an economy based on knowledge, innovation and creativity”<sup>151</sup>. The document states that the lack of cultural cohesion lead to a poor international recognition of the city by the cultural sphere, which goes along with the objective of changing the perception of the city.

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<sup>150</sup> Havlíčková and et al, 100.

<sup>151</sup> Association Marseille Provence 2013, “Marseille-Provence 2013, European and Mediterranean.”, 105.

Despite being present in both documents as a strong influence for the constitution of the cultural years, the concept of creativity is conceptualised differently depending on the case. In Pilsen, creativity conveys a strong ideological dimension. It is perceived as a solution to overcome the lack of open-mindedness in Pilsen which would allow it to be considered as an influential European city. In Marseille, the concept of creativity for the cultural year is not as problematised as in Pilsen. It is mostly associated with notions of economy and needs to be stimulated rather than implemented in the city. Despite a different approach by both cities, creativity is a strong influence in both bid-documents. It is seen as a desired result, as in this theory culture is a tool to solve local problems. In Lindberg's theory, the creative aspect is in both cases, a manner to reach the prescriptive statement.

## **Local and international culture**

Each city joining the ECoC programme is judged by its European dimension and local investment. As such, the programme must balance between these two aspects if it wants to be considered successful. Developing a programme perceived as too foreign for the city would alienate the locals, and not developing the local culture enough in comparison to the international sphere would not contribute to its international recognition and consequently its attractiveness. During their interviews, both programme directors have emphasised on the need to balance those two aspects in the implementation of the cultural year. This chapter of the thesis is dedicated to the attempt to balance the local and the European dimension of the cultural year in both the studied ECoCs.

### **Involving locals in the international event**

The integration of locals in the programme comes at varying degrees. Beyond their sole participation in events as one of the manners to assess the success of the cultural year, several events during the cultural year put locals at the forefront. A good example of this possible type of events is the work of the artist Jean-Pierre Moulères who worked with both Pilsen and Marseille during their cultural years. The artist/curator worked in both cultural capitals to realise in each an exhibit based on a collaboration with locals who would voluntarily share pictures from their family album in order to create an exhibit for the cultural year. Both exhibits, the “Pilsen family album: A Paradise among four Rivers” and “*Les chercheurs de midi*” (The seekers of the south) took place in flagship constructions of the cultural year, respectively DEPO2015 and the J1. These events were met with great success both during and after the cultural year. The Pilsen photo family album exhibit received 200 photos from locals and hosted a total of 5,150 visitors<sup>152</sup>, and the Marseille project was followed by the publication of a book featuring the photos displayed during the ECoC. Locals are also involved directly with the direct participation in the cultural year by volunteering. By their direct involvement in the cultural year, these volunteers tend to show more enthusiasm regarding the effects of the cultural year<sup>153</sup>. To illustrate the importance of locals in the direct implementation of projects, 70% of the events implemented for the MP2013 were implemented with the help of

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<sup>152</sup> Fox et al., “Ex-Post Evaluation of 2015 European Capitals of Culture.”

<sup>153</sup> Ježek et al., “Evropské Hlavní Město Kultury, Plzeň, Ekonomické Efekty, Evaluační Výzkum (European Capital of Culture, Pilsen, Economic Effects, Evaluation Research).”

volunteers<sup>154</sup>, whereas in Pilsen, 515 volunteers joined and were trained by the organisation team to carry out the cultural year.

### **Local culture, international ties**

As commented earlier, the cultural year must keep a balance between local and international culture for a successful event. As such, the city performs an exercise of representing the city according to local and external imaginaries to craft a programme meant to satisfy both locals and tourists.

Representing local cultures in a ECoC project requires an effort to integrate artists with a connection to the city/region and/or well as cultural practices found at a local level in the events proposed during the cultural year. The P2015 programme provides a good example of this strategy in its the cultural programme. The city of Pilsen is made famous for its practices of puppet play since the 18<sup>th</sup> century (With the presence of a notably museum dedicated to this art). As such, the programme integrated a puppet representation of the Magic Flute during the cultural year and the public representation of giant puppets of several meters created by the Spanish company Carros de Foc. Artistic figures tied to the city of Pilsen were integrated as well into the programme of the ECoC. Pilsen-born designer Ladislav Sutnar and moviemaker Jiří Trnka both received an exhibit dedicated to their work. The artist Gottfried Lindauer was born in Pilsen and moved to New Zealand where he became famous for his work of portrayal of native Maori population. As such, through his immigration experience, an exhibition of his work has been integrated to the P2015 programme as flagship for the Transit and minorities stream. Through the ECoC, these exhibits helped to enhance the recognition of these artists internationally. For example, J. Sulženko has indicated that following the exhibition of Sutnar's Venuses, their value on the art-market had increased<sup>155</sup>.

Existing cultural institutions are integrated to the programme of cultural capitals and serve as cornerstones in the design of the project. As such, existing cultural actors and existing festivals are integrated fully to the programme. For instance, the music festival *Les Suds* (The Souths) in Arles was integrated fully to the MP2013 programme. In Pilsen, the George Patton Memorial Museum organises each year a festival dedicated to the liberation of the city by American troops in 1945. For the P2015 event, the ECoC integrated the celebration of the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the liberation of the city as parts of its programme and ended up being one of

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<sup>154</sup> McAteer et al., "Ex-Post Evaluation of the 2013 European Capitals of Culture."

<sup>155</sup> Sulženko, Interview with author.

the key-moments of the cultural year. Moreover, cultural institutions with an already existing international aspect are expected to integrate themselves in the cultural year as well. The *Alliance française* of Pilsen integrated its annual festival “Bonjour Pilsen” as part of the cultural year. However, despite the integration of existing events in the programme, the majority of the programme of the cultural year is composed of projects created specifically for the ECoC event. Thus, 68% of events found in the P2015 cultural programme were implemented for the first time.

However, integrating local artists in the programme of the cultural event does not mean that the entirety of the local cultural sphere agrees with the ECoC project. Critical voices against the event were formulated in both the studied cultural capitals against its programme, either due to a perceived agenda not emphasising enough local culture, or by the rejection of the ECoC model. The criticisms which both cultural years received are studied in the last chapter of this thesis.

### **Establishing international partnerships**

The establishment of partnerships with other cultural international actors serve as a very strong motivation for participating cities to join the ECoC programme. The establishment of new partnerships or networks have a strong importance in the justification for the application of candidate cities in the bid documents. Existing partnerships have a strong importance as well in the design documents, and both ECoCs have mentioned existing partnerships with other European cities or regions as an argument for their involvement in international partnerships since it helps the collaboration process.

Organising a cultural capital can be the initiator of a network of connected cities. A great example of this is found with the “Cities on the Edge” programme, initiated by Liverpool during its cultural year. The project aimed to gather cities with a “Complicated” perception for a cultural collaboration. Marseille joined this network, along with other cities such as Naples, Istanbul, Bremen and Gdansk. Thus, initiating collaborative and international networks can be a strong argument to select a city in the cultural capital programme. Therefore, Pilsen wanted to integrate that collaborative aspect to its Světovar project as a solution to overcome the lack of existing cultural partnerships. Beyond the revitalisation process, revitalising this brewery was supposed to initiate the creation of a network of revitalised breweries called the *To Beer or not to Beer?! network*. Even if the project was abandoned during the implementation of the

P2015 project (J. Sulženko did not even remember this network when mentioned during the interview), the network aimed at including partners from Belgium (The other ECoC Mons), Denmark, Spain, Poland, Croatia and Switzerland<sup>156</sup>. Finally, the involvement of the city of Pilsen with the “Creative Cities” network initiated by the British Council, a network of European cities experimenting with the creativity with their cultural policies. Joining this network permitted the city to host a three-days’ workshop based on the revitalisation of public spaces implemented in the city in 2010 (Before the submission of the application document). This early involvement in favour of creativity emphasises once more the preeminent presence of this cultural trend in the P2015 programme.

The creation of international cultural partnerships is far from being limited to the city only. Cultural actors are also expected to create new partnerships with foreign collaborators through the ECoC process. The collaboration could take the form of hosting a foreign artist to be included in a cultural activity or by hosting items from a different country. For instance, MP2013 had a strong focus on collaborating with cultural actors from the Euro-Mediterranean region, which explained the difficulties the team because of the Arab spring in 2011. Through the MP2013 project, 3 cultural actors out of 4 created new partnerships for the projects implemented during the capital year. However, beyond the creation of international links this the cultural year also had a strong impact on the development of Marseille cultural sphere, with 39% of the actors involved in the cultural year finding new sources of funding, and this cultural year helped actors to create ties within the metropolitan area<sup>157</sup>. One of the main challenges the city of Pilsen had to face for the implementation of its cultural capital year was its lack of existing international partnerships due to the relatively small scale of the city. Following the cultural year, 53% of cultural actors stated they established good international links through their participation to the ECoC<sup>158</sup>. Thanks to the international ties the cultural year created in the Bohemian city, P2015 featured in its cultural programme a collaboration with several cultural institutions in the city of Munich to feature the work of various artists such as Alfons Mucha or Vasilij Kadinshij in the West Bohemia museum for the project “Munich, the shining metropolis of arts (1870-1918)”. The collaboration with foreign cultural actors also means the creation of artistic residencies in the cultural capitals. Once more, *La Friche de la Belle de Mai* and DEPO2015 share the fact that both sites have hosted these stays, and still do today. Marseille received artists from the other side of the Mediterranean, whereas P2015 developed

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<sup>156</sup> Havlíčková and et al., “Otevřete Si Plzeň!”, 20.

<sup>157</sup> McAteer et al., “Ex-Post Evaluation of the 2013 European Capitals of Culture.”

<sup>158</sup> Fox et al., “Ex-Post Evaluation of 2015 European Capitals of Culture.”

these stays with the creation of an international exchange grant for the cultural year which permitted to host 19 foreign artists and sent 8 Czech artists abroad in 2015.

Finally, cultural capitals are expected to integrate a collaboration with the other ECoC to their cultural programme, from the earlier draft of the cultural capital up to its implementation. MP2013 partnered with Košice 2013 to propose events such as the Slovak week featuring several artists from Slovakia, or by collaborating on a project dedicated to the Romani community. However, the ex-post evaluation of MP2013 noted that the cultural capital had a limited collaboration with its Slovak counterpart<sup>159</sup>. P2015 collaborated as well with its Belgian counterpart, Mons 2015. Through this collaboration, the city managed to organise a representation of Alfred Jarry's play *Ubu King*, an event that J. Sulženko has commented as impossible to implement outside of the cultural year as a consequence of the high budget it required<sup>160</sup>.

As said in the introduction of this chapter, the success of the ECoC is achieved if the balance between local and international culture is attained during the cultural year. The process of transforming the city through the mega-event aims for a change of perception at an internal and external level. Working with a great variety of partners is a delicate task, which J. Sulženko referred to as a "mental exercise<sup>161</sup>", as the preparation of the project required to carefully explain to the local population the objectives of the cultural year. He however stated that running late on the schedule required the team to produce a lot of events, and for the legacy and impact of the cultural year, a decrease in the number of events to include the locals more would have been preferable. Indeed, convincing the local population of the necessity of implementing the cultural year is required to have a lasting impact, as the initial scepticism of the population is usually high before the cultural year<sup>162</sup>, as mentioned by U. Fuchs<sup>163</sup>.

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<sup>159</sup> McAteer et al., "Ex-Post Evaluation of the 2013 European Capitals of Culture."

<sup>160</sup> Sulženko, Interview with author.

<sup>161</sup> Sulženko.

<sup>162</sup> Marianne Goldin and Jean-Christophe Sevin, "Marseille-Provence 2013 and the 'Creative Neighborhoods'. Understanding the Impacts of the ECoC on Local Cultures and Neighborhoods.," in *Ageing Society, Ageing Culture? Sixth Annual Conference of the University Network of the European Capitals of Culture* (Pécs: University Network of the European Capitals of Culture, 2013), 11.

<sup>163</sup> Fuchs, Interview with author.

## **Local history and in the design of the cultural year**

### **Historical narration in the presentation of the city**

When delving into the layout of the planned cultural programmes for both cultural capitals, the integration of history appeared as a strong motif in the conception of cultural events. Thus, this part is dedicated to the importance that local, national or European history bear in the implementation of the ECoC programme in both cities.

The historical motif is preeminent in the Pilsen bid document and serve as the key motivation for the city application to the ECoC programme. History is problematised in the document to explain the need for opening-up the minds of the city. It is used as a manner to give more justification to the descriptive statement, to explain the perceived close-mindedness of Pilsen and Czech society. As commented earlier, the document opens with a prologue metaphorically narrating the experience of the city during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The experience of totalitarianism is seen as a disruptive event which strongly and negatively modified the city of Pilsen in her desired development. The descriptive statement (D) of the lack of open-mindedness of Pilsners is seen as a consequence of the totalitarian experience which harms the democratic development in the Czech Republic: “Is it not obvious that the mere existence of small nations such as the Czechs, following the recent unfortunate experience of two totalitarian regimes has resulted after twenty years of fragile democracy in chaos within so many human souls”<sup>164</sup>. The project of P2015 promises to “open sore wounds”<sup>165</sup> with its Transit and Minorities programme, the stream dedicated to the issue of immigration in Pilsen. In its own historical narration, the bid-document presents the totalitarian part of its history as a rupture in its own history of connectedness and as a place which includes minorities of Central Europe: “The traditional, efficient and inspiring co-existence of Czech, German and Jewish cultures, as well as Catholic, Protestant and Jewish belief systems, is part of the historical feel of the city and its inhabitants, albeit disturbed by two totalitarian regimes”<sup>166</sup>. This excerpt echoes the displacement of minorities in Central Europe in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with the episodes of the Holocaust and the expulsion of Germans from Czechoslovakia. This forced removal of minorities in Pilsen is described in the document as the reason justifying the lack of open mindedness for minorities from different, non-European, geographical areas. However, if the programme of the cultural year featured several events dedicated to the question of the totalitarian experience, the

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<sup>164</sup> Havlíčková and et al., “Otevřete Si Plzeň!”, 67.

<sup>165</sup> Havlíčková and et al, 19.

<sup>166</sup> Havlíčková and et al, 120.



monitoring panel commented on the initial programme on being too local, and asked for the addition of events with an international aura, which diluted this approach to local Pilsen problematic history as the main motivation for the organisation of the cultural year.

Marseille on the other hand does not problematise the city history in a similar fashion as Pilsen. In the application of the city, history is not used as a strong motivation to justify the need for the municipality to be integrated to the ECoC programme. Rather, history is a tool used to emphasise the construction of Marseille as a liminal space, a city marked with the history of migration and movements of population. As such, when the city justifies its individuality in comparison to other competing French cities, it states that “Marseille-Provence is the most intercultural – the city in which dialogue between cultures is both more ancient and diverse”<sup>167</sup>. In a similar fashion as Pilsen flagship project, the erection of Marseille flagship project the MuCEM is connected with its local history. The MuCEM was planned to be inaugurated with the exhibit on “Mobility and Migrations in Europe and the Mediterranean”, dedicated to the history of mobility. The MuCEM was inaugurated with the exhibit “The Black and the Blue, A Mediterranean dream” which had as a focus the different imaginaries of the various regions of the Mediterranean, which still adopt a certain historic approach to the subject, as the exhibit starts its object of focus on the 18<sup>th</sup> century<sup>168</sup>.

### **Working with the blocked memory**

ECoCs offer the possibility for cities to deal with their local problematic history. If Pilsen decides to confront it in an upfront manner by the narration of its totalitarian experience as one of the main justifiers for its application to the cultural capitals programme, Marseille adopts a shy approach to this issue.

U. Fuchs used his experience as the cultural director of Linz2009 to propose a project linked with the local experience of totalitarianism in Marseille during the French collaboration and German occupation during second World War. The MP2013 association collaborated with the historian Robert Mencherini to develop the *Ici Même* (Right here) project. This project consisted in the temporary spray of several inscriptions throughout the Marseille metropolitan area to explain in a few words events which occurred during this period, such as an episode of the Jewish deportation. This temporary art project in the streets of Marseille was completed

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<sup>167</sup> Association Marseille Provence 2013, “Marseille-Provence 2013, European and Mediterranean.”, 211.

<sup>168</sup> “The Black and the Blue, a Mediterranean Dream...,” Mucem, accessed July 27, 2020, <https://www.mucem.org/en/black-and-blue-mediterranean-dream>.

with an exhibit at the municipal archives on the same topic. This project was inspired by two elements. The first one was the experience of U. Fuchs in Linz, Hitler's birth city, when he implemented a similar project called *In Situ*. The second inspiration for the project are the *Stolpersteine*, cobblestones found in European cities which, in a similar fashion to the *Ici même* project inform passerby of the past-presence of local victims of Nazism. However, local resistance to a controversial episode of local history may hinder the process of opening a dialogue on this complicated issue. As a consequence, the city of Marseille did not offer an extended full-fledged strategy to integrate the issue of the heritage of the war of Algeria. An absence found despite the fact that the Phocaeen city was deeply involved in the French colonial history, having been a place of transition and exile for the French (*Pieds noirs*) and the Algerian (Harkis) population and that left Algeria following its independence. As such, the MP2013 association had the project to organise an exhibit in Aix-en-Provence dedicated to the writer Albert Camus, whose first curator was Benjamin Stora. However, he was removed from the project following an intervention by the mayor of this city<sup>169</sup>. This forced removal stems from the engagement of B. Stora as a historian specialised on French Algeria and the Algerian war and whose position led him to alienate a part of the population nostalgic of this period, still influential in southern France. U. Fuchs has called this episode in the interview as "One of the greatest failures of MP2013"<sup>170</sup>. The programme of Marseille-Provence lacked strong cultural events dedicated to this episode of history, and the only cultural event in the programme dealing with this issue is the play *Les pieds tanqués*.

### **Cities as European crossroads**

A. Gombault has argued that P2015 and MP2013 have in common the fact that they focus heavily on the "encounter" dimension of people with a wide range of identities, values and objectives<sup>171</sup>. Moreover, as explained by N. L. Immler and H. Sackers<sup>172</sup>, all competing cities applying for the ECOC programme position themselves as European crossroads, no matter their geographical position. Both cities are no exception to this rule and tie this intersectional aspect to their historical narration to add an extra layer in the presentation of the city. For instance, Pilsen insists on its positioning on the Via Carolina, a medieval trade route crossing Central

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<sup>169</sup> Catherine Simon, "Albert Camus, un écrivain pris en otage à Aix-en-Provence," *Le Monde*, September 14, 2012, [https://www.lemonde.fr/livres/article/2012/09/14/albert-camus-un-ecrivain-pris-en-otage-a-aix-en-provence\\_1760451\\_3260.html](https://www.lemonde.fr/livres/article/2012/09/14/albert-camus-un-ecrivain-pris-en-otage-a-aix-en-provence_1760451_3260.html).

<sup>170</sup> Fuchs, Interview with author.

<sup>171</sup> Gombault, "Social Participation Issues in Becoming a Creative City: Learning from European Capitals of Culture."

<sup>172</sup> Immler and Sackers, "(Re)Programming Europe."

Europe and proceeds to a retelling of its story by narrating the waves of its immigration: “Rhine stonemasons, Spanish freelancers, Italian railway workers, American foot soldiers, and even Vietnamese stall keepers and Ukrainian or Polish builders”<sup>173</sup>. The movement of population throughout Central Europe is seen in the partnership established for P2015 between the West Bohemia Gallery and the various institutions from Munich to feature pieces of art nouveau by Czech artists who worked in the German city. Marseille perceives itself as a connection between North and South, as a place of junction and immigration throughout its history, starting with the Antiquity. The notion of liminal space varies greatly throughout Marseille bid, but always remains present. The North and South notion is applied throughout the bid to describe the encounter dimension of the MP2013. However, this North-South distinction varies depending on the nature of the planned event. For instance, North and South can be applied for both sides of the Mediterranean Sea; It could be used to differentiate Northern and Southern Europe or could just work as global North and South. The result helps with the objective of establishing Marseille as a point of converging cultures, especially in relation to the Barcelona Process. A great example of this notion of Marseille serving as a point of connection between Northern and Southern culture is found in the project “Marseille-Fes-Košice festival of Sacred music”, an unimplemented project described in the bid document as “an expression of Marseilles’ desire to act as a link between Northern Europe and the Mediterranean”<sup>174</sup>. This North-South dichotomy remained the implemented programme with exhibits such as in the representation of the play *Nord et sud dans nos histoires et dans l’oeuvre d’Albert Camus, le premier homme* (North and South in our stories and in the work of Albert Camus, the first Man).

### **Utilisation of historical figures for the cultural year**

The utilisation of historical figures constitutes a good strategy for the implementation teams to rally values linked to these historic figures. By their aura, they call to the visitors’ imaginaries and serve as flagship figures for the event. Their work and/or life also prove to be fruitful for event designers creating a cultural activity around those figures. Therefore, they are used for both communication and inspirational values in the design of cultural capitals.

For instance, the original programme of the MP2013 bid document is made in relation to the figure of writer Albert Camus. The idea of using his figure originates from two elements, the fact that the author was born in 1913 (which offered the city the opportunity to celebrate the

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<sup>173</sup> Havlíčková and et al., “Otevřete Si Plzeň!”, 120.

<sup>174</sup> Association Marseille Provence 2013, “Marseille-Provence 2013, European and Mediterranean.”, 51.

century of his birth anniversary) and the second being that the figure of Camus benefits from a great aura as a writer and possesses a link with the Mediterranean world since several of his works take place in Algeria. As a consequence, MP2013 proposed several events around the figure of the writer such as the aforementioned play and exhibit in Aix-en-Provence. Moreover, the cultural year in the Phocaeen city worked to feature the work of several artists with ties with the Provence region, albeit they only remained there for just a period of their life. A great example of this trend is found in *Le Grand Atelier du Midi*, a joint exhibit between the fine art museums of Marseille and Aix-en-Provence which features arts pieces from artists both French and foreign such as Van Gogh or Paul Cézanne. Marseille also made use of mythical figures from the Antiquity to add to the historical values of several exhibits, such as Ulysses. Homer's hero is used as a red thread for the creation of the opening exhibit of the J1, *Méditerranées: Des cites d'hier aux hommes d'aujourd'hui* (The Mediterraneans: From yesterday's cities to today's men).

Pilsen adopts a very similar approach to historical figures in the design of the P2015 cultural year. The cultural programme of the Bohemian city featured several historical figures tied with the city which are used as central figures for exhibits dedicated to their works. For instance, the exhibits dedicated to the work of painter Gottfried Lindauer and the designer Ladislav Sutnar previously described serve as a good illustration of this utilisation of historical figures. Moreover, the Pilsen application document uses historical figures to contribute to the diplomatic aspect of the bid document. As the application to competing cities has the requirement to state their attachment to European values, the P2015 application integrates in its argumentation notions of democracy and freedom against authoritarian regimes with the presence of figures perceived as heroes of the resistance against the communist regime such as former president Václav Havel or Jan Sokol by quoting them.

It appears that dealing with local history is a strong motif in both studied ECoCs. The utilisation of history permits to use various figures, persons or historical events, which influence the imaginaries of those who attend the events. The cultural capitals give a meaning to their local history in order to justify their application, and the discussion engaged on past events is a fruitful inspiration for the creation of local events. The historic aspect of the cultural year, in either its contextualisation, problematisation and usage remain idiosyncratic in each cultural capital. In our case study, Pilsen problematises its local history, and uses it to justify the need for a cultural mega event in its city. Marseille on the other hand, does not adopt such

problematization of its history, even avoiding certain problematic aspects of it (Algerian war). Using history as a motif for the creation of activities allow to give a more “local” aspect to the mega-event and contributes to inscribe it in its regional context.

## **Inclusion in the design of European capitals of culture**

As part of the “City and citizens” obligations for the cultural year, each ECoC is supposed to integrate minorities in the programme of its cultural year. As seen in the chapter dedicated to the analysis of the main lines of both programmes, the concept of inclusion justifies the main guidelines regarding some streams or themes in both P2015 and MP2013.

P2015 justifies the need to organise a stream dedicated to both sexual minorities and ethnic minorities as part of its opening process, since the totalitarian experience is seen as the reason of the close-mindedness of the Czech population regarding minorities. To tackle the question of minorities in Pilsen, the initial programme aimed at organising a series of activity within areas “with a high percentage of foreign workers”<sup>175</sup> in order to spark a dialogue between locals and this newly arrived population under the name “Uncle Tom’s Cabin” (Named after Harriet B. Stowe’s novel). The project was implemented in the cultural year under the name “Uncle Tom’s Cottage” and took place in the Peklo cultural house and featured a theatre representation of the play “Alone among people” with a group of foreign actors. Regarding the implementation of activities focused on the issue of sexual minorities, MP2013 developed several events as part of its theme “Genders or Genres” in relation with the exploration of sexual genders and the representation of sexual minorities such as the exhibit “At the Bazaar of Gender, Feminine-masculine in the Mediterranean” at the MuCEM

Both bid documents in an attempt to engage in dialogue with minorities during the ECoC year feature events with a focus on the Roma community in the early drafts of their cultural programme. In Marseille, the opportunity to organise an exhibit named “Sharing the Roma memory”, a travelling exhibition which permits the collaboration between local actors such as the “Arlaten” ethnographic museum in the city of Arles and the organisation team of Košice 2013. The collaboration between the two cities on that topic was carried out during the MP2013 event, under the title *Roma and Gypsies, A European Culture*. The P2015 had the ambition to organise a festival of Roma music organised by the singer Ida Kellarová in collaboration with the German Philharmonischer Verein der Sinti und Roma. This collaboration was not carried out during in the implementation of P2015. Roma culture was present nonetheless with the displacement of the Khamoro festival of Romani music organised in Pilsen for its 2015 edition,

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<sup>175</sup> Havlíčková and et al., “Otevřete Si Plzeň!”

instead of Prague<sup>176</sup>. Both events aimed at showcasing “the history, traditions and culture of Roma people<sup>177</sup>” and adopt an educational aspect to raise awareness on this community.

All European capitals of culture, beyond the integration of minorities, aim at gathering the largest part of its local population as possible. As a result, a special focus is held onto the groups which do not normally engage with cultural activities, such as the elderly and the youngest part of the local population. The initial P2015 bid proposed the implementation of an activity targeting the elderly “Active through old age” through its Relationships and emotions stream, whereas several other events of the bid documents included a “Youth” dimension to its programme (Such as the “Jazz without borders” or the “Animania” projects). Marseille adopted a similar strategy of implementing events specifically for these groups, such as the “Holiday notebook” targeting children specifically.

MP2013 developed an original approach to the inclusion of all parts of its territory with the project of *Quartiers créatifs* (Creative neighbourhoods) initiated in November 2011 as a strategy to reach the areas considered “at-risk”. The adjective creative is to be understood as non-related to R. Florida’s theory of the creative class<sup>178</sup>, as mentioned in the chapter dedicated to the usage of that theory in the design of MP2013. This project, absent from the bid document, aimed at reaching the population of these areas in order to stimulate participatory approaches by directly organising artistic events with locals. Fourteen different workshops were organised throughout the areas covered by the cultural event, and 6 of these creative neighbourhoods were implemented in Marseille. These events raised scepticism from several observers, such as M. Goldin and J-C Sevin<sup>179</sup> who believed this project does not resolve ongoing urban issues in these neighbourhoods. Moreover, U. Fuchs stated that in his opinion the idea of these Creative neighbourhoods was “a very very good idea” despite a contrasted outcome<sup>180</sup> with the failure of a couple of these workshops. Among the projects that were not carried out, the case of the *Jardins possibles* (Possible gardens) resulted in the withdrawal of local partners from the

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<sup>176</sup> Plzen 2015, “Khamoro | Plzen 2015,” accessed July 17, 2020, <http://www.plzen2015.cz/en/events/khamoro>.

<sup>177</sup> Havlíčková and et al., “Otevřete Si Plzeň!”, 123.

<sup>178</sup> Goldin and Sevin, “Marseille-Provence 2013 and the ‘Creative Neighborhoods’. Understanding the Impacts of the ECoC on Local Cultures and Neighborhoods.”

<sup>179</sup> Goldin and Sevin.

<sup>180</sup> Fuchs, Interview with author.

project, following a “perceived disregard” from the municipality<sup>181</sup>. The issue of criticisms and failures of the cultural year such as this one is analysed in the last chapter of this thesis.

Inclusion is one of the strategies of cultural capitals and is part of the process to create an interest in the cultural year projects for locals. Similar groups are targeted in both ECoCs, which aim at triggering a discussion or helping the representation of these groups. However, the creative neighbourhoods and some of the harsh reactions they provoked underlines that despite the strategies to reach all groups in the metropolitan area with culture, urban issues remain, and culture cannot be the only solution to the lack of integration or representation of those groups.

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<sup>181</sup> Emmanuelle Gall, “Marseille-Provence 2013 : la misère est-elle soluble dans la culture ?,” *Le blog Marseille-Provence 2013-Télérama* (blog), November 21, 2012, <https://www.telerama.fr/scenes/marseille-provence-2013-la-misere-est-elle-soluble-dans-la-culture,89814.php>.



## **Governance process of the European capital of culture**

As part of the study of the strategies implemented for the cultural year, it is necessary to delve into the topic of governance for the cultural year.

### **Working with locals and the local political scene**

The two cultural capitals in their application document develop a different approach to the issue of local governance. The MP2013 document develops a more top-down approach, whereas in contrast Pilsen adopts a horizontal approach to its process of governance. Surveys and round tables are mentioned numerous times in the Pilsen document, to contribute to this horizontal process of governance. This approach to integrate civil society in P2015 can be seen as another proof of the importance that P2015 has for a “democratic society”.

The role of public institutions should be mentioned as well. During both interviews, the cultural directors have mentioned clashes between local institutions, in particular with multi-level governance (City, region, state). The project of MP2013 has been perceived as a Trojan horse for the extension of powers of the Phocaean city on the intercity area of Marseille<sup>182</sup>, which was already a source of tension for local political actors. U. Fuchs has described the cooperation with local political actors as “difficult, especially in the beginning<sup>183</sup>”. He mentioned the attempt to influence the project by the city council member responsible for culture, with the ambition to select projects to integrate in the cultural year - which resulted in a clash with the head of the MP2013 association from 2006 to 2011 (And then advisor) Bernard Latarjet. Moreover, U. Fuchs mentioned later that the part of the decision to not appoint a politician as president of MP2013 resulted from a tensed political context, in particular between the mayor of the city (Right-wing party) and the head of the département (Left-wing party) who would have used local elections to discredit the ECoC in Marseille. J. Sulženko has indicated during the interview that part of the difficulties related to the Světovar project were a result of political clashes regarding the use of funds for the completion of this project, in particular European subsidies<sup>184</sup>. Indeed, if the city of Pilsen has been described as an “active supporter” and involved in the main governance of the project, a conflict arose with the regional authorities regarding the use of this money, a conflict amplified by the fact that both institutions had different political parties at their heads.

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<sup>182</sup> McAteer et al., “Ex-Post Evaluation of the 2013 European Capitals of Culture.”

<sup>183</sup> Fuchs, Interview with author.

<sup>184</sup> Sulženko, Interview with author.

## **Involvement of the private sphere in the cultural year**

Private companies are an integral part of the cultural year, similar to other cultural actors. Their role is not limited to sponsorship only and varies from the implementation of activities within their infrastructure to the position of actor in the governance for the ECoC. Thus, in Marseille, private companies were integrated in the *Ateliers de l'Euroméditerranée* projects. In Pilsen, J. Sulženko has commented the relationship with local breweries as being difficult at the beginning but acknowledges a good cooperation with the Pilsner Urquell brewery during the cultural year<sup>185</sup>. The brand was involved directly by the organisation during its yearly Pilsner fest, a celebration of the history of the brand organised on the premises of the brewery, which was integrated in the cultural year.

The strong involvement of the private sphere in the organisation of MP2013 has been noted by several outside observants such as A. Gombault<sup>186</sup> and N. Maisetti<sup>187</sup>. As commented earlier in the listing of the elements which drove the city of Marseille to apply to the ECoC programme, the “Club ambition 20”, a group of local actors from the private sector gathered after a ranking of European cities based on their attractiveness in which Marseille was in 23<sup>rd</sup> position. This association played a significant role in the application of the city to the ECoC programme and particularly its president Jacques Pfister, the head of the local chamber of commerce and former CEO of the the Orangina-Schweppes company. J. Pfister was the president of the MP2013 association during the implementation of the programme, a fact which echoes the argument employed by Neo-Marxist scholars<sup>188</sup> which sees the involvement of private actors who act beyond their traditional roles as partners in public policies and thus become more influential in urban development. U. Fuchs commented on the role of J. Pfister as head of the programme as a “formidable idea”<sup>189</sup>. He argued that in a complicated political context such as Marseille, the involvement of a person in the private sector could benefit the implementation team of an ECoC. He stated that J. Pfister had very little influence on the design of the cultural year (unlike a politician) and left him and his team relatively free in the design of MP2013. Moreover, he insisted that J. Pfister had the beneficial effect of helping in the involvement of private actors,

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<sup>185</sup> Sulženko.

<sup>186</sup> Gombault, “Social Participation Issues in Becoming a Creative City: Learning from European Capitals of Culture.”

<sup>187</sup> Maisetti, “‘Jouer collectif’ dans un territoire fragmenté: l’économie politique de la capitale Européenne de la culture dans la recomposition de la gouvernance urbaine.”

<sup>188</sup> Maisetti.

<sup>189</sup> Fuchs, Interview with author.

and as a result the cultural year received a large contribution to its funding from the private sector.

### **Assessing the cultural year**

The assessment of the cultural year is left to the discretion of the organising team. This lack of standard methodology to assess the cultural year has been noted by several scholars who studied the effects of cultural years, such as J Ježek<sup>190</sup>, as well as the members of the MP2013 association interviewed in the journal “L’observatoire”, B. Colette<sup>191</sup>. A fact which has been acknowledged by the coordinating bodies of the ECoC programme since it was mentioned in the influential Palmer report. However, the absence of standardised methodology employed by the capital years does not mean that no model exists for cultural capitals. It is interesting to note that both years have implemented to a certain degree the Impact08, a methodology employed by the staff of Liverpool08 and whose director at the time of its implementation, Beatriz Garcia, has been invited to Marseille before the cultural year to devise the assessment methodology before the cultural year<sup>192</sup>. As Ms. Garcia has been involved in both Liverpool08 and Glasgow 1990, it is possible to perceive the influence of these key-cultural capitals in the model of those which followed. Moreover, it illustrates very well the existence of a network of cosmopolitan professionals working as key-figures of the ECoC programme that Patel has described<sup>193</sup>. As a consequence, this task is left to the organising team which decides on the manner to conduct its own evaluation of the cultural year. Outside evaluators can produce their own work assessing the cultural year as well, conducting a research with a different methodology than the implementation team which may result in a different result for both parties. This in fact happened during the research for this thesis, when, as mentioned earlier, J. Sulženko contested the figures regarding the amount of visiting international tourists in the city of Pilsen. Finally, the EC produces its own evaluation of both capitals of culture in a given year, basing its evaluation on the work produced and by conducting its own research

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<sup>190</sup> Ježek et al., “Evropské Hlavní Město Kultury, Plzeň, Ekonomické Efekty, Evaluační Výzkum (European Capital of Culture, Pilsen, Economic Effects, Evaluation Research).”

<sup>191</sup> Samuel Périgois, “L’évaluation de La Capitale Européenne de La Culture Marseille-Provence 2013: Retour Sur Expériences,” *L’Observatoire* 2015/1, no. 46 (2015): 16–19.

<sup>192</sup> Association Marseille Provence 2013, “Marseille-Provence 2013, European and Mediterranean.”, 189.

<sup>193</sup> Patel, “Integration by Interpellation.”

## Criticism of the cultural year

Both ECoC cases claim to have reached their goals in the implementation of their programme. However, this does not prevent them from criticism emerging from the local population. Both cases have met similar criticism from a certain branch of the cultural scene, mostly the independent scene, which has refused to cooperate with P2015 according to Jiří Sulženko<sup>194</sup>. Moreover, dealing with refused cultural actors can prove to be difficult, as both cultural managers referred to them as a “quite visible minority” (Sulženko) and “people of great ego” (Fuchs<sup>195</sup>).

The issue of communication, and rather the cases of miscommunication with different groups are one of the reasons which prompt criticism. U. Fuchs refers to this case as the most common reason for the failing of certain projects in ECoCs. One of the initial reactions to the ECoC programme is usually a lack of confidence regarding the feasibility or the after-effects of the program which leads to an initial scepticism for the cultural year<sup>196</sup>. U. Fuchs recalled an experience with the implementation of a project in a school which got rejected by a part of its teaching staff as the CGT union was critical of the project. Problems of communication may therefore lead to the rejection of the ECoC project by a consequential part of the cultural scene. The case of MP2013 is thus extremely interesting in that case, as it has been criticised for not featuring enough the local rap scene, one of U. Fuchs’ main regrets regarding that event<sup>197</sup>. The bid document had integrated the local rap scene in its the initial planned programme of the event, with its programme *Traffic* dedicated to urban culture<sup>198</sup>, mentioning specifically the name of the rapper Keny Arkana, and the band IAM. Almost ironically these two aforementioned rap artists, have been among the loudest voice criticising the MP2013 event for its lack of representation of local urban culture. Keny Arkana produced a critical song, *Capitale de la rupture*<sup>199</sup>, while Akhenaton, IAM lead rapper, has voiced his negative opinion in national media<sup>200</sup>. U. Fuchs comments on that hostility as resulting from an unfortunate conflict, and regrets failing to restore good relations with this group. Moreover, J. Sulzenko also comments

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<sup>194</sup> Sulženko, Interview with author.

<sup>195</sup> Fuchs, Interview with author.

<sup>196</sup> Fuchs.

<sup>197</sup> Fuchs.

<sup>198</sup> Association Marseille Provence 2013, “Marseille-Provence 2013, European and Mediterranean.”, 48-49.

<sup>199</sup> Keny Arkana, *Keny Arkana - Capitale de La Rupture (Clip Officiel)*, YouTube, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ta2jot9JhU0>.

<sup>200</sup> AFP, “Akhenaton: «Marseille tourne le dos à ses enfants les plus talentueux»,” *Libération*, February 21, 2013, sec. Musique, [https://next.liberation.fr/musique/2013/02/21/akhenaton-marseille-tourne-le-dos-a-ses-enfants-les-plus-talentueux\\_883434](https://next.liberation.fr/musique/2013/02/21/akhenaton-marseille-tourne-le-dos-a-ses-enfants-les-plus-talentueux_883434).

as well that the selection criteria of acceptable projects for the cultural year may lead to some criticism, as the rejection of ideas considered too alien for a cultural year may lead to the disappointment for a part of the population.

An interesting case regarding the way the ECoC team deal with criticism is found in Marseille with the integration of critical voices as part of the cultural year programme. MP2013 integrated both an *In* and *Off* programme. An *Off* cultural event is usually conceived as an unofficial cultural event as it is not implemented by official bodies such as the state or commercial groups<sup>201</sup>. The *Off* programme started initially as a joke between individuals working in the fields of communication and journalism who before the official candidacy of the city to the ECoC programme had registered the website domain marseille2013.com, and the association M2K13. The objective of the project was initially to denounce local policies which in association with the *Euroméditerranée* project were perceived as transforming Marseille as a touristic hub, at the expense of the local population harmed by this process<sup>202</sup>. The *Off* programme evolved to feature events with the city of Marseille and its paradoxes as an area of focus. It relied on 4 axes :

- Merguez capital : Marseille is cosmopolitan, Marseille is a village
- Liar city: Marseille is transforming, Marseille is showing off
- Trash city: Marseille is beautiful, Marseille is ugly
- Kalachnik'Off: Marseille is inegalitarian, Marseille is cohesive

The *Off* programme feature several elements with a certain humour, such as the “International Festival of the Boring Movie” (*Festival international du film chiant*), or included areas that were not featured in the main programme. A good example of this is found in the *Yes we camp* project, which created a camping site accessible for a small fee, which hosted several artistic installations (Annex n°3) set in the northern neighbourhoods of the city, which are among the poorest urban areas of Marseille<sup>203</sup>. The inclusion of that *Off* programme originated from Ulrich’s Fuchs experience in Linz. Linz09 also attracted criticism from the local cultural scene. U. Fuchs commented that not integrating those critical voice to Linz cultural capital has been a

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<sup>201</sup> Elsa Vivant, “Les événements off : de la résistance à la mise en scène de la ville créative,” *Géocarrefour* 82, no. 3 (July 1, 2007): 131–40, <https://doi.org/10.4000/geocarrefour.2188>.

<sup>202</sup> Nicolas Maisetti, “Marseille 2013 Off : l’institutionnalisation d’une critique ?,” *Faire-Savoirs: Sciences de l’Homme et de la Société en Provence-Alpes-Côte d’Azur*, no. 10 (2013): 18.

<sup>203</sup> Giovanangeli, “Marseille, European Capital of Culture 2013 Ins and Offs: A Case for Rethinking the Effects of Large-Scale Cultural Initiatives.”

mistake<sup>204</sup>. During the preparation of the MP2013 project, he advocated for the integration of these critical voices to the programme. He has commented to that aspect that for him, the *In* and the *Off* were “complementary”. However, the creation of that *Off* programme did not mean that every critical voice was satisfied by the MP2013 project. Local inhabitants were still concerned on the effects the project would have on the local population, and some cultural actors have also expressed criticism on the *Off* programme<sup>205</sup>.

One of the most common criticisms regarding the European Capitals of Culture (and more generally the theory of the creative class) is the process of gentrification it inevitably triggers. The term gentrification was first coined in 1964 by Ruth Glass<sup>206</sup> in her work on “rehabilitation of working-class and derelict housing” to fit the middle-class. The term is relevant in this case, as the construction of new flagship infrastructure has the effect to attract a new class of inhabitants with capitals who end up replacing the local population. Such process is criticised heavily by several groups in the city of Marseille, often from anti-globalist movements such as the FRIC group (*Front des réfractaires à l’intoxication à la culture/* Refractory front to the intoxication by culture) which denounces local policies of expulsion of the city towards its own population by posting videos with an aesthetic (They all wear face hoods) reminiscent of extreme-left radical groups<sup>207</sup>. Moreover, several scholars have been critical of the cultural year before, during and after its implementation. Among the critical academic movements, the group called *Pensons le matin* (Let’s think the morning) composed of several scholars specialised in various domains of social sciences, gathered in the premises of *La friche de la Belle de mai* to produce several academics articles and analyses, very often critical of cultural and urban policies led by the city of Marseille.

As admitted by both programme directors, creating an event which does not attract any criticism is an impossible exercise. Both programme managers have acknowledged this fact in their interviews. Due to a wide variety of factors such as a hostile cultural scene which does not find itself in the cultural year, to initial scepticism or a lack of awareness of the programme, it is impossible to obtain exclusively positive feedback from the local population. Both programme manager acknowledged this aspect of the cultural year, J. Sulženko stating that the

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<sup>204</sup> Fuchs, Interview with author.

<sup>205</sup> Maisetti, “Marseille 2013 Off : l’institutionnalisation d’une critique ?”

<sup>206</sup> London University College, Centre for Urban Studies, and Ruth Glass, *London: Aspects of Change* (London: MacGibbon & Kee, 1964).

<sup>207</sup> Alouti Fériel, “Le collectif Le Fric s’attaque à Marseille 2013, Capitale européenne de la culture,” *Les Inrockuptibles*, January 9, 2013.

implementation team “can’t think of satisfying everybody”<sup>208</sup>, and as U. Fuchs stated in his interview on that regard “Culture on the agenda, a cultural project on the agenda creates a debate in a city”<sup>209</sup>. However, one has to note the initiative that MP2013 offered an answer within its programme to answer these critical voices, which produced an interesting approach to this issue.

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<sup>208</sup> Sulženko, Interview with author.

<sup>209</sup> Fuchs, Interview with author.

## **Conclusion**

Both cultural capitals have commented on their events as a success. Both cities have reached a satisfying number of visitors during their cultural years which have been sufficiently covered by media. An imprint have been on the cities they have been implemented in, either physically with projects for sites specifically erected or revitalised for the occasion, or by integrating new elements in the cultural calendar of the city. Both cultural directors have considered the mega-events they took part in designing as successes, a perception confirmed by the ex-post evaluations produced by the European Commission. Moreover, both of them considered the events maintained as part of the heritage of the cultural year to be greatest successes of both these cultural capitals. Despite various failures and some criticisms by the local population, the events are considered to be a short-term success. For the ECoCs to be considered truly successful, it is necessary to study the medium and long-term impact of the event in its city of implementation. Such task would require an further extensive study focused on both the implementation team and the local populations. The utilisation of culture in the cultural capitals to overcome local issues is questionable, since the ECoC implies the creation or enhancement of certain urban phenomena such as gentrification.

The study of Marseille-Provence 2013 and Pilsen 2015 has underlined that both events follow common trends: The programmes for both cities are strongly influenced by the concept of creativity; possess strong key moments throughout the cultural year, follow similar lines to create their programmes such as adopting an emphasis on integration, displays artists with ties to the city or adds outside festivals to its cultural programme. All of these elements can be labelled as “trends” which influence the cultural year. They serve as a sort of guidelines in which the team in charge of the implementation design the events with its partners. These trends correspond both to the necessity to have a strong effect on the city (By example by creating a workplace tied to the concept of the creative class), or serve a political agenda (Integration of minorities, dialogue with other cultures).

The elements which offered the most diversity was the content of the events in the cultural year. Each city has its own history and cultural life which motivates different needs for the capital year. In Marseille, the history of the harbour led to a problematic socio-urban situation and a city with a rich history of migration. In Pilsen, the totalitarian experience led to a perceived close-mindedness from the population, resulting in a fragile democracy. Both



programmes were influenced by their local culture and tried their best to display it while integrating foreign cultural elements. The balance between this aspect is a fundamental element in the success of the cultural year, and each programme director has emphasised on the need, and the difficulty, to maintain this balance. During the implementation phase, both cities have been asked to modify their programme to maintain a balance in the events of the cultural year. Marseille has been asked to reduce the events of “high culture”<sup>210</sup>, whereas Pilsen was required to integrate more international events<sup>211</sup>. For a successful completion, the implementation team must maintain the balance of its content on two axes: “international-local culture” and “High-popular culture”.

It is possible to acknowledge that MP2013 featured several original projects in its programme such as the *Quartiers créatifs* and the *Off* programme. As a result of this, the cultural year in the Phocaeen city managed to reach certain areas considered as difficult to integrate and offered some elements which did not exist in the programme of P2015. However, one should also consider the difference of budget between both events, as MP2013 had almost five times the budget of P2015. Such amount of money permitted the MP2013 association to experiment new elements in its cultural programme which would not have been possible otherwise. Beyond the monetary question, the governance of the event and the human factor have an impact on the final programme which should not be underestimated to fully analyse the content of a cultural year. As such, the analysis of a cultural year requires a holistic approach to understand all the factors which influence the conception of the mega-event.

It appears that based on the two examples studied the strategies to redefine their images through a successful European capital of culture lie in several factors: The construction of flagship projects to modify the façade of the city or attached to a type of economy the city desires to attract. The organisation of a balanced cultural calendar with strong flagship moments is unconditionally necessary for a successful ECoC. The peaks of activities put on public display must attract both locals and outsiders. By their representation in the public space, they benefit from a good mediatic cover which influence the representation of the city. The desired change of perception of the city is both an internal and external process. This fact motivates the balance of cultural events as described above. The city must possess arguments to attract foreigners, such as the organisation of a music festival with international and local artists, yet involve the locals by interacting directly with them, targeting specific groups (Youth, elderly,

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<sup>210</sup> McAteer et al., “Ex-Post Evaluation of the 2013 European Capitals of Culture.”

<sup>211</sup> Fox et al., “Ex-Post Evaluation of 2015 European Capitals of Culture.”

minorities). Beyond the cultural event, this European capital of culture must be accompanied with other policies to enhance the city. Moreover, by their participatory aspect and the inclusion of foreign culture in their programme, they contribute to the process of European integration during a peak of activity.

The success of cultural capitals is based on the attendance and visibility that these cultural events gained during the year. If Marseille benefitted from an already-existing international aura, Pilsen benefitted from the international exposure given by P2015. From that perspective, one may wonder if the context of the Covid-19 pandemic in which the writing of this thesis took place allowed the 2020 cultural capitals, Rijeka and Galway, to reach the aims and objectives both cities set when applying for their events. Massive participation to key events and the attraction of outsiders is one of the conditions for the success of cultural capitals. The lockdown and the implementation of sanitary measures frowning upon or banning mass groupings are having a significant impact of the world of culture, and the ECoC programme is no exception to this fact. As such, certain voices critical of the implementation of the cultural year in Galway have made their criticisms louder because of the pandemic situation<sup>212</sup>. The study of the upcoming European capitals of culture including those of 2020, should prove to be extremely interesting regarding the aspects focused on during this thesis, the (re)dynamization of a city's attractiveness and the stimulation of its local culture in the European context, as actors will have to innovate on the methods to attain their objectives.

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<sup>212</sup> Judy Murphy, "Galway 2020 – the Farce Continues," *Connacht Tribune*, June 12, 2020, <https://connachttribune.ie/galway-2020-the-farce-continues/>.

**Annex:**

***Métamorphose* festival: Example of building erected for the *Ville éphémère* project.**

Screenshot from the presentation video of the festival found on Youtube<sup>213</sup>



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**Annex 2: Giant puppets in Pilsen 2015<sup>214</sup>**



<sup>213</sup> *Métamorphoses, Le Film (Marseille, 2013) - 20'*, 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hs5n8nKeBto>.

<sup>214</sup> Alamy Limited, "Stock Photo - Pilsen, Czech Republic. 28th Aug, 2015. Parade of Giant Puppets of Spanish Theatre Company Carros de Foc Opens the Skupa's Pilsen Festival Organised as Part of the Pilsen," Alamy, accessed July 28, 2020, <https://www.alamy.com/stock-photo-pilsen-czech-republic-28th-aug-2015-parade-of-giant-puppets-of-spanish-86895473.html>.

**Yeswecamp: Screenshots from a video presenting the installation<sup>215</sup>**



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<sup>215</sup> YesWeCamp, *Yes We Camp* (Youtube, 2015), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=58G3dPuzHrA>.

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