

Course of
The Politics of Cultural Heritage in Europe

Policy choices and socio-cultural exclusion in a
European Capital of Culture: the case of
Marseille-Provence 2013

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Introduction

Over the past two decades, the concept of culture has evolved to become a central element in urban policies that seek to enhance the attractiveness and competitiveness of cities. This transformation has occurred in response to the global shift towards a knowledge-based economy, where creativity, innovation, and cultural amenities are increasingly valued as key drivers of economic growth and urban development.

One of the influential figures in shaping this perspective is Richard Florida, whose work on the creative class has been both praised and critiqued in academic and policy circles. According to Florida, the creative class comprises individuals with skills in technology, arts, culture, and design, and they are seen as vital contributors to urban prosperity. This group is believed to be attracted to cities that offer a vibrant cultural scene, diverse and tolerant social environments, and a high-quality lifestyle. As a result, city planners and policymakers have increasingly focused on incorporating cultural elements into their urban strategies. The objective is to transform cities into attractive destinations for the so-called creative talent, tourists, and potential new inhabitants who possess the desired attributes of the creative class. The present vision of a creative city seeks to harness the economic potential of culture and creativity while fostering an environment that nurtures innovation and artistic expression. In the pursuit of creating attractive and competitive cities, cultural policies have taken on new dimensions. They are no longer solely concerned with supporting and promoting the arts and cultural heritage. Instead, they now form part of broader territorial strategies of distinction and positioning within the context of inter-territorial competition (Florida, 2002).

Cities are increasingly viewed as competing entities, vying for economic activity, investment, and human capital. The aforementioned competition has given rise to a "competition of territories," wherein cities seek to distinguish themselves from their rivals. Cultural policies are, therefore, instrumentalized to project a unique image of the city that sets it apart from others. The goal is to attract economic activity and investment by creating an environment that appeals to the creative class and the industries associated with it.

However, while the "creative city" concept has gained prominence and support among urban elites and policymakers, it has also faced criticism. Critics argue that the indicated approach to urban development prioritizes the interests of the middle and upper classes at the expense of the less privileged. The pursuit of a "creative city" often leads to the gentrification of historic neighbourhoods, displacing lower-income residents and eroding the social fabric of communities. Furthermore, the emphasis on attracting the creative class can result in a homogenization of urban cultures, as cities

strive to conform to a standardized model of creativity and innovation. This can lead to the erasure of unique local cultures and traditions, as cities attempt to fit into the global competition for talent and investment (Maisetti, 2014).

The present rush to creative cities characterized by cultural events, is interpretable through the western societies' need of "experience hunger". Accordingly, cultural tourism becomes a means of collecting individual experiences that can be used to create narratives of the self or provide raw materials for distinction (Richards, 2007). Consequently, tourism, particularly cultural tourism, has acquired significance within the context of the experiential society and creative city. It has emerged as a component of the cultural and symbolic economy, assuming a pivotal role in propelling the evolution of the experience economy. The evolution involves the creation of distinct experiential settings and the transformation of diverse tourist services into experiential offerings (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). Nevertheless, the events shaped by this approach, as highlighted by McCarthy (2005), may lead to a lack of cultural integration within the local context, along with limited connections to local notions of identity and lifestyle.

Nevertheless, it is discernible that a marked deficiency persists in the academic literature when it comes to investigating the intricate process underpinning the formulation of policy choices within the milieu of mega-events, particularly concerning the consideration of socio-cultural inclusion.

The present thesis seeks to address the lacuna pertaining to the determinants influencing the limited attention of policymakers in the context of policy choices within a cultural mega-event characterized by a dearth of emphasis on socio-cultural inclusivity, by answering to the following research question:

"Why were policy choices that gave limited attention to socio-cultural inclusion made?"

The investigation focuses on the Marseille-Provence 2013 (MP2013) mega-event, with the primary goal of conducting a thorough analysis of the factors that have influenced policy choices related to socio-cultural inclusion and exclusion during the cultural capital year. This research is particularly relevant in the context of Marseille, where issues of socio-economic instability and common challenges are prevalent throughout the region.

The aforementioned analysis assumes particular relevance since a discernible trend has emerged where economic interests have progressively assumed a central role in shaping cultural events. The phenomenon is not isolated but rather emblematic of a broader paradigm shift witnessed in cultural programs. One program that exemplifies such an evolution is the European Capital of Culture (ECOC), which has undergone a substantial transformation since its inception in Athens. In particular, starting from Glasgow edition in 1990, the pivotal concept of urban regeneration served as a

transformative force. This thematic evolution has attracted substantial engagement and participation from stakeholders within both the real estate and economic sectors. The engagement has manifested in tangible ways, exerting substantive influence over the formulation and execution of policies and strategies associated with the ECOC.

This persistent phenomenon assumes heightened significance when contextualized within the framework of the Marseille Provence edition of 2013, which serves as an illustrative case study through which the interlaced dynamics of urban revitalization and cultural resurgence find expression. The trajectory of the city, mirroring that of Glasgow, signifies a transition from a post-industrial historical continuum to an envisioned future steeped in the pursuit of revitalization. In this regard, the ECOC initiative emerged as an auspicious avenue for Marseille to seek redemption from its prevailing socio-economic condition. Coincidentally, the economic sector discerned in the ECOC a potent instrument not only to recalibrate the city's global image but also to invigorate extant urban regeneration endeavours, prominently exemplified by the Euromediterranée project's inception in the mid-1990s.

The First chapter commences with a comprehensive overview of the European Capital of Culture (ECOC) program, tracing its historical genesis and subsequent evolution leading up to its contemporary form. It elucidates the intricate procedure, objectives, and requisite steps that cities must undertake in their pursuit to secure the prestigious ECOC designation. The chapter further delves into the classification of ECOC as a mega-cultural event, providing a foundational understanding of its unique nature. After the aforementioned contextual groundwork, the chapter proceeds to construct the theoretical framework underpinning the research, followed by a succinct review of pertinent literature pertaining to socio-cultural exclusion.

The second chapter investigates the contextual milieu within which Marseille-Provence 2013 (MP 2013) unfolded. It scrutinizes the various interests at play in the city of Marseille, particularly emphasizing the Euromediterranée urban regeneration project. It delves into the candidacy and selection process for the European Capital of Culture, highlighting the dominant role played by the city's economic elite. It explores how economic interests shaped policy choices and led to limited emphasis on socio-cultural inclusion. Key players in this endeavour included the *Mécènes du Sud* association and the Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Marseille-Provence (CCI MP).

Chapter three is dedicated to dissecting the policy choices made by stakeholders during the MP 2013 initiative. It critically examines the urban interventions in the Vieux Port area, marked by contentious debates concerning their compatibility with the surrounding architectural landscape and the selective measures implemented to discourage public gatherings. Additionally, this chapter explores the MP

2013 labelled project, "*Jardin possibles*," situated in the Quartiers Nord. It highlights the project's limited responsiveness to local citizens' and associations' demands, characterizing it as an ephemeral endeavour lacking enduring impact.

The final, fourth, chapter provides an overarching perspective on the involvement of cultural actors in the ECOC. It reveals that arbitral selection processes and economically driven approaches dominated the modus operandi throughout the cultural events of the ECOC year. In contrast, this chapter spotlights two distinct forms of resistance and opposition to the official ECOC program. The first is institutional in nature, represented by the "Off" initiative, exemplified by the case study of "Yes We camp." This case demonstrates how a project emancipated from economic, political, and real estate interests can foster inclusivity, efficiency, and a truer representation of the city's identity. The chapter concludes by examining two forms of radical protest: the documentary "*Capitale de la ropture*" featuring a chorus of voices expressing disappointment over the commodification of culture and the superficiality of ECOC 2013, and the actions of a series of cultural activists known as "FRIC," who vehemently critique the cultural year for its failure to align with the demands of cultural actors.

In light of the above, the thesis will delve into a multifaceted examination of the influential presence and dominance of the economic elite across various stages of the candidacy phase and subsequent stages related to the Marseille-Provence 2013 (MP2013) mega-event. This analysis will shed light on the arbitral and profit-driven decisions that often took precedence, sometimes at the detriment of local citizens, particularly those facing economic disadvantages in the Quartiers Nord neighbourhoods. Additionally, it will scrutinize the selection criteria for local cultural actors, which, in pursuit of international appeal, occasionally resulted in cultural initiatives that felt disconnected from the rich cultural tapestry of Marseille. The inquiry will also extend to the profound impact of these developments on the city's evolving urban landscape. Notably, even prior to the MP2013 initiative, the Euroméditerranée program had initiated urban rejuvenation efforts. These infrastructural interventions carried out under the auspices of MP2013 were significantly influenced by global trends and frequently culminated in exclusionary choices geared towards tourists, as well as architectural decisions that deviated from the traditional forms and aesthetics of the city.

Chapter I

1. The European Capital of Culture Programme

The European Capital of Culture programme, initiated through the collaboration of Melina Mercouri, the then Minister of Culture in Greece, and Jack Lang, her French counterpart, emerged with the aim of strengthening the bonds among European nations and fostering a collective sense of European identity. Mercouri's fervent advocacy for culture underscored her perception of an inherent disparity in the attention and recognition given to culture in contrast to politics and economics within European societies. This realization spurred her to envision a dedicated project that would actively promote and prioritize the diverse cultural heritage of European member states, seeking to elevate culture to a more prominent position within the European narrative (Roberge, 2017).

The vision behind the European Capital of Culture programme transcended national boundaries, aspiring to create a platform for European nations to celebrate their unique cultural expressions while simultaneously fostering unity and mutual understanding among the peoples of Europe. By emphasizing culture on a pan-European level, Mercouri and Lang aimed to counterbalance the prevailing focus on economic and political matters, promoting a more holistic approach to European integration. They recognized that culture could serve as a potent vehicle for forging common ground and shared values across borders, contributing to a deeper sense of European identity and solidarity. In essence, the program embodied a concerted effort to infuse European societies with a stronger appreciation for their cultural richness and diversity, paving the way for a more interconnected and culturally vibrant Europe.

The historic declaration made by Melina Mercouri in 1983 reverberated throughout Europe, igniting a collective recognition of the intrinsic value of culture and its potential to unify the diverse nations within the continent. In response to this fervent call for cultural appreciation and collaboration, the European City of Culture programme was formally established by the Council of Culture Ministers just two years later. This visionary initiative sought to serve as a platform for European cities to showcase their cultural richness and diversity, creating an opportunity to celebrate and promote their unique artistic expressions, historical heritage, and contemporary creativity (Council of European Union, 1985).

The designation process of European Capitals of Culture involves the evaluation and selection of cities through a systematic procedure that can be divided into a pre-selection and the selection phase.

The preselection phase for the European Capital of Culture begins six years before the event's actual occurrence. In the initial step, each Member State involved (with two countries invited each year to nominate cities) issues a call for applications to cities within their country that are interested in competing for the title. Interested cities then have ten months to submit a general outline of their proposed program for the designated year and then an impartial panel comprising experts in the fields of culture or culture-based urban development, is responsible for reviewing the submitted proposals against a predetermined set of criteria (Payer, 2014). Based on this evaluation, a shortlist of cities is created, and these cities are then requested to submit more comprehensive applications. After the final applications are received, the panel reconvenes to carefully assess and evaluate them and to provide recommendations for the selection of one city from each host country to be officially designated as the European Capital of Culture, even if the formal designation is made by the relevant authority within each Member State. However, during its early years, from its inception until 1996, the programme relied on the Council of Ministers, and the designation of each winning city was determined through intergovernmental agreements.

The decision to designate Athens as the first recipient of this esteemed title was not arbitrary but reflected a conscious acknowledgement of the city's profound historical and cultural contributions to the European narrative. Early iterations of the programme imposed tight timelines on selected cities, compelling them to orchestrate cultural events within a limited period. While this sense of urgency fuelled remarkable displays of creativity and ingenuity, it also presented a challenge in fully harnessing the potential of the initiative. A pivotal transformation occurred during the Glasgow edition in 1990, when participating cities were granted a planning period of 3 to 5 years. This expansion of the preparatory timeframe offered cities an invaluable opportunity to embark on more intricate, ambitious, and urban impactful projects. The extended planning phase enabled meticulous coordination with diverse stakeholders, including cultural institutions, local artists, communities, and governmental entities. As a result, the European City of Culture programme underwent a profound metamorphosis, transcending its initial celebratory nature to become a multifaceted and holistic endeavor. Cities now had the latitude to delve into their cultural heritage, unearthing hidden treasures and weaving a cohesive narrative that emphasized their distinctive cultural identity. This evolution prompted a deeper integration of culture into urban development and regeneration initiatives, resulting in a legacy that surpassed the designated year of cultural celebration.

The expansion and evolution of the European City of Culture programme continued beyond the Glasgow edition in 1990, driven by a groundbreaking resolution passed by the Council of European Union in the same year (Council of European Union, 1990). This resolution marked a transformative

milestone, effectively broadening the initiative's horizons and inclusivity by extending its eligibility beyond the confines of the Member States to include other European countries.

Under the redefined guidelines, cities situated in EU candidate countries, potential candidates, and those within the European Free Trade Association that are party to the Agreement on the European Economic Area were granted the prestigious opportunity to partake in the celebrated designation of European Capital of Culture. To ensure a smooth and cohesive expansion, the European Commission assumed the vital role of publishing the call for applications and meticulously validating the panel's recommendations, aligning the selection procedure with the well-established process utilized for the Member States (EU Commission, website).

The embodiment of this all-encompassing extension manifested in the designation of Novi Sad in Serbia as the first city from a non-member country to be recognized as a European Capital of Culture. Sharing the esteemed title with Esch-sur-Alzette in Luxembourg and Kaunas in Lithuania, this landmark decision eloquently testified to a profound acknowledgment of the cultural richness and significance residing in cities beyond the boundaries of the European Union. Moreover, it served as a resolute testament to the commitment to fostering vibrant collaboration and mutual understanding among diverse European cultures.

Furthermore, it will be not before 1999 that the name of the initiative will be changed into the European Capital of Culture program as the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union reached an agreement to rename the initiative as the "European Capital of Culture" (European Parliament and Council 1999). The rebranding aimed to confer a more distinctive and recognizable appellation that accurately communicated the program's fundamental purpose and its broader significance within the cultural landscape of Europe. By adopting the name "European Capital of Culture," the European Institutions sought to underscore the primary objective of the program, which is to celebrate and promote the vast cultural diversity and richness exhibited by European cities. Additionally, the new nomenclature emphasized the pivotal role of these designated cities as vibrant cultural hubs and dynamic centers of artistic expression, recognizing their potential as catalysts for fostering broader cultural exchanges and collaborations across European borders.

The implementation of the revised regulations in 2005 introduced further refinements to the program. This included the creation of a comprehensive list that designates specific years to one or two countries in alternating turns. These chosen Member States are then entrusted with hosting the event, and at least four years prior to the designated year, the respective national authorities are required to nominate one or more cities within their borders as potential candidates for the European Capital of Culture title. To ensure an impartial evaluation and selection process, a panel of seven independent

cultural experts is assigned the crucial responsibility of reviewing and assessing the bids submitted by the nominated cities. Based on their expert evaluations, the panel offers recommendations to the Council, ultimately determining which countries will be designated as European Capitals of Culture for the respective year. Since the formal initiation of the selection process in 2008, the program has consistently designated two European towns, situated in two separate countries, as European Capitals of Culture each year (with a few exceptions, such as 2010, 2022, and 2023, when three cities were honoured).

In 2006, a significant decision was made (European Parliament and Council 2006). This decision encompassed three significant updates, designed to strengthen the program's efficacy and facilitate a more rigorous evaluation process, through the introduction of three significant updates.

The first notable update was the establishment of a dedicated monitoring panel, entrusted with the crucial task of overseeing and assessing the progress of the cities designated as European Capitals of Culture. This monitoring panel operates as a guidance body, offering valuable advice and support to ensure that the designated cities remain steadfast in their pursuit of the program's objectives and operational goals. By providing expert guidance, the monitoring panel endeavors to enhance the quality and impact of the cultural initiatives undertaken by the participating cities, fostering a more profound and lasting legacy that extends beyond the year of designation. Moreover, the introduction of a robust monitoring mechanism reflects the program's dedication to upholding the highest standards of cultural excellence and effectiveness. Through close monitoring and regular evaluations, the program aims to identify areas of strength and areas that may require further attention, thereby facilitating continual refinement and improvement of the program's implementation and impact.

The second crucial update involved the introduction of the Melina Mercouri Prize, a prestigious accolade awarded to cities that successfully met the evaluation criteria set forth by the monitoring panel. Named after Melina Mercouri, the former Greek Minister of Culture and a staunch advocate for cultural initiatives, the prize stands as a testament to her enduring legacy and commitment to promoting and prioritizing culture within Europe. The Melina Mercouri Prize serves as a recognition of excellence in cultural programming and implementation, celebrating cities that have demonstrated exceptional creativity, innovation, and cultural engagement.

Lastly, the decision imposed an obligation on the European Commission to conduct an ex-post evaluation of the European Capital of Culture program. This comprehensive evaluation is conducted to assess the overall success and impact of the projects undertaken by the designated cities, meticulously measuring their achievements against the predefined goals and objectives of the program. The evaluation process serves as a valuable source of insights and feedback, offering a

wealth of information to further improve the program's effectiveness and enhance its long-term impact.

Today, the programme holds a significant purpose of nurturing the diversity of cities and celebrating the cultural richness of local inhabitants. Numerous studies conducted by Balsas (2004), Richards & Wilson (2004), Herrero et al. (2006), and Shukla et al. (2006) have explored the significance of the European Capital of Culture event and its potential positive impacts. These studies reveal that achieving successful preparation and realizing the desired positive outcomes can be challenging due to the multitude of factors involved. Some of these factors include the quality of program management, support from corporate communities, political and local authorities, and the scale and location of the event. Existing research highlights the importance of a well-structured and systematic approach to the selection process to ensure the event's success (Balsas, 2004; Richards & Wilson, 2004; Herrero et al., 2006; Shukla et al., 2006).

The ECOC program has evolved into one of the most enduring and renowned initiatives undertaken by the EU, and it has rightfully earned its place as a mega-event, as described in literature by Müller (Müller, 2015). The European Capital of Culture program encompasses a wide range of activities that go beyond the mere promotion of cultural heritage. It has transformed into a multifaceted platform that combines business elements, tourist attractions, and entertainment, resulting in a harmonious blend of cultural, economic, and social endeavours. These collective efforts have a profound impact on the host community, that also determine an “important social impact on the host community as they contribute to formation of a strong sense of belonging and a sense of place” (Rizzello, 2014). Moreover, the ECOC program has proven to be a catalyst for urban development, often leading to the revitalization and regeneration of the designated city, with infrastructure improvements, restoration of historical sites, and the creation of cultural venues contribute to the overall enhancement of the urban environment.

2. Theoretical framework

In the present research work, the rational choice approach, with a specific focus on the influence of interests on policy decisions, has emerged as the most apt and advantageous one. Indeed, within the intricate context of Marseille-Provence 2013, various interest groups have played a pivotal role in shaping each phase of the project, commencing from its candidature phase and extending through to its implementation. Nevertheless, it has become apparent that certain interests have exerted a notably stronger influence, a phenomenon that will be expounded upon at length throughout the thesis. These repercussions of heightened interest dominance manifest in various dimensions, ranging from the

limited participation of local cultural actors to the exacerbation of social exclusion. To enhance the comprehension of these intricate dynamics at play, the forthcoming sections will endeavour to provide a comprehensive exposition of these overarching concepts.

Rational Choice Theory (RCT) serves as a foundational framework within social sciences, offering a lens through which the intricacies of individual decision-making can be analysed and comprehended. At the heart of RCT lies the foundational presumption that individuals are rational actors who are inherently driven by the pursuit of optimizing their personal well-being or satisfaction. This concept, often encapsulated under the term "utility," is crucial to the understanding of RCT. It is imperative to underscore that the notion of utility is inherently subjective, with its definition and interpretation varying significantly among individuals. According to proponents of rational choice theory, interests constitute the ultimate foundation upon which individuals base their decisions. In essence, interests represent the preferences that rational actors seek to either maximize or optimize in their decision-making processes. In this regard, it becomes untenable to disentangle preferences from actions, as individuals invariably act in accordance with their intrinsic preferences (Dodds, 2012).

One of the fundamental tenets of RCT is the principle of utility maximization. When individuals are confronted with choices, they systematically engage in a cognitive process meticulously designed to maximize their utility. This cognitive endeavour entails a comprehensive evaluation of the potential benefits and costs associated with each available option. The scope of these considerations encompasses both tangible dimensions, such as financial or temporal implications, as well as intangible facets, including the anticipated impact on emotional well-being. It is through this deliberative process that individuals endeavour to make choices that optimize their utility.

Nevertheless, a prominent facet of RCT is the assertion that individuals are frequently propelled by self-interest. It postulates that actors are primarily motivated by their unrelenting pursuit of personal well-being and are predisposed to select choices that align with their best interests. It is imperative to underscore that within the context of RCT, the concept of self-interest does not inherently connote selfishness; rather, it underscores the notion that individuals act in ways they perceive will most effectively enhance their personal welfare.

Within the framework of RCT, individuals manifest an intricate interplay of unique preferences and constraints that substantially influence their decision-making processes. Preferences are fundamentally shaped by individual values, aspirations, and lived experiences. Consequently, these preferences contribute to the divergence in individuals' utility functions, as each person's interpretation of utility hinges on their distinct set of preferences. Simultaneously, constraints, whether they emanate from finite resources or external factors, wield significant influence over the

contours of decision-making, thereby reinforcing the dynamic interaction between preferences and the external environment.

Within the framework of the rational choice paradigm, a salient strand of inquiry pertains to the meticulous examination of how interest groups, harbouring specific vested interests, exert their influence over the policy choices process. This analytical orientation draws sustenance from the doctrine of pluralism. While certain scholarly quarters construe this theory through a normative lens, advocating for heightened governmental responsiveness to interest group entreaties, others, including notable scholars such as Dahl (1961) and Polsby (1960), espouse a dual characterization of pluralism. They perceive it as a heuristic device both for depicting the operational dynamics of policy-making systems and for explicating the underlying mechanisms guiding their function.

Pluralists, akin to adherents of cleavage theory, posit that interest groups function as conduits for the articulation of societal or ideological schisms. Nevertheless, the pivotal divergence lies in the pluralists' assertion that no singular schism achieves primacy within the precincts of political and policy formulation. Instead, a kaleidoscope of interest groups perpetually ebbs and flows within the intricate tapestry of the policy-making continuum, with the oscillations in their influence marking the passage of temporal epochs. In consonance with pluralist precepts, the state assumes the mantle of an impartial adjudicator, mediating among the variegated interest groups, impervious to the dominance of any singular faction.

The subsequent iteration of this theoretical framework, termed neo-pluralism, upholds the core tenet of situating the state as the crucible for inter-group competition. Nevertheless, neo-pluralism posits that certain interest groups wield major power relative to their counterparts. For instance, Charles Lindblom (1977) postulates that organized business conglomerates occupy a relatively preeminent echelon vis-à-vis groups advocating for labour or consumer interests. Despite the labyrinthine intricacies enveloping the attributes and justifications that underpin this bias, scholarly consensus converges on the enduring favouritism extended toward affluent and business interests in the domain of representation (Lowery et al., 2015).

Contemporary analytical endeavours, exemplified by the scholarship of Dür et al., aspire to cast light upon the contextual variables that dictate the likelihood of business entities securing propitious policy outcomes. Alternative methodological trajectories scrutinize interest groups through the prism of the interests they espouse and the depth of their integration into the administrative machinery. As alluded to earlier, a myriad of academic undertakings strives to stratify interest groups based on their functional proclivities. To illustrate, Finer (1958) delineates a bifurcation between groups championing the "narrow" material interests of their constituents and those espousing specific

ideologies, a taxonomy also resonant in Truman's (1951) scholarship. In contrast, Hassenteufel introduces a more nuanced tripartite classification schema, demarcating "categorical" groups that advocate the circumscribed material interests of the collective; "groups of conviction," which advocate for "inclusive interests" that transcend their own membership; and "territorial groups," representing regional or local concerns (Hassenteufel 2008: 174).

Further recurrent demarcations within the realm of interest group typology encompass the evaluation of whether these groups champion singular or plural interests, the sectors they represent (ranging from capital through business associations to labour through trade unions and specific occupations via professional associations), and the modalities through which they advocate for their constituencies—be it via direct, personalized membership or indirectly, by means of intermediary organizations such as peak associations. Finally, another frequently traversed terrain pertains to the taxonomy of interest groups into "insider" or "outsider" entities. The "insider" categorization subsumes those groups intricately involved in consultation and negotiation with governmental agencies, often preceding the crystallization of the government's official stance. In contradistinction, "outsider" groups either find themselves relegated to the margins of the consultation process or participate therein in a cursory and peripheral capacity. The ascription of "insider" or "outsider" status derives from a multifarious interplay of factors, including considerations of access, influence, strategic orientations, and the ascribed status conferred upon them by political actors and the bureaucratic machinery (Maloney et al., 1994; Grant, 1989).

2.1 Mega-events a definition

Cultural events, despite sharing certain commonalities, exhibit significant variations in scale and impact on their surrounding environments. Therefore, a nuanced analysis is required, recognizing that not all events can be studied as homogenous entities. In this context, Müller's classification, as outlined in his work "What makes an event a mega-event? Definitions and sizes," provides valuable insights. Müller introduces the concept of a mega-event, which has garnered considerable attention in contemporary scholarship, characterized by four fundamental attributes (Müller 2015):

1. **Ambulatory Occasions:** Mega-events are temporary gatherings with a predetermined duration, distinguishing them from ongoing cultural activities or permanent institutions.
2. **Large Number of Visitors:** These events attract a substantial influx of attendees, transcending typical audience sizes for regular cultural happenings.

3. Large Mediated Reach: Mega-events gain extensive media coverage, capturing widespread attention through various communication channels, thereby reaching a broad global audience.
4. Large Costs and Impacts: These events entail significant financial investments, necessitating substantial financial resources. Moreover, they have considerable effects on the built environment and local population, leaving enduring imprints on the social, cultural, and economic fabric of the host location.

The phenomenon of mega-events has been a focal point of extensive scholarly investigation due to their profound and lasting repercussions on the communities that host them (Gursoy et al., 2017; Zhou & Ap, 2009). These mega-events, characterized by their infrequent occurrence and significant global magnitude, occupy a prominent position on the international stage (Magno & Dossena, 2020). Their significance is gauged through multiple dimensions, including their expansive scale, substantial attendance figures, widespread public interest, substantial financial investments, and extensive media coverage. As a result, they engender a cascading impact on the host community, fostering infrastructural enhancements, stimulating economic growth, and rejuvenating urban landscapes (Lorde et al., 2011). Prominent exemplars of such mega-events encompass the Olympic Games, FIFA Soccer World Cups, and World Expos, each exerting a profound influence on a diverse array of stakeholders and serving as a pivotal catalyst for transformative processes (O'Brien, 2006; Tournois, 2018).

These transformative effects are not confined solely to the temporal span of the events themselves, extending to encompass various stages of the mega-event lifecycle, including the preliminary phases of bidding and strategic planning, the active execution of the event, and persisting well into the post-event continuum (Gibson et al., 2014; Minnaert, 2012). It is worth noting that the sphere of mega-events is not exclusively confined to the realm of sports, although prevailing scholarly discourse has predominantly centred around the examination of sporting mega-events.

The manifold benefits and advancements bestowed upon host localities by mega-events have garnered significant attention within existing literature. However, it is pertinent to highlight that scholarly inquiry has predominantly gravitated towards dissecting the economic ramifications of these events, leaving a notable void in comprehensive scrutiny and systematic evaluation of their socio-cultural impacts and corresponding methodological frameworks.

3. Socio-cultural exclusion

In theoretical constructs, individuals are endowed with certain entitlements that are designed to preempt the occurrence of such instances of societal disruptions. Human rights, proffer an egalitarian

prerogative for the articulation of one's perspectives, equitable treatment within the legal framework, and active participation in communal dialogues pertaining to the socio-political and cultural fabric of the community in which one resides. Concurrently, social rights, encompassing critical domains such as healthcare and education, are enshrined with the intent to ensure that each member of society is afforded an equitable opportunity to access foundational services and opportunities available to the broader populace. However, when the protective mantle of these rights is compromised or, more pointedly, when governmental authorities consciously engage in curbing these rights, the resultant societal blackouts come to the fore.

While an all-encompassing and universally endorsed demarcation or benchmark for the concept of social exclusion remains elusive, a unifying strand that interlaces the diverse explications proffered by scholars, governmental bodies, non-governmental organizations, and other relevant stakeholders resides in the fundamental concept of curtailed engagement within the fabric of society. The United Nations characterizes social exclusion as a state wherein individuals encounter obstacles that impede their full participation in economic, social, political, and cultural spheres, a condition both emanating from and perpetuating such an environment.

Additional formulations of the social exclusion is articulated by Levitas (2007) and her contemporaries as an intricate and multifaceted phenomenon, encompassing the absence or negation of essential resources, entitlements, commodities, and services. It further encompasses the incapacity to engage in conventional interpersonal dynamics and activities that a majority of society enjoys, spanning the realms of economic, social, cultural, and political domains. This multi-layered process impacts not only the individual's quality of life but also resonates across the societal landscape, influencing equity and social cohesion at large.

Social exclusion encompasses a diverse spectrum of manifestations that operate on multiple planes within societal contexts. Often, an intricate nexus exists, linking instances of social exclusion across various dimensions of human existence. This interrelatedness accentuates the challenges of extricating oneself from exclusionary dynamics, a conundrum that frequently perpetuates across generational boundaries, effectively ensnaring specific demographic segments in a cycle of persistent marginalization.

The emergence of social exclusion as a salient concept in the latter decades of the twentieth century invites an exploration into its contextual underpinnings and relevance. This inquiry has been prompted by the prevalence of discussions surrounding the notion of "new poverty" and the identification of an "underclass" seemingly impervious to the advantages arising from economic

growth. This discourse, which has garnered notable attention since the 1980s, as underscored by Silver (1993), beckons an examination of the factors catalysing this conceptual evolution.

The landscape of the past few decades has been marked by significant transformations encompassing economic restructuring, intensified patterns of migration, and the heightened mobility of global capital. These seismic shifts have yielded multifaceted ramifications, culminating in the perturbation of conventional trajectories characterizing collective life. Prevailing career progression pathways, once perceived as assured avenues to prosperity, have been dismantled, with certain segments of the workforce experiencing the disintegration of established rungs on the occupational ladder. Simultaneously, specific labour sectors and geographic localities have encountered the unenviable designation of being deemed economically expendable, a consequence of the prevailing forces of global capital mobility.

Within the broader context of global integration, the process of inclusion has been accompanied by instances of exclusion, leading to a nuanced terrain of social dynamics. Regions grappling with the challenge of adapting to the rapid vicissitudes of social transformation often find themselves bereft of the requisite networks and social relationships that underpin active engagement within expanded market horizons. The limitations imposed by this predicament impede their capacity to participate meaningfully in the economic sphere, thereby exacerbating the phenomenon of social exclusion.

The concepts of poverty and social exclusion, although often discussed as pressing societal concerns, diverge in their foundational premises. Social exclusion is frequently juxtaposed with the idea of an inclusive society characterized by robust social cohesion, while poverty is commonly framed in contrast to the aspiration for a more equitable societal structure. It is worth noting, however, that the Joseph Rowntree Foundation advances the notion of an intricate interplay between poverty and social exclusion, emphasizing their interdependence. Specifically, individuals grappling with poverty face impediments in effectively participating in societal activities due to constrained access to resources. In a reciprocal manner, a lack of active societal engagement exacerbates the condition of poverty, operating as a dual-faceted mechanism—encompassing direct ramifications such as exclusion from remunerative labour, alongside indirect consequences like isolation from social networks that facilitate personal advancement (Silver, 2007).

One early significant contribution can be attributed to René Lenoir, a French sociologist active in the 1970s. Lenoir conducted empirical investigations into the experiences of marginalized and excluded populations within French society, particularly focusing on urban contexts. Employing the term "*exclusion sociale*" (social exclusion), Lenoir sought to elucidate the processes through which certain

individuals and groups were systematically denied full participation in society, encompassing both economic and social dimensions.

In the 1990s, the concept of social exclusion gained further prominence due to the work of scholars such as Ruth Levitas. Levitas expanded the understanding of social exclusion by emphasizing its multidimensional nature that extends beyond mere economic deprivation. Her analysis drew attention to the structural and systemic factors contributing to exclusion, including restricted access to resources, discriminatory practices, and imbalances of power.

It is precisely during the 1990s that the academic debate surrounding social exclusion gained popularity. Silver (1994) proposed a comprehensive perspective that highlights the interplay of economic, political, and social factors in excluding individuals from full participation in society. According to this view, social exclusion is not merely a lack of resources or opportunities but a broader process that encompasses the denial of rights, limited access to social networks, and diminished agency. Levitas (1998) expanded on this concept by emphasizing the dynamic nature of social exclusion. She viewed social exclusion as a process of closure, whereby individuals and groups are systematically denied access to resources, opportunities, and social networks. This perspective recognizes the fluidity and intersectionality of social exclusion, acknowledging that individuals can move in and out of exclusionary states throughout their lives.

Theoretical frameworks have played a crucial role in understanding and addressing social exclusion. Sen's capability approach (1999) provides a lens through which to examine social exclusion by focusing on individuals' freedom to achieve valuable functioning and capabilities. It emphasizes the importance of enhancing individuals' capabilities to overcome social exclusion, enabling them to lead lives they have reason to value. Bourdieu's concept of social capital (1986) offers another theoretical perspective by highlighting the value of social networks, relationships, and collective resources in facilitating social inclusion and mobility. Social capital serves as a valuable resource that individuals can draw upon to access opportunities, navigate social structures, and secure their position within society.

A range of factors contributes to the complex phenomenon of social exclusion, and comprehending these factors is imperative for formulating effective intervention strategies. Among the prominent drivers of social exclusion, poverty and inequality consistently emerge as critical determinants. Pioneering research conducted by Townsend in 1979 highlighted the multidimensional nature of poverty, elucidating its profound implications on individuals' social participation and overall well-being. Subsequently, Atkinson's work in 1998 further underscored the interconnectedness of poverty, income inequality, and social exclusion, elucidating how economic disadvantage curtails access to

vital resources such as education, healthcare, and employment opportunities, perpetuating cycles of marginalization.

Discrimination and prejudice also play a pivotal role in perpetuating social exclusion, acting as formidable barriers to equitable participation in society. Pager and Shepherd's exploration of racial discrimination in 2008 offered valuable insights into its detrimental impact across various domains, including employment, housing, credit, and consumer markets. Their findings revealed how discriminatory practices impede social inclusion and perpetuate the marginalization of specific social groups. Additionally, Pager's seminal work in 2003 shed light on the stigmatization associated with criminal records, unveiling how such records become enduring labels that hinder employment prospects, reinforcing social exclusion for those affected.

In tandem with individual-level determinants, spatial considerations exert significant influence on social exclusion, as emphasized by Massey's research in 1994. The spatial concentration of poverty, residential segregation, and inadequate transportation infrastructure pose physical and social barriers that impede access to essential services, employment opportunities, and social networks for marginalized communities.

Chapter II

1. Marseille a post-colonial and post-industrial city

The economic crisis, and the consequent drop of the industrial production occurred between the 1970s and the 1980s, radically changed the social, economic, and urban environments of the cities, that until those decades, used to base their strength on that productive sector. Marseille is one of them.

Marseille's historical and cultural significance is deeply intertwined with its maritime identity and strategic geographic location. As the second largest and one of the oldest cities in France, Marseille has played a crucial role in shaping the course of European history. Situated on the southern coast of France, its position at the heart of the Mediterranean Sea has bestowed upon it the status of one of the region's most important port cities. Founded around 600 BC by the ancient Greeks, the city was named "*Massalia*," derived from the Greek term "*massaliai*," which translates to "dwellers beyond the harbor.". Throughout its existence, the city's maritime heritage has been a defining aspect of its identity, influencing various facets of its culture, economy, and way of life. Over the course of centuries, Marseille's significance as a port city has only grown, transforming it into a vital trading hub that connected Europe with the Mediterranean and beyond. Its bustling port became a hub of commerce, attracting merchants, sailors, and travelers from diverse backgrounds. This cosmopolitan atmosphere fostered a rich tapestry of cultural diversity that continues to thrive in the city today.

In academic parlance, Marseille has been referred to as an "*enclave mer/mer*," a term coined by the esteemed French historian Maurice Agulhon (Viard, 2014). This conceptual framework elucidates Marseille's unique position as an enclave closely linked to the sea, both in terms of its geographical setting and its cultural and economic identity. The maritime character of the city has not only influenced its economic development but also permeated its customs, traditions, and way of life, shaping a distinct cultural milieu.

As a city of encounters, Marseille has long served as a crossroads of cultures and civilizations. Its historical role as a gateway to the colonies earned it the evocative moniker of "*la porte de l'orient*" or "the gateway to the East." This prestigious appellation underscores its pivotal function in connecting Europe with the exotic and enigmatic realms of the East. Through its port, Marseille facilitated trade, cultural exchange, and artistic inspiration, fostering a dynamic interplay of ideas and influences that have enriched its cultural landscape.

However, during the 1960s, similar to other ports in France and Europe, it underwent changes in its port system. This was triggered, among other motivations, by the establishment of new port

infrastructure and an industrial zone in Fos-sur-Mer. As a consequence, while the eastern basins of the Marseille port experienced a decline in their level of activity, emerging areas such as the Etang de Berre attracted the attention of politicians, businesses, and individuals seeking proximity to new employment opportunities. The situation worsened in the 1980s with the crisis of the Fordist model which contributed to further deterioration of the economic and social fabric affecting not only the central neighbourhoods but also the peripheral areas near the port and industrial zones. In subsequent years, the industrial and port structures that had been neglected experienced a decline in both their symbolic and monetary worth. This coincided with the concentration of socially disadvantaged individuals, particularly immigrants, in these impoverished neighborhoods where long-standing problems such as unemployment, insecurity, and unsanitary living conditions became deeply entrenched (Bertoncello et al., 2000).

This scenario, contributed to increase the already present negative image of the city generated by the historical presence of banditry in Marseille, stemming from its strategic geographical position as a crossroad of cultures, goods, and people in the Mediterranean. Throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries, Marseille smuggling, theft, and other forms of organized crime were prevalent, particularly in the bustling port area, where the transient nature of maritime commerce facilitated clandestine operations. One emblematic figure associated with Marseille's history of banditry was François Marius Granier, more commonly known as "Pierrot le Fou." Granier, a notorious bandit and gang leader during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, attained notoriety for his audacious and violent crimes. His daring escapes from incarceration and exploits within the criminal underworld captured the public's imagination, perpetuating his legendary status within the city's criminal folklore. In more contemporary times, banditry in Marseille has become intricately linked with drug trafficking and organized crime. The city's strategic location and well-established criminal networks have made it a significant conduit for drug smuggling into Europe. The territorial disputes among rival gangs vying for control over these illicit activities have resulted in an escalation of gun violence and criminality, particularly in certain neighbourhoods (Mucchielli, 2014).

Over time, this narrative of Marseille as a dangerous city has been reinforced by mechanisms of socio-economic exclusion and the pervasive inequalities that exist within its boundaries, that led some scholars to identify Marseille as a "French Banlieue" (Lanaspeze, 2006). The city, like many other urban centers, contends with entrenched issues of poverty, unemployment, and social marginalization, particularly evident in certain neighborhoods on the city's peripheries. These socio-economic challenges have created a complex web of interconnected problems, contributing to higher crime rates and exacerbating existing negative stereotypes about the city and its inhabitants. The

perpetuation of the negative narrative has also been influenced by political discourse surrounding Marseille's social context. Political actors have often exploited the city's challenges for their gain, utilizing simplistic portrayals of Marseille's issues without providing substantive and sustainable solutions (Magnier, 2021).

The scholarly work conducted by Thomas Bresson and André Donzel in the early XXI century provides an insightful analysis of the social dynamics and challenges within Marseille. Their research highlights the city's marked social disparities in comparison to other major urban centers in France. Bresson and Donzel underscore that residents in Marseille face significant discrepancies concerning income, employment opportunities, and residential integration, indicating the presence of substantial socio-economic inequalities within the urban landscape (Bresson and Donzel, 2007).

This theory is further corroborated by Louis Maurin, the director of the *l'Observatoire des inégalités*, an independent organization established in 2003 to monitor inequalities in France. In an interview with France3, Maurin, stated, *"Il s'agit de quartiers statistiques établis par l'INSEE. Il n'y a pas de grandes villes de France autre que Marseille où il y ait une telle concentration de pauvreté"* (Poustis, 2019).

2. Urban regeneration processes in Marseille before 2013: the Euroméditerranée

The European Capital of Culture programme has emerged as a strategic instrument for city rebranding or repositioning, particularly in the context of post-industrial cities seeking to transcend their historical industrial identities (Ferrari & Adamo, 2006; Richards & Palmer, 2010). By introducing a counterbalancing cultural narrative, these cities endeavour to project an altered global image and reconfigure their international perception (Richards, 2000; Richards & Palmer, 2010).

However, the enduring ramifications of this strategy and its eventual results are characterized by complexity. It is evident that in various cases, the absence of sustained follow-up initiatives, encompassing strategic marketing endeavours and substantial investments, constitutes a formidable barrier to the realization of substantial, medium- to long-term changes in the local place image, even following the execution of a meticulously orchestrated event (Ferrari & Adamo, 2006). The perpetuation of an evolved city image beyond the immediate aftermath of a mega-event necessitates the development of a comprehensive and protracted strategy. This is underscored by the potential for the initial "halo effect" associated with a successful event to rapidly wane over a relatively abbreviated temporal trajectory (Palmer-Rae, 2004).

Within the realm of post-industrial cities that have secured the prestigious mantle of the European Capital of Culture, a trajectory that was pioneered by Glasgow, urban regeneration has emerged as a predominant operative paradigm. Glasgow harnessed the ECOC designation as a catalytic impetus to expedite a multifaceted urban revitalization process and to imbue the city with a renewed global image. This endeavor was accompanied by a comprehensive cultural program, underpinned by an unprecedented infusion of financial support from local authorities and private stakeholders (Garcia, 2004, 2005). Regeneration, within this analytical context, assumes the role of an overarching transformational process that seeks to holistically enhance diverse dimensions of local well-being, spanning the economic, social, and environmental realms (Evans & Shaw, 2004). Of note, mega-events such as the ECOC are adept at harmonizing tourism strategies with urban planning, thereby fostering a resurgence in community confidence and local pride (Garcia, 2004). Richards and Palmer (2010) posits that "events provide an incentive for physical regeneration of areas of the city and regeneration itself in turn provides an inspiration for events."

Within this intricate dialectic between culture and the process of regeneration, a tripartite categorization is discernible, encompassing (Evans, 2005):

1. culture and regeneration
2. culture-led regeneration
3. cultural regeneration

For many post-industrial urban contexts such as Liverpool, Rotterdam, and Porto, the ECOC is emblematic of the culture-led regeneration paradigm. Herein, cultural activity serves as a dynamic catalyst and fulcrum propelling the entire regeneration endeavour. This cultural catalyst often enjoys conspicuous public prominence and is heralded as an emblematic harbinger of urban rejuvenation. Notably, this approach harbours potential risks, particularly the insufficiency of interlinking culture with mainstream urban design, planning, and broader economic developmental agendas, resulting in an under integration of cultural elements (Evans, 2011).

While the ECOC holds demonstrable potential as an impetus for urban regeneration, it is important to acknowledge that the ensuing regenerative dynamics can engender conflicts and lead to substantial fiscal liabilities for host communities, along with the potential displacement of local residents (Quinn, 2009).

The case of Marseille offers a distinctive illustration in this discourse. Urban regeneration, although markedly catalysed and later shaped by the ECOC, was initiated prior to the city's successful bid for the event. In this instance, the impetus for the transformation was rooted more profoundly in the

economic and financial considerations of a select economic stratum within Marseille's sociopolitical fabric.

The genesis of Marseille's urban strategy, even though undergone especially in the last thirty years, can be tracked back to the *Loi Malraux* in 1962 which paved the way for a gradual restoration program in real estate. The act was part of a comprehensive strategy for planned and regulated urban development aimed at preserving cityscapes in the face of the great architectural changes of the '60s.

A role, the one of the real estates, that will be key in the development of the most ambitious and large scale, as well as controversial, urban renovation strategy, the Euroméditerranée project, initiated in 1995.

Initially, it aimed to establish a Euro-Mediterranean tertiary centre and materialized in a 313-hectare area encompassing the neighbourhoods of Arenc, Belle de Mai, Rue de la République, Saint Charles, and La Joliette, situated on the outskirts near the port. These neighbourhoods hold a rich historical and cultural heritage, representing Marseille's prosperous economic and cultural peak. They feature a diverse range of architectural assets, including industrial and port warehouses, residential buildings, and 19th-century structures influenced by Haussmannian-style architecture (Bertoncello, 2003). This heterogeneous space accommodated various commercial activities, from local and wholesale businesses to retail establishments, and it welcomed low-income residents primarily consisting of a significant number of immigrants. However, the area's neglect led property values to plumb, attracting investors who recognized the substantial long-term real estate potential, and which seized the opportunity to capitalize on the significant architectural and economic value of the region, laying the bases for gentrification.

Indeed, the city centre of Marseille, also in the face of the abovementioned Euroméditerranée but not exclusively, has been deeply involved by displacements of poor inhabitants since the beginning of the 90s, in particular with the *Périmètres de Restauration Immobilière* (PRI). This regulatory tool imposes an obligation upon property owners to renovate their immovable heritage under the potential threat of expropriation. The PRI framework is primarily implemented within the realms of architectural, urban, and landscape preservation, as exemplified by the Zone of Protection for Architectural, Urban, and Landscape Heritage (ZPPAUP) established by the city of Marseille in 1997 encompassing the Belsunce and Panier neighborhoods, contiguous to the present *Etablissement Public d'Aménagement Euroméditerranée* (EPA-EM) perimeter. Subsequently, an additional zone was decreed in 1999, encompassing a significant area including the Chapitre, Noailles, Canebière, and Opéra districts. Another ZPPAUP encompasses the sectors along the rue de la République, spanning from Le Panier to Belsunce.

In addition to the PRI, the city center of Marseille experiences the implementation of targeted housing improvement programs, known as *Opération Programmée d'Amélioration de l'Habitat* (OPAH). In contrast to the coercive nature of PRI, OPAH operates as an incentivizing and punctual instrument, formalized through conventions with the National Housing Agency (ANAH) for a duration of four years, offering subsidies for renovation endeavors. Within the context of the Euroméditerranée project, two distinct OPAH initiatives were undertaken: the "République" OPAH conducted from 2002 to 2006, and the urban renewal OPAH spanning 2008 to 2012. The latter was executed in collaboration with the ANRU (National Urban Renewal Agency) "Centre-Nord" urban renewal program, which constitutes one of the 14 urban renewal projects within the municipality of Marseille. These efforts encompass four priority sectors within the city center: the Bon Pasteur block and the Hoche sector, situated within the EPA-EM perimeter, as well as the Panier and Belsunce neighborhoods. Furthermore, an ongoing urban renewal OPAH, overseen by the mixed development company SOLEAM, is presently underway in the remaining sections of Marseille's core area.

This historical overview of Marseille's city center reclamation through urban planning serves to illustrate the relative persistence of the urban project. It underscores that the seemingly exceptional circumstances associated with resident displacements are, in fact, embedded in a longer-term trajectory.

This reasoning is supported also by several political declarations of local representatives. In 2003, Claude Valette, then the Deputy Mayor responsible for urban planning in Marseille, expressed the view that the city needed to attract wealth creators and suggested that half of its residents should be displaced to make way for a different vision for the city center (Copola, 2018). This sentiment was echoed by Danièle Servant, the Deputy Mayor in charge of housing, who supported the idea of not rehousing the affected families on-site during the rehabilitation of Rue de la République, stating that the developer, Marseille République, seemed to be implementing the desired policy (Ruffin, 2007). The intentionality of these displacements is particularly relevant when considering the project's financial structure, the settlement patterns of the actors involved, the housing program, and the mechanisms employed to assist the displaced individuals. These factors, or their absence, significantly influence the residential trajectories of those affected. In terms of relocation, two distinct approaches were observed within the development operation. The first phase, focusing on the rehabilitation of Rue de la République, lacked adequate support measures for the displaced individuals, resulting in various controversies and giving rise to a protest movement that significantly impacted Marseille's social fabric. From 2010 onwards, the EPA-EM adopted a different strategy,

directly acquiring the buildings designated for rehabilitation and coordinating the relocation process with other urban renewal projects.

In this perspective, the designation of Marseille as the European Capital of Culture in 2013 marked a significant milestone in the city's cultural and urban development, representing a unique opportunity to revitalize and transform the cultural and urban landscape of the city, while also addressing the pressing social challenges faced by its residents. The chance to create a growth trajectory that would potentially foster a more inclusive and socially diverse urban environment, aiming to leverage this opportunity to shape its urban landscape and cultural sector in a way that reflected the authentic social heterogeneity of its population.

3. The predominant role of the economic elite in the Marseille-Provence 2013 candidacy and selection process

The first characteristic to mention, when it comes to the city's candidacy, is that it has been put forwards by the economic world of *la ville phocéenne*. This premise, that might seem useful only to give a context, it is instead absolutely key in the whole development of the thesis, and especially in order to answer to the research question and understand why such poor attention towards socio-cultural inclusion was put in policy choices.

As mentioned above, the city in the years before the candidacy- despite some efforts but also some inactivism- laid in a difficult social-economic context. Exactly for that, the local actors, mainly the economic ones, saw in the potential obtention of the title an opportunity to both foster the Euroméditerranée project, as well as the image of the city and its economic performances. To better understand this willingness for economic redemption, as well as the role of economic elites of Marseille, a key moment was in 2003, when the DATAR conducted a classification of European cities (Rozenblat, Cicille, 2003), positioning Marseille at the twenty-third rank, a placement perceived as "disappointing" by the leadership of the Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Marseille Provence (CCI MP). Despite reservations regarding the methodological robustness of such rankings (Bardet, Helluin, 2010), their impact on those involved in shaping public policy cannot be underestimated (Desage, Godard, 2005). This occurrence, in particular, provides an opportune juncture for corporate leaders who consistently voice concerns about what they perceive as the dearth of metropolitan integration, discerned as a deterrent to the region's allure. This assessment draws sustenance from an activist expertise cultivated during the 1990s, wherein planners, urban theorists, and academicians congregated under the banner of the "*Club d'échange et de réflexion sur l'aire métropolitaine marseillaise*" (Maisetti, 2015; De Roo, 1992; Viard, 1994; Langevin, Chouraqui, 2000).

A key role in the achievement of such economic driven objective, is played by the association Mécènes du Sud and especially the Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Marseille-Provence (CCI MP). The first being born with the aim of imposing Marseille as the next ECOC. This is testified by the words of one of its members and personal counsellor of a future CCI MP's president, Laurent Carezzo:

“In 2003, [...] in one of our first meeting, one of our members [...] found an article that said that the next French European Capital of Culture would have been in 2013. And so we decided to put that as objective, and we started to work to achieve it since 2003.” (Vignau, 2022)

Among the founders of the association, representatives of Vacances Blues, Pernod-Ricard, Société Marseillaise de crédit, Courtage de France, High Co, Olympique de Marseille and Pébèò, representing basically the whole economic panorama of the city. Starting from “*travailler l'image de l'entreprise à travers l'art*” the aim was to promote expositions and financing artists at the end of the curiosity of the media and a thankfulness of the cultural professionals (Maisetti, 2014). Hence, according to them, the obtention of the candidature was explicitly shaped by the intention of fostering Marseille's position in the global economic scenario, augmenting its attractiveness to international investors and partners.

In this regard, an institutionalization of the Mécènes du Sud's objective -using culture as a tool to promote the territory and making it more economically attractive in order to foster its economic development- occurs when Jacques Pfister¹ ascended to the helm of the CCIMP in November 2004. His candidacy was anchored in the "Ambition Top 20" initiative, an endeavor aspiring to ascend three positions within the “*Championnat d'Europe des métropoles*”. This program assumes significance as a harbinger of the reintegration of economic elites into the contours of local public policy production. This phenomenon, as dissected by Pierre-Paul Zalio (2004), signifies the CCIMP's historical role as a crucible for the integration and cultivation of economic elites. The early 20th-century epoch, characterized by a pronounced export of local production, witnessed the ascent of these merchant elites in their pursuit of social prominence. This trajectory was intricately entwined with the trajectories of port-centric developmental endeavors. However, the ebbing of the industrial-port complex from the mid-1970s not only augured economic deceleration but also catalyzed a wane in the predominance of the familial entrepreneurial model. These contextual contours ought not to be construed as a mere backdrop; they poignantly set the stage to decipher subsequent developments (Maisetti, 2015).

¹ A person very close to the personalities of the associations

The emergence of the Marseille-Provence candidacy in the mid-2000s, inexorably entwined with broader global economic reconfigurations and nuanced shifts in private elite configurations, serves as an illustrative case study of the transformative impact of these dynamics on the intricate web of urban power dynamics. This underscores the intricately woven and symbiotic interplay between imperatives of economic pertinence, realignments within the echelons of elite strata, and the consequential power dynamics that collectively shape the contours of urban policy agendas. This dynamic is further underscored by the notable involvement of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Marseille-Provence, which emerged as a foundational member, alongside the municipality of Marseille, the CU MPM (Urban Community of Marseille Provence Métropole), and the aforementioned Ambition Top 20 club, in the establishment of the Association Marseille Provence 2013. Created on January 15, 2007, this association was distinctly presided over by Mr. Jacques Pfister, who assumed the role of President. It is noteworthy that this exemplifies a unique scenario wherein an association ostensibly focused on nurturing cultural pursuits is helmed by an individual at the helm of a Chamber of Commerce, a position inherently embedded within the financial-economic domain and concurrently detached from the cultural sphere.

Such instrumental conception of culture, as illuminated within British contexts (Jones, Wilks-Heeg, 2004), is underscored by a business leader who serves as a founding member of the Ambition Top 20 Club, as articulated in an interview conducted by Maisetti (2015):

“L’idée de faire un Club ambition Top 20 répondait au fait qu’il était important d’avoir une ambition dans la mandature. En l’occurrence, c’était de faire entrer Marseille dans les vingt premières dans le classement des villes européennes alors qu’on était vingt-troisième. L’idée de faire un club avec les grandes entreprises est née avec l’ambition Top 20. La nouvelle équipe dirigeante de la Chambre a identifié le dossier Top 20 et parmi les accélérateurs possibles, ils ont pris conscience de l’échéance 2013. Parce qu’il y a des critères de classement de la DATAR : la fréquentation des musées, le nombre d’expositions, de touristes des manifestations. Il s’agissait donc d’agir sur ces critères pour monter dans la hiérarchie”

The provided assertion implies an avenue for deducing the fundamental motives of the economic elite pertaining to their influence on the candidature process and subsequent policy choices made within the European Capital of Culture (ECOC) 2013 program. Specifically, it suggests the potential underlying objective of utilizing the bid as a catalyst to enhance the global perception of the city, by synergistically propel ongoing initiatives in urban revitalization, notably the Euroméditerranée

project. Moreover, it underscores the strategic deployment of cultural endeavours as a mechanism for attaining heightened international recognition and prominence.

A concept prominently advocated by Pfister which underscores the strategic import of several interrelated factors, including the salience of the Top20 initiative, the strategic harnessing of culture, and the European Capital of Culture (ECOC) program. At its core, this framework aligns with Pfister's position on leveraging cultural dynamics and the ECOC initiative to advance the economic aspirations of the CCI MP. This concerted endeavour was envisaged to bolster the international recognition of Marseille. Pfister posits that this objective could only be realized through the comprehensive mobilization of the entire metropolitan area.

“On est dans le rôle macro-économique des Chambres qui est de tirer ce territoire vers le haut et contribuer à son développement économique. Le Top 20 n'est pas une idée, c'est un processus très compliqué qui a été fait par des gens beaucoup plus intelligents que vous et moi, des énarques au sein de la DATAR. Celle-ci a mis en évidence la puissance métropolitaine à partir d'un classement européen établi à l'aide de critères très techniques, très précis, très mesurables. On aime bien ça nous les chefs d'entreprise : mesurer les choses. L'aire métropolitaine marseillaise est vingt-troisième de ce classement ex æquo. Nous, on s'est dit “on veut être dans le Top 20”. [...] Tout ça ne poursuit qu'un seul objectif, celui d'essayer de progresser dans cette compétition que nous aimons bien, celle des grandes métropoles. [...] Marseille-Provence Capitale européenne de la culture : voilà, un beau projet. Mais Marseille-Provence ne peut gagner que si c'est l'ensemble de la métropole qui se mobilise. [...] Cette ambition du Top 20 est une pédagogie : elle permet à tout le monde de progresser par rapport à un objectif partagé qui est relativement objectif parce qu'il est mesurable. À partir de là, j'ai pu réunir tous les grands chefs d'entreprise du territoire pour leur donner une lecture de ce que c'était l'économie d'un territoire” (Pfister in Maisetti, 2015)

In the aftermath of this articulated standpoint, a pivotal development ensued: the decision to extend the geographical scope of the bid, transcending the confines of Marseille to encompass an expansive hinterland that comprised 96 towns and cities, laying the groundwork for the future Aix-Marseille Métropole. The impetus for this expansion was undergirded by the conceptual underpinning that the burgeoning leisure and cultural sector could function as an instrumental conduit for advancing local economic interests. In tandem, this expansion entailed the adoption of a paradigm wherein the fiscal responsibilities inherent to this enterprise were distributed across an array of municipal entities and

stakeholders, as cogently articulated by Vignau (2022). While this strategic manoeuvre was ostensibly justified as a pragmatic measure, it inadvertently unveils an inherent tension between the immediate gratification of economic gains and the broader imperatives of cultural dissemination and inclusivity. The nuanced critique, derived from the scholarly insights presented by Vignau (2022), accentuates the potential myopia intrinsic to this approach. It portrays the expansion as predominantly geared towards ephemeral monetary dividends, potentially at the expense of a sustained commitment to holistic cultural proliferation and equitable civic engagement.

The conspicuous and assertive presence of the economic elite in Marseille, distinguished by its substantial influence, has manifestly facilitated the strategic maneuvering to capitalize on the salient opportunity presented by the candidature, thereby engendering an instrumental role in configuring the urban agenda congruent with their distinctive interpretations of the territorial landscape. Concurrently, this involvement has conduced to the espousal of an entrepreneurial modality vis-à-vis public policy (Maisetti, 2014). This strategic overture, while indicative of a palpable alignment of interests and resources, has not been devoid of implications for the political domain, which, for an extended duration, assumed a passive stance in this dynamic interplay.

The discernible attenuation of the political sphere in the face of the economic elite's ascendancy bespeaks a complex interrelation wherein the privileging of entrepreneurial proclivities subtly interfaces with the political landscape, potentially recalibrating the traditional power equilibrium. Interestingly, academic works devoted to this event often tend to allocate limited attention to the involvement of politics. Notably, comprehensive studies by Vignau (2022) and Maisetti (2014) extensively discuss the economic influence on the candidacy but offer scant mention of the specific political role played in the process. However, an illuminating perspective is presented in the work of Marlène de Saussure (2020), where a deliberate intention on the part of Marseille's politicians to assume a passive role in the advertising and management of the event is revealed.

As outlined by de Saussure (2020), Marseille's political leadership chose to take a step back from actively shaping the narrative and administration of the 2013 Capital of Culture initiative. By maintaining a poor, secondary, and silent involvement in contrast to the dominant economic sector led by CCIMP, the political leadership left room for manoeuvrability, potentially allowing for a blame-shifting strategy in the event of any shortcomings or failures. At the same time, they positioned themselves to reap recognition and acclaim in case of the project's success.

In Maisetti's (2014) analysis, the concept of "*dépolitisation*" serves as a lens through which the calculated endeavours of Marseille's economic elite to foreground their own developmental interests

and priorities in pursuit of the European Capital of Culture designation are elucidated. Concurrently, Maisetti (2015) draws a parallel between this perspective and the role ascribed to politics, characterizing it as *"une présence indispensable, mais un silence impératif."* This very intersection of political dynamics within the project materializes with particular clarity in the account of the pivotal Grand Oral presentation, a decisive juncture where the European Capital of Culture selection process is adjudicated by a discerning panel of judges. As the momentous September 2008 designation approached, Jacques Pfister, in conjunction with the Director-General of the candidacy committee, strategically positioned themselves vis-à-vis the adjudicatory panel. Accompanying them were not only the mayor of Marseille, Jean-Claude Gaudin, but also prominent regional dignitaries. According to accounts furnished by members of the Marseille delegation, in that circumstance the president of the adjudicatory jury interposed, soliciting the participation of the elected officials in the proceedings. In response, Pfister declined this entreaty, articulating his intention to personally undertake the ensuing presentation. This episode encapsulates the desire of the economic world to avoid potential political opposition and backlash from jeopardizing the success of the initiative. A statement issued by a representative of the Chamber of Commerce encapsulates the nuanced perception of the prevalent notion concerning the political agency within the project:

« Lorsque la mairie s'est lancée, il y avait des rivalités au sein de la municipalité et on a eu peur que ça ne prenne pas des formes nouvelles. On a demandé au président de la Chambre de se structurer et on est allé chercher Latarjet » (in Maisetti 2015).

However, after Marseille was selected as the 2013 European Capital of Culture on 16 September 2008, political actors attempted to regain control of the process, particularly in the view of the upcoming municipal election in 2014. They sought to capitalize on the cultural effervescence and various activities associated with the ECOC to gain political visibility and support.

This attempt by the political world to reoccupy the scene did not achieve significant success. The fear that political interference could compromise the success of the event was a significant factor in the continued dominance of the economic elite. As a result, the Chamber of Commerce continued to exert influence, unwilling to yield to the political world due to concerns about potential disruptions to the carefully planned and orchestrated cultural program.

This willingness to hold the decision power untied from the political sphere is furthermore proven by the fact that, the association MP2013 was established on January 26, 2007 through the utilization of a legal entity under the framework of the French law of 1901 serving as a twofold purpose: to uphold the prevailing influence of private stakeholders within the organizational structure while ensuring

legal autonomy, all the while rendering the entity eligible for public grants and allocating majority voting rights to representatives of local authorities. This strategic decision, however, has concurrently preserved the pivotal role of economic actors in the decision-making process, thus cementing a form of governance that safeguards against what these economic actors perceive as potential political disruptions.

However, notwithstanding the prevailing economic orientation, it remains paramount to acknowledge that culture was quintessentially the principal thematic locus of the European Capital of Culture initiative. In this context, it becomes evident that Pfister's professional acumen did not encompass a substantial depth of cultural expertise, thereby rendering him deficient in this critical facet when assuming a role within the MP 2013 association. To address this deficiency, commencing in 2006, Pfister was strategically flanked by a distinguished luminary possessing an eminent proficiency in the cultural domain: Bernard Latarjet,

Bernard Latarjet's professional trajectory has been characterized by his notable contributions across various domains, which reflect his expertise and unwavering commitment. He started his career at the Ministry of Agriculture, before moving to the *Délégation à l'aménagement du territoire et à l'action régionale* (DATAR), where he played a pivotal role in conceptualizing and co-directing the Photographic Mission of DATAR, showcasing his adeptness in innovative project management. With a profound passion for arts and culture, Latarjet assumed the role of General Delegate at the esteemed *Cinémathèque Française*, dedicating himself to the preservation and promotion of France's cinematic heritage. Subsequently, his tenure as Director-General of the prestigious *Fondation de France* further exemplified his commitment to philanthropy and engagement with critical social issues. Latarjet's engagement with the political sphere was equally impactful, as he served as a special advisor to the Minister of National Education and Culture, Jack Lang, providing invaluable insights into the complexities of cultural policy-making. Additionally, he extended his expertise as a technical advisor for Culture at the Presidency of the Republic, actively contributing to cultural endeavours alongside François Mitterrand during a crucial period in French history. The last appointment before MP2013 will be the presidency of the Public Establishment of the *Parc de la Villette* and the *Grande Halle*, a position he held with distinction from 1996 to 2006. This significant responsibility empowered him to shape and elevate the urban landscape, thereby contributing to the cultural enrichment of Paris through these iconic landmarks (Latarjet, Wikipedia page).

The deliberate selection of Mr. Latarjet as a prominent figure within the organization of the Capital Year was a strategic choice rather than a random one. This decision was motivated by the conspicuous disparity between the predominantly economic forces steering the Capital Year's planning and the

intricacies of the cultural sphere. To bridge this divide effectively, it became imperative to appoint an individual with a super-partes status, capable of harmonizing the realms of bureaucracy and cultural expertise. Moreover, this decision was made with a consideration for the expectations of European counterparts who were seeking a candidate possessing a profound comprehension of cultural matters, administrative prowess, and the adeptness to navigate the intricacies of bureaucratic processes. This imperative was also keenly recognized by stakeholders involved in MP 2013, as affirmed by an interview with a former delegated official at the Municipality of Marseille during the period of 2008-2009.

“on s’aperçoit que l’Europe attend un personnage qui a une dimension concrète, quelqu’un capable de monter des dossiers. Une sorte de technocrate au bon sens du terme” (Maisetti, 2014)

In light of the background and context in which the application for the 2013 European Capital of Culture was developed, the motivations that prompted the evaluation committee to express their preference for Marseille's candidacy - which occurred on 16th September 2008 - were explicitly outlined in the Report published in December 2010². The application sought to persuade the committee members by emphasizing the innovative nature of the project and, more importantly, the commitment to reaching disadvantaged audiences, a fundamental aspect underpinning the analysis of this master's thesis. The evaluation panel not only appreciated this emphasis on inclusion but also recognized its critical importance.

In fact, the committee's report contains a range of recommendations, which highlight the significance of promoting accessibility and cultural engagement for diverse and marginalized communities. Among these recommendations, the report emphasizes the importance of developing initiatives that cater to disadvantaged audiences, fostering cultural activities that resonate with diverse social groups, and ensuring that cultural events and spaces are accessible and welcoming to all segments of the population, stating:

“Concerning the city and citizens’ dimension: pay special attention to the effective implementation of projects combining artistic quality with outreach to the wider population, notably in difficult neighbourhoods”.

² Report for the first monitoring and Advisory meeting for the European capitals of Culture 2013. Issued by the monitoring and advisory panel for the European Capital of culture (ECOC) 2013

Similar concerns, denouncing a structural problem that worried the monitoring bodies, were expressed in the second report of the same committee published in May 2012³, hence eight months before the start of the ECOC year:

“However, it noted that a lot of cultural events planned in the framework of the programme would relate to "high culture" and recommended to find a balance with more participatory and "fun" events. More generally, the panel stressed the importance of focusing on citizens and their engagement, and not only on citizens as audience. The question of the integration of the entire territory of the event, including ethnic minorities, was also raised as an important stake for the success of the event. [...] It also recommended a review of event pricing to ensure that there is a greater opportunity for access to the ECOC events (not just those aimed at minorities) by all communities. The ECOC is an opportunity to engage as more than audiences and to break down barriers.”

As the European Capital of Culture (ECOC) year approached, several significant premises and concerns emerged, shaping the context in which Marseille embarked on this prestigious cultural endeavour. One of the foremost apprehensions was related to the involvement of the city's poorest fringes of the population and the extent to which local actors would be included in the decision-making processes and cultural initiatives. This objective will be stressed throughout all the developing of the ECOC phases, from candidature to implementation, by the different actors involved. Also in the *Lancement officiel de la candidature de Marseille – Provence Capitale Européenne de la culture 2013*, it is possible to read among the objective of the candidature:

“en donnant corps à la dimension culturelle de certains problèmes sociaux considérés comme prioritaires sur le territoire de la candidature (lutte contre l'illettrisme, actions en faveur de quartiers ou de publics défavorisés, interventions dans les hôpitaux, dans les prisons, ...)”

and

“Il devra préciser les thèmes et les actions dont le caractère éducatif favorisera la participation de ceux-ci et notamment des habitants qui fréquentent peu les institutions culturelles ou qui vivent des situations sociales difficiles.”

There was a palpable unease about the representation and participation of these marginalized communities, fearing that their voices might be overshadowed or marginalized amidst the grandeur of the event.

³ Report for the Second Monitoring and Advisory Meeting for the European Capitals of Culture 2013, May 2012

While the ECOC year provided an exceptional platform for cultural expression and exposure, it also created a potential risk of commodifying culture and neglecting the needs and aspirations of its diverse and vulnerable communities, by orienting policy choices into the direction of the international ambitions of Marseille's economic elite.

Chapter III

The following chapter will expound upon how policy choices made in the framework of MP 2013 were not attentive to socio-cultural inclusion, but rather aligned with the concurrent urban rejuvenation endeavours within the Euroméditerranée project. Moreover, the chapter will delineate how marginalized segments of the local populace were rendered bereft of opportunities to partake in the events orchestrated under the aegis of MP 2013. As a matter of fact, the overwhelming majority of events were concentrated within the geographic confines of the Euroméditerranée perimeter and events that were extended beyond this hyper-central precinct predominantly involved ephemeral undertakings that lacked substantive socio-cultural impact.

To substantiate these assertions, the chapter will scrutinize two illustrative scenarios. The first scenario encompasses the comprehensive renovation initiative undertaken in the Vieux Port-La Joliette expanse. This venture was steered by a neo-liberal paradigm, characterized by a city's concerted efforts to engage in policy choices that marginalized the most socio-economically vulnerable sectors of the populace. Concomitantly, this endeavour engendered the creation of an international city image, instrumental in advancing the objectives of the Club Top20. This dualism in effect perpetuated socio-economic disparities while simultaneously cultivating a city image aligned with predetermined objectives.

The second scenario to be expounded upon pertains to an initiative situated within Marseille's most impoverished district, the Quartiers Nord. Regrettably, this endeavour was characterized by its ephemeral nature and a notable dearth of participation from local citizens' associations. Akin to the aforementioned scenario, policy choices were once more underpinned by considerations that prioritized the enhancement of infrastructural connections between the renovated areas and the broader city, accentuating a pervasive thematic of spatial dichotomy, representing a failure in the declared objective of the ECOC bid.

1. The transformation of Marseille- the Vieux Port and La Joliette renovation

« Ce musée et « Marseille, Capitale européenne de la Culture », ont été utilisés comme un véritable cheval de Troie pour accélérer une certaine vision de transformation de la ville, et puis aussi pour détourner le regard des pressions qui ont eu lieu sur les habitantes et des conséquences sociales : privilégier l'attractivité pour faire venir à Marseille de nouveaux habitants de classes aisées, privilégier le tourisme, exclure des marseillaises de leur propre quartier et du droit à la ville,

réhabiliter sans les habitants plutôt qu'avec, s'associer à la spéculation immobilière et permettre l'augmentation des loyers » (Primitivi, 2023)

These were the words of an activist of the Primitivi association⁴, on occasion of the 10th anniversary of the opening of the Museum of European and Mediterranean Civilizations (Mucem), the symbol of the MP 2013, last June in Marseille. They are useful to underline the perception of a certain portion of the population against the cultural year, as well as to introduce some of the elements that will be developed in the next paragraph.

The designation of Marseille as the European Capital of Culture brought to the forefront the imperative of transforming the city into an alluring destination capable of attracting investments and fostering economic development. The economic sector played a proactive role in this undertaking, employing communication campaigns to underscore the urgency and significance of Marseille's metamorphosis. A pivotal aspect of this transformation lay in the implementation of visionary architectural projects that redefined the city's skyline and cultural landscape.

Prominent among these projects were the CMA-CGM tower, a striking architectural feat envisioned by the esteemed architect Zaha Hadid, and the Mucem, a cultural institution that celebrated the region's diverse heritage. Adding to the city's allure was the Villa Méditerranée, an audacious creation designed by the Italian architect Stefano Boeri, reflecting the city's aspiration to cultivate a cosmopolitan identity.

Moreover, the rejuvenation of existing landmarks played a crucial role in reshaping Marseille's urban fabric. Dilapidated structures, such as the Old Docks, were thoughtfully renovated to breathe new life into their historical significance, while the Silo was imaginatively transformed into a vibrant venue for cultural performances. The Archives, steeped in history and cultural heritage, underwent meticulous restoration to preserve and celebrate their legacy. Additionally, the introduction of modern malls, exemplified by Les Terrasses du Port and Les Voûtes, contributed to the city's economic vitality and provided a contemporary ambiance for residents and visitors alike.

The city's aspirations to showcase a reinvigorated identity rested on the strategic deployment of these visually striking architectural landmarks, which became emblematic of Marseille's cultural and economic transformation. By leveraging these iconic structures as symbols of urban regeneration,

⁴ A blog and association that like to define itself as “Une « téléche de rue » qui, depuis 1998, accompagne, soutient, réalise des films, en projette, en distribue, dans une démarche rebelle, solidaire et non-commerciale” (Primitivi website).

Marseille sought to attract national and international attention, beckoning investors and visitors to explore its dynamic offerings.

In fact, as anticipated in the previous paragraphs, the whole candidacy of Marseille has been based especially on the interests of the economic élite of the city of Marseille, driven by the same actors involved in the EUROMED project as well as first-line personalities of the CCI MP. It is not a case that the 80% of the investments took place exactly in the perimeter of the EUROMED (Lachmanowits, 2013). As a matter of fact, this was the main intention of the stakeholders at play in the organization of the ECOC 2013. A strategy to attract middle-class capital and investment thanks to this aesthetic turn. A concept stated also by Jean-louis Russac, from the Economic Development Service of the Urban Community, stating:

“Our goal is to attract in Marseille a real estate clientele who does not yet live here but can be potentially interested in leisure purchase” (in Buslacchi, 2018).

If this are the thoughts that driven the realization of the cultural structures for the ECOC year, it should not surprise if the choices made did not meet the necessities of the local inhabitants, but rather were aimed and made for a different, more wealthy international audience.

What has been defined as the cultural waterfront, can be considered the heart of that perimeter, thought to be the perfect scenario for the events at the centre of the Capital year. It will be there that the inauguration and the main exhibitions will take place. One of the main stages of the ECOC 2013 was without doubt the Vieux Port. Its rehabilitation, even if started in a period antecedent to the ECOC selection process, on occasion of the European Capital of Culture, received a special attention since it would have become the pulsing hearth as the main stage of the future cultural year, and for this reason a call of expression of interests for a renovation project was launched by the Municipality.

The announcement of the tender to revamp the Marseille waterfront sparked significant interest in the realm of urban planning and architectural discourse. It presented a unique opportunity to transform the city's urban landscape and create a vibrant public space, making it a matter of utmost importance for academics and professionals in the field. The competition called for a visionary redesign of the area in two phases, with completion scheduled for 2013 and 2020. Architects from around the world eagerly submitted their proposals, and the anticipation was high to witness the metamorphosis of the city's coastal zone.

However, the outcome of the competition raised several contentious issues that became subjects of academic debate and scrutiny. The press and scholars alike criticized the final decision made by the Municipality's president, Eugène Caselli, who had the support of Mayor Jean-Claude Gaudin. The

controversy arose when the selected project turned out to be the one presented by Foster+Partners, a world-renowned multinational architectural firm with an impressive portfolio of iconic structures across major cities worldwide. Despite the jury's preference for Corinne Vezzoni, a renowned architect from Marseille known for her profound understanding of the local context, the choice fell on the project submitted by the renowned firm.

The winning design by Norman Foster and his team proposed a bold and visually striking transformation of the waterfront, characterized by its strong visual impact on the city's skyline. The project aimed to renovate the entire area in an unmistakable manner, making a bold statement of modernity and progress. In contrast, Vezzoni's proposal embraced the softer lines and a more context-sensitive approach, seeking harmony with the surrounding environment and respecting the historical fabric of the city (Buslacchi, 2018).

A non-positive judgment shared also by Quentin Avérous, in an article from *Causeur* where he shares doubts about the intervention on the Vieux-Port. The authors argue that the project involves demolishing, flattening, and paving over the area, resulting in an Anglo-Saxon style of architecture that does not consider the Mediterranean context of Marseille. He believes that the new design lacks the essence of being Mediterranean and fails to represent the authentic identity of the city.

« On rase, on aplanit, on pave. Une architecture anglo-saxonne, belle au demeurant, mais qui ne tient pas compte du contexte : elle n'a, pour ainsi dire, rien de méditerranéen. [Marseille] is antimoderne, et ne cela authentiquement subversive » (Avérous, 2013)

Furthermore, the text highlights the controversy surrounding the selection of Norman Foster's design over that of local architect Corinne Vezzoni. It suggests that political pressure and the pursuit of a more glamorous and attention-grabbing project led to Foster's design being chosen, even if it may not have been the best fit for the city. Consequently, in his analysis, the "*Nouveau Vieux-Port*" becomes a symbol of the commodification and loss of Marseille's unique identity, arguing that in the city's quest to compete with other major European metropolises, it is sacrificing its true character and resorting to superficial changes, akin to putting up a façade or disguise (Avérous, 2013).

The decision to select Foster's design over Vezzoni's more contextual proposal ignited debates and discussions on various aspects of urban planning and architectural design. Scholars questioned whether the chosen project truly reflected the desires and aspirations of the city's residents or whether it favored a more tourist-oriented and international visually approach. According to the British firm, the intention was to "reclaim the quaysides as a civic space, creating new informal venues for

performances and events and removing traffic to create a safe, semi-pedestrianised public realm” (Foster + Partners website)

Of this “new public realm” the absolute protagonist is the *ombrière*. Initially conceived as a canopy designed to house the fish market, it has assumed a pivotal role as the nerve centre within the Vieux Port. Situated at a strategic junction, it occupies a compact area encompassing the exit of a subway station, a bustling bus stop servicing numerous lines, a waterfront corner, and the embarkation point for boats destined for l'Estaque, Pointe Rouge, and the islands comprising the Frioul archipelago. The structure is defined by the architects’ studio as “a dramatic blade of reflective stainless steel will shelter a flexible new events pavilion. Open on all sides, its 46 by 22 metre canopy is supported by slender pillars – the canopy’s polished, mirrored surface reflects the surrounding port and tapers towards the edges, minimising its profile and reducing the structure’s visual impact” (Foster + Partners website).

However, if these were the intentions of the studio and of the both economic and political stakeholders involved in the organization of MP2 2013, the choice made at side of the renovation, or rather the construction of the above-mentioned cultural waterfront, presented not few criticisms.

Bruno Le Dantec, a prominent writer from Marseille, has distinguished himself in the realm of critical urban analysis, particularly in the context of his hometown. Recognized for his thought-provoking insights, Le Dantec serves as a columnist for Canal Sur, a well-regarded Andalusian radio station, where he offers in-depth analysis and commentary on various urban issues prevalent in Marseille. Furthermore, he actively collaborates with the esteemed monthly review and social experimentation publication, CQFD, actively engaging with the struggles and community dynamics within the working-class neighbourhoods situated in central Marseille (Université de Lyon, 2020).

In his contribution to the documentary "*La fête est finie*" (2014), Le Dantec sheds light on the profound negation induced by the interventions associated with Marseille-Provence 2013. He keenly observes how these choices have exhibited a disconcerting disregard for the city's authentic cultural heritage and history. The development of the Cultural waterfront, according to Le Dantec's perspective, epitomizes a distressing denial of Marseille's rich historical and cultural legacy, intimately entwined with its port and vibrant popular character. As Le Dantec points out, these invaluable aspects of the city are seemingly sacrificed in the pursuit of reclaiming public space by local elites, the municipality, and the EUROMED project, raising pertinent questions about the motivations and beneficiaries of this transformation (Burlaud, 2014).

Furthermore, the renovation of the Vieux Port of Marseille reveals a significant dearth of green spaces and communal gathering areas. Although these spaces were not part of the original project design, some sporadic additions of benches and green elements were later introduced. However, these subsequent choices were marked by a non-inclusive and propagandistic orientation, as described by Vignau (2012 and 2022), reflecting a neo-liberalization of the city and a criminalization of poverty.

The benches installed in the Vieux Port adopted anti-homeless designs, deliberately discouraging individuals from lying down and creating an atmosphere unfriendly to vagrancy. In particular:

“À Marseille, la principale limite territoriale du grand événement créatif MP 2013 concerne surtout le renforcement de pratiques urbaines néolibérales. À ce titre, [ne] la réesthétisation du Vieux-Port le renforcement de l'idéologie néolibérale [est] réel. Les signes insidieux (mais non moins percutants) de ce néolibéralisme urbain apparaissent notamment à travers l'absence de bancs publics sur le quai de la Fraternité ou la présence d'un mobilier urbain excluant et l'implantation de plusieurs dispositifs anti-SDF comme des bancs publics scindés en deux ou en trois pour éviter que l'on ne s'y allonge. Ces dispositifs sont exacerbés par l'omniprésence des caméras de surveillance qui tendent à aseptiser l'hypercentre tout en autorisant une certaine criminalisation de la pauvreté” (Vignau, 2022)

Moreover, the inadequacy of available seating exacerbates the Vieux Port's incapacity to serve as a vibrant communal space. In practice, this waterfront area is predominantly traversed by passersby waiting for public transport or ferries, rather than being utilized as a purposeful setting for leisure activities. The dearth of public green expanses further compounds this utilitarian characterization. The insufficiency of shaded zones within the Vieux Port further deters individuals from pausing and lingering, except for the partial respite offered by the ombrière structure. This paucity of shaded zones exacerbates the overarching deficiency in establishing an environment conducive to communal assembly and recreational engagement (Buslacchi, 2013).

Concurrently, the deployment of hostile architectural interventions and the adoption of policy choices that are not inclusively attuned have led to Thonnellier's categorization of Marseille as a "ville rigide" or "ville sécuritaire" (Thonnellier, 2013). This taxonomy encapsulates the broader impact of these choices in shaping the urban character and ethos of the city, fundamentally impacting the vitality of communal spaces and the broader urban fabric.

An integral element that helps in understanding the orientation of policy choices oriented at giving a more reassuring and international attractive image of the city, was the establishment of the *Centre de Supervision Urbain de la Ville de Marseille* on April 12, 2012. This centre was specifically designed

to address any behaviours that could potentially pose a threat to public order and to undertake an initiative aimed at improving the city's image by managing the presence of individuals considered inconvenient. It was a significant undertaking, with a budget of 20 million euros, and involved the installation of 360 operating cameras that would function around the clock, seven days a week. The primary objective was to enhance the security and surveillance capabilities of the city in preparation for the MP 2013 event (De Broqua, 2012). The establishment of this centre raised various debates and concerns among critics and civil rights advocates. While proponents argued that it was necessary to ensure the safety and smooth functioning of the event, opponents expressed apprehensions regarding potential infringements on privacy rights and the potential for social control and exclusion. They saw it as part of a larger trend towards securitization and the prioritization of image management over addressing underlying social issues.

The alterations made to the Vieux Port's configuration in preparation for the Marseille-Provence 2013 event included a significant change concerning the ferry terminal that served arrivals from the Maghreb region. The terminal was relocated, making room for the introduction of ferries catering primarily to tourists. As Burlaud (2014) astutely observed, this strategic move had dual objectives: first, it aimed to enhance tourist access to the nearby Museum of European and Mediterranean Civilizations (Mucem), a key attraction for the European Capital of Culture; and secondly, it facilitated the creation of a carefully curated and sanitized tourist experience. The deliberate arrangement allowed tourists to navigate the Vieux Port's vicinity without encountering the city's Arab population, essentially segregating the local population from the tourism-oriented areas.

This approach to urban planning reflects a problematic trend of privileging the interests of tourism and economic development over inclusive and socially diverse city spaces. The emphasis on catering to tourists, while simultaneously avoiding the presence of certain communities, perpetuates a form of socio-cultural exclusion within the urban landscape. This reasoning is supported also by a group of young people, interviewed always in the documentary *“la fête est finie”*, where a group of young individuals report an escalation in police scrutiny, specifically targeting young individuals of Arab ethnicity in the city centre. These individuals express feelings of discomfort and detachment when present in the city centre due to the frequent and seemingly unjustified police controls imposed upon them. Consequently, they articulate a sense of alienation and exclusion, no longer perceiving themselves as integral parts of the city. Moreover, the perceived differential treatment between themselves and the tourists becomes a source of profound distress and highlights the inequality they perceive within the urban fabric:

« Les touristes vient ils sont tranquilles allez y passer bonjour et tout, mais nous [...] doivent aller à traves contrôles, il n'est plus notre ville. Je préfère rester ici (quartiers nord) voir mes collègues, que alles à la ville et être bizarre comme ça » (Burlaud, 2014)

This situation raises critical questions about the inclusivity and social dynamics. The deliberate spatial reconfigurations and differential treatment experienced by marginalized communities underscore the underlying power dynamics and social hierarchies at play. Such practices perpetuate a sense of exclusion and marginalization, ultimately challenging the notion of a diverse and inclusive public space within the city centre, in the framework of an event that presented among its main objective the inclusion of minorities and disadvantages categories.

However, discordant opinions are present on the intervention of the other part of the cultural waterfront. Some, as the above mentioned Le Dantec, rose criticisms over the distant architectural language used in that occasion. The intention of position Marseille among the top 20 cities in the world, as well the one of promoting an European and Mediterranean culture -both objectives of the Capital year- lead to the construction of buildings that resemble shapes and styles common especially in the northern part of the continent, having very little to share with the migrant and multicultural post-colonial soul of the ville phocéenne. This is particularly evident in the symbols of the MP 2013, that can be considered without exaggerating, its heritage: the Mucem and the esplanade J4.

The Mucem project in Marseille has been a significant urban development initiative since the early 2000s. It involves the restoration of Fort Saint-Jean, which has been closed to the public since the post-war period, as well as the construction of a new architectural structure by Rudy Ricciotti on the former J4 pier site. The project also includes the Villa Méditerranée, an exhibition and congress venue commissioned by the Région PACA. These cultural establishments are integral to the Marseille-Provence 2013 initiative and play a central role in showcasing the city's cultural offerings. The presence of the Mucem terrace and other social spaces adds to the allure of these areas and integrates them into the city's transportation network. Consequently, these open sections of the museum complex become significant pathways in the cognitive geography of the local population, contributing to their experiential understanding of Marseille's cultural landscape.

The renovation and reopening of spaces in the Vieux Port for the Marseille-Provence 2013 (MP2013) event triggered significant urban transformations, yet it also gave rise to a set of consequences and controversies that demand academic examination. Maria Elena Buslacchi⁵ brings attention to what

⁵ Post-doc researcher at the Centre méditerranéen, de sociologie, de sciences politiques et d'histoire / Aix-Marseille Université, Professor Buslacchi's expertise lies in the study of Mediterranean port cities. Her research encompasses an

she describes as an imperialist modality evident in the management project of the Vieux Port-La Joliette area for MP2013. This approach, according to Buslacchi, displayed a disregard for the city's pre-existing architectonic scenario and implemented aesthetics that appeared detached from the broader urban context:

“The implementation of the urban redevelopment project resulted in the displacement of certain segments of the population, particularly those who were socioeconomically disadvantaged. This is particularly evident when considering the informal use of the area, which served as a primary access point to the sea for a significant portion of the population. While the informal use of the waterfront facilitated social interactions and connections among dock workers, families, and residents of the Quartiers Nord, once the cultural waterfront was complete, they were effectively cut off from their previously privileged access to the sea, along with the social exchanges that accompanied it” (M.E. Buslacchi, personal interview with the author, July 2023).

2. MP 2013 in the Quartiers Nord: the Quartiers créatifs-jardins possibles project

As stated before, 80% of the interventions and investments for the European Capital of Culture (ECOC) were concentrated in the EUROMED area, primarily the centre and hyper centre of Marseille. Consequently, the densely populated, socially challenging, and poor zones of the city received limited attention in this regard.

It results impossible speaking of periphery in Marseille, without referring to the *Quartiers Nord*, an area notorious for its high crime rate, poverty, and unemployment. These areas encompass the 13th, 14th, 15th, and 16th arrondissements, accounting for approximately one-third of the city's total population, hence amounting to nearly 250,000 inhabitants. Among them, approximately 117,000 individuals reside within the *quartiers prioritaires*, a classification designated by the French government to identify economically disadvantaged urban areas requiring targeted intervention and urban renewal efforts (Vergnenegre, 2021).

Given the nuanced social conditions prevalent in these areas, it could be hypothesized that the MP 2013 program and agenda might have accorded considerable attention to their circumstances. The event's prospective role as a catalyst for social change could have been substantial, particularly in fostering inclusivity and societal integration within a socioeconomically marginalized and culturally heterogeneous community. This assumption gains further relevance when considering that one of the central tenets of the program was ostensibly to advance the participation and integration of

in-depth examination of urban developments and transformations within these cities, with a particular interest in the effects and consequences of the European Capital of Culture (ECOC) program.

historically marginalized populations and disadvantaged individuals across diverse facets of the event.

In this framework, the biggest effort in this sense has been with the implementation of the *Quartiers Créatives* project. The initiative, supported by Marseille-Provence 2013, Marseille Urban Renovation, the National Urban Renovation Agency (ANRU), the National Public Funds Trust (Caisse des Dépôts et Consignations), and funded with the European Regional Development Funds, represented a comprehensive and diverse participatory endeavour. Its principal objective was to integrate artistic actions into the urban renewal process and foster participatory approaches within difficult neighbours. Over the course of 2013, the initiative implemented into fourteen culture and urban development projects (five of which in the 15th, 9th and 3rd arrondissements of Marseille), specifically designed to stimulate community participation, cultivate social cohesion, and enhance the quality of life (MP2013, 2014).

The objectives of the project will be better summarized by Jean-François Chougnat, the General Director of Marseille-Provence 2013⁶, on occasion of a personal communication released to Desirée Campagna in the writing process of her book⁷:

“The first reason I would give is that this Program was promoted because of the criteria set by the European Union. We designed the project in response to the City and Citizens criterion: the idea that an ECOOC should be based not only on artistic contents, but also on the promotion of culture in the largest sense, as expression of all people, even of those that are far from artistic experiences. The second reason is linked with a deep analysis of the urban context of the city of Marseille, which is the poorest big city in France, presenting strong social divisions. If the city had to invest time and resources into the organization of the event, then this event must be able to address the social needs of the inhabitants, involving also the poorest neighborhoods, that are far from the city center and lack cultural infrastructures. This seemed to us both useful and appropriate” (Campagna, 2022)

This role of bringing together disadvantaged communities and reconnecting the socially fragile fringes of the population with the city was emphasized by Aurélie Filippetti, the Minister for Culture at the time, during a press conference to launch the MP 2013 program in November 2012. In that

⁶ Latarjet, will quit the direction of the association Marseille provence 2013 at the beginning of 2011 with "son engagement au service du projet et sa ferme volonté de l'accompagner jusqu'à son terme".

<https://www.france24.com/fr/20110321-bernard-latarjet-marseille-provence-2013-capitale-culture-europeenne>

⁷ Campagna, D (2022). Participatory Governance and Cultural Development. An Empirical Analysis of European Capitals of Culture. Palgrave McMillan

event, the socialist member of the government emphasized the national and European significance of the project, stating:

« ce projet d'intérêt national et européen [...]. On a besoin de la culture pour retisser du lien, redonner de la fierté aux habitants de vivre dans leur territoire » (Filipetti, 2012)

Given the declarations and considerations presented, it becomes evident that the *Quartiers Créatives* project assumed a pivotal role as the “city and citizens dimension” feature within the ECOC 2013 program. The intention to leverage the artistic performances of the capital year to foster inclusion of the most vulnerable segments of the population was apparent, but the actual implementation of this project requires closer examination.

Karima Berriche, the director of the social centre “*L’Agora*” in the 14th arrondissement, is a key figure in a challenging and socially engaged neighbourhood. In her interview for the documentary “*La fête est finie*” Berriche shed light on the criticisms surrounding the *Quartiers Créatives* project, particularly regarding its impact on her collective and the subsequent withdrawal of her and other civic associations from the realization of the “*Jardins possibles*” initiative.

The choice of the location for the performance development within “*Quartiers Créatives*” raised considerable concerns. The decision-making body opted for a terrain that would have been later affected by the construction works of the L2 highway, an infrastructure connecting the central-east part of Marseille with the northern region of Saint-Barthélemy. This choice underscored the temporary nature of the project, leading to apprehensions among the citizens’ collective and Berriche herself.

The decision to establish the *Quartiers Créatives* project in an area undergoing highway construction signalled a sense of impermanence, creating uncertainty and apprehension among the community involved. As a result, it raised questions about the project’s long-term impact on the targeted communities and the extent to which it truly aligned with the objective of fostering social inclusion.

« Et là les associations, et les habitants ont vu le projet comme une violence psychologique. L'éphémère quand on vit dans la précarité, ils ont dit basta. Ils sont venus (MP 2013 and related stakeholders) hors contexte, sans se rendre compte du contexte social et urbain dans lequel ils allaient inscrire ce projet artistique, et c'était une erreur fatale » (Berriche in Burlaud, 2014)

Furthermore, another factor that contributed to the disagreement was the amount of money allocated to the project. Considering the temporary nature of the initiative and the prevailing social fragmentation caused by high unemployment rates, particularly among the youth -reaching 60% in

the area covered by the Agora social centre- the allocated funds were deemed unacceptable (Martiniere et Schmidand, 2013):

« On met 422 000 euros sur des trucs éphémères. Tu ne peux pas parler de culture si tu ne résous pas de front le problème de l'emploi. En termes de concertation et de rénovation urbaine, on est en panne sur le territoire. Il y a de quoi soulever de la colère » (Beriche in Les Inrockuptibles, 2013)

The precarious and multifaceted nature of the *Quartiers Créatives* project takes on a more profound significance when scrutinizing the allocation of investments from the budget of MP 2013. Despite substantial contributions from diverse stakeholders, including the European Union, Bouches du Rhone department, the Municipality, the State, the PACA region, and the private sector, totalling over 600 million, the distribution of funds reveals a pronounced disparity. A considerable proportion of the budget, approximately 160 million, was singularly directed towards the construction of the Mucem, located in the hyper centre of Marseille.

The concentration of such substantial financial resources on a single project in the city's hyper centre raises pertinent questions about the equitable distribution of financial resources across different areas of Marseille. Notably, the *Quartiers Nord*, experienced minimal investment in the establishment of permanent cultural facilities. For instance, the *Théâtre du Merlan*, one of the few public cultural spaces in the area, has faced criticism due to its management practices being perceived as elitist, leading to the exclusion of the local community from accessing meaningful cultural experiences. Moreover, the sole library available to residents in the Quartiers Nord occupies 400m² of space, resulting in a significant disparity in access to educational resources. This book-to-inhabitant ratio ranks amongst the lowest in France, further accentuating the insufficient provisions for fostering intellectual and educational development in the area (Martiniere et Schmidand, 2013).

A line of thought shared by Pascale Reynier, deputy to culture in the 15th and 16th *arrondissements*, which labelled the initiative as a cosmetic intervention:

« Pour ne pas être en conflit avec les habitants, ils se sont dits qu'ils allaient faire un projet participatif. Dans les quartiers pauvres, il est plus simple de faire du jardinage que de s'embêter à prendre des gosses qui sont difficiles et faire un vrai travail de qualité. Mais est-ce que le gamin va avoir des cours particuliers avec un prof de théâtre ? Est-ce qu'il va voir des spectacles de qualité ?

Non. » (Reynier in Les Inrockuptibles, 2013)

The neglect of the residents in the Quartiers Nord is also evident in the lack of communication and information about Marseille 2013, as highlighted by Reynier. In the period leading up to the opening of Marseille 2013, communication efforts were primarily focused on the city centre, disregarding the

Quartiers Nord. The absence of promotional materials, such as posters or advertisements, in the northern districts starkly contrasts with their abundance in the city centre. By the end of December 2012, the town halls in the 13th, 14th, 15th, and 16th arrondissements had not received any programming information about Marseill's status as the Capital of Culture. As a result, residents in these areas remained unaware of the significance of the year and the cultural events taking place. This lack of awareness has caused frustration among locals who feel marginalized and believe that Marseille 2013 should cater to the needs of both tourists and all residents. (Martiniere et Schmidtdand, 2013)

The discrepancies, disagreements and the distance grown between the marginalized communities of the Quartiers Nord and the MP 2013 actors, culminated in the withdraw of the associations and local citizens collectives from the organization of such project, in a letter collegially written by all the civic stakeholders at play on 13 November 2012. In the letter, the associations express their disappointment for the "disdainful political decision-making" defining the interventions in the Quartiers Nord as a project that:

« Plutôt que de profiter au développement économique, urbain et culturel de nos quartiers, ne réponds qu'à une logique d'affichage, de « "faire vitrin »" au projet de rénovation urbaine qui entraîne de nombreux conflits avec le GIP MRU. M. Raoust (MP2013) le résumait bien [...] que le financement de celui-ci au projet existait pour palier au manque de concertation. Cette déclaration, ainsi que l'imposition (une nouvelle fois) d'un projet venu d'en haut -sans concertation-, l'asphyxie financière de nos associations à qui on demande de se « "mobilise »" sur un projet que l'on ne nous a pas proposé de co-concevoir et le mépris régulier affiché par ces institutions, nous a amené à nous retirer. [...] Le débat n'a, avouez-le, jamais été posé. Sans préjuger de la conclusion qu'aurait pu avoir un tel débat, il aurait été, dès l'origine, bien plus efficace et juste de venir décider avec les habitants et leurs associations du cadre que pourrait avoir un projet labellisé MP2013. [...] La politique de MP2013 trouve son caractère occupationnel, étant destinée à mener une activité à court terme, ne permettant pas de favoriser le développement des espaces publics par et pour les habitants ». (Open letter, 2012)

The final part of the letter presents new proposals, by firmly asserts that no project, whether related to urban renovation or cultural initiatives, can be successfully developed without a strong emphasis on creating sustainable local employment. It emphasizes the need to secure additional funding to provide employment opportunities and training, thereby reconciling economic development with cultural projects, and underlining the association's desire to be recognized as fully engaged participants rather than mere spectators. They assert their commitment to being integral actors in the

realization of projects, demanding that their involvement be acknowledged and valued. Lastly, the letter proposes the selection of the “*pelouse cœur de Pico*” as the site for the final production, ensuring the continuity of artistic production and the meaningful involvement of residents and artists, hence rejecting being passive spectators and demanding an inclusive partnership involving residents, associations, public institutions, and external artistic actors.

However, despite the proposal for an alternative meeting in order to reorganize the project in a way that could meet the needs of the local population and helping in addressing also the structural difficulties of the neighbourhoods, nobody will ever answer to that call as testified by a member of the artistic collective SAFI “We never had a meeting or an opportunity to discuss what was happening” (personal communication to D. Campagna, July 10, 2017)

3. Considerations over the unsuccess of the project

The distance created by the top-down approach of MP 2013 in the *Jardins Possibles* project exemplifies how policy implementation in cultural events can contribute to social exclusion. The lack of success in this initiative can be attributed to several factors.

Firstly, an evident factor is the disconnect between the social context of the Quartiers Nord and the organizers/promoters of the project. As mentioned earlier, the Quartiers Nord face deep-rooted social fragility characterized by high unemployment rates, poverty, and crime. Given this background, proposing a short-term, ephemeral, and non-inclusive project that does not prioritize job creation was bound to generate concerns and conflicts. Moreover, the allocation of an incredibly high budget (if we consider the nature and the duration) for the project sparked debates, as the local associations faced precarious financial conditions that prevented them from consistently pursuing socially inclusive initiatives. This might be combined with the structural lack of trust among the actors involved, based on many years of forgetfulness and marginalization “fruit of the specific history of the neighbourhood, product of a well-grounded conflict that characterizes the relationship between the territory and political institutions” (Campagna, 2022).

Nevertheless, the structuring of the project itself raises concerns regarding its effectiveness in bringing about tangible transformations in the lives of citizens and fostering their inclusion in the Capital Year initiative. It appears that the project was primarily conceived as a superficial endeavour, lacking a genuine commitment to generating meaningful change. This is evidenced by the sole choice of positioning the garden venue in an area that would imminently be impacted by the forthcoming construction of the L2 highway. Such a decision clearly underscores a disregard for the long-term implications of the project, emphasizing its inherently short-term perspective.

Consequently, the initiative reinforces the notion that the MP 2013 operation failed to rectify the gravitational imbalance inherent in the cultural landscape, particularly with regards to the marginalized periphery of the Quartiers Nord (Grésillon, 2013). This geographical area remained marginalized in terms of cultural resources and opportunities, with a disproportionate concentration of cultural offerings in more privileged areas, thereby perpetuating a state of marginalization and exclusion.

Furthermore, the provision of transportation services exemplifies another aspect of marginalization experienced by residents of the Quartiers Nord. While free shuttle services were available between the city centre and the Théâtre du Merlan, no equivalent shuttle services were extended to transport residents from the Quartiers Nord to exhibitions at prominent cultural institutions such as the Mucem or La Belle de Mai, central components of the MP 2013 initiative. Moreover, the limited operating hours of public transportation services posed additional barriers, curtailing residents' access to cultural events and impeding their full engagement in the Capital Year activities (Martiniere et Schmidand, 2013).

This statement is also supported by what affirms Buslacchi, underlining how the lack of investments in cultural infrastructure within the Quartiers Nord, displayed a failure to consider the development of structures that could have served as public services in the realms of education, culture, and transportation, thereby facilitating access to existing cultural facilities located in other nearby areas. This oversight further marginalized the disadvantaged communities by denying them opportunities for engagement and participation in cultural activities that were readily available in other parts of the city (M.E. Buslacchi, personal interview with the author, July 2023).

Chapter IV

In the preceding chapter, attention was drawn to instances of social exclusion stemming from policy choices within the *Quartiers Créatives-Jardins Possibles* project and the urban development intervention in the Vieux Port-La Joliette vicinity, both situated within the context of the Marseille-Provence 2013 (MP2013) initiative. In this chapter, the focus will pivot toward the realm of culture, aiming to discern the emergence of exclusionary and marginalizing dynamics within the sphere of cultural initiatives affiliated with the European Capital of Culture. The analysis will probe into the causes and manifestations of these phenomena, scrutinizing the behavior and choices of the array of stakeholders involved, encompassing both political and economic actors. Central to this inquiry is the exploration of how these choices were consistently driven by the overarching objective of catapulting Marseille onto the global stage, often at the expense of actively promoting and empowering local cultural agents.

This pursuit of international acclaim without commensurate investment in local cultural entities is illuminated through a multifaceted exploration. First, it involves an examination of the contentious deliberations surrounding the imposition of an international artist for a pivotal event within the Capital Cultural Year. Concurrently, attention will be directed toward the contentious and interest-oriented procedures employed in the selection of cultural practitioners.

The concluding sections of this chapter will elucidate instances of resistance to this prevailing modus operandi. One form of resistance is epitomized by the Off initiative, which positioned itself as an alternative, advocating a cultural and inclusivity-driven manifestation as a counterpoint. The second form of resistance is characterized by non-institutional dissent, openly denouncing the econometric approach of MP2013, along with its instrumental manipulation of culture to achieve economic ends.

1. The ECOC and inclusivity of local cultural actors

The pursuit of the European Capital of Culture designation by Marseille in 2008 was primarily motivated by the intention to involve and showcase local artists as the central focus of the Capital year. This emphasis on local artistic talent and creativity formed the foundation for Marseille's successful bid for the title.

This commitment to inclusivity and cultural accessibility was not merely rhetorical but was substantiated by tangible actions and initiatives during the visit of the European jury. As elucidated by Mr. Latarjet, the president of the association MP 2013 (until 2011), in an interview with a prominent cultural radio station, the decision-makers took a strategic approach to showcase the city's

dedication to ensuring that no one would be excluded from participating in the cultural project. One significant demonstration of this commitment was the thoughtful decision to organize a visit for the European jury to the Baumettes prison, where they were introduced to artistic workshops organized by long-term inmates. This move aimed to convey a powerful message of inclusivity and integration. By showcasing the engagement of marginalized members of society, such as the prison inmates, in artistic endeavours, Marseille sought to dispel the notion that cultural participation was limited to certain segments of the population. The city was keen to highlight that art and culture could serve as powerful tools for social transformation, breaking barriers and reaching even those who might have been previously considered disconnected from such experiences (France Culture, 2011).

As a result, the city's proposal was judged to be the most fitting and responsive to the aims of the program. The panel responsible for evaluating the proposals recognized the innovative and well-structured nature of Marseille's project. It was evident that considerable effort had been invested in refining and developing the proposal since the initial preselection stage. The panel was impressed with the city's commitment to maintaining high artistic standards while also striving to engage and connect with disadvantaged audiences. This balanced approach resonated with the panel and showcased Marseille's dedication to using culture as a means of bridging social gaps and fostering inclusivity (Selection panel, 2008).

The importance of this commitment was increased by the incredibly multi-cultural and diverse cultural environment of the city of Marseille, as well as its social dimension. As a matter of fact, Marseille is well known for its vibrant and multicultural artistic panorama, which propose alternative forms of art and artistic expressions which fall outside the mainstream channels.

In Marseille, multiculturalism is not merely an abstract concept, but a palpable reality deeply ingrained in the city's social fabric. The city's cultural landscape embraces the collective voices, traditions, and artistic expressions of its multiethnic communities. This is particularly evident in the domain of music, that is enriched by North African influences with the sounds of Rai, Chaabi, and Gnawa music reverberate through Marseille's cafes, and concert venues. But also, in Marseille's streets which serve as open-air galleries for artistic expression, with vibrant street art and graffiti adorning walls and buildings. Artists from diverse backgrounds utilize these public spaces as canvases for conveying their thoughts, ideas, and cultural heritage (Mackay, 2017).

Music in Marseille has historically served as a political and social instrument, with artists using their platforms to address pertinent issues. One such example is the reggae act Massilia Sound System, which emerged in response to the 1984 FN surge, reflecting a commitment to confronting societal challenges through their music. Similarly, the rap group IAM draws inspiration from the civil rights

movement and Marseille's multicultural essence, utilizing their lyrics to shed light on issues of race and social deprivation prevalent in the city. Music has undeniably played a central role in shaping the identity of Marseille, acting as a cultural force that preserves and celebrates the city's rich history. For instance, the band Moussu T e lei Jovents delivers a joyous sound, interweaving elements of Cajun banjo, reggae rhythms, and blues, thereby commemorating the cultural richness of the city (Deboik, 2021).

However, throughout the approaching of the European Capital of Culture programme, the choices took by stakeholders, assumed very often a different direction in respect to this multi-ethnic cultural scenario. Arbitrative choices and an international-economic driven approach when it comes to funding, was noticed generating disappointed and protest, that will lead to alternative forms of representations as well as particular effect on inclusiveness of such cultural actors.

The examination of policy choices in the cultural landscape of Marseille reveals important insights into the dynamics of inclusivity and exclusion. While the initial intentions of decision-makers emphasized the incorporation of alternative forms of art and engagement with local citizens, the practical decisions appeared to fall short.

An observation that aligns with Maisetti's critique, highlighting the marginalization of local cultural actors who were overshadowed by mobilized producers and targeted primarily at national and European decision-makers, tourists, and investors.

« les producteurs mobilisés (chef d'entreprises), les destinataires privilégiés (décideurs nationaux et européens pour la désignation, puis touristes et investisseurs pour la mise en œuvre), tout comme les modalités de l'action publique employées (marketing urbain) ont marginalisé les acteurs culturels locaux » (Maisetti, 2014).

The marginalization of cultural actors' representations and interests is furthermore proven by Maisetti, through the empirical evidence of the inherent conflicts woven into the fabric of the urban cultural enterprise, which subsequently manifest in the form of dissent aimed at the Capital project. These dissenting expressions underscore the underlying struggles pertaining to the fundamental discourse of urban identity construction through cultural channels. The dynamic between the initiators of the candidacy and the artistic community notably exhibits a distinct tenor, as examined in subsequent sections, characterized by the dichotomous quandary of instrumental participation versus the assertion of dissenting withdrawal. This dichotomous impasse finds succinct articulation through the testimony of a cultural institution's administrator:

“Je ne pense pas qu'il faille jeter le bébé avec l'eau du bain. Marseille, il y a quelque chose à comprendre au niveau de la culture populaire autour d'une forme de fantaisie un peu bordélique, qu'il ne faudrait pas mettre au pas non plus. S'il s'agit avec 2013 de faire une normalisation de ce qu'est un événement en Europe aujourd'hui, avec un Festival qui va bien, une expo qui va bien.. Dans les quartiers, il y a une imbrication du social et de l'artistique qui existe et qui est transcrit dans la candidature avec leurs deux axes, la Méditerranée d'un côté et la Cité Radieuse de l'autre Intellectuellement, c'est verbalisé, mais pas au niveau des programmes. Mais au milieu de tout ça, tu as toutes ces polémiques politiques et cette déconnection entre les technocrates de Marseille-Provence 2013 et les associations.” (Maisetti, 2013)

Notably, the dominance of economic elites in shaping the cultural landscape during the ECOC programme led to a selection of cultural actors driven by economic considerations and international appeal, thereby excluding those who did not meet such standards. This observation aligns with the sentiments expressed by a collaborator of the CCI MP president, who candidly acknowledged the marginalization of certain cultural actors, stating:

“On ne va pas à jouer la Champion's League avec un équipe de division d'honneur” (Maisetti, 2014).

The analogy underscores the inherent challenges faced by cultural actors lacking the economic resources and international reputation akin to play an international role in the cultural scenario under the ECOC framework.

Consequently, some local artists and community representatives felt alienated from the policy choices surrounding the cultural programme, leading to protests and alternative forms of representation. The marginalization of certain cultural actors due to an international-economic focus raises pertinent questions about the true inclusivity and representation of Marseille's diverse cultural expressions within the framework of the ECOC initiative.

A line of thought enlarged by Buslacchi as follows:

“The concept of culture embraced during Marseille-Provence 2013 was heavily influenced by economic interests and geared towards attracting an international middle-class tourist audience. The direction of the project was primarily shaped by actors such as the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Marseille-Provence (CCI MP) and other economic-political interests, who were detached from the local cultural circles of Marseille. This approach did not prioritize the enhancement of alternative cultural forms or support for cultural actors closely associated with social associations” (M.E. Buslacchi, personal interview with the author, July 2023).

The frustration experienced by cultural actors was also exacerbated by an arguable economic policy. On one hand, the municipal authorities implemented budget cuts to the cultural sector, reducing the allocation of public economic resources by up to 15% as decided by the city council in June 2009 (Ville de Marseille, 2009). On the other hand, substantial amounts of money were allocated to finance selected events within the Marseille-Provence 2013 programme.

An illustrative example of the administration's inclination to support artists with international appeal can be seen in the decision to engage internationally renowned artist, David Guetta, despite his lack of connection to the local artistic environment in Marseille. This decision was accompanied by a substantial budget allocation, as a contract was signed in December 2012 between the municipality and the event organizer, Adam Concert, amounting to 400,000 euros. The city council subsequently approved this budget on December 10, 2012. The decision to allocate such a significant budget to this artist, without ensuring free or subsidized access for local citizens, inevitably elicited reactions and concerns among the community (Bosse-Platière, 2013).

Notably, the mobilization against this decision was spearheaded by Lionel Corsini, a prominent local DJ known as DJ Oil, who emerged as a key figure in organizing protests and advocating for a more inclusive and representative cultural experience. The grassroots movement named "*Commando Anti-23 Juin*" quickly gained traction through various channels, both online and physical demonstrations. Utilizing social media platforms and public gatherings, the movement rapidly amassed over 20,000 supporters. The primary objective was to shed light on the discrepancy between the lavish budget allocated to an international artist and the perceived neglect of local artists and cultural actors who epitomized the city's diverse and vibrant artistic fabric. The *Commando Anti-23 Juin's* momentum was further bolstered by a petition campaign, which successfully garnered an impressive 70,000 signatures in opposition to the disproportionately high budget allocation for the David Guetta's performance. In response to the mounting pressure and the prevailing public sentiment, David Guetta eventually reconsidered his original plans and decided against performing in the initially allocated area (*Le Parc Borély*). Instead, he chose a smaller venue (*Le Dome*), ostensibly in response to the concerns expressed by the local community through the mobilization efforts of the *Commando Anti-23 Juin* (Maisetti, 2014).

Indeed, the lack of free or affordable access to the concert, despite the availability of public funds, presents a clear contradiction with the objective of inclusivity that was originally set out. By not offering accessible ticket pricing, the event organizers effectively excluded the economically disadvantaged segments of the population from participating in the cultural experience. This contradicts the 1998 directive of the Ministry of Culture, which emphasizes that structures receiving

public funds should practice pricing that is affordable to all, considering the financial contributions from the state and other partners (Bosse-Platière, 2013):

« La structure doit pratiquer des tarifs accessibles à tous les publics, compte tenu des financements apportés par l'État et les autres partenaires »

The case of the David Guetta's concert was only the beginning of a larger cultural/artistic mobilization that looked at the ECOC as a commercial, economic-driven initiative that was excluding the core artistic scenario of the *ville phocéenne*. A trend that was at times defined as a deculturalization attempt towards the artistic panorama of the city, describing the cultural year as a diversion:

Et à Marseille, en 2013 [...] la Culture, ce n'est en vérité qu'un prétexte à la modernisation, au lancement de grands travaux, à l'accroissement du tourisme. C'est un cache-sexe qui, pour un an, fera se porter les regards là où il faut, tout en faisant méticuleusement oublier le reste — une aubaine à un an des municipales (Avérous, 2013).

These perceptions will lead to the articulation of different forms of protests vesiculated through different channels both official and unofficial, radical and institutional.

Akhenaton, leader of the IAM hip hop group, at the centre of that urban culture present in Marseille, started articulating its discontent generated from the selective funding process, through media channel. In particular, in an interview with *Le Point* said:

"Il y a (dans Marseille-Provence 2013, ndlr) une forme très triste d'ultra-snobisme provincial qui est horripilante", assène le rappeur Akhenaton, du groupe IAM, regrettant que "Marseille tourne le dos à ses enfants les plus talentueux" (Le Point, 2013)

Minna Sif, a French Moroccan novelist of success, shared a similar perspective on Marseille's cultural program. According to her, the program lacked any genuine essence of Marseille's culture. She criticized the exclusion of key local cultural actors, with the hip hop scene being the most striking example:

"Le programme est vidé de toute essence marseillaise. Les acteurs principaux de la vie culturelle locale ont été tenus à l'écart et l'exemple du hip hop est le plus sidérant (...) à Marseille, on a un rap intellectuel, politique, féroce, tendre et comique (...) Pour moi, MP2013, ce n'est pas de la culture : c'est un parcours fléché pour touristes en goguette" (Le Point, 2013)

The discontent expressed by various cultural stakeholders in Marseille stems from the perceived marginalization of the city's ethnically diverse populace and its vibrant hip-hop culture within the

official program of MP2013. Despite the significant social and artistic contributions made by these communities, their narratives reflecting urban poverty, violence, and corruption were seemingly overlooked and excluded from the curated cultural offerings of the European Capital of Culture initiative. This exclusion has raised concerns among local artists, intellectuals, and activists, who argue that the omission of such crucial cultural expressions undermines the authenticity and inclusivity of the cultural program and narrows its focus to a more commercially oriented and tourism-driven agenda (Giovanangeli, 2015).

A thought enlarged also by Maisetti (2013) affirming that in defiance of their substantive role in shaping the civic milieu, the cultural stratum in Marseille confronts a confluence of paradoxical directives emanating from the local power structures. While their prominence is underscored within the purview of communication policies, their presence within the institutions entrusted with the formulation of cultural policies remains conspicuously underrepresented. Notwithstanding the fact that the attainment of the European Capital of Culture designation was lauded by the evaluative jury as emblematic of a « *d'un équilibre réussi entre qualité culturelle, engagement politique et soutien économique* » the stakeholders operating within the cultural domain found themselves, right from the project's inception, inadequately engaged, thereby substantiating the emergence of a pervasive sense of marginalization.

2. The institutional resistance, the Off and the “Yes we camp” initiative

The protest and the resistance, articulated in different shapes, were animated by a different concept of making and thinking to culture. In the case of Marseille-Provence, the resistance and critics can be categorized into two kinds of resistance, an institutional and a more radical one. In this paragraph I will analyse the institutional one, that organized itself through a series of Offs initiative, by given birth to a sort of counterpart of the 2013 European Capital of Culture.

The origins of the Off movement date back to 2004, when three graphic designers from Marseille, in a moment when the municipality had not applied for the ECOC 2013 edition yet, deposited the label Marseille 2013, profiting of the possibility of *la ville phocéenne* to become the next capital of culture and to propose an alternative vision of culture and its expression. This initial provocation, that later on would become also a real legal controversy, in 2011 took a more official and institutional shape, with the publishing of *l'Appel du Vallon des Auffes* marking the first time of the institution of an Off in the history of the ECOC programme. The *Appel* contemplates the role of the European Capital of Culture as a catalyst for fostering novel artistic projects and nurturing emerging talents. Nevertheless, apprehensions arise regarding the potential marginalization of these ventures within the official

programming. As a countermeasure, the concept of an Off cultural initiative is introduced, aiming to provide a distinct platform for these artists to flourish during the 2013 European Capital of Culture celebration. This Off event intended to be an alternative, complementary space, enabling these creative forces to manifest their artistic vision and gain exposure alongside the main cultural program. In particular:

La Capitale européenne de la culture devrait permettre de faire émerger de nouveaux projets et de nouveaux artistes. Malheureusement, ceux-ci risquent de passer à la trappe dans la programmation officielle. Faire un OFF, c'est leur permettre L'avoir l'occasion d'exister en 2013. C'est pourquoi, nous lançons aujourd'hui un appel à projets en vue de réaliser la première capitale culturelle OFF. Nous souhaitons centrer notre OFF sur ce qui nous plaît et nous horripile en même temps dans la ville : ses paradoxes. Ville cosmopolite mais esprit villageois, ville urbaine mais verte, ville portuaire mais tournée vers l'intérieur, ville morte la nuit mais prochaine capitale européenne de la culture, ville qui désigne des élus mais qui est gouvernée par d'autres, ville de chaos urbain mais qui tend à la normalisation, ville incontrôlable mais prévisible, Ville monde mais qui ne pense qu'à Paris, ville raciste mais solidaire, ville repoussante mais attachante, Marseille nous séduit et nous révulse par ses multiples paradoxes. Elle agit en nous comme de visant qui aurait le plus et le moins sur le même côté. (Extract from le Vallon des Auffes)

The Off cultural initiatives in Marseille represent a complex and nuanced stance adopted by their proponents and organizers. These initiatives did not seek to challenge the legitimacy of the official leadership or the European Capital of Culture designation itself. Rather, their primary objective was to carve out a distinctive and independent space within the city's cultural landscape. In doing so, they assumed the role of mediators, bridging the gap between institutional entities and the diverse array of cultural actors operating in the city. The Off movement emerged as a deliberate effort to subvert the conventional top-down hierarchical structures that accompany the ECOC establishment. As a flagship cultural event designated by the European Union, the ECOC carries significant bureaucratic connotations, often leading to a centralized and predetermined cultural agenda. In contrast, the Offs aspire to foster a more bottom-up and participatory approach, granting local cultural actors' greater agency and influence in shaping the city's cultural discourse. At its core, the Off initiative embodied an alternative vision of culture in Marseille. This vision seek to challenge and transcend the dominant notions of culture that are reinforced through the formal ECOC designation process. By celebrating the city's artistic diversity and dynamism, the Offs emphasized a multifaceted cultural identity that extended beyond the confines of the official ECOC framework. This alternative perspective aimed to highlight the richness and complexity of Marseille's cultural expression. This approach represented a

conscious effort to democratize culture, making it more accessible and relevant to the lived experiences and aspirations of Marseille's residents (Maisetti, 2014).

« nous ne faisons pas un Off pour nous opposer au In, mais pour montrer une alternative, une autre manière de construire une capitale culturelle qui ressemble plus à notre image de la ville. »

(Eric Pringels , one of the Off founder on Cercle Progressiste Carnussien, 2011)

The idea was to show the real face of Marseille, comprehensive of its problems.

“Le In a décidé de tabler sur la Méditerranée ; nous avons dit qu’il y a autre chose dans cette ville qu’un horizon bleu, que Marseille a des problèmes et que cela fait partie de la ville. On en parle et donc on ne part pas du même point” (Off Conference de presse, 2012).

The colourful mosaic constituted by the Offs initiative, developed around four axes aimed at highlighting the paradoxes of the city, and putting artists at the centre of the territory (Giovannelli, 2015):

- 1 *Poubelle la ville (Marseille est laide, Marseille est belle)*
- 2 *Merguez Capitale (Marseille cosmopolite, Marseille est un village)*
- 3 *Kalashnikov (Marseille est inégalitaire, Marseille est solidaire)*
- 4 *Mytho city (Marseille se transforme, Marseille se la raconte)*

As it is easy to understand, the axes served as a platform for accentuating and commemorating the intricate and often contradictory characteristics that constitute the urban landscape. This encompasses aspects such as societal tension, unfamiliarity, and disorder, while also encompassing features like solidarity, cosmopolitanism, and enticement. This interpretive methodology delineates a novel portrayal of the city's cultural milieu by leveraging the inherent paradoxes. While the "In" events gravitated toward the Mediterranean motif, a discernibly facile thematic choice, the Off event unfurls an intricate mosaic of Marseilles' multifaceted countenance (Pateffoz, 2013).

This objective is achieved also through performances of lesser-known artists, that participated in the 12 months projects with an approximately number of fifteen events implemented by the Off. Among them, Yes We Camp is considered the one which reached a greater number of public and major success.

The Yes We Camp (YWC) project emerged as an experimental undertaking at the intersection of ecological considerations and performative architectural concepts, representing an innovative attempt to amalgamate ecological consciousness with experiential design principles. The architects driving this initiative, namely Olivier Bedu and Eric Pringels (also among the founders of the Off),

drew upon their respective ventures Cabanon Vertical and Natural Solutions, synthesizing environmental awareness and immersive design. Guiding the practical realization was urban economist Nicolas Détrie, orchestrating the physical manifestation of the project on the waterfront of Estaque neighbourhood in Marseille. The temporal trajectory of its construction spanned from January to April 2013, with its doors open to the public from May to September of the same year, followed by its dismantling in October 2013. Noteworthy is the fact that the campsite hosted an array of cultural events, encompassing a residency for 11 artists and accommodating an average of approximately 130 daily campers during the peak tourist season, which surged to nearly 800 attendees during cultural celebrations. Significantly transcending its architectural dimensions, the project exhibited a pronounced social facet. In addition to serving as a platform for youths engaged in professional and social (re)integration endeavours, it established symbiotic relationships with local communities to instigate cultural awareness among economically marginalized, often migrant populations as well as characterized by values of communal sharing, conviviality, and the confluence of heterogeneous societal segments (Siarheyeva, 2016).

The selection of Estaque as the backdrop for this endeavour is imbued with profound significance. Nestled within the 16th arrondissement, a component of the aforementioned Quartiers Nord, Estaque stands as a poignant emblem of the city of Marseille's industrial decline. In a conspicuous juxtaposition to the main event, the alternative Off initiative intentionally opted to situate one of its most compelling exhibitions precisely within the core of the city's most economically impoverished and socially marginalized precinct. This decision was further underscored by the deliberate inclusion of local artists who had been excluded from the official program, thereby infusing a nuanced narrative into the socio-cultural discourse of Marseille.

With the objective of repurposing and rejuvenating an abandoned industrial site and proposing an alternative to the upscale hotels in the Noailles district, the Yes We Camp initiative materialized as a direct challenge to the cultural and urban policies of Marseille within the framework of the 2013 European Capital of Culture. This endeavour illuminated the stark reality of neglected and vacant urban areas within Marseille and its peripheral suburban locales, towns, and villages, thereby presenting a stark juxtaposition to the official discourse and policy directives. By seeking to transform the negative perception of the site, showcasing its inherent value to nearby residents, engaging them in collective dynamics, and facilitating cultural enrichment for marginalized citizens, YWC orchestrated a series of cultural initiatives and projects within a location that had been conspicuously disregarded by the official cultural program of the European Capital of Culture. The campsite emerged as a response to a hitherto barren and underutilized landscape marked by limited facilities

and infrastructural deficiency. Positioned at the intersection of the urban, coastal, and mountainous dimensions, the campsite functioned as a microcosmic portrayal of Marseille, striving to encapsulate the multi-dimensional essence of the city as perceived by its inhabitants (Siarheyeva, 2016).

The enduring success of the initiative is underscored by the fact that Yes We Camp! stands out as one of the rare initiatives originating from the context of MP2013 that has persisted beyond the conclusion of the 2013 program. Over a span of a decade, Yes We Camp has undertaken the transformation of vacant urban spaces across cities such as Paris, Marseille, Lyon, and Martigues, converting them into experimental domains conducive to encounters and hospitality. This endeavour has been characterized by an intensified collaboration with local stakeholders, resulting in the creation of contextual environments that foster communal experiences, creativity, and knowledge acquisition.

Facilitated by robust partnerships with diverse associations and a steadfast commitment to pioneering practices, Yes We Camp conceives and actualizes bespoke hybrid spaces where a multitude of activities converge. This convergence facilitates interactivity and promotes a heightened sense of social awareness. These multifaceted spaces seamlessly integrate social, economic, artistic, and civic functions, catalysing cross-disciplinary interactions and cooperative achievements. While the distinctiveness of each project is acknowledged, the fundamental tenets underlying Yes We Camp's philosophy encompass attentive and receptive listening, a culture of welcoming hospitality, innovative ideation, harmonious coexistence dynamics, communal autonomy, and an underlying ethos of celebration. The organization's endeavours are underpinned by an aspirational vision of a more equitable, dynamic, and contented world. Despite confronting pressing societal challenges, the pragmatic realization of their initiatives yields a palpable sense of gratification and delight, infusing their work with a sense of purpose and collective happiness (De Procé, 2021).

In an interview with Marion Tissot, one of the architects working inside the association YWC, the social and inclusive feature of the project is better understandable. Each initiative is driven by the willingness of giving space for expression and representation of those that very often do not have one.

On vient d'horizons différents mais on se retrouve tous sur des valeurs communes – l'accueil, l'hospitalité, l'inclusion etc. – qu'on place au cœur de nos projets. Chacun de nous défend des valeurs sociales, de vivre-ensemble. Tous ces points communs, on s'en sert pour créer des espaces d'expressions pour des gens qui n'en ont pas forcément. Dans les milieux urbains très denses, on trouve peu d'espaces pour les personnes vulnérables. Notre cœur de métier, c'est d'occuper ces interstices dans des bâtiments délaissés. On fait en sorte que des associations intègrent ces espaces et apportent du liant entre les personnes qui vivent autour. (Tissot in De Procé, 2021).

The subject of analysis pertains to a distinct experiential context, which unequivocally elucidates the foundational imperatives of inclusivity and community engagement. It is germane to delve into the intricate trajectory by which this phenomenon transpired, characterized by an informal modality of execution. This notable departure from formal conventions assumes particular significance in light of the pervasive bureaucratic encumbrances often encountered within the framework of the European Capital of Culture, that could undermine such modality. It is intriguingly paradoxical that the present case study, marked by its alignment with the programmatic guidelines and objectives stipulated within the 2013 Marseille-Provence (MP 2013) program and application dossier, demonstrates a heightened degree of adherence and attainment relative to the "In" project.

Notably, the impetus for inclusiveness finds expression in several salient dimensions. The deliberate selection of a venue situated within one of the city's socioeconomically marginalized sectors underscores a conscientious effort to foster inclusivity by spatially engaging with underserved communities. Additionally, the modality of artistic expression, characterized by its nomadic and unbounded nature, further accentuates the project's resonance with the quintessential attributes that have historically defined Marseille. This locale, emblematic of a cosmopolitan crossroads and characterized by a spirited and anarchic maritime identity, serves as a fecund ground for the gestation of these distinctive artistic and communal tendencies.

3. The radical resistance, Capitale de la Ropture and the FRIC

Having duly scrutinized an instance exemplifying institutional resistance, it becomes pertinent to acknowledge the existence of divergent modes of resistance that manifested within the contours of the MP 2013 initiative. Notably, the phenomenon of socio-cultural exclusion precipitated the emergence of a movement that assumed a decidedly more radical form of expression. This particular movement was characterized by its inclination to vehemently repudiate the perceived deprivation of representation and participatory engagement within the context of the ECOC.

Central to the ethos of this movement was an overt rejection of the extant model for cultural representation and engagement, as articulated by the official stakeholders of the MP 2013 initiative. This movement's ideological framework revolved around an unyielding dissent that encapsulated their profound objection to the prevailing mechanisms of cultural expression and praxis. In contrast to seeking negotiation or accommodation, their approach was one of uncompromising critique, resonating with an ardent refusal to align with the prescribed norms of cultural engagement.

The first example of this kind of more radical resistance is the reportage "*Capitale de la rupture*" (2013). The documentary can be inserted in the wider context of the resistance and protest to the

European Capital of Culture year, and it is not a case that appears the mention to “*La rabia del pueblo*” in the titles. This was a collective of artists created in 2004 in the Noailles district of Marseille -also known as “*le ventre de Marseille*” due to its position in the hearth of the city within the 1st arrondissement- historic neighbourhood inhabited by a strong Maghreb community and characterized by degraded buildings, the absence of both a primary school and a social centre, it was furthermore estimated that 80% of Noailles’ population is eligible for social housing (Gilles, 2016). The movement, started its activity precisely in this neighbourhood, since in that year, the only cultural centre welcoming the artists of the area, *la Maison de David*, was closed. From there, the collective was present in every key moment of the social and cultural life of *la ville phocéenne*, from the riots of the banlieues in 2005, to students’ protests on occasion of the introduction of *contrat première embauche*⁸.

The documentary starts from the Euroméditerranée project, and through a zoom effect, it delves into the urban renewal operations, particularly centred on the *rue de la République*. Testimonies collected from various sources shed light on what is described as the «*la mise au pas*» of the city, orchestrated by this ambitious urban renovation endeavour. The documentary employs a speech collection technique, combining anonymized remarks, where only hands and bodies are visible, and statements from representatives of associations advocating for the protection of residents' interests. The critical analysis of the urban operation resonates with existing research-action findings and the in-depth knowledge offered by local residents' associations, thereby revealing the multifaceted consequences of this project. Central to the critique is the transformation of the city centre into a space primarily catering to business centres, tourists, and the middle classes. Interestingly, the film later addresses the cultural aspect of the operation. An anonymous interviewee points out that all elements, including the desire to alter the city's "image" by developers, the concentration of large retailers, the emergence of art galleries, and the presence of police and repression against undocumented migrants, are interconnected in shaping the city's cultural landscape. This portrayal of the city's preparation for cultural events as a marketing operation, complete with branding, logos, and discourse, is situated within a broader framework of standardization prevalent in Marseille. Another testimony emphasizes the intertwined nature of urban requalification and the economic instrumentalization of culture, critiquing the limited representation of culture as an industrial sector functioning as a "*cheval de Troie spectaculaire de l'arrivée de l'économie et de la civilisation pacifiée dont ils rêvent.*" This particular conception of culture, attributed to the proponents of Operation Capitale, is viewed as an expression

⁸ The *contrat première embauche* was a type of undetermined-duration work contract aimed at people under the age of 26 that was mandated by Article 8 of the law titled "*pour l'égalité des chances*" but never implemented due to the massive national mobilization against the contract in 2006.

of violence and a threat to another form of culture « *la culture du métissage, des langues qui se parlent, des manières de vivre, des coutumes et des traditions* » (Arkana, 2013).

Within the myriad narratives captured in the documentary, a particularly significant perspective emerges from the discourse of the manager of "Le Point de Bascule", Françoise. This narrative affords valuable insight into the reverberations and disillusionment encountered by certain cultural agents as a direct outcome of the European Capital of Culture (ECOC) initiative in 2013.

In the context of an interview, François, initiates discourse by emphasizing the distinctive *modus operandi* embraced by the organization. He elucidates that their establishment constitutes a unique locus characterized by an almost unconditioned disposition toward accommodating individuals immersed in alternative cultural and civic undertakings. This organizational disposition, François contends, emanates from an entrenched commitment to an inherently radical ethos that prioritizes resource optimization within the confines of their available means. Evidencing foresight, the organization deliberately abstained from pursuing financial subsidies from its inception, opting for a nuanced strategy hinging upon a deliberate cultivation of instability. This stratagem has defined their trajectory over a span of six years. The confluence of purposeful instability has notably exerted a salient impact upon the organization's trajectory within this temporal continuum. However, after having experience more serious economic problems, and especially in the light of the obtention of the label ECOC, François asked for help to institutions:

« On a un petit problème de trésorerie pour payer des loyers et on a fait appel aux institutions pratiquement pour la première fois. On a eu un refus total, donc nous on se retrouve en 2013 avec une activité débordante ici et une grosse productivité vue qu'on est tous bénévoles et où on demande de l'aide et on a 0 euro pour débiter l'année. Forcément, alors nous on met un petit acteur culturel et social et citoyenne de de quartiers pratiquement donc ce n'est pas très important je dirais mais nous ça nous semble très symbolique par rapport à l'année 2013 telle qu'elle s'annonce depuis deux ans et telle que elles viennent de de débiter et il y a une grosse probabilité qu'on ferme ici définitivement au bout de sept ans d'activité en tant que dégâts collatéral de 2013. »

(Arkana, 2013)

Conversely, within the domain of non-institutional resistance, a distinct form of opposition emerges in the form of the phenomenon labeled as FRIC (*Front des Réfractaires contre l'Intoxication par la Culture*), an assemblage characterized by self-identification as an « *Un collectif informel et à géométrie variable* » (Alouti, 2013). These individuals utilized video clips as a medium to articulate their opposition to the ongoing urban transformations within Marseille, particularly in the context of the cultural initiatives of the year. Adorned in balaclavas and employing vocal modulation to

obfuscate their identities, these participants vociferously decry the impending repercussions of urban revitalization initiatives on the socioeconomically disadvantaged working-class enclaves nestled in the heart of the city. In elucidating their concerns and critiques through the aforementioned mode of expression, the members of the group assert a deliberate recourse to historical and political antecedents.

« C'est une référence aux zapatistes du Chiapas. Dans les années 1980, ces indigènes mexicains se sont battus pour conserver leurs terres agricoles. Ils ont dit 'Nous les indigènes, nous sommes invisibles, nous allons donc nous masquer pour devenir visibles » (Alouti, 2013)

In an interview granted to the French cultural publication *Les Inrockuptibles*, members of the FRIC delineate their perspective on the cultural capital year as follows:

“une opération qui parachève le traitement infligé à cette ville . L'objectif étant «de se débarrasser de la moitié de la population » pour entériner la renaissance économique de la ville. On dénonce la culture comme un outil d'aménagement du territoire mis au service du monde économique« (...) Au lieu de s'appuyer sur le savoir-faire des Marseillais, ils font venir des gens de l'extérieur, s'agace le plus bavard. Il y a une espèce d'angélisme de l'artiste qui débarque pour n'apporter que le Meilleur” (Alouti, 2013).

Having identified a notable trend wherein a significant portion of cultural initiatives are being situated within zones undergoing urban revitalization, the link between culture and economics was discernible to them without much difficulty. This pursuit of pecuniary advantage, which they vehemently censure in their disseminated statements, presented in the form of internet-hosted videos, serves as a focal point of their critique. Within these video communications, they bring attention to the perceived "disregard" exhibited by local governing bodies towards the inhabitants of Marseille, as well as the deliberate implementation of a "strategy of degradation." This strategic approach involves the abandonment of residents in socioeconomically challenged neighbourhoods to better accommodate the interests of real estate developers. This distinctive urban dynamic is rooted in the fact that, in contrast to several other urban centres in France, the central region of Marseille stands as a testament to socio-cultural diversity and maintains its identity as a vibrant and inclusive locality (Alouti, 2013).

Both the initiation of the "off" initiative and the radical protest movements unmistakably underscore a substantial disparity between the choices taken and the aspirations and imperatives of local cultural stakeholders. Moreover, when we scrutinize the "Yes We camp" endeavour, it can be exemplified as a case study illustrating how an undertaking, liberated from the manifold interests and pressures that conspicuously permeated every stage of the European Capital of Culture (ECOC) 2013, has proven

to be more congruent with the requirements of local cultural stakeholders and decidedly more aligned with the overarching objectives of inclusivity for marginalized communities, as articulated in the initial bid.

Conclusion

Starting from the example of a cultural megaevent, namely the 2013 edition of the European Capital of Culture Marseille Provence, this thesis addressed the research question:

Why were policy choices that gave limited attention to socio-cultural inclusion made?

In the case of Marseille, a city profoundly affected by the vicissitudes of industrialization, wherein poverty, social tensions, and criminality regrettably constitute recurrent motifs, the prospect of hosting such a prestigious cultural event garnered the attention and aspirations of diverse stakeholders. Antecedent to Marseille's bid to host the 2013 ECOC, the city was already in the throes of a comprehensive urban transformation aimed squarely at rejuvenating its urban fabric. This monumental endeavour, underwritten by the economic elite, was spearheaded by the Euromediterranée initiative, which has been shaping Marseille's urban identity since its inception in 1995. A transformation which came often at the expense of preserving an authentic and cohesive architectural character, generating resistance as in the case of the protests that ensued in response to expropriations along *Rue de la République*.

Significantly, many of the same actors and proponents involved in these urban regeneration initiatives, notably the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Marseille-Provence, subsequently developed a keen interest in harnessing the potential of the ECOC for the city. Their fervent commitment to dominating the ECOC proceedings emanated from their desire to further catalyse the ongoing urban renewal efforts in Marseille and impart an international dimension to the city, positioning it among the world's top 20 cities. Realizing this aspiration necessitated the attraction of international investors, which, in turn, entailed the deliberate creation of a new urban identity that could supplant certain local customs and habits perceived as incompatible with international appeal.

In this particular contextual milieu, the CCI MP, an influential interest group of considerable power, adeptly facilitated the catalysis of the candidature bid and actively shaped the choice making processes.. This came also at the expenses of the realm of politics which found itself distanced and estranged. In fact, while politics undeniably played an indispensable role in shepherding the ECOC candidacy through the bureaucratic labyrinth and securing the coveted designation, its continued presence was viewed with apprehension and perceived as potentially destabilizing. In this delicate balance, it was seen as “*une presence indispensable mais [qui devait maintenir] une silence impératif*” (Maisetti, 2015).

This imposition of the economic elite's interests was first and foremost achieved in the urban interventions in the Vieux Port-La Joliette area. An operation characterized by a strong internationalization effort clear already from the choice of the architect in charge of conducting such renovation. Despite the innovative and well-welcomed from the population project of the marseillaise Corinne Vezzoni, Foster and partners' more internationally spendable and known firm was chosen. The project characterized by a strong internationalization that was strongly criticized both for the absence of gathering places, by adopting hostile architectural equipment to contrast poverty and vagrancy, and for the unrelated architectural language:

“On rase, on aplanit, on pave. Une architecture anglo-saxonne, belle au demeurant, mais qui ne tient pas compte du contexte : elle n'a, pour ainsi dire, rien de méditerranéen [...] Le Nouveau Vieux-Port de Foster, c'est le symbole de la mise à l'encan de l'identité phocéenne. Car pour exister parmi les grandes métropoles européennes, la ville doit oublier ce qu'elle est et se travestir”
(Avérous, 2013).

Furthermore, an unmistakable manifestation of the influence exerted by the economic elite is discernible in choices surrounding cultural projects situated in peripheral areas—a focal point explicitly outlined in the Cultural Capital Year's mandate. In the case examined within the purview of the third chapter, notably the *Jardins Possibles* initiative, a discernible dearth of concerted efforts towards fostering inclusion and engendering a substantive impact on local communities becomes apparent. Commencing with the decision of setting the venue of the project, which relegated it to an ephemeral existence due to the fact it would have been impacted by the works of a highway construction. Furthermore, key stakeholders exhibited a palpable indifference towards the entreaties and recommendations emanating from local residents and associations, as a consequence the decisions undertaken in this context did little to mitigate the fractures within the social fabric of the neighbourhood. Notably, no endeavours were made to facilitate access for marginalized individuals to the events predominantly situated in the hypercenter of the city, with no provision for shuttle services or viable transportation connections for northern residents.

Moreover, this particular approach permeated other domains within the framework of the European Capital of Culture (ECOC) program, particularly in the realm of choices made by cultural actors. The overarching criterion guiding the selection process primarily revolved around the potential candidate's international allure, rather than a comprehensive assessment of their intrinsic cultural contributions. This cosmetic orientation, regrettably, detracted from the authentic valorisation of Marseille's rich cultural offerings, which, in some instances, were perceived as incongruent with the internationally projected image sought by the city. Specifically, the domains of rap and hip-hop

music, as well as the influences stemming from North African and Levantine migrants, which significantly enrich the city's cultural landscape, found themselves marginalized from official representation due to their perceived association with Marseille's internationally recognized characteristics of criminal activity and robust immigration—a characterization that the city's internationalization endeavours were striving to shed.

In contrast, the resistance depicted in the final chapter underscored the viability of an alternative approach to the European Capital of Culture (ECOC) initiative and highlighted how the decisions taken had led to a substantial portion of the population, particularly within the cultural sphere, experiencing disillusionment and marginalization. The example of Yes We Camp serves as a tangible embodiment of an alternative cultural expression, one diverging from the trajectory charted by the official MP2013 label, able to welcome the excluded in force of the international appeal criteria dominating the selection process.

The motivation behind those choices, and in particular the reason why such a poor attention was put in place towards socio-cultural inclusion, must be found, as is it now evincible from the content of this master's thesis, in the interest upon which all the choices made throughout the application and implementation phases of the ECOC 2013 edition were made. The exclusion was the result of the incapability of both actors, and projects, to be useful and instrumental to reaching the international objectives that the economic elites embodied both by the CCI MP and the club *Mécènes du Sud*, as well as some political actors, that has been the true driver of Marseille's candidacy.

The ultimate outcome portrays a city eager to seize a second chance on the global stage, shedding the weighty mantle of preconceptions laden with associations of criminality, insecurity, and decline that have, for too many years, been inextricably linked to Marseille's name. The designation as the European Capital of Culture represented a remarkable opportunity, one that held the promise of revitalizing the cultural milieu inhabiting the vibrant tapestry of *la Porte de l'Orient*. Simultaneously, it offered the potential for transforming the region into a prosperous landscape, replete with critical infrastructural developments capable of ameliorating the precarious conditions brought about by poverty and exclusion, particularly evident in the northern districts of the city.

A decade after, the legacy of this event reveals a city that has experienced a resurgence in tourism, yet concurrently witnessed an escalation in social tensions and disparities also fostered by the arbitrariness of choices in terms of architectural language and the lack of effort put in socio-cultural inclusive policies. The nexus of interests among business and real estate magnates, bolstered by the acquiescence of a stagnant political establishment, led to the forfeiture of a substantial portion of the cultural (and social) development potential that the ECOC 2013 was poised to generate.

Particularly noteworthy is the recent shift in municipal leadership, characterized by the ascendance of left-wing environmentalists associated with the *Printemps Marseillais* movement, following a more than two-decade reign under the leadership of Jean-Claude Gaudin. This transition has engendered a glimmer of hope for change among the residents of Marseille, which alongside MP 2013 collateral initiatives, such as Yes We Camp, and the concerted efforts of select cultural actors who managed to garner attention and mobilize support, have transformed Marseille into an extraordinary epicentre of vitality—a capital situated in an awe-inspiring region, bathed in the azure hues of the Mediterranean and sea enriched by the fragrant essence of lavender fields.

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