

**Claiming Marseille Metropolis.
A Diachronic Study on Urban Representation
and Metropolitanism in (Post-)Colonial Marseille, 1906 and 2013**

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To Apa

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1. Introduction

1.1. Claiming Marseille Metropolis: Research Context and Problematization

When I was a historical urban studies graduate student, in the 2010s, I first encountered the sunny, chaotic, and exciting city of Marseille. At that time, a widespread advertising campaign prevailed in the landscape of the city center, promoting the latest urban development measures: the creation of the *Métropole Aix-Marseille-Provence*. Together with the encompassing Provence region, Marseille was about to be integrated into a polycentric metropolitan area. Along with this came a progress-oriented discourse, full of promises for the future. For instance, the new metropolis in the making had already been selected as the 2013 European Capital of Culture, a title of great material and representational significance. In Marseille, the largest urban core of the *Métropole*, massive regeneration projects were running under the slogan *Accélérateur de métropole*, too. Overall, the city was about to experience a renaissance, a revival in metropolitan terms.

However, the terminology of the contemporary urban developments recalled another metropolitan existence of Marseille in the nineteenth and twentieth century: the colonial metropole. This title represented the greatest port of the French Colonial Empire,¹ which had once been the prosperous commercial and industrial center of the modern nation-state. Back then, the city's prosperity and international significance were affirmed with this very term: *métropole*.

This similarity got me wondering and I was curious where these legacies bore traces from the past in this contemporary renaissance. As I looked into the urban history literature on Marseille, I found rich accounts on the city's role and function during the French colonial era.²

¹ The French Colonial Empire existed from the sixteenth century onwards, up until 1980: Melvin Eugene Page and Penny M. Sonnenburg, *Colonialism: An International, Social, Cultural, and Political Encyclopedia* (ABC-CLIO, 2003), 214–218.

² See for instance: Paul A. Amargier and Philippe Joutard, *Histoire de Marseille en treize événements* (Marseille: J. Laffitte, 1988); Pascal Blanchard and Gilles Boëtsch, eds., *Marseille, Porte Sud 1905–2005* (Paris: Découverte, 2005); Ian Coller, “The Republic of Marseille and the Making of Imperial France,” in *Place and*

These generally acknowledged the city's suitability to be called a metropole, i.e. as a single, historically grown, big city with a core function within the imperial system. Other works engaged in great details with the city's contemporary urban planning and the urban geography, culture and governance of the new metropolis.³ This was described as a legally installed, polycentric and heterogeneous, both urban and rural, spatial composition.

In light of the divergences between the respective definitions of the metropolis, the repetition of the same urban terminology seemed surprising: Why has the concept of the metropolis been constitutive of Marseille's urban representation throughout modern history and up until today? Why did the same word “metropolis” describe two significantly different understandings of Marseille, over a century apart? How could a city, which had been affirmed as a flagship of the human and ideological tragedy of colonialism through the term “metropolis,” possibly be promoted as such in the present-day? Why choose a term with such a problematic heritage?

In the attempts to go after these inquiries, I set out to write the apparently first comprehensive problematization of the continuity of the metropolitan representation in Marseille, as well as the meanings and breaks of its recurrence.

With these empirical question marks, I turned to urban theory in order to examine what the functional definition of a metropolis was. In doing so, it quickly became evident that the

Locality in Modern France, ed. Philipp Whalen and Patrick Young (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014), 3–14; Xavier Daumalin, *Marseille et l'Ouest africain: l'Outre-mer des industriels, 1841-1956* (Marseille: Chambre de Commerce et d'Industrie Marseille-Provence, 1992); Pierre Gallocher, *Marseille. zigzags dans le passé*, vol. 3 (Marseille: P. Tacussel, 1993); Marcel Roncayolo, *L'imaginaire de Marseille, port, ville, pôle*, vol. 5, *Histoire du commerce et de l'industrie de Marseille XIXe-XXe siècles* (Lyon: ENS Éditions, 1990); Yael Simpson Fletcher, “‘Capital of the Colonies’: Real and Imagined Boundaries between Metropole and Empire in 1920s Marseilles,” in *Imperial Cities: Landscape, Display and Identity*, by Felix Driver and David Gilbert (Manchester University Press, 1999), 136–154; Emile Temime, *Histoire de Marseille* (Marseille: Jeanne Laffitte, 2006).

³ See for instance: André Donzel, *Marseille, l'expérience de La Cité* (Paris: Anthropos: Diffusion, Economica, 1998); André Donzel, ed., *Métropolisation, Gouvernance Et Citoyenneté Dans La Région Urbaine Marseillaise* (Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 2001); Nicolas Maisetti, *Marseille, Ville Du Monde. L'internationalisation d'une Métropole Morcelée* (Paris: Editions Karthala, 2017); Bernard Morel, *Marseille. Naissance d'une métropole* (Paris: Editions L'Harmattan, 2000); Marcel Roncayolo, *Les grammaires d'une ville : Essai sur la genèse des structures urbaines à Marseille* (Paris: Editions de l'École des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, 1996).

term lacked a systematic definition.⁴ In fact, the term “metropolis” has undergone a significant conceptual and theoretical evolution over time and within urban scholarship. Regarding the terminology, a wide range of linguistic expressions and meanings exists: From the metropole, both as a colonial city-type and/or a core imperial nation-state in opposition to its colonies, over the metropolis as the iconic urban form of Western modernity, to a label for city marketing and urban branding strategies or new governance modes. Even more so, the constitutive features of what is considered *metropolitan* have experienced great definitional and functional shifts throughout history. In fact, the metropolis is more than a fixed spatial unit; rather, it is an urban concept which produced and is reproduced through discursive and material representations and practices. Moreover, the non-fixity of the term affords it a purchase and a potential for instrumentalization, depending on the context it serves in.

The state of the field therefore led to the following theoretical research questions: How can the term “metropolis” be functionalized in urban theory despite significant contextual, definitional and functional shifts throughout history? In a globalized and post-colonial age, what does the dissemination of an urban concept with deep imperialist connotations imply? How and by whom can it be approached and deconstructed critically in a postcolonial perspective?

Overall, these both empirical and theoretical inquiries set the grounds for the research project at hand. It investigates different conceptions of the metropolis in Marseille over time, while questioning the theoretical concept of the metropolis, its definitions, uses, and shortcomings. In order to engage with the research questions, I conduct a comparative study of the status of Marseille as the “colonial metropole” of the French Colonial Empire at the beginning of the twentieth century and of the twenty-first century image of the *Métropole Aix-*

⁴ Basaldua-Sun, Sophia. “An Interdisciplinary Look at Metropolitanisms.” *Journal of Urban Cultural Studies* 5, no. 1 (2018): 73; Brantz, Dorothee, Sasha Disko, and Georg Wagner-Kyora. “Thick Space: Approaches to Metropolitanism.” In *Thick Space: Approaches to Metropolitanism*, edited by Dorothee Brantz, Sasha Disko, and Georg Wagner-Kyora, 11. Bielefeld: Transcript, 2012.

Marseille-Provence. I aim to find out what features of the metropolis can be identified in different time periods respectively, who or which instances defined them, and for what purpose. For this sake, I chose to focus on two major representative events, which significantly contributed to producing and disseminating the images and function of a metropolis in their respective historical context: the first National Colonial Exposition of France in Marseille in 1906 on the one hand, and the *European Capital of Culture* “Marseille-Provence 2013” on the other hand. I elaborate on the selection and analytical articulation of these case studies in part 1.3 *Conceptual Approach and Case Studies*. Beforehand, in the following, a quick overview of metropolitan scholarship lays out the theoretical framework in which this project navigates and helps pointing at the research desiderata, to which it aims to contribute.

1.2. Theoretical Framework

Metropolitan studies constitute the main theoretical and conceptual frame of reference for this investigation. This interdisciplinary field brings together approaches of critical urban theory, urban history, cultural studies, urban sociology and urban governance, which will interplay throughout this work and inform the examination respectively. The following pages start by presenting the term and conceptualizations of the metropolis in the literature.

Referencing a classical approach to engaging with the metropolis, I consider the etymological origins of the word, which stems from Ancient Greek “metera” (the mother) and “polis” (the city), the Mother-City. Traditionally translated as “the city,” the “polis” represented the political sphere of ancient urban societies.⁵ Hence, it referred to the space where power structures were negotiated, where governments and administrations articulated, and where urban communities were regulated. Therefore, according to the urban scholars Ignacio Farias and Susanne Stemmler, it is the combination of issues of power and the urban space that the term “metropolis” expresses.⁶ Complementarily, as the authors mention, the image of the mother invokes the “origins of something,”⁷ that is, without the child, the mother is no mother; the child is necessary to existence as such. In this sense, the “mother” conveys a notion that does not stand for itself, but rather is defined through a relational character. Accordingly, the concept of the metropolis exists in relationship and in interdependence to (a) constitutive counter-part(s); it is the center, which needs the periphery in order to exist as such.

⁵ Manuel Delgado, *El Animal Público: Hacia Una Antropología de Los Espacios Urbanos* (Barcelona: Editorial Anagrama, 1999).

⁶ Ignacio Farias and Susanne Stemmler, “Deconstructing ‘Metropolis,’” in *Thick Space. Approaches to Metropolitanism*, ed. Dorothee Brantz, Sasha Disko, and Georg Wagner-Kyora (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2012), 49–66.

⁷ Geoffrey Bennington and Jacques Derrida, *Jacques Derrida* (Madrid: Cátedra, 1994).

The Imperial Metropolis and Postcolonial Approaches

In the West, the term has been in use since thousands of years. From the political center in the Antiquity, it became the seat of dioceses in the Middle Ages.

From the nineteenth century onwards, the terms “colonial metropole/metropolis” or “imperial metropole/metropolis” were used in Western empires to define their own imperial center as opposed to the colonial periphery. The term “imperial” referred explicitly to the hegemonic powers. “Colonial,” however, qualified the metropolis as the instance which dominated the colonies, i.e. the colonizing metropolis, the dominant core between the colonies. This appellation pointed to the manifestation of the culture imported from the colonies in the metropole as well. Through this process, the metropole itself was transformed into a colonial space.⁸

In Western empires, the term had a double meaning. In the French context, *la Métropole* signified Metropolitan France, i.e. the imperial nation-state as a whole. At the same time, it referred to individual cities, which had a particular function of centrality in the French Empire. This distinction is interesting, for it distances the metropolitan definition from a decidedly *urban* phenomenon. Rather, it draws primarily on the power dynamics represented by the concept: The metropolis was the controlling and decision making body at the center of the colonial network and it was defined by co-dependency and the asymmetrical power relationship between both counterparts.⁹ Notably, in Anglophone metropolitan theory, both the terms “metropolis” and “metropole” appear. However, “metropole” seems to be more common in works addressing colonial contexts and in postcolonial studies.¹⁰ In French however, both metropolitan types are called *métropole*.

⁸ Jennifer Anne Boittin, *Colonial Metropolis: The Urban Grounds of Anti-Imperialism and Feminism in Interwar Paris* (Lincoln (a.o.): University of Nebraska Press, 2015).

⁹⁹ Robert Rotenberg, “Metropolitanism and the Transformation of Urban Space in Nineteenth-Century Colonial Metropolises,” *American Anthropologist*, New Series, 103, no. 1 (March 1, 2001): 7–15.

¹⁰ See for instance : Basaldua-Sun, “An Interdisciplinary Look at Metropolitanisms.”

In these cities, the imperial social, cultural and ethnic identities were shaped. Through logics of “othering,”¹¹ it was the place where colonial alterity was produced and entertained. The colonial counter-image of the “Other” was crucial to the constitution and the existence of the metropolitan “Self.” This system of representation was constitutive of Western imperialist identity-building.¹² Hence, not only is the metropolis a relational concept, it is also a *binary* system of representation, articulated through opposing pairs, like the metropole versus the colonies, civilized citizens versus wild subjects, the “Self” versus the “Other.”

Scholars of postcolonial urban studies have criticized the hegemonic character of Western-centric typologies and rankings of cities, and suggested to take “a view from off the map”¹³ in order to not only study the Western centers of urban networks anymore.¹⁴ Architectural historian Sheila Crane praised this achievement by the architecture historian Zeynep Çelik, whose work challenges existing urban histories of colonialism, decentralizing the geographic focus of research, and considers the “lessons of postcolonial theory contesting the absolute oppositions embedded in the foundational mapping center and periphery, East and West.”¹⁵

These discussions importantly bring postcolonial perspectives to the forefront of urban historical research, however, they do not dismantle the very concept of the metropolis critically. In their insightful essay *Deconstructing the Metropolis*, Farias and Stemmler provide a postcolonial critique of the concept of the metropolis. In their words, “the metropolis is at the

¹¹ Alison Mountz, “The Other,” in *Key Concepts in Political Geography*, ed. Carolyn Gallaher et al. (Los Angeles: Sage, 2009), 328–338.

¹² Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979); Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, Reprint (New York: Vintage, 1994).

¹³ Jennifer Robinson, “Global and World Cities: A View from off the Map,” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 26, no. 3 (September 1, 2002): 531.

¹⁴ Anthony Douglas King, *Urbanism, Colonialism, and the World-Economy. Cultural and Spatial Foundations of the World Urban System*, 1. publ. (London u.a.: Routledge, 1990); Ananya Roy, “Roy-21st Century Metropolis.Pdf,” *Regional Studies*, no. 43:6 (2009): 819–830.

¹⁵ Sheila Crane, review of *Review of Empire, Architecture, and the City: French-Ottoman Encounters, 1830-1914*, by Zeynep Çelik, *H-Urban, H-Net Reviews*, August 2009. See also: Zeynep Çelik, *Empire, Architecture, and the City: French-Ottoman Encounters, 1830-1914* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008).

center of a wider imperialist network, be it in colonial or postcolonial contexts.”¹⁶ Therefore, as they claim, “the ‘metropolis’ is a European concept with a relational postcolonial connotation.”¹⁷ In other words, in spite of contextual and historical specificities, the metropolis always carries – and therefore, contribute to reproducing – imperialist power inequalities explicitly or implicitly. For this reason, I argue that the use and study of this term urgently calls for a critical and postcolonial subversion.

The Modern Metropolis and the Postmodern Metropolis

Since the second half of the nineteenth century, various new phenomena have had a dramatic influence on big cities: the industrial revolution and large-scale urbanization, demographic shifts caused by an extended population growth and the emergence of new technologies as well as the mass culture and consumer society.¹⁸ At the turn of the twentieth century, this city type (i.e. primarily capital cities such as Paris and London, but also New York City, for instance) was the architectural, industrial, and cultural form of Western urban modernity *par excellence*.¹⁹ Scholars called the metropolis of this period a “laboratory of modernity”;²⁰ It was the place where new forms of urbanity, lifestyles and societal order were negotiated, and it represented it both materially and symbolically.

As it shows, the concept of the modern metropolis on the one hand, and the colonial metropole on the other hand existed simultaneously. Their connection might have been rooted in the relationality of the term discussed above. Both represented the urban, cultural, and political core of an imagined or a physical hinterland: Modern metropolises were at the top of

¹⁶ Farias and Stemmler, “Deconstructing ‘Metropolis,’” 57.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 66.

¹⁸ Peter Hall, *Cities in Civilization* (New York: Pantheon, 1998); Andrew Lees and Lynn Hollen Lees, *Cities and the Making of Modern Europe, 1750-1914*, 1 edition (Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007); David Harvey, *Paris, Capital of Modernity* (New York: Routledge, 2003).

¹⁹ Philippe Simay and Andrew E. Benjamin, *Capitales de la modernité: Walter Benjamin et la ville* (éditions de l'éclat, 2006).

²⁰ Dirk Matejovski, *Metropolen: Laboratorien der Moderne*, 1st ed. (Frankfurt/Main; New York, N.Y: Campus Verlag, 2000).

the intellectual and the technological progress of the time. Moreover, they constituted the largest urban built environments and populations in the world. In a similar manner, the colonial metropole was the political and ideological center of an imperial network, and was defined through its domination of and in opposition to the colonial periphery. However, the urban researcher Sophia Basaldua-Sun insightfully noted that the “imperial sensibility is lost in most modern metropolitan scholarship, which took shape prior to postcolonial studies formation as a field, and continues to evolve in parallel rather than intersecting with discourse on colonialism.”²¹ In spite of the historical simultaneity of their occurrence, the scholarly approach to the modern metropolis and the postcolonial perspective rarely meet analytically.

After the Second World War, decolonization and post-Fordism, paired with globalized capitalism and neoliberalism, shifted the definitional and the functional nature of metropolises.²² In an age of globalization, other concurrent terms have emerged to describe and define the ‘big city’ of the present-day: World City,²³ Global City,²⁴ Megacity, and so on. As a result, metropolises are now the urban showcase of the imperatives of networked global competitiveness and the world economy.²⁵ The term has become a prominent urban brand and a label for urban promotion campaigns.²⁶ This shift towards “the inflationary use of the word ‘metropolis’ in city marketing and urban studies” is what Farias and Stemmler postulated as the “metropolitan turn.”²⁷ As the term “turn” suggests a revolutionary paradigm shift,

²¹ Sophia Basaldua-Sun, “An Interdisciplinary Look at Metropolitanisms,” *Journal of Urban Cultural Studies* 5, no. 1 (2018): 76.

²² David Harvey, “From Managerialism to Entrepreneurialism: The Transformation in Urban Governance in Late Capitalism,” *Geografiska Annaler. Series B, Human Geography* 71, no. 1 (1989): 3–17; Neil Brenner, “Theses on Urbanization,” *Public Culture* 25, no. 1 69 (2013): 85–114.

²³ John Friedmann, “The World City Hypothesis. Development and Change (1986),” in *The Global Cities Reader*, ed. Neil Brenner and Roger Keil (Abingdon: Routledge, 2006), 67–71.

²⁴ Saskia Sassen, *The Global City – New York, London, Tokyo*, Revised edition (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1991).

²⁵ Neil Brenner and Roger Keil, *The Global Cities Reader*, New Ed (London; New York: Routledge, 2005); Sassen, *The Global City – New York, London, Tokyo*; Peter Taylor, *World City Network: A Global Urban Analysis* (London, New York: Routledge, 2004).

²⁶ Dorothee Brantz, Sasha Disko, and Georg Wagner-Kyora, “Thick Space: Approaches to Metropolitanism,” in *Thick Space: Approaches to Metropolitanism*, ed. Dorothee Brantz, Sasha Disko, and Georg Wagner-Kyora (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2012), 9–30.

²⁷ Farias and Stemmler, “Deconstructing ‘Metropolis,’” 64.

contemporary metropolitan process don't have much in common with the classical metropolis of the nineteenth and early twentieth century anymore.²⁸

In the second half of the twentieth century, metropolitan terminologies are widely used in the field of urban geography and urban planning. This is true in the face of an unprecedented growth and extent of urban morphologies, which call for new urbanism strategies. Social structural imperatives of the globalized era and the regionalization and networking of urban systems challenge strategies based on spatially confined cities. Today, the urban question is negotiated beyond the traditional spatial boundaries of 'the city'.

Based on the global city-region model, researchers and urban policymakers focus on heterogeneous social structures, spatial and functional polycentricity, trans-regional or trans-national urban networks, as well as cross-border governance.²⁹ These territorial reconfigurations, so-called metropolization processes, are essentially understood as structural and cultural integration of a territorially embedded network of cities.³⁰ The French geographer Guy Di Méo defines metropolization as follows:

“La métropolisation, c'est cette volonté et cette capacité d'intégration fonctionnelle globale, de contrôle par les mécanismes de l'urbanisation d'espaces toujours plus vastes, placés sous l'autorité de cités, de centres opérant en réseau (...) jusqu'à constituer, par-delà la ville proprement dite, une sorte d'entité unique et virtuelle (toile) d'échelle mondiale.”

The creation of metropolitan regions or metropolitan areas are both the grounds for and the result of the dissolution of the binary representational system of space (e.g. center/periphery, urban/rural).

²⁸ Saskia Sassen, “Metropole: Grenzen Eines Begriffs,” in *Mythos Metropole*, by Gotthard Fuchs, Bernhard Moltmann, and Walter Prigge (Frankfurt am Main, 1995), 176.

²⁹ Allen J. Scott, *Global City-Regions: Trends, Theory, Policy*, New Ed (Oxford: OUP Oxford, 2002).

³⁰ Evert Meijers, Marloes Hoogerbrugge, and Koen Hollander, “Twin Cities in the Process of Metropolisation,” *Urban Research & Practice* 7, no. 1 (2014): 35–55.

In contemporary French urban geography, regionalized administrative structures with one or several urban cores are called *métropole*.³¹ They are heterogeneous territorial governance formations, governed by a common urban policy apparatus. Decentralization tendencies in French administration promoted the formation of metropolises. Because through influential urban hubs, the epicenters of power would spread over the national territory. At the same time, the metropolitan terminology is widespread in French political geography. Indeed, up until today, the term *France métropolitaine* designates the ensemble of the 96 French departments which are situated on the European continent.³²

Metropolitan Studies and Metropolitanism

The contemporary field of metropolitan studies is rooted in classical urban sociology and ethnography of the beginning of the twenty-first century. One of its pioneers, the German sociologist Georg Simmel provided a groundbreaking interpretation of everyday life in big cities.³³ According to Simmel, modern urban life was essentially characterized by the conflict between independency and freedom of the individual versus the homogenization and technologization of everyday life in mass society. These modern topics manifested particularly in the metropolis, i.e. the ‘big-city’,³⁴ in which monetary, informational, and human capital

³¹ Sophie Deraëve, “Pôles Métropolitains: The French Approach towards Inter-City Networking,” *Regional Studies, Regional Science* 1, no. 1 (January 1, 2014): 43–50; Jérôme Dubois, *Les Politiques Publiques Territoriales : La Gouvernance Multi-Niveaux Face Aux Défis de l’aménagement* (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2009); Ludovic Halbert, *L’avantage métropolitain* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France - PUF, 2010); Bernard Jouve, “La démocratie en métropoles : gouvernance, participation et citoyenneté,” *Revue française de science politique* 55, no. 2 (2005): 317–37; Patrick Le Galès, “Gouverner Les Très Grandes Métropoles : Institutions et Réseaux Techniques,” 2003; Emmanuel Négrier, *La question métropolitaine : Les politiques à l’épreuve du changement d’échelle territoriale* (Grenoble: Presses Universitaires de Grenoble, 2005).

³² “Définition - France / France Entière / Métropole / France Entière / Métropole,” Insee.fr, November 21, 2017, <https://www.insee.fr/fr/metadonnees/definition/c1696> (accessed December 2, 2018).

³³ Georg Simmel, “The Metropolis and Mental Life,” in *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, ed. Kurt H. Wolff (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1950), 409–424.

³⁴ It is worth noting that the original title of the essay refers to *Großstadt* (big-city) and does not mention *Metropole* (metropolis) explicitly. Rather, *Großstadt* was later translated into ‘metropolis’, which in itself shows an interpretation of the meaning and function of the term: Farias and Stemmler, “Deconstructing ‘Metropolis,’” 59.

circulated more intensively, the diversity of life experiences increased, and the urban life tempo accelerated. Simmel described the metropolis as an inspirational space of possibilities and variety, which offered the individual positive anonymity in the sense of an increased freedom and mobility. At the same time, though, it also created a negative anonymity that manifested through loneliness, mutual ignorance, and superficial relationships.

Around the same period, the so-called Chicago School of urban sociology conducted ethnographic studies of alternative and hidden urban *milieus*.³⁵ This research movement influenced current urban studies in many ways. It showed the dissolution of traditional societal formations and the mosaic of various spatially localized social worlds in the metropolis. Additionally, it raised scholarly interest for the very specific practices, mentalities and ‘ways of life’ in large modern cities.³⁶ Methodologically, the Chicago School positioned the city both as a *context* and as a *object* of sociological research. The intersection between urban space and human behavior was a central characteristic of early urban studies.

Metropolitan studies constitute one sub-division of this area of research. It focuses on the urban form of the metropolis and sustains a focus on ‘big cities.’ In present-day metropolitan scholarship, there is a common assumption that the metropolis is an urban space, that is characterized by and produces ‘something more.’³⁷ The German urban scholar Heinz Reif offered a five-dimensional programmatic definition of the metropolis. According to him, this city-type is characterized by an increased spatial density, a high concentration of resources, a function of centrality, a high social and cultural diversity, and a great variety of individual and collective opportunity.³⁸ In line with this understanding, many authors consider that the

³⁵ Robert E. Park, Ernest W. Burgess, and Morris Janowitz, *The City*, Reprint (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1925).

³⁶ Louis Wirth, “Urbanism as a Way of Life,” *American Journal of Sociology* 44, no. 1 (1938): 1–24.

³⁷ Brantz, Disko, and Wagner-Kyora, “Thick Space: Approaches to Metropolitanism,” 11.

³⁸ Heinz Reif, “Metropolises: History, Concepts, Methodologies,” in *Thick Space. Approaches to Metropolitanism*, ed. Dorothee Brantz, Sasha Disko, and Georg Wagner-Kyora (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2012), 31–47.

metropolis as a spatially, demographically, economically, culturally or creatively “augmented” city.³⁹

Today, the analysis of the metropolis as a localized, bounded urban entity may remain, but theoretical approaches have complemented this spatial approach with the concept of metropolitanism. The term *metropolitanism* is used in specific areas of urban and metropolitan theory, and is functionalized analytically in several ways. The anthropologist Robert Rotenberg provided one of the early studies on the concept, which he framed as a nineteenth century bourgeois, imperialist and capitalist urban representational project.⁴⁰ Joining a postcolonial perspective, this literature scholar defines metropolitanism as Western and imperial capitalist urbanism.⁴¹ In contemporary works, further urban scholars such as Günter H. Lenz, Friedrich Ulfers and Antje Dallmann⁴² conceptualized “new metropolitanism” as a defining characteristic of postmodern spaces of social differences and globalized multiculturalism. Here, the emphasis was put on the *new*, in order to analyze contemporary functions and functioning of the Western metropolis under the predicates of cosmopolitan imaginaries and global economy. According to Petra Eckhard's review,⁴³ this approach built on Simmel and the Chicago School's urban sociological work in order to examine the ‘big city’ in twenty-first century.

A few years later, the volume *Thick Space: Approaches to Metropolitanism* takes the term metropolis as the central subject of inquiry. It proposes a historically grounded

³⁹ Dirk Bronger, *Metropolen, Megastädte, Global Cities. Die Metropolisierung der Erde* (Darmstadt: WBG, 2004); Gotthard Fuchs, Bernhard Moltmann, and Walter Prigge, eds., *Mythos Metropole*, Erstaussg., 1. Aufl. (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1995); Matejovski, *Metropolen*; Clemens Zimmermann, *Die Zeit der Metropolen: Urbanisierung und Großstadtentwicklung*, 2nd ed. (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 2000).

⁴⁰ Robert Rotenberg, “Metropolitanism and the Transformation of Urban Space in Nineteenth-Century Colonial Metropolises,” *American Anthropologist*, New Series, 103, no. 1 (March 1, 2001): 7–15.

⁴¹ Ndi, Alfred. “Metropolitanism, Capital and Patrimony: Theorizing the Postcolonial West African City.” *African Identities* 5, no. Issue 2: African Cities: Imperial Legacies and Postcolonial Predicaments (n.d.): 176–180.

⁴² Günter H. Lenz, Friedrich Ulfers, and Antje Dallmann, *Toward a New Metropolitanism: Reconstituting Public Culture, Urban Citizenship, and the Multicultural Imaginary in New York and Berlin*, 1st ed. (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter GmbH Heidelberg, 2006).

⁴³ Petra Eckhard, review of *Review of Toward a New Metropolitanism. Reconstituting Public Culture, Urban Citizenship, and the Multicultural Imaginary in New York and Berlin*, by Günther H. Lenz, Friedrich Ulfers, and Antje Dallmann, *AAA: Arbeiten Aus Anglistik Und Amerikanistik* 32, no. 2 (2007): 375–378.

examination of the breaks and continuities of the research object. In the introduction, the editors and urban studies researchers Dorothee Brantz, Sasha Disko and Georg Wagner-Kyora call for a diachronic and critical functionalization of metropolitanism in order to grasp past and present – and future – articulations of the metropolis analytically. In her review, Basaldua-Sun criticizes the lack of Southern perspectives, which she misses in order to illustrate the postcolonial perspective enhanced by the book.⁴⁴ Furthermore, she suggests that the strong theoretical orientation taken by the authors ought to be completed by empirical inquiries in order to anchor the conversation.⁴⁵ While the volume provides solid and insightful grounds for the current discussion on metropolitanism, it is precisely this window which I hope to contribute to with my research.

I argue that the concept of metropolitanism is relevant and useful for the analysis at hand for three main reasons: First, it allows to critically discuss phenomena which are empirically characterized as *metropolitan*, without needing to commit to one or the other potentially reductive theoretical definition of the metropolis first. In other words, for this particular study, I am careful to consider the colonial metropole and the metropolis *Aix-Marseille-Provence* as empirical terms, while engaging with metropolitanism as an analytical concept. Second, in a historical perspective, it enables to overcome the obstacle of the definitional distinctions over time and to functionalize the diachronic breaks and continuities of the term analytically. Third, it inscribes the analysis in a contemporary critical and postcolonial area of metropolitan theory. Here, rather than attempting to coin a normative definition of the *postcolonial metropolis*, I engage with conceptions and agency of metropolitanism in a post-colonial period.

Overall, the concept of the metropolis has witnessed and survived many historical macro-developments, like colonization and decolonization, industrialization and deindustrialization, up until the age of globalization and neoliberalism. The term was

⁴⁴ Basaldua-Sun, “An Interdisciplinary Look at Metropolitanisms.”

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 74–75.

transported different meanings, from the metropole, both as a colonial city type and/or a core imperial nation-state in opposition to its colonies, over the metropolis as the iconic urban form of Western modernity, to a label for city marketing and urban branding strategies or new governance modes. Arguably, it has been a central object of urban historicity up until today, while it has experienced several definitional and functional shifts over time, and has become difficult to grasp. I propose that a differentiated and comparative approach to the term, rooted in empirical examples, might reveal powerful conceptual, historical and ideological dimensions of urban typologization, without essentializing ‘the metropolis’ as one monolithic entity.

1.3. Conceptual Approach and Case Studies

The Metropolis as a Concept of Urban Representation

In urban scholarship, the metropolis has been commonly regarded as a given *reality*: i.e. a fixed and identifiable spatial unit, which serves as a container for the investigation of urban phenomena. In the face of this tendency, Thomas Bender builds on the works of Henri Lefebvre to defend a differentiated approach: The metropolis doesn't have an essence *per se*, rather, it is “a historically contingent ‘situation’ located in times as well as in place.”⁴⁶ This so-called *situation* can be filled with substance thanks to the *urban imaginary*, which, in the words of the German sociologist Rolf Lindner, “gives a place meaning, sense.”⁴⁷ The imaginary of the city augments the material reality of urban space and is reproduced through representational discourses and practices.

In the case of the metropolis, there is the assumption that the various contextual singularities and different historical definitions of the term prevents its “functionalization for the current urban discourse.”⁴⁸ However, I suggest that the non-fixity of the notion does not implicate a deficiency; On the contrary, it allows for the instrumentalization of the term, which confers, if not a definition, a multiple potentiality and discursive power. With this approach emerge new issues: Which are the instances who (do not) lead the discursive production of metropolitanism? Which forms of urban agency are identifiable in processes of ‘making’ the metropolis? Can imaginaries of the metropolis be mobilized analytically? Overall, from this perspective, the metropolis is regarded less as a container for urban realities, and more as a

⁴⁶ Bender, Thomas. “History, Theory, and the Metropolis.” In *Thick Space: Approaches to Metropolitanism*, edited by Dorothee Brantz, Sasha Disko, and Georg Wagner-Kyora, 126. Bielefeld: Transcript, 2012; Lefebvre, Henri. *Writings on Cities*. Edited by Eleonore Kofman and Elizabeth Lebas. 1st edition. Cambridge, Mass, USA: Wiley-Blackwell, 1996.

⁴⁷ Lindner, Rolf. “The Gestalt of the Urban Imaginary.” In *Urban Mindscapes of Europe*, edited by Godela Weiss-Sussex and Franco Bianchini, 36. Amsterdam; New York: Rodopi B.V., 2006.

⁴⁸ Gerwin Zohlen, “Metropole als Metapher,” in *Mythos Metropole*, ed. Gotthard Fuchs, Bernhard Moltmann, and Walter Prigge (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1995), 31.

carrier and producer of realities. Hence, in the following, I analyze the metropolis as a concept of urban representation, i.e. a concept which serves the image construction of an meaning assignment to a non fixed defined notion.⁴⁹

Analyzing Events as Case Studies

In order to ground this study empirically, I rely on the historian William Sewell's methodological recommendations: “The conceptual vehicle by means of which historians construct or analyze the contingency and temporal fatefulness of social life is the *event*.”⁵⁰ I refer to his view of the transformative and amplifying power of single events in the course of history. Due to this characterization, I understand that specific events encapsulate contemporary processes and provide a condensed representation of historical structures. In this approach, informal, every-day, or private phenomena are not captured primarily, and the focus rather lies on public and officially structured historical moments.

In line with this view, I focus on two major mass events which, I propose, decisively contribute to the imagination, constitution and dissemination of the metropolis in Marseille. Practically, I first investigate the first French Colonial Exhibition in Marseille in 1906 on the one hand, and second, the *European Capital of Culture* “Marseille-Provence 2013” on the other hand. As this point, it is worth noting that I do not consider the investigated cases as mere illustrations and descriptive moments of the metropolitan phenomenon. Rather, I examine them as producers and displayers of discourses on metropolitanism; Respectively, I analyze the ways and means the metropolis is imagined and represented through and by the events.

Case Study I: The 1906 National Colonial Exposition in Marseille

⁴⁹ Norman Fairclough, *Language and Power*, 2nd edition (Harlow, Eng.; New York: Routledge, 2001); See chapter 1.4. *Analytical Approach*.

⁵⁰ William H. Jr. Sewell, *Logics of History: Social Theory and Social Transformation*, Chicago Studies in Practices of Meaning edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 8–9.

First, I investigate the first French Colonial Exhibition, which took place in Marseille in 1906. At the turn of the 20th century, Marseille was the second city of France and the greatest port of the French Empire.⁵¹ The 1906 Colonial Exposition was an unprecedented specialized international exhibition focusing exclusively on imperial and colonial matters,⁵² which welcomed 2 million visitors and orchestrated a flamboyant *mise en scène* of the prosperous imperial port city of the time.⁵³ Largely ignored by the central government, the event was primarily the work of the leading bourgeoisie and political and economic elites of the city, serving the promotion of Marseille in a national and trans-Imperial city competition as well as the intensification of the local network's trade relationships with the colonies. For this purpose, the exhibition enhanced the commercial prosperity and the industrial potential of the city, and endorsed the growing trade relationships with the French colonies abroad. It provided a popular and entertaining context for the practice of imperialist ideologies and social structures. In this context, the promotion of Marseille was largely articulated through the affirmation of its status as the *colonial metropole of France*. It is precisely this discourse of urban representation which constitutes the object of inquiry for the first case study of this work, according to two leading research questions:

- How and why did the Colonial Exposition serve as means of urban representation in 1906 Marseille?⁵⁴

- How and why did the 1906 Colonial Exposition contribute to producing the colonial metropole and what are the features of metropolitanism in Marseille the colonial era?⁵⁵

⁵¹ Roncayolo, *L'imaginaire de Marseille, port, ville, pôle*; Temime, *Histoire de Marseille*.

⁵² Pascal Blanchard et al., eds., *Human Zoos: Science and Spectacle in the Age of Colonial Empires* (Liverpool University Press, 2008).

⁵³ Laurent Morando, "Les Expositions Coloniales Nationales de Marseille de 1906 et 1922: Manifestations Locales Ou Nationales ?," *Provence Historique* 54, no. 216 (2014): 229–252; Simpson Fletcher, "'Capital of the Colonies': Real and Imagined Boundaries between Metropole and Empire in 1920s Marseilles."

⁵⁴ See chapter 2 *The 1906 National Colonial Exposition in Marseille*.

⁵⁵ See chapter 3 *Establishing the Colonial Metropole: Metropolitanism in Marseille in the Colonial Era*.

Case Study II: The *European Capital of Culture* “Marseille-Provence 2013”

Moving on, more than a century later, the Mediterranean city was awarded the label as *European Capital of Culture (ECOC)* 2013. As a result, the year-long cultural festival “Marseille-Provence 2013” (MP13) celebrated the city and its surrounding region, and constituted an international place marketing flagship.⁵⁶ This title can be regarded as a milestone inscribed in a three-decade urban regeneration process responding to the generalized crisis, which Marseille had endured since the 1960s.⁵⁷ The local leadership and event organizers used (partly romanticized) notions of cultural diversity and cosmopolitanism in order to praise Marseille as a unifying, both European and Mediterranean urban core.⁵⁸ It formulated a counter-discourse to the ongoing bad reputation of the city, which was in desperate need for a promotional event and a new functionalization of its economy.⁵⁹

Beyond the cultural manifestation itself, the event arguably figured as a pivotal moment in the course of urban and regional developments at that time. Indeed, a political, administrative, and city planning reform announced the creation of the metropolitan region *Métropole Aix-Marseille-Provence* on January 1, 2016.⁶⁰ Developed between 2010 and 2013, national territorial governance measures had declared the re-modelling of the main so-called *Communautés Urbaines* of the country (e.g. Paris, Lyon and Aix-Marseille)⁶¹ into optimized inter-municipal cooperation entities: the *Métropoles*.⁶² In and around Marseille, the metropolis essentially implicated a multi-scalar politico-administrative territorial integration, merging 92

⁵⁶ Boris Grésillon, *Un enjeu capitale: Marseille-Provence 2013* (La Tour d’Aigues: Aube, 2011).

⁵⁷ Lauren Andres, “Marseille 2013 or the Final Round of a Long and Complex Regeneration Strategy?,” *Town Planning Review* 82, no. 1 (2011): 61–76.

⁵⁸ Marseille-Provence 2013, *Marseille-Provence 2013: capitale européenne de la culture. Dossier de candidature* (Marseille: Marseille-Provence 2013, 2007).

⁵⁹ Donzel, *Marseille, l’expérience de La Cité*; Michel Peraldi and Michel Samson, *Gouverner Marseille: Enquête sur les mondes politiques marseillais* (Paris: La Découverte, 2006).

⁶⁰ Bernard Morel, *Marseille. Naissance d’une métropole* (Paris: Editions L’Harmattan, 2000).

⁶¹ “Aix-Marseille” refers to the metropolitan area in and around the two urban cores of Marseille and Aix-en-Provence. Aix-en-Provence, abbreviated Aix, is a city of 140’000 inhabitants located 30 km North from Marseille.

⁶² Deraëve, “Pôles Métropolitains;” André Donzel, *Le nouvel esprit de Marseille* (Paris: Editions L’Harmattan, 2014).

municipalities and 1,8 million inhabitants over a 3,173 square km area. While this metropolization project primarily signified a spatial and institutional redefinition, it effected a new mode of collaborative governance and shared resource economy, raising unprecedented issues of local identity, cultural integration and place branding too.⁶³ In this context, MP13 was presented as the first cultural manifestation of a new metropolitan reality.⁶⁴ It played a pioneering role in the invention and dissemination of the image of the new metropolis. Additionally, it provided a framework for collaborative event production and cultural governance on the newly defined territory. This entangled situation provided the grounds for the following investigation and lead to two complementary research questions:

- How and why did the cultural mass event MP13 serve as means of urban representation?⁶⁵

- How and why did MP13 contribute to producing the metropolis *Aix-Marseille-Provence* and what are the features of metropolitanism in post-colonial Marseille?⁶⁶

Diachronic Comparative Research

As discussed above, the theoretical acknowledgement of single, isolated understandings of the metropolis (e.g. the modern or the postmodern metropolis, the colonial metropolis) essentially showed that there was no fixed definition of the concept. In order to make this indication productive empirically, I propose that the comparison of two distinct conceptions of the metropolis in the same place, more than a century apart, allows us to observe the processual travelling of the concept over time, and to discuss the breaks and continuities of its

⁶³ Donzel, *Métropolisation, Gouvernance Et Citoyennete Dans La Region Urbaine Marseillaise*; Philippe Langevin and Jean-Claude Juan, eds., *Marseille: une métropole entre Europe et Méditerranée*, La Documentation Française, 2007.

⁶⁴ Mission interministerielle pour le projet Aix-Marseille-Provence, ed., *Convergences Métropolitaines: Aix-Marseille-Provence*. (Paris: La Documentation Française, 2016).

⁶⁵ See chapter 4 *The European Capital of Culture "Marseille-Provence 2013"*.

⁶⁶ See chapter 5 *Representing the Metropolis "Aix-Marseille-Provence": Metropolitanism in Post-Colonial Marseille*.

functionalization. Hence, the diachronic and the comparative examination of the topic represent two decisive components of my research design. Historical comparisons⁶⁷ can be imagined in several ways, such as through the confrontation of different phenomena during a same historical period or the discussion of one phenomenon during isolated historical phases. They also can have different functions: analytical (understanding a phenomenon through the comparisons of different situations, in which it exists), or contrasting (explaining a particular manifestation of one phenomenon through the comparison with its contrary). Additionally, they can focus on the similarities of the cases, or distill mainly differences.

Based on these methodological accounts, I frame the following investigation as a diachronic and analytical comparison. I compare the manifestation of one phenomenon (metropolitanism in Marseille) in different historical periods, for the sake of comprehending this very phenomenon through the confrontation of different cases. The German historian Hartmut Kaelble claimed that, in historical comparative research, there is a tendency to examine relatable cases, primarily in order to identify *differences* and to elaborate exceptions or so-called *Sonderwege*.⁶⁸ In this dissertation however, the approach is slightly different. While both case studies are separated temporally and functionally, they reveal a discursive continuity, which, as I argued before, calls for critical investigation. Therefore, the project intends to identify defining features respectively, in order to explain apparent divergences on the one hand, and to find out about potential similarities on the other hand.

⁶⁷ Heinz-Gerhard Haupt and Jürgen Kocka, *Comparative and Transnational History: Central European Approaches and New Perspectives* (Berghahn Books, 2012); Hartmut Kaelble, *Der Historische Vergleich. Eine Einführung Zum 19. Und 20. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt a. M.: Campus, 2009).

⁶⁸ Hartmut Kaelble, "Historischer Vergleich," *Docupedia-Zeitgeschichte. Begriffe, Methoden Und Debatten Der Zeithistorischen Forschung* (blog), accessed November 6, 2018, http://docupedia.de/zg/Historischer_Vergleich#Was_ist_der_historische_Vergleich.3F.

Case Studies Selection and Grounds for Comparison

In light of the theoretical questions at the origins of the project, Marseille provided an exceptional and compelling object of inquiry. The history of the city was decisive. As the biggest port city of the French colonial empire, it had functioned as a colonial metropole. Then, over a century later, it experienced ongoing metropolization processes and contributes to coining a new conception of the French metropolis, both of which allows to conduct an analysis of ‘doing metropolitanism’ in the making. Therefore, Marseille’s double image and representation as a metropolis makes for a particularly complex and promising case.

Building on this observation, the comparative approach is based on the observation that the same metropolitan terminologies appear in both periods (beginning of the twentieth century and of the twenty-first century) and decisively shaped the urban discourse on Marseille. Looking at both case studies, I identify connecting elements which provide analytical grounds for the comparative investigation: Both the 1906 Colonial Exposition and MP13 constitute exceptional mass popular events. They are inscribed in a promotional and progress-oriented urban representation endeavor, for the sake of which, in both contexts, metropolitan terminology is articulated explicitly. However, while the terminology has persisted, the metropolitan semantics have shifted: the meaning of the term “metropolis” has changed according to contextual and functional differences.

The metropolitan discourse might have perpetuated and developed throughout the twentieth century, but in this project, I propose that it is analytically productive to focus primarily on two distinct historical moments, which respectively synthesize one particular manifestation of metropolitan imaginary. Therefore, I deliberately restrict the investigation to two delimited cases, which allows for a focused in depth-analysis that accommodates the format and scope of this dissertation. Moreover, as it unfolds throughout this work, both cases are complex and differentiated, and offer rich empirical data on their own. In order to specify the

empirical research and frame the field work, I refer to the principle of saturation in qualitative research.⁶⁹ This notion helps defining the stage at which the collection of empirical data is sufficient to address the research desiderata and to contribute to the theoretical state of the art.⁷⁰ Based on this orientation, I estimate that my case selection provides sufficient grounds for the formation of analytical categories, based on which I am able to address my research questions and establish productive links between the empirical research and the theory.

Challenges and Limitations

A key characteristic of this project is the empirical and analytical articulation of both a historical case and a current case. Due to the temporal situation of the case studies, the dissertation breaks the frame of a traditional historical analysis. As a consequence, it calls for an interdisciplinary research design and a mixed methodology. This approach resonates with and inscribes the study into the transdisciplinary field of urban studies. While this complicates the classification of the project into one specific academic discipline, the heterogeneous orientation of urban studies suits the empirical problematization at the origins of this work, which was in itself cross-epochal and multidimensional thematically.

Another difficulty which emerges with the simultaneous discussion of two historically separated moments is the question of the time in between. There is a temptation to address over a century of urban history in Marseille. However, the research design translates the case oriented theoretical and conceptual discussion, rather than proposing a history of twentieth century Marseille. Therefore, I reserve the chronological narration for the historical contextualization of each case study at the beginning of Part I and Part II respectively.

⁶⁹ For a detailed description of the methods of data collection and analysis used in this project, see chapter 1.4 *Analytical Approach*.

⁷⁰ Benjamin Saunders et al., “Saturation in Qualitative Research: Exploring Its Conceptualization and Operationalization,” *Quality & Quantity*, September 14, 2017, 1–15.

1.4. Analytical Approach

On Language, Discourse and Historical Realities

In each of my case studies, I look for the term *metropolis* as well as the semantic net referring to this notion, in order to analyze how and according to what features meaning is assigned to them.

For the purpose of a diachronic linguistic examination, the interdependence of language and history constitutes a theoretical ground assumption. Here, I draw from Reinhart Koselleck's conceptual history proposition that there is no history without terms and language communication.⁷¹ Since the linguistic turn and a postmodern approach to historical research coined in the 1960s, language has not been regarded as an unfiltered means for the mediation of reality anymore, and has rather been considered itself as the object of critical investigation.⁷² In line with this, there has been a tendency to reject the grand narratives of traditional history, and to refuse assumptions of objective historical subjects, rationalism, modern rhetoric of progress, and of Western hegemony. This intellectual reform deeply affected methods of historical work, generating a challenging awareness and approach to critical source interpretation⁷³. Nowadays, according to Philipp Sarasin, there is a consensus amongst historians that there is no past reality to be considered without the critical investigation of language.⁷⁴

However, the conception of *historical realities* itself raises a fundamental paradox of historical work. As the feminist historian Joan W. Scott insightfully analyzed:

⁷¹ Reinhart Koselleck, *Begriffsgeschichten*, 2nd ed. (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2010), 9–99.

⁷² Jacques Guilhaumou, "A Propos de l'analyse de Discours: Les Historiens et Le 'Tournant Linguistique,'" *Langage et Société*, no. 65 (1993): 5–38; Achim Landwehr, *Historische Diskursanalyse*, 3rd ed. (Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, 2009), 47–55; Gabrielle M. Spiegel, "History and Post-Modernism," *Past & Present* 135, no. 1 (January 5, 1992): 194–208.

⁷³ Stefan Jordan, *Theorien und Methoden der Geschichtswissenschaft*, 3. Auflage (Paderborn: UTB GmbH, 2015).

⁷⁴ Philipp Sarasin, *Geschichtswissenschaft und Diskursanalyse*, 4th ed. (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2003), 32.

“The reality, to which the interpretation of historians refers, is only produced through this very interpretation, although the legitimacy of this interpretation is built on the faith in a reality, which exists outside or prior to the act of interpretation.”⁷⁵

According to Scott, historians must be careful to not consider language as the mirror and the mediator of a reality, which exists prior to its linguistic articulation. Building on from this, I follow the view that language does not reflect an exterior reality, but rather constitutes and produces this very reality.⁷⁶ Therefore, I address language as a specific form of social practice, which is articulated from a particular point of view and contributes to constructing and securing established hegemonic power relations.⁷⁷ In this context, the notion of *representation* plays a crucial role as well and appears recurrently in this work. Here, the term does not refer to the voice of an existing item (e.g. a spokesperson, who *represents* an institution), but rather the image construction of and meaning assignment to an abstract and/or non-defined notion.⁷⁸ Sharpening this understanding, cultural analysts Chris Baker and Dariusz Galasinski claim that “there can be no truth or meaning outside of representation.”⁷⁹ Everything is representable and representational, and nothing can truly actualize outside of the realm in and through which it is represented to the world.

Regarding the difference between the study of language and the examination of meaning assignment *to* language, the linguists Ruth Wodak and Martin Reisigl reject the latter as the central object of research, and rather consider it as a means used to establish the dominant discourse. Instead, they analyze *discourses* primarily, which they imagine as “a dynamic

⁷⁵ Joan W. Scott, “Nach Der Geschichte?,” *Werkstatt Geschichte* 17 (1997): 6. Translation by the author: "Die Realität, auf die sich die Interpretation der HistorikerIn bezieht, wird erst durch diese Interpretation selbst produziert, obwohl sich die Legitimität dieser Interpretation auf den Glauben an eine Realität stützt, die außerhalb oder vor dem Akt des Interpretierens existiert."

⁷⁶ Chris Barker and Dariusz Galasinski, *Cultural Studies and Discourse Analysis: A Dialogue on Language and Identity*, 1 edition (London; Thousand Oaks Calif.: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2001), 1.

⁷⁷ Ruth Wodak, ed., *Language, Power and Ideology: Studies in Political Discourse* (Amsterdam; Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1989).

⁷⁸ Fairclough, *Language and Power*.

⁷⁹ Barker and Galasinski, *Cultural Studies and Discourse Analysis*, 9.

semiotic entity.”⁸⁰ The historian and discourse analysis theorist Achim Landwehr defined the object of study as follows: “statements, which organize systematically and are characterized by a uniform (not identical) repetition with regards to a specific topic, constitute a discourse.”⁸¹ A basic requirement for the emergence and the existence of a discourse is a communicative situation.⁸² Therefore, discourse analysis engages with events of public promotion and communication, the examination of speeches and official/public publications, as well as spoken and literary means of communication at large. Moreover, for the sake of statements interpretation, rhetoric is a crucial and revealing element of analysis. For, according to the language scholar Clemens Ottmers, the purpose of rhetoric is to *convince*, and every form of convincing is a form of power and an instrument of manipulation and control.⁸³ Overall, in this dissertation, I draw both from the conceptual history approach which departs from single specific *terms* or *concepts*⁸⁴ (I focus on the very term *métropole*), and a discourse analysis of *statements* (I analyze the discursive actors, the semantic net and the defining features related to the *métropole*).

Critical and Historical Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis provides the theoretical and methodological grounds for the analysis of text-based historical sources and the qualitative interpretation of their content. I engage with the widely theorized approach of *critical* discourse analysis (CDA),⁸⁵ which advises “gaining

⁸⁰ Martin Reisigl and Ruth Wodak, “The Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA),” in *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*, ed. Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer, 2nd edition (London: Routledge, 2009), 88–89.

⁸¹ Landwehr 2009, 93. Translation by the author: "Aussagen, die sich hinsichtlich eines bestimmten Themas systematisch organisieren und durch eine gleichförmige (nicht identische) Wiederholung auszeichnen, formieren einen Diskurs."

⁸² Landwehr, *Historische Diskursanalyse*, 128.

⁸³ Clemens Ottmers, *Rhetorik* (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 1996), 8–10.

⁸⁴ Reinhart Koselleck, “Some Reflections on Temporal Structure of Conceptual Change,” in *Main Trends in Cultural History*, ed. Willem Melching and Wyger Velema (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1994), 7–16.

⁸⁵ Teun A. van Dijk, *Society and Discourse: How Social Contexts Influence Text and Talk*, 1 edition (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Fairclough, *Language and Power*; Ruth Wodak, ed., *Language, Power and Ideology: Studies in Political Discourse* (Amsterdam; Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1989).

distance from the data (...), embedding data in the social context, clarifying the political positioning of discourse participants (...) [and; MdS] self-reflection while undertaking research.”⁸⁶ At its core lie concepts of critique, power, and ideology, which are crucial to a critical and postcolonial perspective on the topic a hand. The CDA scholar Michael Meyer explains that an important feature of this analytical approach is the assumption that all discourses are historical and can only be examined and understood with reference to their context. Additionally, CDA postulates an interdisciplinary procedure: examination of a specific phenomena from different perspectives and constant interaction and feedback between analysis and data collection.⁸⁷

Moreover, due to the diachronic orientation of this study, I draw from the epistemological and methodological field of historical discourse analysis (HDA).⁸⁸ This trend is rooted in the assumption that discourses exist essentially based on their historicity.⁸⁹ As Wodak and Reisigl define, HDA is conceived to “explore how discourses, genres and texts change in relation to sociopolitical change.”⁹⁰ It operates interdisciplinary at the intersection of linguistic, historical and social sciences analysis, while offering a methodological frame to concentrate on the “diachronic reconstruction and explanation of discursive change.”⁹¹

In this study, I conduct a critical discourse study on the term metropolis. The HDA approach is useful, for it combines the CDA methodology with a historical perspective on the

⁸⁶ ¹ Reisigl and Wodak, “The Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA),” 87.

⁸⁷ Michael Meyer, “Between Theory, Method, and Politics: Positioning of the Approaches to CDA,” in *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*, ed. Michael Meyer and Ruth Wodak (London: Sage, 2001), 14–30.

⁸⁸ Johannes Angermüller, Dominique Maingueneau, and Ruth Wodak, “Historical Knowledge. Introduction,” in *The Discourse Studies Reader: Main Currents in Theory and Analysis*, ed. Johannes Angermüller, Dominique Maingueneau, and Ruth Wodak (Amsterdam; Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2014), 319–322; Laurel J. Brinton, “Historical Discourse Analysis,” in *The Handbook of Discourse Analysis*, ed. Deborah Schiffrin, Deborah Tannen, and Heidi E. Hamilton, 2nd ed. (Malden, MA/Oxford/Victoria: Wiley-Blackwell, 2003), 138–160; Landwehr, *Historische Diskursanalyse*; Achim Landwehr, “Diskurs Und Diskursgeschichte,” *Docupedia-Zeitgeschichte. Begriffe, Methoden Und Debatten der Zeithistorischen Forschung* 2, no. 11 (2010): 1–12; Reisigl and Wodak, “The Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA)””; Sarasin, *Geschichtswissenschaft und Diskursanalyse*.

⁸⁹ Landwehr, *Historische Diskursanalyse*, 99.

⁹⁰ Reisigl and Wodak, “The Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA),” 90.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 120.

empirical data. Therefore, it enables me to refer to comparable methodological framework for both my case studies, beyond their temporal distance. Overall, the study at hand navigates between discourse history, which investigates the ways in which terms and discourses develop over time,⁹² and historical discourse analysis, which aims at the exploration of *how* discourses change in relation to sociopolitical transformations.

⁹² Ute Daniel, *Kompendium Kulturgeschichte: Theorien, Praxis, Schlüsselwörter*, 4th ed. (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2004).

1.5. Data Collection and Analysis

Empirical Data Collection – First Case Study

In order to engage with my research questions and to complement the evaluation of the secondary literature, I collected a rich amount of primary sources. These materials were partly collected via online data bases for digitalized material (e.g. Gallica.fr), and partly brought together during a total of four months of archival and field research in Marseille, Aix-en-Provence, Paris, and New York City (both case studies combined).

For my first case study, the data collection was carried out in three main phases: I began with an initial orientation phase in New York City (Winter 2015). Subsequently, I conducted a phase of intense archival research and broad material assembling (Spring 2016) followed by a third phase of verification and complementary source reading (Fall 2016; Summer 2017) in Marseille and Aix-en-Provence. The source corpus is primarily constituted of first hand text-based accounts, which comprise official reports and catalogues, speeches transcriptions, juridical documents and press articles related to the genesis, the realization and the evaluation of the 1906 Colonial Exposition.

The data collection was dictated by a mixed deductive and inductive approach: The research process was guided by the research questions and key concepts at the core of the investigated topic. However, the content of the data and the analytical categories, which would later derive from them and help discussing the hypotheses, was yet to be discovered. After an initial orientation reading of the material in the archives, I pre-selected valuable material which I photographed digitally, converted into PDF-files, and registered into a systematic data base of my empirical records.

For the purpose of my analysis, the first and most immediate task was to *look* for the term *métropole* in my empirical material – as simple as this might sound. In doing so, I

subsequently asked who discussed this very term, in which context, and pursuing which interests. Due to this procedure, the situating of the inquiry and the empirical approach to it turned out to be extensively conditioned by specific parameters. In fact, throughout the first case study, the very word *métropole* and its related semantic field were mainly articulated by one specific group of discursive actors, primarily – and almost exhaustively – members of the political and economic elite as well as of the imperial lobby of Marseille. In other words, the very predominant voices addressing to notion of metropolis explicitly were local representatives of the colonizing powers themselves. Hence, the articulation of metropolitanism in the era of French colonialism translated processes through which the urban imperial elite constituted, established, and stabilized itself as a group of society.

Due to the affirmative focus on voices that articulated the metropolitan vocabularies and semantics explicitly, I ran the risk of missing out on implicit forms and hidden actors involved in the discourse on the metropolis. In fact, regarding potential counter-voices one wonders whether they existed at all: imperial elites might have been the only instance of actors articulating the concept of metropolis explicitly, because they might have been the only group which profited from this representation. At the same time, official reports might have been archived carefully while potentially subversive or contested records might have been disregarded deliberately in the course of historical transmission.

As a consequence, the primacy of the elite-driven discussion of the metropolis conditioned the orientation of the project. Overall, the imperial and hegemonic character of the actors' landscape reinforced the necessity for a critical postcolonial investigation and deconstruction of the metropolitan discourse, and highlighted the ideological and political power of urban typology.

Empirical Data Collection – Second Case Study

The source material for the second case study of the dissertation is constituted of official publications and records, policy documents and academic studies, newspapers and magazines, as well as online press material. In order to gain a broad and diverse overview, I have not proceeded in a systematic press review of specific publications, but rather selected various articles from local, national, and international press organs according to their relevance regarding my topic.

In addition, drawing from oral history and social sciences approaches⁹³ I conducted semi-structured one-on-one interviews with a number of cultural actors and urban stakeholders, who were influentially involved in the developments of the *Métropole Aix-Marseille-Provence* and the realization of the ECOC MP13. Notably, both informant spheres overlapped at times and regularly referred to each other explicitly or implicitly. In order to generate a comparable data set to the previous case study, I here too set the empirical focus on official representatives. For this purpose, I met with urban governance and cultural policy-makers, and conducted a critical analysis of an elite-perspective discourse.

I selected nine out of seventeen expert interviews for the analysis, based on the exhaustiveness of the exchange respectively, and for the sake of showing a representative constellation of actors, (random order; number of persons in parentheses):⁹⁴

- The two MP13 chief executive officers (CEO) (2004-2011; 2011-2013) (2)

⁹³ Uwe Flick, Ersnt von Kardoff, and Ines Steinke, eds., *A Companion to Qualitative Research*, 1st edition (London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2004); Donald A. Ritchie, *Doing Oral History* (Oxford University Press, 2014); Robert K. Yin, *Applications of Case Study Research* (SAGE, 2012).

⁹⁴ In order to gather data efficiently and to limit the amount of material, I draw from the principle of “saturation”. “Saturation” guidelines help defining the stage at which the collection of empirical data is sufficient to address the research desiderata and to contribute to the theoretical state of the art. See for instance: Monique M. Hennink, Bonnie N. Kaiser, and Vincent C. Marconi, “Code Saturation Versus Meaning Saturation: How Many Interviews Are Enough?” *Qualitative Health Research* 27, no. 4 (2017): 591–608; Benjamin Saunders et al., “Saturation in Qualitative Research: Exploring Its Conceptualization and Operationalization,” *Quality & Quantity*, 2017, 1–15.

- The cultural programming director of MP13 and member of the European Commission for the selection of the European Capitals of Culture (1)
- The head of public-relation and director's right-hand-man at the chamber of commerce and industry Marseille Provence (1)
- One out of three founding members of the official *Off* festival (during MP13) (1)
- The creator of the *Alter Off 2013* festival (the alternative Off-festival during 2013) (1)
- The founder of the metropolitan trail *Grande Randonnée 2013* (GR2013) (1)
- The second CEO of the *Métropole Aix-Marseille-Provence* (1)
- The head of public relations at the *Agence d'Urbanisme de l'Agglomération Marseillaise* (AGAM) and representative at the ministry assignment for the *Métropole Aix-Marseille-Provence* (2014-2015) (1)

The interviews were conducted in Paris and Marseille (Fall 2016), and lasted between 40 and 80 minutes. I recorded them digitally, before transcribing and anonymizing them. Regarding the content, instead of using a fixed questionnaire which might have caused a stiff dynamic of discussion, I conducted semi-structured interviews based on following core questions to the interviewees:

- How would you describe your institutional role in the context of MP13 / the MAMP?
- What is your take on the history, the function and the impact of MP13?
- What is your take on the history, the function and the impact of the MAMP?
- According to you, which connections and breaks exist between MP13 and the MAMP?
- What is your (individual) understanding and definition of the new *metropolis*?

Depending on each specific expertise of the interviewee and based on the flexible nature of the set of questions, the interviews usually developed as an open discussion lead by the researcher. Institutional spokespersons tended to reflect an 'official' discourse based on hard facts or statistical accounts. Other individuals, who did not function as representatives through their

work positions, conveyed more subjective experiences. Notably, the theme of my first case study and the comparative aim of the overall project was not discussed with the interviewees.

Among the persons whom I contacted, one remained reluctant towards the project. After repeated attempts from my side, I only received concise written comments on my research questions via e-mail. The actor seemed skeptical about my inquiry and purpose, and acted defensively against potential criticisms which were allegedly entailed in my research endeavor. Nevertheless, and even though the nature of the data produced in this case was different than the other transcriptions of oral interviews, I decided to integrate this exchange into the corpus as well (Interview 8; A representative at the *Métropole Aix-Marseille-Provence* and former municipal administration official). For, it seemed to contribute to a more thorough depiction of the reality of the empirical process, and added a critical regard to my positionality as a researcher.

Methods of Data Sampling and Analysis

After an initial superficial reading of the material during the archival research and the transcription of the interviews followed a second more careful reading phase, during which I selected the material, which would be actively and centrally consulted for the analysis. This selection was based on the richness and the exhaustiveness of the content of the data regarding my research questions.

I compiled 64 primary text-based archival records and published primary sources, in lengths ranging from 1 to 400 pages each (first case study), and 220 pages of interview transcripts (second case study). In order to investigate the metropolitan semantics in these texts, I carried on with an interdisciplinary methodological framework using social sciences data extraction and evaluation methods of coding. According to Johnny Saldana's qualitative research manual, coding is "a method that enables you to organize and group similarly coded

data into categories (...). You use classification reasoning plus your tacit and intuitive sense to determine which data ‘look alike’ and ‘feel alike’ when grouping them together.”⁹⁵ The unit of analysis, the code, is defined as follows:

“A code in qualitative inquiry is most often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data. The data can consist of interview transcripts, participant observation field notes, journal, documents, literature, artifacts, photographs, video, websites, e-mail correspondence, and so on.”⁹⁶

Due to the inherently subjective and interpretative act of code assignment, this method does not only serve a structured reading and a systematic sorting of data sampling. It also constitutes an essential part of the analytical process.

In order to apply this method, I worked with the coding software Atlas.ti.⁹⁷ There has been controversial discussion on the use of computer-assisted qualitative data analysis softwares (CAQDAs). Some scholars believe such software promotes a mechanical approach to data or that there is a risk that it will be used as a replacement for the researcher’s analytical work. On the other hand, CAQDAs have been broadly acknowledged as useful work tools offering efficient complements to human mental work.⁹⁸ In my study, I followed the approach of Susanne Friese, who proposed that “the data material is the terrain that you want to study; the chosen analytical approach is your pathway through it. The tools and functions provided by Atlas.ti (...) are your equipment to examine what there is to discover.”⁹⁹

⁹⁵ Johnny Saldana, *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers* (London a.o.: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2009), 8–9.

⁹⁶ Ibid. 3.

⁹⁷ The reference system for the interviews follows the style in Atlas.ti and works as follows: [Interview number], [Timestamps of the interview passage entailing the quote], [Atlas.ti Project Number/Quote Number in Atlas.ti].

⁹⁸ Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke, *Successful Qualitative Research: A Practical Guide for Beginners*, 1 edition (Los Angeles: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2013), 220; Zdeněk Konopásek, “Making Thinking Visible with Atlas.Ti: Computer Assisted Qualitative Analysis as Textual Practices,” *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research* 9, no. 2 (2008), 2.

⁹⁹ Susanne Friese, *Qualitative Data Analysis with ATLAS.Ti*, 1 edition (London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2012), 4.

In practice, I assigned different types of codes to the data, depending on their descriptive (e.g. description of a pavilion during the Colonial Exposition), functional (e.g. a speech by person X) or analytical (e.g. the interpretation of the nature of the new metropolis MAMP by one interviewee) nature. Notably, some quotes were assigned several codes, and entailed a mix of description and/or function and/or analysis. Then, according to their nature and to thematic patterns, I clustered them together into code groups.¹⁰⁰ Still navigating between an inductive and a deductive approach, the argumentative structure of the project formed during the process of coding. Therefore, I ordered the code groups in an outline-like structure, which later shaped the development of my chapters.

Overall, throughout my analysis, I engaged with both the coding method and CAQDAs as pragmatic technical guideline for the systematic evaluation and synthetic organization of my data in order to conduct critical source interpretation. While these methods and tools are traditionally more widely spread and recognized in the fields of social sciences than in classical history disciplines, they are extremely useful for this project. Indeed, they allow the systematized evaluation of a significant amount of data within an optimized timeframe. Moreover, they enable me to use the same method of data extraction, registering, and analysis for my two case studies in spite of the temporal distance of their topic and the divergent nature of their respective data set. Additionally, they allow to test mix methods and interdisciplinary research, in order to contribute to innovative methodological and empirical innovative approaches in historical work.

¹⁰⁰ Saldana, *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*, 8–9.

PART I – Making the Colonial Metropole

2. The 1906 National Colonial Exposition in Marseille

Marseille, around 1900: A Short Contextualization

In 1906, Marseille was the greatest port of France and its colonial empire. On the European scale, it was ranked as the sixth largest port, right after London, Hamburg, Antwerp, Rotterdam, and Liverpool.¹⁰¹ Since the conquest of Algeria by the French in 1830 and due to the extended French territories in West Africa of the so-called “second colonial empire,”¹⁰² the geographic proximity of the port city determined the crucial role of Marseille within the imperial network as well as decisive functions for French colonization in general.

In line with Paris, Lyon and Bordeaux, Marseille was counted amongst the major cities of the country. In the course of the nineteenth century, the local population increased extensively, growing from 100’000 to 500’000 people in 1914.¹⁰³ Due to the circulation of its major port, Marseille was shaped by a culturally and ethnically heterogeneous population and constituted a hub for short- and long-term migration flows. Its harbor welcomed travelers and sailors from all over the world, and at the turn of the century, 20% of the city’s inhabitants were first or second generation Italian immigrants.

After the industrial revolution, the city experienced a wave of technological and infrastructural modernisation: The lift to the iconic cathedral Notre-Dame-de-la-Garde, built on

¹⁰¹ René Borruet, *Le port moderne de Marseille : du dock au conteneur (1844–1974)*, Histoire du commerce et de l’industrie de Marseille, XIXe-XXe siècles 9 (Marseille: Chambre de commerce et d’industrie Marseille-Provence, 1994), 38.

¹⁰² The period of the “second colonial empire” is defined in contrast to the “first colonial empire”, which usually refers to the French colonization of the Americas and in the Caribbean, as well as Indian and African territories between the 16th and the beginning of the 19th century. The “second colonial empire” commonly implies the second wave of colonization by the French, starting with the conquest of Algiers in 1830 until the 1960s. This period was characterized by a widely spread domination of West African countries and regions, as well as in Asia and Oceania.

¹⁰³ Pierre Echinard, “Le Regard d’un Historien,” *L’Express.Fr*, July 18, 2002, https://www.lexpress.fr/informations/le-regard-d-un-historien_648858.html (accessed February 21, 2017).

the hill closing the southern border of the city center, was built in 1892. Shortly after, in 1905, the *pont transbordeur* (trans-border bridge) was constructed. Subsequently, in the inner-city, the tramway network was extended and popularized thanks to affordable commute prices and accessibility. This was true for Marseille's interregional connectedness as well with the booming use of the railway line Paris-Lyon-Marseille inaugurated in 1857 for instance.

Around 1900, trade and industry constituted the central axes of the city's economy. Oleaginous transformation and the production of oils and soaps, the sugar and tile factories, as well as maritime construction were the main sectors of activity.¹⁰⁴ The beginning of the twentieth century marked the golden age of Marseille, the so-called *système marseillais* based on the port and its industries, extensively lead by powerful local bourgeois families, claiming a liberal and decentralized independence in business and capitalizing on the foreign labor force provided by the harbors' circulation. During this period, the local bourgeoisie, the port related activities, and their commercial and industrial force seemed to define Marseille's profile and potential.

Political Climate and Social Ruptures

Not only did the port activities shape the mixed character of the population, they also marked a strong marine and industrial working-class. This influential group of the population significantly manifested during the first years of the twentieth century in the course of three major strikes in 1900, 1902, and 1903. Hence, an atmosphere of violence and contestation characterized this period in the context of a long series of dock workers' strikes and workers international syndicalization around the port.¹⁰⁵ The successful revendications lead to what

¹⁰⁴ Pierre-Paul Zalio, "D'impossibles notables ? Les grandes familles de Marseille face à la politique (1860-1970)," *Politix* 17, no. 65 (2004): 93–118.

¹⁰⁵ Élisabeth Claverie, "Les dockers à Marseille de 1864 à 1941 : de leur apparition au statut de 1941" (Université de Provence, 1996); Michel Pigenet, "Les dockers. Retour sur le long processus de construction d'une identité collective en France, XIX^e-XX^e siècles", *Genèses* 1, no. 42 (2001): 5–25.

have been called a *victoire ouvrière*¹⁰⁶ at the end of 1903, which was disturbing for the bourgeoisie of Marseille and increased the rivalry between both classes.

Following the end of the last dockers' strikes, in 1904, local economic and political elites began organizing the first French Colonial Exposition, an initiative that might have been a response to the ongoing port crisis. As historian Émile Temime has asserted, crises of the city in Marseille had always ensued crises of the port¹⁰⁷. And it was not the first time that a large-scale celebration was organized in the hopes of pacifying local conflicts: a few years earlier, in honor of the 2'500th anniversary of the city's founding, the socialist mayor Siméon Flaissières organized a massive carnivalesque celebration. The event was highly popular and served the politician's goal to bring the right-wing parties closer to his lead and to forge a social consensus in Marseille.¹⁰⁸

In a similar manner then, the alleged "victory of the working-class" following the strikes-series may have contributed to urging the need for the local commercial and political bourgeoisie to celebrate a representative and promotional event, which would display and secure their power and influence. In the course of the right-wing mandate of the recently elected mayor, Amable Chanot (1902-1908), a longstanding enemy of the socialist forces in Marseille,¹⁰⁹ the urban elites and stakeholders had great interest in a positive manifestation in favor of the city's reputation and economic prosperity.

Marseille and French Colonialism

Furthermore, Marseille's port history was closely linked to the second wave of French colonization starting in the 1830s. The ideology and the discourse of this period emphasized

¹⁰⁶ Mireille Lartigue, "Les grèves des dockers à Marseille de 1890 à 1903", *Provence Historique* 10, no. 40 (1960): 179.

¹⁰⁷ Emile Temime, "Au carrefour des Suds", in *Marseille, porte Sud 1905 - 2005*, par Pascal Blanchard et Gilles Boëtsch (Paris, 2005), 10.

¹⁰⁸ Temime, *Histoire de Marseille*, 128.

¹⁰⁹ A. Olivesi, "Les socialistes marseillais et le problème colonial", no. 45 (1964): 28.

the allegedly pacific civilizing missions of colonialism, in line with a rhetoric of scientific progress and of human adventure.¹¹⁰ According to Témime, the link between Marseille and the French colonial endeavor was ambiguous and rather of commercial nature than a missionary project.¹¹¹ In line with these economic interests, several means of colonial promotion and intellectual propaganda were part of the life in the city, like the *Société de Géographie*, the *Institut Colonial* and the Colonial Expositions (1906 and 1922).¹¹² However, the economic endeavor was not to be mistaken with a neutral commercial enterprise; as we will discuss in the following, these very institutions carried an influential colonial ideological and political dimension.

During French colonialism, Marseille had experienced anti-colonial contestations too during the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century.¹¹³ Political criticisms addressed the wars and diplomatic conflicts cause by colonization. Humanist discussions (and to some extent, religious Christian positions) further condemned the violence acts, forced labor and enslavement of indigenous populations. The liberal economic voices denounced the high costs of colonization and the unequal profit for a limited privileged sector of French society. These contestations tended to internationalization and an egalitarian working force division. The right-wing nationalist critiques defended territorial patriotism, against which anti-patriotic and anti-militarist socialist voices protested. This tendency understood colonialism within an overall capitalist ideology and enterprise, and formulated a deliberate anti-capitalist position. Finally, according to the anarchist critique, colonization was a direct expression and a product

¹¹⁰ Amaury Lorin et Christelle Taraud, ed., *Nouvelle histoire des colonisations européennes: XIXe-XXe siècles: sociétés, cultures, politiques*, Le noeud gordien (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 2013).

¹¹¹ Temime, "Au carrefour des Suds", 9.

¹¹² All three institutions will be discussed in further detail in the course of this chapter. See for instance: Daumalin, *Marseille et l'Ouest africain*.

¹¹³ Charles-Robert Ageron, *L'anticolonialisme en France de 1871 à 1914* (Presses Universitaires de France, 1973).

of patriotism and mercantilism. It was therefore interpreted as a harmful capitalist distraction used to fight working class movements.

In Marseille, manifestations of resistance were visible from the 1880s onwards, in reaction to the colonial missions departing from the port.¹¹⁴ They reached a high point during the following decade with the contested conquests of Dahomey (today: Benin) and Madagascar. However, these movements decreased at the end of the nineteenth century and on the occasion of the 1906 colonial exposition, the reactions remained rather limited.¹¹⁵ While Marseille had experienced strong protests at the end of the nineteenth, the context of the exposition organization remained quiet and the very idea of an exhibitory project was not been contested as such.¹¹⁶

Referring to the past dock workers riots, Olivesi wondered, discussing the exhibition: “Où étaient les bouderies de mai 1893?”¹¹⁷ According to the historian, anti-colonial criticism towards the violence acts committed overseas existed at that time. However, neither the project of the Colonial Exposition itself nor Marseille’s crucial role within French imperialism as a system were questioned explicitly. Rather, it seemed that the event’s pacific and educational character predominated in a positive campaign. This may have been due to a decline of the imperialist expansion at the time, which, after experiencing a paroxysm in the 1880s, diminished continuously until the 1914. As an explanation, Olivesi underscored that the event conveyed “un caractère commercial, pacifique et volontiers unanime”¹¹⁸. According to the author, the pacifist nature of the mass event contributed to keeping the critical voices quiet. In general, the colonial politics enjoyed a large majority and mainstream position in France at the beginning of the twentieth century.¹¹⁹ This period was characterized by a favorable majority

¹¹⁴ Olivesi, “Le Mouvement social,” 31.

¹¹⁵ Ageron, *L’anticolonialisme en France de 1871 à 1914*, 53.

¹¹⁶ Olivesi, “Le Mouvement social,” 56–58.

¹¹⁷ Olivesi, “Le Mouvement social,” 57

¹¹⁸ Olivesi, “Le Mouvement social,” 28.

¹¹⁹ Ageron, *L’anticolonialisme en France de 1871 à 1914*, 43.

opinion towards the imperial politics, carried by the official republican doctrine of the government and a strong colonial patriotism.¹²⁰

Later on however, communist critique and resistance attacked the principle and the organization of imperial universal exhibitions. In the course of the 1931 colonial exposition in Paris for instance, massive criticism had been played out through a contestation campaign against the so-called *Exposition internationale de l'Impérialisme*.¹²¹ However, there was no explicit or obviously visible equivalent to such movements in 1906 Marseille.

In 1906 and during the decade that followed, Marseille established its colonial significance as the port city at the heart of the French Empire, the geographic bridge to the conquered territories in Africa, a gateway towards the Orient through the Suez Canal, and an essential stage on the way to the American continent. According to Blanchard and Boëtsch, this importance and ambition of the so-called “Capital of the Empire” was extensively marked during the 1906 Colonial Exposition: “Marseille a décidé de forger son destin : il sera colonial, marchand, ouvert sur l’Orient et sur les migrations transméditerranéennes.”¹²² According to the historians, the nodal function within the Mediterranean network of cities, the connection to the oriental territories, and a colonial and trade-oriented urban agenda were set to shape Marseille’s role and future into the twentieth century.

Capital of the Empire and Colonial Metropole

It is in this context that the city hosted the first National Colonial Exposition of the country in 1906, a celebration of the achievements of the strong mercantile and industrial imperial bourgeoisie of the city. During the event, a prominent representational discourse aimed at establishing Marseille’s status as the main colonial metropole of France. This position of the

¹²⁰ Ibid., 38–43.

¹²¹ Charles-Robert Ageron, “L’Exposition Coloniale de 1931 : Mythe Républicain Ou Mythe Impérial,” in *Les Lieux de Mémoire. La République*, ed. Pierre Nora, Gallimard (Paris, 1997), 493–515.

¹²² Blanchard and Boëtsch, *Marseille, Porte Sud 1905–2005*, 19.

métropole coloniale had been first claimed by the local Chamber of Commerce during the local celebrations of 1899.¹²³

This major event took place from April 15 to November 15, 1906, in the Borély Park (later Chanot Park) at the outskirts of the city center. In line with the tradition of international expositions of the time, numerous buildings and pavilions exhibited local resources of the French colonies and protectorates, as well as the richness of the so-called “mother-country” and Marseille. The show welcomed around two million visitors in total; it was reviewed as a popular success and acclaimed by the official local press and representatives. This project was presented as an enterprise by and for the Marseille population, which would increase the national and international visibility of the city. Articulated by the local political and economic elites as a promotional event for the city of Marseille, a prominent representational discourse aimed at establishing Marseille’s status as the main colonial metropole of France. This specific image and concept of the city was *conveyed during* – and extensively *produced by* – the exposition.

Based on this context, the first research question of this dissertation emerges: How and why did the Colonial Exposition serve as means of urban representation in 1906 Marseille? In order to engage with these inquiries, I analyze the construction and the role of the Exposition as a mass medium of representation. I investigate the event itself, its spatial structure and thematic curation, as well as its exhibitory function and purpose.

Reading International Expositions

International expositions, also called universal expositions of fairs,¹²⁴ were a widespread phenomenon in North-America and Europe during the second half of the nineteenth century

¹²³ Chambre de Commerce de Marseille, *Compte Rendu de La Situation Commerciale et Industrielle de La Circonscription de Marseille Pendant l’année 1899* (Marseille: Imprimerie Marseillaise, 1900), 223; Marcel Courdurié et Jean-Louis Miège, *Marseille colonial face à la crise de 1929* (Marseille: Chambre de commerce et d’industrie de Marseille-Provence, 1991), 17.

¹²⁴ Robert W. Rydell, *All the World’s a Fair: Visions of Empire at American International Expositions, 1876-1916*, 1984th ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987), 3.

and the first half of the 20th century. They were broad eclectic displays of the achievements of both nation-states and Empires, taking place in big Western cities like London (1851), New York (1853), Chicago (1893) and Paris (1889, 1900) for instance.¹²⁵ The broad interdisciplinary field of international exposition studies and numerous scholarly works engage with these events.¹²⁶ International expositions provided popularized, educational and entertaining accounts, and a spatially closed overview of the modern world. Generally, the purpose and function of these events were to stimulate local economies and general material uplift for the country and the host city. Moreover, expositions usually highlighted commercial interests and promoted early appearances of mass culture and consumption. They constituted fleeting “ideologically coherent ‘symbolic universes’,”¹²⁷ which conveyed political and philosophical notions – and contributed to establish hegemonic power hierarchies – about race, nation-states and identity, and modern progress. Berger and Luckmann’s concept of the “symbolic universe” defines “bodies of theoretical traditions that integrate different provinces of meaning and encompass the institutional order in a symbolic totality.”¹²⁸ This notion instructively addresses the power of international expositions as cohesively constructed orders, legitimization instruments, conveyers of sets of beliefs and ideological systems.

Colonial and inter-colonial expositions were a type of thematically specialized international exhibitions that emerged in Australia during the 1860s.¹²⁹ These events, which

¹²⁵ Rosalind H. Williams, *Dream Worlds, Mass Consumption in Late Nineteenth-Century France* (University of California Press, 1982).

¹²⁶ See for instance: Blanchard, Pascal, Nicolas Bancel, Gilles Boëtsch, et Sandrine Lemaire, ed. *Human zoos : science and spectacle in the age of colonial empires*. Liverpool University Press, 2008; Geppert, Alexander C. T. *Fleeting cities: imperial expositions in fin-de-siècle Europe*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010; Greenhalgh, Paul. *Ephemeral Vistas: The Expositions Universelles, Great Exhibitions and World’s Fairs, 1851-1939*. Manchester, UK; New York: Manchester Univ Pr, 1991; Patricia A. Morton, *Hybrid Modernities: Architecture and Representation at the 1931 Colonial Exposition, Paris* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2003); Rydell, *All the World’s a Fair*; Simpson Fletcher, Yael. “‘Capital of the Colonies’: real and imagined boundaries between metropole and empire in 1920s Marseilles”. In *Imperial Cities: Landscape, Display and Identity*, par Felix Driver et David Gilbert, 136–154. Manchester University Press, 1999; Williams, *Dream Worlds, Mass Consumption in Late Nineteenth-Century France*.

¹²⁷ Rydell, *All the World’s a Fair*, 2.

¹²⁸ Peter L. Berger et Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (New York: Anchor, 1967), 113.

¹²⁹ The first inter-colonial exhibition took place in Melbourne in 1866.

explicitly emphasized the exhibition and promotion of colonial Empires, reached Europe in the 1880s with examples in Amsterdam 1883 and in London 1886. As mentioned previously, the first colonial event of this sort in imperial France was organized in Marseille in 1906. It constitutes the main object of the following inquiry.

The historian Yael Simpson-Fletcher proposed different approaches to colonial expositions in the field of cultural geography of colonialism. According to her, these events were “relocated representations”¹³⁰ of the dominated territories exposed. At the same time, she considered that they were the materialization of “the imagery and the experience of travel between the cultural spaces of the metropole and the colonies.”¹³¹ Either way, colonial expositions displayed both the interrelatedness of the colonies and the metropole, and the asymmetrical relationship between them.

As Patricia Morton explained, the significant impact of colonial expositions was the ability to materialize and “make visible” of the power structures of the colonial system and its constitutive hierarchies.¹³² Drawing from Homi K. Bhabha’s investigation of the semiotical establishment of cultural references and hierarchical power structures in “Signs Taken for Wonders,” Morton quotes the American literature scholar: “acknowledgment of authority depends of the immediate – unmediated – visibility of its rule of recognition as the unmistakable referent of historical necessity.”¹³³ In the course of the Marseille exposition, metropolitan visitors were able to *see* and *experience* the Empire through the event, making it become real and tangible for them. In other words, *representing* the Empire *created* the Empire.

¹³⁰ Simpson Fletcher, “‘Capital of the Colonies’: real and imagined boundaries between metropole and empire in 1920s Marseilles”, 136.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Morton, *Hybrid Modernities*, 6.

¹³³ Geppert, *Fleeting cities*, 1.

International Expositions and Urban Representation

Most of the exhibitions studies literature suggests that international expositions were always closely linked to representational endeavors within their respective urban settings. Indeed, for instance, in the introduction of his groundbreaking global study on universal exhibitions, Alexander Geppert called these events “the most spectacular mass medium of the urban imagination in fin-de-siècle Europe.”¹³⁴ Hence, an inherent and decisive link seemed to exist between international exhibitions and their host city. However, the specific discursive and representational means contributing to labelling or establishing a specific image of the very urban context during and through the exposition remain largely understudied.

Exemplarily, introducing the comparative volume on 100 years of international expositions, the historian Marta Filipova claimed that, from the mid-1800s to the mid-1900s, “almost every metropolis had the ambition to host a carefully orchestrated exhibition that would showcase the best achievements and inventions to date and secure its status of a world city.”¹³⁵ This statement shows the inherent connection between expositions and urban representation and promotion. It also entails two revealing – and problematic – notions. Firstly, the terms “metropolis” and “world city” are used as descriptive synonyms. The specificities of these urban types are not elaborated critically. Secondly, the causality between displaying modern progress through international expositions, and guaranteeing a city’s global status was considered logical and given. These two aspects remained unproblematic in Filipova’s passage. However, I propose that a differentiated and critical approach to urban typologization seemed to be essential in order to grasp ideological strategies and power structures underlying the representation of cities.

¹³⁴ Geppert, *Fleeting cities*, 1.

¹³⁵ Marta Filipova, “Introduction: The Margins of Exhibitions and Exhibitions Studies”, in *Cultures of International Exhibitions 1840-1940: Great Exhibitions in the Margins* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2015), 2.

Research on the 1906 Colonial Exposition

Apart from the broad body of general literature on international exhibitions, there is only a reasonable amount of studies which focus centrally on the 1906 Colonial Exposition in Marseille.¹³⁶ What is more, the context of publication is almost exclusively French, except for Simpson Fletcher's work for instance. In this regard, the French historian Patrick Boulanger estimates that the Colonial Expositions in Marseille, both in 1906 and 1922, were somewhat forgotten over time although they enjoyed international importance in their time.¹³⁷

In general, the studies on the Marseille exhibitions provide very informative factual accounts of the event itself, its organization, and curatorial structure.¹³⁸ In few cases, they have a specific focus of analysis, like the national significance of the Marseille exposition,¹³⁹ for instance in comparison to Paris as the capital city and the acclaimed host of international expositions (e.g. *Exposition Universelle* in 1889, *Exposition du Trocadéro* in 1900). Another focus exists on the relationship between the colonies and the imperial "mother-country" displayed through the means of the exposition.¹⁴⁰ However, there is a general deficit in terms of critical and differentiated description and examination of the Colonial Exposition. The postcolonial and urban studies perspectives are largely inexistent. Moreover, pointing to guiding analytical perspectives of this study, issues of city image production and dissemination

¹³⁶ Amargier and Joutard, *Histoire de Marseille en treize événements*; Archives de la ville de Marseille, *Désirs d'ailleurs: les expositions coloniales de Marseille 1906 et 1922*. (Marseille: Éditions Alors Hors du Temps, 2006); Patrick Boulanger, "Visions d'Empire : Des Danseuses Cambodgiennes Aux Cavaliers Algériens. Les Affiches Des Expositions Coloniales de Marseille (1906-1922)," *Revue Marseille*, no. 188 (1999): 56–67; Gallocher, *Marseille. zigzags dans le passé*; Jean-Louis Miège, "Genèse Des Grandes Expositions," in *Catalogue Des Expositions: L'Orient Des Provençaux* (Marseille: Vieille Charité, 1982), 15–22; Laurent Morando, "Les Expositions Coloniales Nationales de Marseille de 1906 et 1922 : Manifestations Locales Ou Nationales ?," *Provence Historique* 54, no. 216 (2014): 229–252; Roncayolo, *L'imaginaire de Marseille, port, ville, pôle*; Simpson Fletcher, "'Capital of the Colonies': Real and Imagined Boundaries between Metropole and Empire in 1920s Marseilles."

¹³⁷ Boulanger, "Visions d'Empire", 56.

¹³⁸ See for instance: Archives de la ville de Marseille, *Désirs d'ailleurs*; Amargier and Joutard, *Histoire de Marseille en treize événements*; Gallocher, *Marseille. zigzags dans le passé*.

¹³⁹ Morando, "Les expositions coloniales nationales de Marseille de 1906 et 1922 : Manifestations locales ou nationales ?"

¹⁴⁰ Simpson Fletcher, "'Capital of the Colonies': real and imagined boundaries between metropole and empire in 1920s Marseilles".

remain understudied. This is also true for the discourse on the colonial metropole, and the questions regarding ideological and political strategies of urban representation. Hence, this dissertation project aims to contribute to a critical discussion of the 1906 exposition from an pluri-disciplinary and international perspective in the field of historical urban studies. Additionally, this study ought to add a postcolonial problematization as well as a critical urban theory approach to the more general accounts on international expositions.

The Exposition and Marseille *Métropole*

The 1906 Colonial Exposition in Marseille was deliberately used as a promotional operation for the city: The organizers and the urban stakeholders involved aimed at affirming Marseille as (the) colonial metropole of France. Explicitly, the local representatives qualified the exposition as the “magnifique projet consacrant Marseille comme métropole coloniale de la France.”¹⁴¹ Here, the “metropole” referred to a specific type of city, with a particular definition, set of functions, and recognition. Hence, the colonial event was explicitly used in order to create and establish a specific image and concept of the city. Therefore, I wonder: How did mass cultural events of Western modernity shape urban landscapes and imaginaries? Which actors and institutions triggered this impact, and which interests were pursued? What were the discursive and representational strategies at stake?

The concept of the metropole had a double definition and function in the context of the French Imperial era. Indeed, the metropole described both France as a nation and specific cities. It was also used as a generic synonym for Paris, which was considered the metropole *par excellence* due to its status as the capital city of French modernity. Therefore, the metropole designated a central place-based geopolitical and economic functions in the imperial context. Simultaneously, it described a prominent urban prototype of Western modernity.

¹⁴¹ Chambre de Commerce de Marseille, *La Chambre de Commerce de Marseille et l'Exposition Coloniale de 1906* (Marseille: Barlatier, 1908), 73.

These different meanings and instrumentalizations of the concept of the metropole in the course of the international and imperial expositions at the end of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century has not been granted scholarly attention. For instance, the study of reference *Hybrid Modernities* by Patricia A. Morton arbitrarily mentions the *Métropole* as qualifier for France as opposed to greater France (including the colonies) or *La France d'Outre-Mer* (the territories overseas), disregarding the urban connotation of the term.¹⁴² The corresponding index entry to *Métropole* merely indicates references to the nation-state too. Therefore, I aim to contribute to the existing research with a specific analysis of the creation and dissemination of the metropolitan image through the 1906 exposition.

Primary Sources

As mentioned above, the following analysis is based on the existing international exposition studies literature. Complementarily, the Colonial Exposition will be investigated with the help of primary sources. The corpus is mostly constituted of written sources and contains official guides and catalogues of the 1906 exposition itself, popular and scientific works published in the context of the event, transcripts of official speeches, Marseille City Council meeting reports and legal documents. Additionally, I use central bodies of local and regional press (*Le Petit Marseillais*, *Le Petit Provençal*, *Le Sémaphore*, *Le Radical*) as well as national colonial newspapers (*La Dépêche Coloniale Illustrée*, *Questions Diplomatiques et Coloniales*, *Revue de politique extérieure*). These sources are interpreted drawing from historical discourse analysis methods¹⁴³ in order to identify a semantic net and retrace the discourse on the colonial metropole in the context of the Exposition.

Chapter Outline

¹⁴² Morton, *Hybrid Modernities*, 7.

¹⁴³ See chapter 1 *Introduction*.

In this chapter, I investigate the nature and the function of the Colonial Exposition as a mass medium of urban representation. The following is structured in three parts: *Towards a Colonial Exposition in Marseille* (2.1), *The Exposition: Celebrating Colonial Economy and Trade* (2.2), and *Educational Endeavor, Colonial Propaganda, and Promotional Mass Event* (2.3).

The first part introduces the context of Marseille around 1900 and the organization of the first French Colonial Exposition in this city. The central actors and institutions will be presented, as well as the influences, discussions, and motivations which lead to the event's realization. The second part essentially provides a detailed description of the Colonial Exposition itself. Here, the site and the arrangement of the venue will be laid out, as well as the numerous pavilions and buildings constituting the six-month show in Marseille. The third and last part of the chapter puts the emphasis on the officially disseminated purpose and goals of the exposition, and its ideological and political function. Here, the discursive content and structure of the exhibitory practice will be analyzed through the lens of the didactic and scientific mission, the colonial propaganda apparatus, as well as the mass culture and promotion dimension of the event. Subsequently, these thematic and argumentative subchapters will be summed up in a conclusion, which will eventually provide an outlook and a bridge to the subsequent chapter.

2.1. Towards a Colonial Exposition in Marseille

The Exposition in Marseille and the Parisian Influence

The 1906 exhibition in Marseille was a pioneer event due to its exclusive thematic focus on colonial matters. However, precursors can be found in the 1900 *Exposition Universelle* in Paris.¹⁴⁴ In 1900, the *Exposition Universelle* in Paris, was a major international event, unprecedented in size and variety in the country. The exposition symbolically synthesized the 19th century and marked the turn into the new century of modernity and progress.¹⁴⁵ It took place from April 14 to November 12, stretched over 216 hectares on the Champs-de-Mars/Trocadéro, the Esplanade des Invalides, and Bois de Vincennes, and welcomed almost 50 million visitors. The main venue was located at the base of the Eiffel Tower, one of the most striking and iconic buildings of the 1889 World Fair in the French capital.

Around 1900, in the background of the Exposition, the centralized government had a sense that the average French population had a distanced relationship to the colonized territories overseas. In order to combat this perceived distance, the colonies and their societies, cultures, and resources received increased importance and physical presence at the event. An educational propaganda forged a radicalized image of the colonial Other and contributed to the representation of the Empire.¹⁴⁶

An eminent politician and businessman from Marseille, Jules Charles-Roux (1841-1918), president of the *Compagnie Générale Transatlantique* and of the *Union Coloniale Française*, was assigned the colonial section at the Paris exposition. Here, twenty-five pavilions provided an idealized and “idyllic” representation of the French colonial empire.¹⁴⁷ Charles-Roux’s

¹⁴⁴ Patrick Boulanger, “Visions d’Empire : des danseuses cambodgiennes aux cavaliers algériens. Les affiches des expositions coloniales de Marseille (1906-1922)”, *Revue Marseille*, no. 188 (1999): 56.

¹⁴⁵ Geppert, *Fleeting cities*, 62–65.

¹⁴⁶ Blanchard et al., *Human zoos*.

¹⁴⁷ Béatrix Chevalier, “Un essai d’histoire biographique. Un grand bourgeois de Marseille: Jules Charles-roux (1841-1918)” (Master Thesis, Aix-en-Provence, 1969), 96–98.

involvement constituted a personal connection as well as ideological and programmatic influences between the 1900 exhibition and the upcoming projects in Marseille.¹⁴⁸

Marseille's Imperial Lobby

Charles-Roux was a central figure in the colonial economic networks of the southern port city at the turn of the century, and played a key role during the execution of the colonial exposition in 1906. Born and raised in Marseille, he had a multifaceted and successful career with numerous institutional responsibilities, and became a well-known public figure in Marseille.¹⁴⁹ He was board member of the *Banque de France* (1877), an administrator – and partly president – of the *Caisse d'épargne des Bouches-du-Rhône* between 1880 and 1890, and presided over the *Société Marseillaise de Crédit* from 1911 to 1918. He also worked as the vice president of the *Compagnie du Canal de Suez* in 1897 and president of the *Compagnie Générale Transatlantique* (1904-1914), amongst other maritime transport companies. He had an active, but short lived career as a politician too: He was elected member of the city council of Marseille in 1887, and then became general counsellor in 1895. A fervent defender of liberalism and decentralization, he always acted in favor of increased economic growth and independence for his home city. According to these priorities, he stated: “La politique qui économise des révolutions est la meilleure et la plus sérieuse des économies.”¹⁵⁰ In the spirit of a businessman, Charles-Roux was only interested in politics for the good and the influence it could have on the economic sector. He praised the idea of republican liberties which, for him, meant the political and economic freedom for the municipalities, and a restrained intervention of the state.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁸ Sylviane Leprun, “Les motifs phocéens du monde colonial. Les expositions coloniales de Marseille 1906-1922.”, in *Désirs d'ailleurs. Les expositions coloniales de Marseille 1906 et 1922*, ed. Archives de la Ville de Marseille (Marseille: Éditions Alors Hors du Temps, 2006), 129; Morando, “Les expositions coloniales nationales de Marseille de 1906 et 1922 : Manifestations locales ou nationales ?”.

¹⁴⁹ Dominique Boudet et al., *Jules Charles-Roux: le grand Marseillais de Paris* (Rennes: Marines éditions, 2004).

¹⁵⁰ Jules Charles-Roux, *Vingt ans de vie publique : questions municipales, travaux divers, rapports sur délégations en France et à l'étranger, études économiques et discours parlementaires* (Paris: Guillaumin, 1892).

¹⁵¹ Emile Temime, “Jules Charles-Roux, l'homme politique”, in *Jules Charles-Roux: le grand Marseillais de Paris* (Rennes Cedex: Marines éditions, 2004), 39.

However, in 1898, he abandoned this mandate and oriented his political commitment towards another, though closely related sphere of action: Marseille's prosperity and success as a colonial city. No matter the affiliation or the professional position, this devotion to his city seemed to represent a continuity of Charles-Roux's life and work. As Temime wrote: "dans toute sa carrière, (...) il n'a cessé de penser à Marseille, de vouloir améliorer son image et d'y consacrer une grande partie de sa vie."¹⁵² The city of Marseille, its political autonomy, economic growth, and positive image were at the core of Charles-Roux's work as well as the object of strong personal attachment.

During the last decades of the nineteenth century, the business sector of Marseille was generally favorable to the colonial idea. From the 1870s on, the local intellectual milieu increasingly engaged with these issues as well: For instance, in 1877, the *Société de Géographie* was created in Marseille. Here, during conferences and events, imperial expeditions were granted primary focus, and the the *Société* was overall well connected within the French colonial networks. Indeed, the Minister of the Colonies himself visited the organization on the occasion of its twentieth anniversary in the 1890s. Among his various functions, Charles-Roux was a founding member of the society, and served as president from 1886 to 1889. Adrien Artaud, an eminent political figure of this period and president of the Chamber of Commerce of Marseille from 1913 to 1920, once wrote that it was in the context of the geographic society that his peer had developed his interest and expertise in colonial affairs.¹⁵³ On the basis of this recommendation, Charles-Roux was also assigned to teach the colonial education classes at the Sorbonne in 1896-97. Furthermore, based on the scientific and academic dimensions of his profile, Charles-Roux cultivated a long-time friendship with Dr. Edouard Heckel (1843-1916). Heckel was a French scientist and professor of Botany and History of Sciences at the University

¹⁵² Ibid., 51

¹⁵³ Eliane Richard, "Charles-Roux, Le Colonial," in *Jules Charles-Roux: Le Grand Marseillais de Paris*, by Isabelle Aillaud et al. (Rennes: Marines éditions, 2004), 56.

and Medical School of Marseille. Motivated by a profound ambition to popularize the “colonial idea,”¹⁵⁴ he was a crucial figure in Marseille’s colonial education system¹⁵⁵ and scientific networks, and most well known as the creator of the first French Colonial Institute and Museum founded in Marseille in 1893.

The Institute was considered one of the main research centers on colonial economy in the country.¹⁵⁶ It also supplied six academic chairs for “colonial education” funded by the Chamber of Commerce, and supported the provision of colonial resources for the city. Henkel also contributed to the development of tropical pathology as an academic discipline from the end of the 1890s onwards, drawing on which he on founded the *Institut de Médecine Coloniale* (1906) later on.¹⁵⁷ The courses on colonialism were subsidized by the municipality, which covered significant parts of the Colonial Institute and Museum (450’000 Francs) as well as a botanic research glasshouse in the Borély Park (26’300 Francs), too.

Overall, at the edge of the twentieth century, Marseille was the most qualified and best equipped center for colonial education in France.¹⁵⁸ Henkel, who had been described as a true *apôtre de la cause coloniale*¹⁵⁹ by a fellow colonialist of the time, most certainly experienced the highlight of his Marseille career, and popular scientific as well as didactic responsibilities during the 1906 colonial exposition.¹⁶⁰

Charles-Roux was not a theoretician; he was a practitioner and his colonial beliefs were grounded in economic purposes. He primarily regarded colonization as a *solution pacifique à*

¹⁵⁴ Daumalin, *Marseille et l’Ouest africain*, 215.

¹⁵⁵ On Marseille’s colonial education system, see: Laurent Morando, “L’enseignement Colonial En Province (1899-1940) : “impérialisme Municipal” Ou Réussites Locales ?,” *Outre-Mers* 91, no. 342–343 (2004): 273–294.

¹⁵⁶ René Musset, “Un annuaire économique colonial français,” *Annales de géographie* 41, no. 234 (1932): 644.

¹⁵⁷ On Heckel’s career, see: Eliane Richard, “Charles-Roux, Le Colonial” (Rennes: Marines éditions, 2004), 56.

¹⁵⁸ Daumalin, *Marseille et l’Ouest africain*, 214.

¹⁵⁹ Chambre de Commerce de Marseille, *La Chambre de Commerce de Marseille et l’Exposition Coloniale de 1906*, 4.

¹⁶⁰ Michael A. Osborne, *The Emergence of Tropical Medicine in France* (University of Chicago Press, 2014), 169.

un problème économique.¹⁶¹ Neglecting issues of violence and power structures, he represented the imperial project as a system of production, which made international resources profitable. He regarded the colonies as a support and a guarantee for French economic and industrial prosperity. Furthermore, he understood the conquered territories abroad as a means to increasing the nation's visibility and influence worldwide. Moreover, in his view, these achievements contributed to forging a strong and confident image of – and for – the country and its population. Finally, Charles-Roux accepted the civilizing mission as an uncontroversial cultural mandate for the West, and France in particular, which he generally considered superior culturally and economically.¹⁶² Under his influence, the Marseille Exposition was rooted in an understanding of colonization which was primarily *commercial, pacifique, et volontiers unanime*.¹⁶³

Charles-Roux was extensively involved in the representation of the French imperial lobby in the context of turn-of-the-century international exhibitions. For instance, he was a jury member during the 1889 exposition in Paris, and member of the superior commission in charge of the French sections during the universal expositions in Chicago (1892) and Brussels (1897). Due to this expertise, he was then assigned the *Section des colonies et pays de protectorat* during the 1900 show in Paris. However, he estimated that the colonial sections had not received the attention and the recognition they deserved.¹⁶⁴ This disappointment might have motivated his ambition to produce an even greater show in his home city.

¹⁶¹ Jules Charles-Roux, *Les Colonies Françaises. Introduction Générale*, Publications de la Commission chargée de préparer la participation du Ministère des Colonies, Exposition Universelle de 1900 (Paris: Challamel, 1901), 223.

¹⁶² Richard, "Charles-Roux, Le Colonial."

¹⁶³ Olivesi, "Le Mouvement social," 28.

¹⁶⁴ Charles-Roux, *Les Colonies Françaises. Introduction Générale*, 230–233.

An Exposition for Marseille

After actively taking part in the Parisian Exposition in 1900 and acknowledging its huge success, stakeholders in Marseille started discussing the possibility of a comparable exhibition in their city. On October 23, 1902, during a talk given at the local *Société de Géographie*, it was Heckel who first suggested and demanded the organization of a colonial exposition and an international colonial conference in Marseille.¹⁶⁵ Following on the meeting of the *Société*, the city council of Marseille discussed the matter on October 28, 1902. This topic came about after Heckel had sent a letter to the newly elected mayor Amable Chanot promoting the concept of a colonial exhibition in the city. He wrote:

“Monsieur le Maire, Il résulte de mes nombreux rapports avec le maire colonial parisien durant le mois de septembre entier que je viens de passer à Paris, la constatation d’un étonnement profond de voir Marseille se laisser distancer sur le terrain des expositions coloniales par des villes d’importance moindre comme Lyon et Bordeaux. Depuis plusieurs années, ces deux cités ont organisé et mené à bien avec un rendement fructueux des expositions coloniales, et Marseille, la ‘capitale’, la ‘métropole coloniale’ n’a pas encore la sienne!”¹⁶⁶

Henkel pointed out that, on a national level, Marseille had missed to affirm its position as a central urban node – the *colonial metropole* – within the French empire. Indeed, he considered unacceptable that the city had not yet hosted a major representative exhibition for this purpose. In fact, according to his exchange with the Parisian mayor, he was under the impression that his home city was being passed by rival pretenders to this function and image of a colonial city, like Lyon and Bordeaux. Here, Heckel most probably referred to other events with a colonial dimension, such as the *Exposition universelle, internationale et coloniale* in 1894 in Lyon and

¹⁶⁵ Chambre de Commerce de Marseille, *La Chambre de Commerce de Marseille et l’Exposition Coloniale de 1906*, 8.

¹⁶⁶ Conseil Municipal, “Séance Du 28 Octobre 1902. Exposition Coloniale de 1904-1905 Dans Le Parc Du Château Borély” (Marseille, October 28, 1902), 1D 177, Archives municipales de Marseille.

the *Exposition de la Société Philomathique* in Bordeaux one year later. Building on the important colonial pavilion during the Universal Exposition in Paris in 1889, both events attempted to display their impact in the empire. Though, the imperial representatives in Marseille argued that Lyon and Bordeaux were not as well suited for the role as main colonial cities as Marseille was. For him, the former was the main urban center of the French empire and therefore owed itself an unprecedented colonial celebration. Hence, Heckel's message showed that universal and colonial expositions were considered a significant instrument of urban representation. What is more, these events were specifically orchestrated in the context of a national competition between cities.

Discussing the organization, Heckel proposed the future general curator of the event: "M. J.C. Roux qui a eu un des premiers l'initiative de ce projet et en a entretenu aussi le Ministre, m'a déclaré mettre entièrement à la disposition de la Ville sa haute compétence en matière coloniale affirmée par le succès du Trocadéro en 1900."¹⁶⁷ Henkel underlined Charles-Roux's role as one of the pioneer initiators of this project. Additionally, he mentioned that this businessman had allegedly already discussed the plan for an exposition with the Minister [of the Colonies; MdS]. Thus, Charles-Roux represented an important link between the actors in Marseille and the Parisian state's representatives. Furthermore, the mere fact that Charles-Roux had informed the Minister underscored his seriousness and his commitment to the project.

In the course of this city council meeting, a vote for a colonial exposition in Marseille in principle was approved unanimously. On December 19, 1902, a commission for preparatory studies (*Commission d'études préparatoires*) was established which was composed of members of the city council, the General Council (Bouches-du-Rhône department), and the Chamber of Commerce of Marseille.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Conseil Municipal, "Séance Du 19 Décembre 1902. Exposition Coloniale. – Congrès International Colonial" (Marseille, December 19, 1902), 1D 177, Archives municipales de Marseille.

During the preliminary elaborations, deputy mayor M. Pieri emphasized the necessary and promising character of such an event for the city:

“M. Pieri: – Monsieur le Maire et Messieurs les Conseillers Municipaux (...) Vous avez vite compris quelle importance une pareille solennité aurait pour le renom et la prospérité commercial, industrielle et maritime de notre cité. L’administration estime qu’il est urgent de se mettre au travail pour faire aboutir dans retard ce projet grandiose, car d’autres villes, semble-t-il, songent déjà à tirer parti de notre idée.”¹⁶⁹

The city’s representatives were convinced that such a colonial exposition would have a positive effect on Marseille’s reputation and represent a guarantee for a prosperous economic and political future. This statement expressed the nature of the intentions pursued with this project and the strong faith that was put in the direct impact of the event on its host city. Indeed, a colonial exposition in Marseille would serve as a promotional and marketing instrument for the city. Enhancing Marseille’s greatness and performance, this project would also automatically follow the logics of competition with – and exclusion of – other cities, compared to which Marseille would appear superior. Therefore, it was crucial for the local organizers to put the project in place before other French cities appropriated a similar plan for themselves.

During the following year, municipal and departmental funding was arranged. In 1902, the city council had granted 10,000 *Francs* as a budget for the recently created preparatory commission. On October 22, 1903, the *Conseil général* (department) agreed on a 250,000 *Francs* subsidy, and one month later, the *Conseil Municipal* joined it with quadruple that amount.¹⁷⁰ On December 21st, the Chamber of Commerce added additional 250,000 *Francs* to

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ Jules Charles-Roux, *Rapport Général. Exposition Coloniale Nationale de Marseille 15 Avril-18 Novembre 1906* (Marseille: Barlatier, 1907), 10.

the budget. The rest of the costs was to be covered by private donations, the exhibiting parties themselves, the colonies, and the visitors, who contributed one *Franc* entrance each.¹⁷¹

These financial arrangements showed the primary implication of local and regional stakeholders and resources, enhancing the decentralized and decentralizing character of the enterprise. Indeed, this project was initiated from and for Marseille's bourgeois elite. At this level, Paris' participation remained insignificant, and Marseille's authorities granted themselves autonomous decision making power.

Based on suggestions and demands from Marseille's mayor and the departmental *Conseil Général*, a presidential decree was issued declaring the project of a colonial exposition in Marseille and appointing the heads of the enterprise.¹⁷² Charles-Roux became the head-curator (*Commissaire Général de l'Exposition Nationale de Marseille de 1906*), while Heckel served as his assistant (*Commissaire Général adjoint*). On the governmental level, the *Ministres des Colonies, de l'Intérieur et des Cultes, et des Affaires Etrangères* constituted a regulatory link between the central government and the project in Marseille. Hence, in spite of the role of the ministries, the leading positions were held by local and regional actors in Marseille.

Overall, the procedures were unprecedented, both in regard to the national context of universal fairs and the policy collaborations between Paris and Marseille in general. Indeed, aside from comparable events taking place in the French capital or abroad, it was the very first time that the heads of an exposition were nominated by a presidential decree.¹⁷³ However, apart from these nominations, the central government was hardly implicated in the making of the

¹⁷¹ Jacques Léotard, "L'Exposition Coloniale et le Congrès Colonial de Marseille En 1906," in *Bulletin de La Société de Géographie et d'Etudes Coloniales de Marseille*, vol. 27 (Marseille: Secrétariat de la Société de Géographie, 1903), 439-441. According to Laurent Morando, this amount was relatively high, considering that, back then, a minor earned an average of 120 to 130 *Francs* a month: Morando, "Les Expositions Coloniales Nationales de Marseille de 1906 et 1922 : Manifestations Locales Ou Nationales ?" 232.

¹⁷² Presidential decree, Emile Loubert, President of the French Republic, March 1, 1904, in: Aimé Bouis, *Le Livre d'Or de Marseille. De Son Commerce et de Ses Industries. Compte-Rendu Annuel de La Situation Maritime, Commerciale, Industrielle, Coloniale* (Marseille: R. Saurel, 1905), 207.

¹⁷³ Charles-Roux, *Rapport Général. Exposition Coloniale Nationale de Marseille 15 Avril-18 Novembre 1906*, 10.

event.¹⁷⁴ Furthermore, the Exposition was a decentralized organization, which was rather atypical in the very centralized structure of the French state.¹⁷⁵

Improving the Image of a City in Crisis

In order to legitimize the exhibition's project, the organizers enhanced the need for the improvement of Marseille's image and social climate in a period of crisis.

It was Charles-Roux who addressed the exposition committee during the event's planning phase in 1904 and called on the necessity of a colonial celebration:

“La triste période que nous venons de traverser rend, à mon sens, l'Exposition Coloniale plus utile et plus opportune que jamais. Il serait temps que Marseille se manifestât autrement que par de perpétuelles agitations qui détournent le trafic commercial au profit des ports concurrents, imposent à la population tout entière (...) les sacrifices les plus cuisants (...) et portent une atteinte grave à son bon renom en France et à l'étranger.”¹⁷⁶

The curator put the emphasis on the usefulness of a major popular event in these troublesome times for the city. In fact, in Marseille, the first years of the new century were marked by almost continuous maritime worker's riots and strikes in the port of the city.¹⁷⁷ These economically and politically motivated conflicts between the unionized dockers and the entrepreneurs and members of the chamber of commerce, involved mostly the negotiating of labor conditions, working schedules, and wages. This social agitation and violence strongly marked the atmosphere and image of Marseille. According to his statement above, Charles-Roux was afraid

¹⁷⁴ Boulanger, “Visions d'Empire,” 57.

¹⁷⁵ See chapter 3.3. *Contingent Relationality*.

¹⁷⁶ Jules Charles-Roux, “Rapport de M. J. Charles-Roux Sur Les Travaux Accomplis Depuis La Signature Du Décret Présidentiel. Extrait Du Procès-Verbal de La Réunion Du Comité Supérieur Du 14 Octobre 1904” (Marseille, October 14, 1904), 13 F 2, Archives municipales de Marseille, 10.

¹⁷⁷ On the dockers strikes in Marseille, see, amongst others: Claverie, “Les Dockers à Marseille de 1864 à 1941”; Jean Doménichino and Jean-Marie Guillon, *Les dockers : le port autonome de Marseille; histoire des hommes* (Marseille: Éditions Jeanne Laffitte, 2001); Pigenet, “Les dockers. Retour sur le long processus de construction d'une identité collective en France, XIX^e-XX^e siècles.”

that the conflicts were to lead to a distraction, away from the maritime commercial activity. And this risk needed to be addressed carefully in order to ensure the city's prosperity as well as its economic importance in comparison with other rival ports. Furthermore, so the curator, these protests frustrated and threatened the local population, and damaged the image of the city and its reputation worldwide.

In this context, the exposition represented an opportunity to mark a turning point after a difficult period, being given a perfect occasion to stage the city in a politically favorable light. "Unissons donc nos efforts, Messieurs, pour favoriser l'éclosion d'un ère nouvelle de calme, de travail fécond et de paix sociale."¹⁷⁸ Social order, peace, and favorable conditions for economic growth were thus central tasks and goals for Marseille's imperial elites. The Colonial Exposition was conceived and praised as a symbol and a carrier of these resolutions, as well as a catalyst of new prosperous times for the city.

A Specialized Event

At the turn of the twentieth century, universal fairs and international expositions were a widely spread phenomenon in Europe and North America. However, Marseille had never hosted such an event and aimed for an innovative show.

"Après les grandes expositions universelles et internationales qui eurent lieu à Paris, en 1900, puis à Saint-Louis et à Liège, l'ère de ces vastes manifestations était momentanément close. L'Exposition de Milan, qui eut lieu en même temps que l'Exposition de Marseille, se présentait, au début, sous l'aspect d'une Exposition spécialisée aux moyens de transports (...) mais ce ne fut pas, à proprement parler, une

¹⁷⁸ Jules Charles-Roux, "Rapport de M. J. Charles-Roux Sur Les Travaux Accomplis Depuis La Signature Du Décret Présidentiel. Extrait Du Procès-Verbal de La Réunion Du Comité Supérieur Du 14 Octobre 1904" (Marseille, October 14, 1904), 13 F 2, Archives municipales de Marseille, 10.

Exposition Universelle ; (...) l'Exposition de Marseille se trouve spécialisée à un sujet bien déterminé, limité, mais développe dans toute son ampleur.”¹⁷⁹

Here, the curator compared the Marseille event with contemporary examples of major international expositions like the Louisiana Purchase Exposition, the 1904 World's Fair in St. Louis, Missouri (USA), and its counterpart in Liège (Belgium) in 1905, the *Exposition Universelle et Internationale de Liège* on the occasion of the seventy-fifth anniversary of Belgian independence. According to him, the latter two represented the last examples of what had been, strictly speaking, large universal exhibitions. He omitted a third comparable event which took place during this period: the Lewis and Clark Centennial and American Pacific Exposition and Oriental Fair in Portland in 1905, which was not officially launched and registered as a world fair at the time, though is often discussed as such in the literature.¹⁸⁰

Instead, he jumped directly to the *Esposizione Internazionale del Sempione* in Milano in 1906, a world fair that was initially conceived as a specialized event, similar to what was foreseen for Marseille. Focusing on transportation and engineering at first, it was then expanded towards a more general set of exhibits and topics. Though, according to the organizers in Marseille, the age of the classic universal exhibition and world fair was over, and a new type of exposition was about to be created.

“L'idée première d'une Exposition purement coloniale est née du succès de l'Exposition du Trocadéro en 1900. L'avenir paraissant plus propice aux expositions spéciales qu'aux expositions universelles, c'est à la manifestation de notre activité au delà des mers que semblait devoir être consacrée la première de ces expositions.”¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁹ Charles-Roux, *Rapport Général. Exposition Coloniale Nationale de Marseille 15 Avril-18 Novembre 1906*, 20.

¹⁸⁰ John E. Findling, Kimberly D. Pelle, and Foreword by Vicente González Loscertales, *Encyclopedia of World's Fairs and Expositions*, 2nd edition (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2008), 181-184.

¹⁸¹ Chambre de Commerce de Marseille, *La Chambre de Commerce de Marseille et l'Exposition Coloniale de 1906*, 49.

As discussed before, the 1900 *Exposition* constituted a major influence. However, unlike the “universal” Parisian show, there was a sense that specialized events were now on the agenda. In this context, it seemed logical that Marseille, the main port city of the empire, would put its colonial and maritime function on display.

Marseille Exhibiting French Colonialism: A Predestinated Match

“Quelle cité autre que Marseille, premier port de France que d’aucuns considéraient comme une ville coloniale, pouvait revendiquer l’accueil de pareille exposition?”¹⁸² Amongst the political elites – and predominantly in the contemporary literature on this subject – the city of Marseille was considered predestinated and perfect for hosting this major colonial manifestation.

In his letter to the local mayor Chanot quoted above, Heckel posited the status of Marseille as a “capital” of the French colonial network. It seemed evident to him that, because of this central function of the city, this specialized colonial exposition had to take place in Marseille. Charles-Roux’s local patriotism and expertise in the organization and the marketing enterprise of international exhibitions matched and even reinforced this ambition.

In the official guide of the show, the obviousness of this location was used as a legitimating argument as well: “Seconde ville de France, cité la plus peuplée de la Méditerranée, port le plus vaste et le mieux outillé de cette mer (...) elle était toute désignée pour préparer l’Exposition de 1906.”¹⁸³ Drawing on the city’s demographic and infrastructural qualities, the organizers considered Marseille perfect for hosting the event.

Paul Masson, an important local historian of colonization working at the time, published his study *Marseille et le Colonisation Française* during the year of the exhibition, in which he

¹⁸² Boulanger, “Visions d’Empire,” 56.

¹⁸³ [Unknown], *Guide Officiel de l’Exposition Coloniale de Marseille* (Marseille: Barlatier, 1906), 6.

argued that Marseille ought to be *le siège désigné* of all future exhibitions.¹⁸⁴ Indeed, throughout the text, Masson invoked the city's *vocation colonisatrice* in order to praise Marseille as the new colonial metropole of France at the edge of the twentieth century.¹⁸⁵

Here, a self-referential legitimization strategy was articulated in order to assert the exhibition project: On one hand, due to its function as the main representative imperial city of France, Marseille was predisposed to organize a colonial exposition. On the other hand, the very event itself was instrumentalized in order to establish the city's status and image as the colonial metropole of France. Hence, in this double-sided discourse, depictions and attributes of the city defined each other respectively.

¹⁸⁴ Paul Masson, *Marseille et La Colonisation Française. Essai d'Histoire Coloniale*, Exposition Coloniale de Marseille 1906 (Marseille: Barlatier, 1906), 579.

¹⁸⁵ Olivesi, "Le Mouvement social," 28.

2.2. The Exposition: Celebrating Colonial Economy and Trade

The Creation of an Original Exposition Site

The crucial task of choosing the exposition's venue was one of the first on the commission's agenda. An early suggestion for the location was Borély Park, a green space in the southeastern part of the city, approximately three kilometers away from the center.¹⁸⁶ This idea was supported by Heckel, among others: "cette exposition pourrait être faite avec grand succès au Parc Borély où toutes les surfaces libres y compris les pelouses pourraient être couvertes par des constructions indigènes avec une grand Palais en face de l'entrée du Parc!"¹⁸⁷ Already at this early stage of the planning, the scientist imagined the site's arrangement structured around a large main building – a "*Grand Palais*," which was built a few years later. Borély Park, however, was decided against as it turned out to be too far from the city center and poorly connected.

Several other locations were considered, including pieces of wasteland in the Joliette and Arenc districts, the old cemetery of Saint-Charles, and a few others. However, they were all considered too far from the city-center, too small or too expensive for the endeavor.¹⁸⁸

Eventually, the Rouet park, a military training area at the Rond-Point du Prado in the southern part of the city, was selected. It was renamed "Parc Chanot" for the exposition in reference to the contemporary mayor of the city (this designation is still in use today.) The terrain covered 20 hectares and could be extended through the use of two adjacent private properties. Long negotiations involving military authorities from Paris and Marseille, the

¹⁸⁶ Morando, "Les Expositions Coloniales Nationales de Marseille de 1906 et 1922 : Manifestations Locales Ou Nationales ?" 232.

¹⁸⁷ Edouard Heckel's letter to the mayor of Marseille, quoted in: Conseil Municipal, "Séance Du 28 Octobre 1902. Exposition Coloniale de 1904-1905 Dans Le Parc Du Château Borély" (Marseille, October 28, 1902), 1D 177, Archives municipales de Marseille.

¹⁸⁸ Charles-Roux, *Rapport Général. Exposition Coloniale Nationale de Marseille 15 Avril-18 Novembre 1906*, 17–18.

municipal administrations, and the owners of the areas then ensued in August 1904. The army offered two and a half years of free use of the training camp, and rental deals were agreed on for the other parties.¹⁸⁹ By that autumn, a rental contract with a sale commitment from the city of Marseille, in case of potential planning following the exposition, was agreed on. On February 10, 1905, the first tree was solemnly planted on the Rouet area. Extensive rehabilitation and construction works were then conducted in order to transform the now 36-hectar area into a suitable exposition site.

Transport networks also required expansion: The number of train connections between Paris and Marseille were increased for the duration of the event. In the city, tramways provided the most common means of transportation, especially for visitors transferring from the Saint Charles train station: “L’entrée est au rond-point du Prado, à dix minutes du centre de la ville par les petits tramways électriques qui circulent sans interruption et transportent le voyageur pour la modique somme de 0 fr. 10, et à mi-chemin de la ville et du château Borély.”¹⁹⁰ The official exposition guide promoted the modern commuter infrastructure and well-developed public transport schedules and affordable prices proposed to the visitors.

What is more, the Exposition served as a platform to promote an infrastructural connection between the port of Marseille and the Rhône. Building on a discussion from the end of the nineteenth century, preparatory works were conducted during the year of the exposition, and eventually led to the inauguration of the canal in 1927.¹⁹¹ Though, already during the years surrounding the Colonial Exposition, the connection to the Rhône was advocated for and

¹⁸⁹ For a detailed evaluation of the procedures and acquisition arrangements for the exposition site, see: Isabelle Aillaud, “L’Exposition Coloniale de 1906,” in *Désirs d’ailleurs. Les Expositions Coloniales de Marseille 1906 et 1922*, ed. Archives municipales de Marseille, Editions Alors Hors du Temps (Marseille, 2006), 84-85.

¹⁹⁰ [Unknown], *Guide Officiel de l’Exposition Coloniale de Marseille*, 15.

¹⁹¹ Paul Masson, “Le Canal de Marseille Au Rhône,” *Annales de Géographie* 25, no. 135 (1916): 223–227.

framed as an affirmative means of the city's industrial force.¹⁹² Hence, as these examples show, the exposition contributed to the technical development and the modernization of the city.

The location choice was widely applauded. For instance, the local daily newspaper *Le Petit Marseillais* underlined its positive impact on the surrounding area: “L’Exposition coloniale fait de notre Prado le boulevard le plus fréquenté, et on peut dire qu’il prédispose délicieusement la visiteur à apprécier les belles choses qu’il va voir dans les palais coloniaux.”¹⁹³ It transformed the Prado boulevard stretching alongside the exposition site into a busy street with gained significance. The special *aménagement* also contributed to embellishing this infrastructure, in line with the aesthetic efforts that had been made inside the park. “Jamais, d’ailleurs, le Prado ne se montra plus élégant ni plus animé.”¹⁹⁴ According to an article recounting the event’s opening ceremony, the colonial exposition led to the renovation and increased popularity of the Prado (the boulevard and/or the Rond Point) and thereby contributed to endorsing this part of the city.

During the discussions about the exposition site, the question of centrality emerged as a main factor of appreciation and attractiveness. Although the Prado site was situated farther south than the inner city core, the organizers managed to convey other characteristics of centrality, by rehabilitating and popularizing the urban space around the exposition venue and expanding the transport networks. Of course, these measures seemed necessary in order to commute the numerous regional, national, and international visitors expected. Adding to these practical necessities, these logistical and infrastructural conditions were essential to the representation of the modern, technologically advanced, and competitive Marseille.

¹⁹² See for instance: Exposition inauguration speech of Jules Charles-Roux: Chambre de Commerce de Marseille, *La Chambre de Commerce de Marseille et l’Exposition Coloniale de 1906*, 70; Speech of M. Lesieur, President of the Chamber of Commerce of Paris and of the Assembly of the Presidents: *Ibid.*, 139; Masson, *Marseille et La Colonisation Française. Essai d’Histoire Coloniale*, 574–575.

¹⁹³ Jacques Martial, “La Promenade Du Prado. Son Histoire,” *Le Petit Marseillais*, April 19, 1906, 1.

¹⁹⁴ *Le Petit Marseillais*, “Exposition Coloniale. L’inauguration Officielle,” *Le Petit Marseillais*, April 15, 1906, 1.

The Inauguration of the Colonial Exposition

On April 14, 1906, the first National Colonial Exposition was inaugurated in Marseille. The city's mayor, the municipal council, and prominent political and military stakeholders attended the ceremony. Representatives from surrounding localities and partner municipalities and ports (e.g. Dunkirk, Toulon, and Le Havre) came for the occasion as well. And, of course, Charles-Roux, Heckel, and the main administrators were present.¹⁹⁵

However, no representatives of the French government attended the inauguration. The national press largely ignored the event, as well.¹⁹⁶ In fact, in July 1906, another colonial exposition was launched in the *Grand Palais* in Paris. The event in the capital was not mentioned in the written sources discussing the Marseille show, or was it said to have had little success¹⁹⁷. In the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, the journalist René Pinon dismissed it as a “déplorable contrefaçon de Marseille, une Exposition coloniale où il y a de tout excepté des colonies.”¹⁹⁸ He found that it was a poor imitation of Marseille's production, and failed at its goal of exhibiting the colonies properly. Both the absence of representatives from the national government and the press reviews – or lack thereof – pointed to a rivalry between Paris and Marseille.

In Marseille, on the other hand, the local and regional newspapers fervently covered the inauguration of the exposition, as well as the opening to the public two days later¹⁹⁹. The topic

¹⁹⁵ For further details on the participants and the organizational of the inauguration of the colonial exposition in Marseille (April 14, 1906), see for instance: Chambre de Commerce de Marseille, *La Chambre de Commerce de Marseille et l'Exposition Coloniale de 1906*, 59–74.

¹⁹⁶ Boulanger, “Visions d'Empire,” 59.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Le Petit Marseillais, “Exposition Coloniale. L'inauguration Officielle”; Gaspard Galy, “L'Inauguration Officielle de l'Exposition Coloniale,” *Le Petit Marseillais*, April 14, 1906, 1; Louis Sabarin, “A l'Exposition Coloniale,” *Le Petit Provençal*, April 8, 1906, 1; Le Petit Provençal, “L'Ouverture de l'Exposition Coloniale,” *Le Petit Provençal*, April 11, 1906, 1; Le Petit Provençal, “L'Inauguration de l'Exposition Coloniale,” *Le Petit Provençal*, April 12, 1906, 1; Camille Ferdy, “L'Inauguration de l'Exposition Coloniale,” *Le Petit Provençal*, April 15, 1906, 1–2; Le Petit Provençal, “L'Ouverture de l'Exposition Coloniale,” *Le Petit Provençal*, April 16, 1906, 1–2; Armand Gerbe, “L'Exposition Coloniale,” *Le Radical*, April 15, 1906, 2–3; Jacques Léotard, “Ouverture de l'Exposition,” *Le Sémaphore*, April 13, 1906, 1; J. L., “L'Inauguration de l'Exposition Coloniale,” *Le Sémaphore*, April 15, 1906, 1.

of the colonial exposition was consistently addressed on the front pages of the daily newspaper for most of the duration of the event, which accounted for its local significance. This attested the advertising role of the local press, too. Thus, not only did the press report the visitors' enthusiasm, it also contributed to (re)producing it. The daily newspapers also served as a mouthpiece for the official discourse and transmitted the transcribed inauguration speeches, for instance.

Overall, the press in Marseille praised the project: It was described as “un grand évènement pour Marseille,”²⁰⁰ in *Le Petit Marseillais*, and printed Charles-Roux' large portrait on its front page the day before the opening. The regional counterpart, *Le Petit Provençal*, assured the event's success, despite the early stage of its realization: “L'Exposition Coloniale de Marseille revêtira un caractère de prestige et d'éclat dont notre pays pourra se montrer légitimement fier”²⁰¹. The event was promised to be a great success, not only for its host city but for the whole nation.

Le Radical called the event “imposant, grandiose, original et intéressant”²⁰² “Grandiose”²⁰³ was the adjective which the redaction of *Le Sémaphore* chose as well. Clearly, the exhibition enjoyed wide recognition among the local press. It regularly reviewed its events and buildings in a positive tone. The vocabulary and criteria used in the articles was in line with the language and value system that appeared in the official documents, published by the exposition organizers themselves. Hence, the press coverage in Marseille seemed to, at least in this specific matter, reflect and support the voice of the local elites. In this context, the daily newspapers quoted here did not nourish a differentiated discussion on the topic, but rather functioned as an organ for the city representatives. Hence, they contributed to conveying the officially disseminated image of Marseille during the colonial exposition.

²⁰⁰ Galy, “L'Inauguration Officielle de l'Exposition Coloniale,” 1.

²⁰¹ Ferdy, “L'Inauguration de l'Exposition Coloniale,” 1.

²⁰² Gerbe, “L'Exposition Coloniale,” 2.

²⁰³ Léotard, “Ouverture de l'Exposition,” 1.

The significance of this major event for the city of Marseille was underlined during Chanut's speech at the inauguration:

“d'jà la soleil nous a souri, tout le monde nous sourira bientôt et, dans quelques jours, l'Exposition montrera que Marseille pouvait faire quelque chose. (...) Il faut qu'il en reste mieux qu'un enseignement et un exemple, il faut qu'il reste encore un souvenir tangible de cette manifestation qui bientôt attirera dans notre ville nos compatriotes de France et des colonies, les étrangers, et, enfin le chef d'Etat lui-même.”²⁰⁴

Referring to the pleasant Mediterranean climate, he praised the city and promised a great success for the exposition. According to Chanut, its realization was the opportunity to show what Marseille was capable of. Adding to the educational role and the pioneering function of the event, it was expected to have a long-term, tangible, positive impact on the city. Indeed, the mayor affirmed that this success would make the city visible for the whole nation, and even more so, attractive for the whole world. Ultimately, it would, hopefully, even receive the high recognition of the French president's visit. This would symbolically assert the fact that the port city was able to execute great work on its own, in other words, without the help of the nation's central power. Simultaneously, and despite the autonomous procedure in Marseille, this achievement would be acknowledged by the head of the French republic. This tension between the claim for decentralization on one hand, and the cry for recognition from Paris on the other hand, appeared clearly during this opening speech. Furthermore, the mayor underlined the symbolic and material importance of the colonial exposition for the city of Marseille as a whole, which put the emphasis on the urban dimension of this cultural and colonial project.

²⁰⁴ Ferdy, “L'Inauguration de l'Exposition Coloniale.”

The *Grand Palais*

The visitors entered the site at the Rond-Point du Prado. Behind the entrance gate, two large colonial glasshouses displayed exotic vegetation. From there, the vast exposition area was structured around a main central road, which led to the *Grand Palais de l'Exportation* and from which various other paths spread (see Illustration 1). Numerous buildings and pavilions representing the French colonies and protectorates were spread around the park. This way, the topography of the exhibition site translated the imaginary of the Empire's geography: At the pinnacle, the *Grand Palais*, symbol of the dominant mother-nation and core of the imperial network. Leading up to it from the site's entrance, the Pavilions, representing the dominated territories, placed hierarchically in accordance with their (commercial) significance to the *métropole*. E.g. Algeria, Marseille's closest colonial trade partner, and Indochina, so-called "most flourishing"²⁰⁵ and economically promising French colony of the time, enjoyed a prominent position in the site's arrangement.²⁰⁶

The *Grand Palais*, whose opening was delayed by ten days (April 26, 1906), constituted the core of the Exposition²⁰⁷ and its most essential representative part.²⁰⁸ This large, representative structure was built over one hectare in the classical style of the central exhibition hall, similar to the *Grand Palais* in Paris, for example.²⁰⁹ It was conceived and realized by Léonce Müller, chief architect of the city, and Etienne Bentz, the official architect of the projects and creator of the general plan for the exposition site. This building fulfilled several functions. There was a *Salle des Fêtes* where official events and celebrations took place. Additionally, the

²⁰⁵ Léotard, "L'Exposition Coloniale et le Congrès Colonial de Marseille En 1906," 439–41.

²⁰⁶ Aimé Bouis, *Le Livre d'Or de Marseille. De Son Commerce et de Ses Industries. Compte-Rendu Annuel de La Situation Maritime, Commerciale, Industrielle, Coloniale*, Conseil Général des Bouches-du-Rhône (Marseille: Imprimerie Samat et Cie, 1906); Aimé Bouis, *Le Livre d'Or de Marseille. De Son Commerce et de Ses Industries. Compte-Rendu Annuel de La Situation Maritime, Commerciale, Industrielle, Coloniale* (Marseille: Typographie & Lithographie Ant. Ged, 1907).

²⁰⁷ For descriptions and organizational details about *Grand Palais* of the colonial exposition (1906), see: [Unknown], *Guide Officiel de l'Exposition Coloniale de Marseille*, 101–120.

²⁰⁸ Gallocher, *Marseille. zigzags dans le passé*, 205.

²⁰⁹ Aillaud, "L'Exposition Coloniale de 1906," 89.

venue hosted several showrooms. In the main part of the building, visitors discovered the *Grand Palais*' commercial exhibition.

The Chamber of Commerce, symbol and key actor of the local economic network, exhibited itself:

“Il s’agit d’admirer (...) l’exposition de la Chambre de commerce de notre ville, qui offre un très grand intérêt avec d’une part, une vue panoramique et un plan en relief du port de Marseille, et, d’autre part, des graphiques sur la force motrice employée en 1905 dans le département des Bouches-du-Rhône; sur le mouvement de la population totale et de la population industrielle de notre ville; sur la valeur de la production industrielle de Marseille de 1815 à 1905; sur l’importance actuelle de l’industrie à Marseille et de son développement depuis 1830; sur la valeur de la production annuelle de chacune des spécialités de Marseille industriel.”²¹⁰

This positive review underlined the instructive focus put on the port and on the demographic condition of the *Département*. Even more importantly, the exposition showed Marseille’s industrial development, production, and worth, thereby displaying the city’s industrial strength overall, adding to its commercial capacities.

The Chamber of Commerce of Marseille was given credit for successful leadership of the local commercial resources.²¹¹ Created in 1599, this organization was the very first Chamber of Commerce worldwide and a pioneer establishment which constituted an element of local pride and patriotism, as well as hope for future economic prosperity. The institution played a crucial role as a financial and institutional support of urban representative events in Marseille throughout the ages. It was a central institutional actor and platform of urban stakeholders and

²¹⁰ Louis Sabarin, “A l’Exposition Coloniale. L’Ouverture Du Grand-Palais,” 1.

²¹¹ Sabarin, “Les Fêtes Provençales à l’Exposition Coloniale,” 1: “On reproche souvent aux français actuels de manquer à la fois d’audace et de largeur de vues. (...) Peut-être beaucoup de Marseillais aussi (...) Mais ils [les Marseillais; MdS] ont certainement à leur tête une élite intelligente et courageuse. (...) On peut en trouver la preuve dans les travaux de la Chambre de Commerce qui reflètent les préoccupations de cette élite du corps commercial qu’elle représente.”

economic elites for Marseille and its region. The participation of this economic player in the realization of a popular mass event was significant: the economic leaders carried out the exhibition as a local promotional endeavor and thereby shaped the image of Marseille which was disseminated in this context.

Furthermore, several armament and transport companies were represented as well, like the *Compagnie Générale Transatlantique*, which was presided over by Charles-Roux at the time. Furthermore, numerous exportation brands and products were exhibited, regional businesses, like the well-known sugar factories Saint-Louis (Marseille), national brands, like the champagne house Moët et Chandon, and many more. This section asserted France's commercial strength in conveying its ability to export goods to the colonies.

In the left wing, the Provençal art exhibitions showed the artistic richness and cultural heritage of the region. This hall certified the regional production and cultural heritage of Marseille, which were important both for the promoters of the city's image and for the decentralization discussion. Here, the city of Marseille, the *Conseil Général*, and patrons commissioned local painters, sculptors, and artisans and exhibited over 1,200 works of art and design in order to provide an "idée complète de ce que produisit en art le génie provençal."²¹² The promotion and emphasis of the Provence region was complemented by a pavilion on its own, the *Dioramas de Provence*, also called *Mas de la Santo-Estello*, in reference to the local traditional housings.²¹³ This building was integrated in the geography of the exposition as a whole, as if the Provence was in itself yet another colony.²¹⁴ This conveyed an image of Marseille's supremacy over two different kinds of hinterland: the colonies overseas and the Provence region.

²¹² [Unknown], *Guide Officiel de l'Exposition Coloniale de Marseille*, 115.

²¹³ For descriptions and organizational details about the Provence pavilion of the colonial exposition (1906), see: [Unknown], *Guide Officiel de l'Exposition Coloniale de Marseille*, 33–35.

²¹⁴ Gallocher, *Marseille. zigzags dans le passé*, 205.

In line with this endeavor, the adjacent *Section des Corps Gras* retraced the history and the contemporary situation of the soap and olive oil production, which is central to Marseille's industrial and economic prosperity. This section can be regarded as an explicit demonstration of regionalism too, as it enhanced the local specialties and attractions. Furthermore, the local newspapers *Le Sémaphore* and *Le Petit Marseillais* were displayed as part of the heritage in a small pavilion.²¹⁵

The Pavilions

The colonial pavilions were designed committing to a metropolitan interpretation of the various local architectural fashion and reproduced main emblematic constructions in the French colonies: E.g. the Tunisian section is built within a colonnade inspired by the Zitouna mosk, reminding of Tunis' iconic patio and world's oldest university.²¹⁶ The pavilions' exhibitions were carefully curated to display selected local exotic artefacts, military devices, works of art and raw materials in order to illustrate the colonies' traditions and culture. For the sake of a lively representation, colonial subjects were mandated to stage everyday life practices in the so-called "*Village Nègre*" or Tunisian "Souk" for instance, and delivered traditional dances and music performances during celebratory parades. Inscribed in the exhibitory tradition of the time, this curatorial program aimed at an ethnographic museology, in which allegedly 'realistic' and 'authentic' depictions served as a criterion of quality and legitimacy of the exhibits.²¹⁷ Overall, the pavilions were articulated as an imperial understanding of the dominated territories overseas, positively showcasing the colonizing missions of the metropolitan powers in the colonies.

²¹⁵ [Unknown], *Guide Officiel de l'Exposition Coloniale de Marseille*, 157–159.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 51–62.

²¹⁷ Vanessa R. Schwartz, *Spectacular Realities: Early Mass Culture in Fin-de-Siècle Paris* (University of California Press, 1998).

The Indochinese Section

The largest section in the Chanot Park was dedicated to Indochina.²¹⁸ It consisted of 15 buildings (each colony had its own pavilion: Cochinchina, Tonkin, Annam, Cambodia and Laos) and covered 35,000 square meters – a third of the exhibition site. Furthermore, it was supported by the Indochinese government with a budget of 1.5 million *Francs*, making it the most expensive pavilion of the event. It was also considered one of its most important pavilions: “Le programme aussi vaste que délicat (...) constitue une des parties les plus intéressantes et les plus importantes de l’Exposition.”²¹⁹ At the exposition, due to its significant size and the quality of its realization, it was celebrated as one of the most thrilling sections.

The *Livre d’Or*, the economic yearbook of Marseille, emphasized this part as well:

“Parmi les Palais qui peuplèrent l’Exposition (...) il convient de garder surtout la souvenance des palais de l’Indo-Chine. Notre grande possession française en Extrême-Orient affirma un effort supérieurement significatif des progrès, de la prospérité de cette colonie. (...) c’est surtout le côté économique de cette partie de l’Exposition qui ait accaparé notre attention. (...) La Chambre de commerce de Marseille fit, en corps, un visite des plus instructives et des plus profitables pour les intérêts généraux du commerce marseillais en cette section.”²²⁰

According to these lines, Indochina was able to affirm its prosperity during the event in Marseille. This economic success also made it particularly attractive to the local commercial elites in the Chamber of Commerce. This institution paid increased attention to the pavilion, putting the emphasis on the profitable impact of Marseille’s trade relationships with these territories. Indeed, this colony was regarded as “la plus florissante de notre pays”²²¹ and

²¹⁸ For descriptions and organizational details about the indochinese section of the colonial exposition (1906), see: [Unknown], *Guide Officiel de l’Exposition Coloniale de Marseille*, 123–141.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 128.

²²⁰ Bouis, *Le Livre d’Or de Marseille. De Son Commerce et de Ses Industries. Compte-Rendu Annuel de La Situation Maritime, Commerciale, Industrielle, Coloniale*, 1907, 377–378.

²²¹ Léotard, “L’Exposition Coloniale et le Congrès Colonial de Marseille En 1906,” 467.

represented a promising feature in Marseille's colonial network and the most booming and thriving colony of the French Empire,²²² which justified its prominent position during the Colonial Exposition.

The Algerian Section

The Algerian pavilion constituted another main attraction of the exhibition. Already during the preliminary negotiations regarding the event planning, Algeria had been regarded as one of the main part of the program.

Shortly after his nomination as general curator, Charles-Roux depicted the colony as a central actor in the project:

“Dans une lettre spéciale au Gouverneur général de l’Algérie, j’ai insinué que par ses rapports consistants avec le port de Marseille et en raison de l’intérêt qu’elle a à conserver la prépondérance dans les échanges coloniaux avec la première place maritime de la Métropole, l’Algérie plus que toute autre voudrait certainement apporter à la manifestation de 1906 une participation aussi complète que ses ressources le lui permettent. Elle trouvera d’ailleurs ainsi l’occasion d’affirmer de nouveau sa vitalité et son credit.”²²³

As this statement showed, due to the country's active trade relationships with the port of Marseille, the general governor of Algeria was requested – and literally, expected – to participate in the Exposition project. The local government was also urged to invest and deliver a result of high quality. Furthermore, this statement suggested that the enrollment in the exhibition was mandatory in order to secure the colony's relationship with the Empire's central maritime node as well as its prominent position within the French colonial network. Finally, the

²²² Morando, “Les Expositions Coloniales Nationales de Marseille de 1906 et 1922 : Manifestations Locales Ou Nationales ?” 237.

²²³ Charles-Roux, “Rapport de M. J. Charles-Roux Sur Les Travaux Accomplis Depuis La Signature Du Décret Présidentiel. Extrait Du Procès-Verbal de La Réunion Du Comité Supérieur Du 14 Octobre 1904,” 2.

curator argued, the Algerian representatives should regard this opportunity as a unique way to showcase and legitimize its greatness as a colony of the French Empire.

The review in Bouis's *Livre d'Or* also suggested that Algeria would raise particular interest among the exhibition visitors too:

“L’Algérie, si approchée de nous par les communications maritimes les plus rapides que nous avons acquies le droit de l’appeler notre grande voisine; l’Algérie, avec laquelle nous sommes continuellement en rapports de sympathies et d’affaires, ne peut qu’intéresser, tout particulièrement à l’Exposition coloniale, les Marseillais.”²²⁴

Within the French colonial network, the city of Marseille and the Algerian colony were highly connected, due to their geographic and maritime proximity and to their productive commercial relationships. Thus, as suggested above, topics and affairs relating to Algeria were of high significance for the population of Marseille. For these reasons, the presence of this colony in the Exposition seemed to guarantee a factor of attractiveness for the local audience.

In line with this high significance and symbolic value, the Algerian section was located along the central road and opposite to the *Palais du Ministère des Colonies et des Beaux-Arts*.²²⁵ However, with five pavilions and a surface area of 9,000 square meters, the overall format of this exhibition was far more modest than its Indochinese counterpart. Nevertheless, the central palace, its crowning cupola and the 30 meters high, tricolor minaret displayed a significant architectural contribution. In terms of content, the section addressed several topics, like the antique heritage of the country, its great forests, and contemporary culture.

This did not go unnoticed in the press reviews, and the *Dépêche Coloniale Illustrée* underlined the innovative character of the Algerian pavilion compared to other appearances in

²²⁴ Bouis, *Le Livre d'Or de Marseille. De Son Commerce et de Ses Industries. Compte-Rendu Annuel de La Situation Maritime, Commerciale, Industrielle, Coloniale*, 1906, 519.

²²⁵ For descriptions and organizational details about the Algerian section of the colonial exposition (1906), see: [Unknown], *Guide Officiel de l'Exposition Coloniale de Marseille*, 37–49.

earlier universal expositions.²²⁶ Among the positive reviews received, this section was praised in term of colonial education: “L’Algérie qui, de toutes les colonies participant à l’Exposition fut celle qui donna (...) le plus complet aperçu d’ensemble des progrès de la colonisation en son territoire.”²²⁷

According to this appreciation, the Algerian pavilions delivered best the benefits of French colonialism. In the imperial context of the time, this was understood as a great compliment: due to a successful performance in Marseille, the Algerian representatives managed to convey a positive image, not so much of their own country, but rather of the French influence on it. This way, through the exhibition of a colony, Algeria, the organizers managed to enhance the imperial system itself. This revealed a reversed legitimization and power demonstration: the dominated served to celebrate the dominant.

The West French Africa Section

In the southern part of the site, the 10,000 square meter section dedicated to West French Africa constituted another main thematic focus of the colonial exposition.²²⁸ This major palace was called “l’œuvre architectural la plus fière, la plus inattendue, la plus saisissante de l’exposition coloniale”²²⁹ in the *Dépêche Coloniale Illustrée*.

A few months into the event, Léon Cayla, colonial administrator and future general governor of Madagascar (1930-1939) published another article in the same journal, where he praised the pavilion and reviewed it as a “parfaite évocation de la France africaine.”²³⁰ He called it an unforgettable visit and spoke highly of the responsible curators, “ceux qui consacèrent

²²⁶ La Dépêche Coloniale Illustrée, “Exposition Coloniale de Marseille,” *La Dépêche Coloniale Illustrée*, April 30, 1906, 92.

²²⁷ Bouis, *Le Livre d’Or de Marseille. De Son Commerce et de Ses Industries. Compte-Rendu Annuel de La Situation Maritime, Commerciale, Industrielle, Coloniale*, 1907, 378.

²²⁸ For descriptions and organizational details about the French Western Africa section of the colonial exposition (1906), see: [Unknown], *Guide Officiel de l’Exposition Coloniale de Marseille*, 89–97.

²²⁹ La Dépêche Coloniale Illustrée, “Exposition Coloniale de Marseille,” 90.

²³⁰ Léon Cayla, “L’Afrique Occidentale à l’Exposition de Marseille,” *La Dépêche Coloniale Illustrée*, September 15, 1906, 220.

leur talent et leurs efforts à nous instruire en nous charmant.”²³¹ As these reports showed, great importance was given to the pleasant and accurate character of the representations.

However, regarding the content of the representations, the newspaper *Questions diplomatiques et coloniales* published an interesting critique:

“Ce qui caractérise l’exposition de l’Afrique Occidentale, c’est son caractère à peu près exclusivement officiel. (...) On ne trouve aucune participation des maisons de commerce africaines. Par contre, les missions scientifiques et économiques, organisées au cours de ces dernières années, on bien fait les choses, et elles ont été heureusement inspirées d’initier le public aux résultats de leurs travaux. (...) Le Gouvernement général a tenu également à ce que le public n’ignore rien – et il faut l’en féliciter – des grands travaux publics dont il poursuit l’exécution en Afrique Occidentale.”²³²

Here, the author commented on the minor representations of African commercial institutions and businesses in the West French Africa section. Rather, he explained, the emphasis was put on the metropolitan commercial missions that had been conducted in the colonies, and on the so-called positive impact they had on the local development. In the article, the author did not consider the focus on the colonizers’ missions and the negligence of indigenous activities a qualitative lack in the pavilion. Though, this quantitative difference is informative because it suggests, that the exhibition of the colonies merely served the purpose of shedding the imperial power in a positive light, regardless of the local contextualization. To a large extent, this put the so-called educational endeavor of the show into perspective: The exhibition mostly aimed at displaying France’s Imperial richness due to the colonies and the impact of French Colonialism overseas, rather than enhancing the resources of the territories and societies themselves.

The Madagascan Section

²³¹ Ibid.

²³² Aspe-Fleurimont, “Promenades à l’Exposition Coloniale de Marseille,” *Questions Diplomatiques et Coloniales. Revue de Politique Extérieure* 21, no. 223 (June 1, 1906): 724-726.

A third palace was dedicated to Madagascar and its dependencies. The heterogeneous architecture of this section represented the Indian, Arab, and Malayan influences of the island, referencing the historical settler populations and reflecting its cosmopolitan heritage. Numerous²³³ exhibits were all assembled in the central hall, which the reporter in the *Dépêche Coloniale Illustrée* regarded as an innovative arrangement compared to the Parisian universal exposition in 1900.²³⁴ The *Livre d'Or*, also praised the section, “Le Palais de Madagascar qui présentait un si intéressant résumé des progrès économiques de la grande île.”²³⁵

Unsurprisingly, in line with the thematic orientation of the *Livre d'Or*, the topics addressed in the palace were rated positively. Indeed, not differing from the other sections, manifestations of the economic development and trade products of this colony constituted the main focus. While the author of this quote enhanced the notion of progress, it seemed clear that this referred to advances achieved in the context of the French mission in the African territories. Hence, similar to the Algerian pavilion discussed before, the palace functioned as a means to showcase and to compliment the colonial system.

The Tunisian Section

On the left side of the central axis, the Tunisian pavilion covered 8,000 square meters of the park and unfolded around a large courtyard, right before the Palace of the Ministries.²³⁶ Here, raw material resources were shown (coffee, oil, wine, among other things) in a souk-like atmosphere and decor. Another minaret towered above an ensemble of buildings created in the style Arab Tunisian art and architecture.

²³³ For descriptions and organizational details about the section on Madagascar and Dependencies of the colonial exposition (1906), see: [Unknown], *Guide Officiel de l'Exposition Coloniale de Marseille*, 63–78.

²³⁴ La *Dépêche Coloniale Illustrée*, “Exposition Coloniale de Marseille,” 89.

²³⁵ Bouis, *Le Livre d'Or de Marseille. De Son Commerce et de Ses Industries. Compte-Rendu Annuel de La Situation Maritime, Commerciale, Industrielle, Coloniale*, 1907, 378.

²³⁶ For descriptions and organizational details about the Tunisian section of the colonial exposition (1906), see: [Unknown], *Guide Officiel de l'Exposition Coloniale de Marseille*, 51–62.

As reported in the daily newspaper of Marseille, *Le Petit Provençal*, the French minister of Tunisia M. Pichon participated in the opening day of the exposition in Marseille and praised the successful realization of the Tunisian pavilion. He considered it a very instructive and accurate representation of the economic, intellectual, and artistic developments of his territory, which meant, according to him, that the exhibition had turned out very well.²³⁷ Here again, the positive reviews were based on notions of content accurateness and detail.

Diverse and Former Colonies

Further colonial pavilions were structured similarly to the ones discussed above. For the sake of addressing my research question, I estimate that a detailed description of each part is unnecessary. Therefore, I sum up the remaining exhibition sections in the following.

In addition to the sections displaying Morocco and French Congo, the so-called “diverse colonies” were exhibited as well: French Guyana, French Establishments in Oceania (New Caledonia and Tahiti) and the New Hebrides. Furthermore, former colonies of the French Empire constituted a section on their own: French Establishments in India (French India), Reunion, Martinique, and Guadeloupe.

In a geographical society report, this hierarchical organization of these territories was commented on as follows:

“On avait songé surtout au commerçant de bonne volonté, à l’industriel en quête d’affaires, au colon possible, et on avait organisé à leur intention une sorte de vaste et riche musée d’enseignement colonial. Les colonies en déclin ou arriérées ont souffert de cette conception. (...) Ce ne sont pas là des réussites coloniales ; aussi, ne s’en était-on guère occupé; on les avait presque dissimulées, comme gênantes, et il fallait

²³⁷ *Le Petit Provençal*, “L’Ouverture de l’Exposition Coloniale,” 1.

témoigner de véritables aptitudes d'explorateur pour les découvrir en un coin assez délaissé de l'enceinte."²³⁸

According to this statement, the exposition was essentially conceptualized and curated for a key audience constituted of colonial traders, merchants, and industrialists. The former colonies had obviously lost their attractiveness for the colonial commercialists, as they were not part of their active network anymore. In the same manner, little attention was paid to the *diverse colonies*, because they did not represent a particular financial market. As a result, they were staged modestly and granted less attention. This quote is also telling in regard to the educational endeavor of the exposition, which seemed to be essentially focusing on the *commercial* education of the visitors, hoping to shape a profitable consciousness and a support for financial affairs.

Overall, as the descriptions and reviews showed, the curatorial organization of the pavilions and palaces in the Chanot Park was relatively homogeneous. Despite architectural and programmatic specificities of single colonies, the pavilions generally revealed similar thematic features and shared common purposes, essentially displaying the main administrative departments and activities of the respective countries such as education, mail delivery services, agriculture, construction, and public works.²³⁹

In press reviews and official publications of the event, the great importance attached to the realism of the colonial depictions was noticeable. At least according to the advocates and supporters of the exposition, this characteristic seemed to be a guarantee of value and quality, and positively reported. Another important indicator of success was the innovative character of the productions in Marseille. The innovation was generally measured in comparison to the universal exposition in Paris 1900, which seemed to be the main model and the main competitor

²³⁸ Maurice Zimmermann, quoted in: Léotard, "L'Exposition Coloniale et le Congrès Colonial de Marseille En 1906," 464.

²³⁹ Aillaud, "L'Exposition Coloniale de 1906," 95.

at the same time. For, in the face of the capital city, the organizers in Marseille aimed at proving the particularity and unprecedented achievements of their own Exposition.

The Attractions and Celebrations

Complementing the thematic pavilions, a series of attractions and carrousel entertained the visitors. These were praised as highly modern amusement rides and originated from – or were inspired by – Coney Island in New York and the Crystal Palace in London. Visitors enjoyed panoramas, which counted amongst the great innovations of the Paris exhibition in 1900, a *Machine Volante* and a Montgolfier offering a panorama of Marseille at 400 meters tall, a labyrinth, a reproduction of the Niagara Falls, a Water Toboggan, and many more.²⁴⁰ Several theatre, music, and dance shows were also performed on the occasion.

However, as the review of Louis Bonnafont, a delegate of Tonkin, showed, their presence did not convince everyone: “Tout l’effort du Comité directeur se porta sur les amusements. (...) La foule vint dès l’ouverture, nombreuse, très nombreuse, mais elle vint trop pour se distraire, pas assez pour s’instruire et pas du tout pour traiter d’affaires coloniales.”²⁴¹ To the great disappointment of the representative, the crowd came primarily to enjoy the entertainment, which shadowed or even prevented from the educational and business functions of the exposition.

Another significant part was the scientific colonial conference, which the organization committee considered mandatory for this kind of exhibition format.²⁴² Morando suggested that this occurred in line with a positivist understanding of progress through science that was characteristic for the intellectual fields around 1900.²⁴³ For Charles-Roux, this event was the

²⁴⁰ [Unknown], *Guide Officiel de l’Exposition Coloniale de Marseille*, 63–64.

²⁴¹ Louis Bonnafont, *Rapport Sur l’Exposition Coloniale de Marseille* (Marseille: Cassagne, 1906), 8.

²⁴² Charles-Roux, *Rapport Général. Exposition Coloniale Nationale de Marseille 15 Avril-18 Novembre 1906*, 227.

²⁴³ Morando, “Les Expositions Coloniales Nationales de Marseille de 1906 et 1922 : Manifestations Locales Ou Nationales ?” 242.

synthesis of the scientific and educational purpose of the exposition, the “consécration théorique de la vaste leçon de choses qu’est notre Exposition.”²⁴⁴

It took place from September 5 to 9, 1906, welcomed 2000 participants, and separated the communications in eight divisions: (1) Trade, (2) Industries in the colonies, (3) Navigation and commercial Marine, (4) agriculture, (5) Public works and mines, (6) Colonization, emigration and population, (7) Work regulations for indigenous populations, and (8) colonial legislation. More than a merely intellectual and theoretical gathering, the event aimed at elaborating practical methods and applicable lessons.²⁴⁵ Overall, the products, societies, and economies in the colonies were discussed extensively by national experts and practitioners. The conference reports related issues and debates on French Colonialism in general, without addressing Marseille in particular or its position and function as a colonial port city.

On September 15, 1906, five months after the opening of the show, and once its popularity and organizational completion was guaranteed, Armand Fallières, the newly elected president of the French republic (1906-1913) granted the exposition a personal visit in the course of a promotional *tour de France*. The local newspapers extensively related this prestigious event. During his welcome speech, mayor Chanot introduced the municipal government as follows: “Je vous présente (...) le Conseil municipal de Marseille, profondément attaché aux institutions républicaines. S’il garde son indépendance, il sait marquer ses sentiments par un dévouement dans bornes à la République.”²⁴⁶ These sentences were revealing because, in spite of the vivid discussions on decentralization among the Marseille political bourgeoisie, which will be elaborated on in the next chapter, the presidential visit was the occasion to manifest an unchanged devotion towards the head of the nation.

²⁴⁴ Chambre de Commerce de Marseille, *La Chambre de Commerce de Marseille et l’Exposition Coloniale de 1906*, 214.

²⁴⁵ Charles-Roux, *Rapport Général. Exposition Coloniale Nationale de Marseille 15 Avril-18 Novembre 1906*, 244–277.

²⁴⁶ Le Petit Provençal, “Le Président de La République à Marseille,” *Le Petit Provençal*, September 16, 1906, 2.

This sentiment was seconded by the general curator, who welcomed the statesman as follows: “Monsieur le président, je suis heureux de vous recevoir ici et vous remercie d’avoir bien voulu consacrer par votre visite, le succès de cette Exposition.”²⁴⁷ Fulfilling the official duties, Charles-Roux ignored his general claim for Marseille’s autonomy and expressed his gratitude towards the politician. According to the official depiction and image disseminated to the population through the newspaper, the president’s visit represented the ultimate assertion of the exposition’s success.

The Closing of the Exposition

On November 18, 1906, after six months of celebration, a ceremony presided by the minister of the colonies, Raphaël Milliès-Lacroix, closed the Colonial Exposition. According to the organizers, the local elites and reporters, it had been a great and promising accomplishment and a major popular success, with almost 2 million visitors in total. This was underscored by the local newspapers, which all reported the final celebrations and the closing speeches of the exposition representatives in detail. During his appearance, the minister of the colonies congratulated what he called a successful economic event with a high educational value, which conveyed the progress and achievements of French colonialism accurately. He also complimented the event for fulfilling the task of praising and honoring not only the city of Marseille, but also the French nation and the third Republic.²⁴⁸ Charles-Roux also expressed his satisfaction and mentioned future projects and continuations of the work of the exposition:

“Nous croyons donc avoir rempli, Monsieur le Ministre, la première partie de notre programme. Reste la seconde sur laquelle je prends la liberté d’appeler votre plus bienveillante attention. Notre Chambre de Commerce, toujours à l’affût des oeuvres

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

²⁴⁸ Le Petit Marseillais, “La Journée de Cloture à l’Exposition Coloniale,” *Le Petit Marseillais*, November 19, 1906, 2.

utiles qu'elle peut accomplir en faveur de notre port, a pris l'initiative intelligente de créer son Institut colonial, et d'y joindre le Musée colonial créé, avec son concours, par mon éminent collègue, M. le Docteur Heckel."²⁴⁹

The creation of a new colonial institute in Marseille functioned as a sequel and a second colonial exposition was soon talked about. Initially projected for the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the original in 1916, the topic came off the table in the course of the First World War and was realized later on, in 1922.²⁵⁰

²⁴⁹ Charles-Roux, *Rapport Général. Exposition Coloniale Nationale de Marseille 15 Avril-18 Novembre 1906*, 361.

²⁵⁰ On the 1922 Colonial Exposition, see for instance: Boulanger, "Visions d'Empire."; Morando, "Les Expositions Coloniales Nationales de Marseille de 1906 et 1922 : Manifestations Locales Ou Nationales ?"; Simpson Fletcher, "'Capital of the Colonies': Real and Imagined Boundaries between Metropole and Empire in 1920s Marseilles."

2.3. Educational Endeavor, Colonial Propaganda, and Promotional Mass Event

A Didactic Mission

At the turn of the twentieth century, international expositions were an unprecedented medium of mass communication.²⁵¹ At a point in history prior to the wide spread of the radio, and later the television, these colonial events were a unique means of information dissemination to a wide audience, representative of the whole population, and a rare occasion to explicitly “show the colonies.”²⁵² Recognizing this function, the organizers of the 1906 Colonial Exposition in Marseille conceived the event as a large-scale tool for the dissemination of the colonial ideology. Jules Charles-Roux, the main curator, discussed and presented the primary goal of the exhibition as follows:

“Quel devait être le but d’une Exposition spécialisée comme celle-ci à un sujet bien déterminé, mais développé dans toute son ampleur? A quel concept devait-il répondre? Tout d’abord, ce devrait être une vaste, lumineuse et utile leçon des choses pour le grand public.”²⁵³

In addition to being an instrument of communication, the exhibition was conceptualized as a teaching and instructive experience. In this sense, the planning of the show’s program and the curation of the pavilions was influenced by an educational endeavor.

The didactic function as well as the use of the formulation “leçon des choses” were widely spread and shared by all universal expositions of the time.²⁵⁴ The didactic approach and educational mission of an imperial exposition was nothing new or innovative as such. In fact,

²⁵¹ Geppert, *Fleeting Cities*, 1–15.

²⁵² Morando, “Les Expositions Coloniales Nationales de Marseille de 1906 et 1922 : Manifestations Locales Ou Nationales ?” 230.

²⁵³ Closing speech J. Charles-Roux, November 18, 1906, Marseille: Chambre de Commerce de Marseille, *La Chambre de Commerce de Marseille et l’Exposition Coloniale de 1906*, 211.

²⁵⁴ Morton, *Hybrid Modernities*, 3–15; Williams, *Dream Worlds, Mass Consumption in Late Nineteenth-Century France*, 58.

this didactic claim was very common in the promotional campaigns of organizing committees and exposition supporters. International expositions were enhanced in their alleged ability to provide a composite overview of the world and convey it in unfiltered manner to its visitors. Thus, the educational project carried out during the first Colonial Exposition in Marseille was nothing new as such. However, the exclusive and revealing aspect of this particular show was that the didactic program was exclusively engaging with French colonialism. This thematic restriction followed the deliberate choice to organize a specialized event, in opposition to the international expositions and their wider program produced so far.²⁵⁵ As a result, the system of knowledge produced by this Exposition had a clear political and ideological orientation. Thus, while I acknowledge that the educational endeavor was by no means particular to the Marseille case at stake, I argue that the explicitly colonial nature of its teachings was unprecedented, and therefore asks for detailed examination.

The impact of this didactic purpose is difficult to measure today: from the exposition records, it is clear that numerous colonial artefacts and a large variety of educational experiences intended to teach the public about the colonies. Nonetheless, the effect of the exposition on the population's "imperial consciousness"²⁵⁶ – also discussed as "*mentalité coloniale*"²⁵⁷ – can only be interpreted and imagined with hindsight. In accordance with this difficulty, the following discussion will not attempt to report systematically the effects of the exposition's knowledge production and distribution efforts. Rather, based on a representative selection of historical sources, I analyze the statements of intent of the central actors. A diachronic investigation of this discourse offers valuable insights into the programmatic foci, as well as the educational and propagandist goals established by the authorities of the event.

²⁵⁵ On the specialized expositions, see chapter 2.1. *Towards a Colonial Exposition in Marseille*.

²⁵⁶ Morando, "Les Expositions Coloniales Nationales de Marseille de 1906 et 1922 : Manifestations Locales Ou Nationales ?" 15.

²⁵⁷ Geppert, *Fleeting Cities*, 195.

An Educational Endeavor

The officially advertised purpose of the colonial exhibition was a complex, generous, and useful enlightenment of a wide popular audience. The first pages of the show's official guide indicated – and insisted on – these primary aims:

“Il faut que le visiteur emporte de son passage mieux qu'un souvenir pittoresque, plus qu'un souvenir agréable: il doit garder en soi, au sortir de sa visite, la mémoire d'un enseignement. C'est ce à quoi répond l'organisation documentaire pratique de chaque pavillon colonial.”²⁵⁸

In a somewhat didactic tone, the booklet reminded the audience that, in addition to being pleasant and entertaining, a visit to the exposition was also meant to be instructive. The colonial pavilions and several exhibitions sections were curated accordingly with a focus on education. The notion of utility was also of importance for the organizers of the event. In its self-representation, the Exposition put a strong emphasis on the usefulness of the teachings on colonialism and the practical orientation in term of subject matter. The necessity to educate the French population served to justify the aim and the project of the whole exhibition.

The duality between entertainment and education was characteristic of turn-of-the-century international expositions and universal fairs in the Western world.²⁵⁹ This type of event aimed at “educating the urban crowd” and, in doing so, served a modern conception of democratization of knowledge accessible for all. In this context, the allegedly benevolent intentions of the social elites of the time must be questioned and counterbalanced from a critical perspective on the mechanisms of knowledge distribution. Indeed, the dynamics between the *teaching* subjects and the *taught* subjects was inherently hierarchical and unequal. In fact, these dynamics were imposed unilaterally and could neither be reversed nor negotiated. They were

²⁵⁸ [Unknown], *Guide Officiel de l'Exposition Coloniale de Marseille*, 14.

²⁵⁹ See for instance: Morton, *Hybrid Modernities*; Rydell, *All the World's a Fair*; Williams, *Dream Worlds, Mass Consumption in Late Nineteenth-Century France*.

dictated through a hegemonic distribution of power and mirrored a society in which a specific population group (the colonizing elites) systematically got to decide what ought to be taught and known while the rest of the crowd (the colonized and subordinate metropolitan subjects) followed the lead.

Official representatives seemed to appreciate the educational benefits of the exhibition as well. M. Milliès-Lacroix, the Minister of the Colonies, for instance, showed his appreciation: In his official closing statements, he claimed that the exposition had helped him greatly to understand the colonial issues necessary to fulfill his governmental task.²⁶⁰ With this review, the Minister provided an official endorsement – which had particular authority due to his high political status – of the exhibition’s achievements. In this sense, his comments contributed to promoting the didactic character of the show.

The educational purpose of the event was broadly emphasized by the press too. For example, the following abstract discussed the techniques used to convey intellectually stimulating and useful lessons about the Empire and its resources:

“Une Exposition de cette nature pouvait se concevoir de deux manières différentes; prendre chaque principal produit – caoutchouc, arachides, acajou, huile et amandes de palmes – et montrer ce qu’il est dans toute colonie où on le rencontre, faire son histoire botanique et géographique, indiquer ses moyens de culture, de récolte, l’importance de ses exportations, et enfin ses transformations industrielles après sa vente en Europe; voilà une première méthode. Voici la seconde, – et celle qui a été adoptée: pour chaque colonie envisagée séparément, et à l’occasion de chacun des produits qui s’y trouvent, on a donné les renseignements divers, dont il vient d’être parlé; ce procédé est moins scientifique que le premier, mais infiniment plus pratique, plus profitable pour

²⁶⁰ Armand Gerbe, “La Clôture de l’Exposition,” *Le Radical*, November 19, 1906, 2–3.

l'instruction, les répétitions fréquentes étant celles qui frappent le mieux l'attention et étant de nature à bien la fixer."²⁶¹

Here, the author compared different curatorial methods and enhanced the one chosen for the Exposition. The structure of the exposition's site and the arrangement of the pavilions mirrored the empire's geography, and every significant raw material and trading good was described and discussed in detail.

What is more, the lessons provided in the pavilions were often reformulated and repeated, in order to imprint the knowledge in the visitors' memory.

“Les murs de chaque palais ou pavillon fournissent, en effet, les renseignements principaux que tout cerveau français, même légèrement cultivé, devrait posséder, et, grâce aux graphiques, aux statistiques, aux cartes répandues à profusion sur les murs, si l'on se bornait à réunir tous ces renseignements, sans même aller jusqu'aux étiquettes, on se trouverait en présence d'un historique complet de nos colonies et d'un exposé de leur situation présente.”²⁶²

Here, Charles-Roux explained that the various instructive means used in each part of the exposition were considered highly effective: Even a superficial glance at the exhibits sufficed to teach a complete lesson about the past and present colonial world. He ensured that a visit to the event could provide the basic set of knowledge every citizen (*cerveau français*) was expected to have. His tone revealed the level of arrogance and self-righteousness of a man who allowed himself to assume and determine the norms of what every citizen ought to know.

Finally, the exhibition intended to address an international audience as well, thus extending the range of impact of its message and ideology. Hence, not only were the French

²⁶¹ Aspe-Fleurimont, “Promenades à l'Exposition Coloniale de Marseille,” 723.

²⁶² Closing speech by J. Charles-Roux, November 18, 1906, Marseille: Chambre de Commerce de Marseille, *La Chambre de Commerce de Marseille et l'Exposition Coloniale de 1906*, 212.

citizens educated for the sake of the colonial regime they lived under, foreign populations were as well:

“Nos visiteurs ont paru goûter ce mode d’initiation aux choses coloniales, et certains représentants de nations voisines nous ont posé à leur sujet maintes questions qui, tout en nous flattant singulièrement, ont bien prouvée que non seulement la France sait coloniser, mais qu’elle sait encore apprendre la colonisation à ceux qui avaient la prétention d’en connaître plus qu’elle sur ce point.”²⁶³

By praising the methodological precision of the exhibitions, Charles-Roux presented France not only as a successful colonizing nation, but also as a great teacher and role model in colonial matters.

A Popularized Manifestation

In line with modern mass cultural events, aspirations for a popularized and democratic Exposition were strongly advertised.²⁶⁴ For example, the official media celebrated the exhibition’s easy access for all ages. Indeed, students from schools of all levels (boarding schools, specialized institutions like the *Arts et Métiers*, etc.) as well as professionals visited the show. These students, as well as members of the naval and aviation military forces, were welcomed for free. The colonial representatives regarded the education provided for the young imperial generation as a very useful contribution to society.²⁶⁵

Moreover, the exposition’s curator positively underlined the fact that the show not only addressed a wide audience, regardless of age or social and educational status, but it also welcomed visitors of both sexes. Offering popular education for women and delivering what was implicitly described as a gender-democratic event was considered worthy of mentioning

²⁶³ Ibid.

²⁶⁴ On popular mass cultural events in modern France, see: Schwartz, *Spectacular Realities*.

²⁶⁵ Bonnafont, *Rapport Sur l’Exposition Coloniale de Marseille*, 10.

specifically.²⁶⁶ During his closing speech, the curator spoke directly to the women in the audience:

“Mesdames, nous vous remercions de l’assiduité avec laquelle vous avez visité notre Exposition, en y apportant journallement l’élégance et le charme inhérent à votre sexe; vous avez été nos plus précieuses collaboratrices (...). Puisque vous avez bien voulu vous intéresser à nos colonies, n’hésitez pas à y envoyer vos enfants. Ah! Je sais par expérience combien il est dur de se séparer d’un fils qu’on a élevé, choyé, dorloté; mais c’est un sacrifice qu’il faut savoir s’imposer (...). Aidez-nous donc, Mesdames, (...) et vous aurez une fois de plus bien mérité de la Patrie.”²⁶⁷

Here, Charles-Roux encouraged the French women to come and visit the exhibitions. However, he somewhat reduced the women’s contribution to the colonial exposition to a superficial and aesthetic one. In addition to referring to their appearance, the curator further advised the female subjects to give their children away to the colonies. While recognizing that the care and education of their offspring were of central importance in these women’s lives, he goes on to encourage the devoted mothers to give up their children’s presence at home, despite the pain it would cause them. This sacrifice should be their contribution and compromise for the nation’s sake. His statement revealed a paternalistic and patronizing attitude towards women. Indeed, in this depiction, a woman’s role in the French exposition was limited to her looks and her role as protecting mother.

The gender-based attributions and the stigmatization of what was considered typically *feminine* or *masculine* features was not exceptional in the context of the exposition. In the city’s economic yearbook for example, Marseille’s ambition for the colonial exposition was

²⁶⁶ Closing speech J. Charles-Roux, November 18, 1906, Marseille: Charles-Roux, *Rapport Général. Exposition Coloniale Nationale de Marseille 15 Avril-18 Novembre 1906*, 357.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 362–363.

characterized as a *grand acte de virilité*.²⁶⁸ In this source, values of work force, manliness, perspicacity, and trust were praised and addressed as exclusively male. Overall, the colonial exposition and visions for the future of the city were discussed as a men's endeavor, which consolidated the image of a patriarchal society.

Scientific Approach

In addition to functioning as a popularized and accessible experience, the colonial exposition claimed to be a scientific event as well. Charles-Roux touted the event's academic significance: "À la note coloniale (...), il fallait joindre la note artistique et la note scientifique."²⁶⁹ As quoted here, colonial, artistic, and scientific perspectives were brought together in order to serve the programmatic purposes of the event. Indeed, in addition to conveying a colonial, ideological, and political message, and offering an attractive entertaining program, the exposition aimed to display and trigger professional scientific works.

When it comes to the scientific areas presented, the exhibition focused on specific themes:

"La note scientifique présentait un intérêt particulier pour la ville industrielle qu'est Marseille, dont la production annuelle est d'un milliard 37 millions, pour son port, qui est le premier de France, et les populations maritimes environnantes. (...) les produits oléagineux constituent une des principales branches de son commerce (...). De là est venue l'idée d'organiser une exposition spéciale des corps gras (...). La seconde note scientifique est donnée dans le Palais de la Mer, par l'exposition d'Océanographie et des Pêches maritimes."²⁷⁰

²⁶⁸ Bouis, *Le Livre d'Or de Marseille. De Son Commerce et de Ses Industries. Compte-Rendu Annuel de La Situation Maritime, Commerciale, Industrielle, Coloniale*, 1905, 205.

²⁶⁹ Closing speech by J. Charles-Roux, November 18, 1906, Marseille: Chambre de Commerce de Marseille, *La Chambre de Commerce de Marseille et l'Exposition Coloniale de 1906*, 212.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 214.

Two main thematic fields were displayed: Maritime science and oceanography, and the production and transformation of raw materials, particularly oil-based products (*corps gras*). Oleaginous fruits and seeds constituted major raw material resources in Marseille and the Provence region. As a result of olive farming, the production of oil, soaps – like the well-known *Savon de Marseille* – and related fat-based products represented a central manufacturing and service sector.²⁷¹ Furthermore, this sector functioned in relationship with the colonial import of palm and groundnut oil. Hence, for the purpose of marketing both the local industrial production and the import-export system with the French colonies, a large number of these products were exhibited. As the *corps gras* topic showed, the scientific foci addressed in the exposition derived directly from the industrial and commercial interests of the city.²⁷²

Furthermore, the so-called Sea Palace displayed the current state of research in marine life and oceanography. The maritime pavilion was advertised as one of the highlights of the exposition: It hosted the first international scientific oceanographic exhibition ever produced in a universal exposition, and emerged from a cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Local newspapers announced the arrival of political representatives and scholars from Belgium and the Netherlands, among others, who travelled to Marseille to attend the Sea Palace.²⁷³ Thus, the oceanographic pavilion added a worldwide visibility and significance to the exposition in Marseille.²⁷⁴

Scientific research and innovation were showcased for the sake of industrial development as well. Academic activities were influenced and praised for their contribution to the extending sectors of transformation and distribution of raw materials, like the *corps gras* for instance.

²⁷¹ Daumalin, *Marseille et l'Ouest africain*.

²⁷² According to Rydell, international expositions functioned as benchmarks of progress, which, in most cases, was used as a synonym of economic growth: Rydell, *All the World's a Fair*, 4.

²⁷³ For instance, M. Max Weber, representative of the Dutch Government, and M. Lecointe, political and scientific delegate from Bussels, were announced to attend the 1906 Colonial Exposition in Marseille: Le Petit Provençal, "L'Ouverture de l'Exposition Coloniale," 1.

²⁷⁴ [Unknown], *Guide Officiel de l'Exposition Coloniale de Marseille*, 143–144.

This interest revealed a highly capitalized scientific environment, like Marseille's *Institut Colonial*, where "des savants mettent journellement la science au service de l'industrie."²⁷⁵ In the daily press, scientific advances and industrial profit were similarly combined. As discussed in *Le Petit Provençal* for instance, the *Grand Palais* exhibited "les richesses industrielles qu'elle [Marseille; MdS] fait jaillir par la baguette de cette fée qu'on appelle la science."²⁷⁶ The fairy metaphor depicted industrial productivity as integral and nearly magical result of scientific works put at the disposal of industrial growth and innovation.

Furthermore, the academic activities were a demonstration of scientific reliability and exactitude which contributed to legitimizing – and therefore to establishing – the colonial ideology conveyed through the Exposition. This resonated with the function of other international exhibition the time. Indeed, this phenomenon around 1900 was characterized by a discursive interrelation of notions of technological progress, scientific accuracy, anthropological 'realness' and economic interests, hegemonic propaganda, and political ideology.²⁷⁷ Following on from this, in the imperial setting, it also contributed to the dissemination of the imperial set of beliefs linked to colonialism. In this context, the historians Amaury Lorin and Christelle Teraud talked about the so-called *fantasme scientifique*²⁷⁸ of the imperial powers:

"une maîtrise presque totale de la vie des hommes permettant à ceux qui détiennent des connaissances supérieures d'engager l'humanité sur la voie de progrès inédits. Mobilisées par la 'race' blanche, qui se caractérise par 'le génie de l'expansion', les disciplines précitées [la médecine, l'hygiène, la géographie, l'histoire et la sociologie; MdS] se convertissent en pouvoirs nouveaux sur le monde et ses habitants. A la différence des 'aventures' impériales passées, souvent conçues comme des 'œuvre[s]

²⁷⁵ Masson, *Marseille et La Colonisation Française. Essai d'Histoire Coloniale*, 577.

²⁷⁶ Rozays, "Les Fêtes Du Conseil Général à l'Exposition Coloniale," 1.

²⁷⁷ Rydell, *All the World's a Fair*, 8.

²⁷⁸ Lorin and Teraud, *Nouvelle Histoire Des Colonisations Européennes*, 157.

de destruction' des autochtones, une telle politique permettra de 'les vivifier' pour leur plus grand bénéfice ainsi que celui de la métropole."²⁷⁹

Hence, the exhibition of so-called scientific progress linked to colonial affairs enabled the imperial elite to affirm its domination through territorial expansion and knowledge superiority. The Colonial Congress held in Marseille during the Exposition served similar scientific purposes. During the opening, the event was described as an "Exposition des méthodes et des idées après celle des résultats et des faits."²⁸⁰ Here, it was suggested that the pavilions exhibited the hard facts and objective results of French colonialism.

As a supplement, the conference series of the *Congrès* was intended to complement and extend the focus through an intellectual and methodological discussion. The congress's role was understood as follows:

"Quand nos yeux se seront remplis du spectacle des diverse richesses provenant de nos colonies, il nous restera, si nous voulons tirer de cette leçon des choses tout l'enseignement qu'elle comporte, (...) à nous livrer à une sorte d'examen de conscience, à constater les résultats obtenus, à faire la critique des procédés mis en oeuvre pour les obtenir, à nous efforcer d'en découvrir les point faibles, à nous demander si nous n'aurions pas pu mieux réussir et comment nous l'aurions pu. Une enquête sur la valeur de notre oeuvre dans le passé; un effort vers le mieux dans l'avenir, tel est le double caractère du congrès [colonial de Marseille, 1906; MdS]."²⁸¹

Following the examination of the pavilions and their instructions, scholars were expected to then engage with a critical discussion and critique of the exhibits. This way, a constructive scientific discussion would take place. The organizers hoped that this would lead to the optimization of the as-yet developed colonization methods and catalyze future progress.

²⁷⁹ Ibid.

²⁸⁰ Opening speech by J. Charles-Roux, April 14, 1906, Marseille: Chambre de Commerce de Marseille, *La Chambre de Commerce de Marseille et l'Exposition Coloniale de 1906*, 70.

²⁸¹ Ibid.

This function of the Colonial Congress pointed to a recurrent rhetoric regarding the educational and scientific purposes of the exposition: On one hand, the show was conceived as a summary and synthesis of the colonial achievements up until the present day. On the other hand, it was hoped to be the occasion of new discoveries and a catalyzer for further research. This double-sided temporality articulated contemporary references to the past, as well as imaginations for the future.

Another example illustrated this temporal rhetoric. To ensure the exposition's legacy, many scientific and thematic publications were planned. Between 1905 and 1907, the committee edited eight large official volumes, which classified, sorted, and summed up the exposition's teachings.²⁸² They were conceived as an innovative set of publications relating the latest results and state of research on French colonization. They also provided a basis for planned scientific works on these issues:

“Enfin, en dehors des Notices et des Rapports administratifs qui paraîtront par la suite, nous décidâmes qu'une Commission spéciale publierait une collection d'ouvrage analogue à celle qui parut à la suite de l'Exposition Universelle de 1900 (Section des Colonies et Pays de Protectorat), afin de constituer une véritable bibliothèque coloniale qui, comparée à la précédente, devrait montrer les progrès accomplis. (...) Une série d'ouvrages (...) qui constituera une précieuse source de documents, non seulement pour

²⁸² List of the official scientific publications of the Colonial Exposition in Marseille in 1906: Henry Babled, *Mouvement de la législation coloniale colonies françaises et pays de protectorat : 1896-1906* (Marseille: Barlatier, 1907); Henri Barré et al., *Voyageurs et Explorateurs Provençaux* (Marseille: Barlatier, 1905); Gaston Darboux et al., *L'industrie des pêches aux colonies: nos richesses coloniales 1900-1905*, vol. 1-4 (Marseille: Barlatier, 1906); Paul Gaffarel, *Histoire de l'expansion coloniale de la France depuis 1870 jusqu'en 1905* (Marseille: Barlatier, 1906); Édouard Heckel, Cyprien Mandine, and Jules Charles-Roux, *L'enseignement colonial en France et à l'étranger* (Marseille: Barlatier, 1907); Masson, *Marseille et La Colonisation Française. Essai d'Histoire Coloniale*; Paul Masson et al., *Les colonies françaises au début du XX^e siècle, cinq ans de progrès (1900-1905)*, vol. 1-3 (Marseille: Barlatier, 1906); Georges Treille, *Organisation sanitaire des colonies: progrès réalisés - progrès à faire* (Marseille: Barlatier, 1906).

les contemporains, mais aussi pour ceux qui, par la suite, viendront chercher des renseignements sur notre histoire coloniale.”²⁸³

The publication of these works were advertised for in the local newspapers. *Le Sémaphore*, for instance, praised several series of books that were released during the colonial exposition in Marseille, and believed that this effort would guarantee a sustainable legacy of the exposition’s teachings.²⁸⁴ These publications were conceived in order to influence the French historical canon and to guarantee a heritage.

Legitimizing Racism and Disseminating Colonial Ideology

French imperial thought provided the ideological basis for the exposition’s tenets (both on the scientific level and on the popular level). A complementary central function of the event was the promotion of colonialism as a system. In his inauguration speech, the Mayor of Marseille Amable Chanot praised what he regarded as a major exhibition of the French colonial adventure: “C’est l’oeuvre coloniale française que l’on vient admirer de tous les points de la France, que les représentants les plus autorisés des nations voisines se disposent à apprécier.”²⁸⁵ As stated here, the international visibility of the exposition was granted great importance. The political elites of the city were very much aware of the representational potential and the ideological influence conveyed by the show. They saw the exposition as France’s opportunity to exhibit and affirm its imperial power internationally. Hence, more than being a mere promotional event for the city of Marseille and its political and bourgeois upper-class, the event

²⁸³ Closing speech by J. Charles-Roux, November 18, 1906, Marseille: Chambre de Commerce de Marseille, *La Chambre de Commerce de Marseille et l’Exposition Coloniale de 1906*, 215.

²⁸⁴ Jacques Léotard, “Les Publications de l’Exposition,” *Le Sémaphore*, May 11, 1906, 1: “Les premières publications de la Commission officielle de l’Exposition coloniale ont reçu déjà un excellent accueil dans les milieux compétents; les nouveaux ouvrages publiés, qui sont tout à fait dignes des précédents, ne peuvent manquer d’obtenir un égal succès dans les monde colonial et commercial comme auprès du grand public. La dernière série de quatre volumes, qui reste à éditer (...) achèvera de constituer un durable souvenir de notre magnifique Exposition.”

²⁸⁵ Amable Chanot, Mayor of Marseille, quoted in: Unknown, L’Inauguration de l’Exposition Coloniale, in: *Le Petit Provençal*, “L’Inauguration de l’Exposition Coloniale,” 1.

constituted a celebration of French colonialism as a system and as an ideology.²⁸⁶ Complementarily, ambitions of technological progress and scientific anthropology conveyed and legitimized racism and power hierarchies. The connection between an ideology of progress and the affirmation of scientific racism was commonly spread in the exposition tradition of the time.²⁸⁷

During the summer of 1906, the departmental council of the Bouches-du-Rhône organized major celebrations at the exposition in Marseille. Numerous national and international representatives were invited to visit the exhibition and admire the local achievements. André Lefevre, the Vice-President of the City Council of Paris, represented, among others, the country's capital during these summer parties:

“C’est ici [at the Colonial Exposition in Marseille, in 1906; MdS] la fête du progrès, du progrès par la persuasion [persuasion; MdS], le triomphe de notre méthode coloniale. Fidèle à ses doctrines, la France (...) la distribue à ceux qui deviennent ses enfants. Elle les instruit, elle les élève, (...) elle les libère en un mot, car il n’est point de pire esclavage que l’ignorance et la barbarie.”²⁸⁸

As the deputy told the audience in Marseille, he considered the exposition a successful celebration of imperial progress and of the French colonial method. He put the emphasis on the state's didactic function, which he himself represented as a Parisian politician. In line with the doctrine of the time, the French central government ought to enlighten its population. Indeed, Lefevre assumed that this education would be synonymous with freedom for the people of

²⁸⁶ Léotard, “Ouverture de l’Exposition,” 2.

²⁸⁷ Pascal Blanchard, Nicolas Bancel, and Sandrine Lemaire, “From Scientific Racism to Popular and Colonial Racism in France and the West,” in *Human Zoos. Science and Spectacle in the Age of the Colonial Empires*, ed. Pascal Blanchard et al. (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2008), 104–113 ; Gilles Boëtsch and Yann Ardagna, “Human Zoos: The ‘Savage’ and the Anthropologist,” in *Ibid.* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2008), 114–122.

On the connection between didactic mission, ideology of progress and scientific racism in the US-American context: Rydell, *All the World's a Fair*, 4–8.

²⁸⁸ M. André Lefevre, Vice-President of the City Council of Paris, quoted in: Rozays, “Les Fêtes Du Conseil Général à l’Exposition Coloniale,” 1.

France: “il n’est point de pire esclavage que l’ignorance et la barbarie.” As this expression showed, a fine line existed between *instruction* and *indoctrination*, and the politician articulated this distinction skillfully.

In addition to promoting colonialism as a system, the exposition put an emphasis on the colonies themselves. The discourse praising the territories overseas was conveyed by the press. For instance, the local newspaper *Le Petit Provençal* dedicated two whole front pages to the closing ceremony of the colonial exposition and reviewed the event as a “manifestation inoubliable du génie de nos colonies.”²⁸⁹ This is the same periodical that had announced, a few months before, that:

“l’Exposition Coloniale de Marseille revêtira un caractère de prestige et d’éclat dont notre pays pourra se montrer légitimement fier à la fois pour lui-même et pour l’honneur de cette France méritante et laborieuse d’au delà les mers que l’on a si justement appelée la plus grande France.”²⁹⁰

According to this publication, the colonial exposition was a manifestation of national pride not only for its home country, but also – and even more so – for the territories abroad that constituted the French empire. Here, the colonized societies were characterized as hard working and lucrative, essentially contributing to transforming the country into ‘greater France.’²⁹¹ Emphasizing the worth of the colonies was an important rhetorical means of imperial propaganda. Indeed, the organizers of the exposition – supported by the local press, which faithfully related their speeches – made sure to remind the audience of the crucial importance of the colonies for the prosperity and well-being of the French population.²⁹²

²⁸⁹ Camille Ferdy, “A l’Exposition Coloniale. La Journée de Clôture,” *Le Petit Provençal*, November 19, 1906, 2.

²⁹⁰ Ferdy, “L’Inauguration de l’Exposition Coloniale,” 1.

²⁹¹ Ellen Furlough, “Une Leçon Des Choses : Tourism, Empire, and the Nation in Interwar France,” *French Historical Studies* 25, no. 3 (July 1, 2002): 441.

²⁹² See for instance: Speech by M. Estrine, President of the Commission for the Reception of the Exhibitors, on April 26, 1906: Le Sémaphore, “Exposition Coloniale. Au Palais de l’Exportation,” *Le Sémaphore*, April 27, 1906, 1: “Nos colonies suppléent tous les jours plus largement aux débouchés qui nous sont enlevés, et

The exposition was further described as a contribution to “faire mieux connaître, mieux apprécier et plus aimer nos colonies.”²⁹³ In other words, the event played an important role in creating an emotional relationship between the metropolitan population and the colonies. Not only had it instructed the visitors in colonial knowledge; it had also make them *like*, and even *love*, the colonies better. The Minister of the Colonies referred to a similar kind of affectionate connection as well:

“Lorsque s’est déroulé sous mes yeux émerveillés le tableau des produits innombrables de nos colonies, j’ai éprouvé, en même temps que la sensation de leur activité et de leur plein développement, une émotion profonde; car, me reportant aux sacrifices si grands et si douloureux que nous avons coûtés leur conquête et que nous imposent encore leur organisation, leur conservation et leur défense, j’ai compris que ces sacrifices ne sont pas vains.”²⁹⁴

According to the Minister’s experience, the exposition revealed and reinforced the emotional connection he felt toward the French colonial enterprise. Using terms and expressions such as “marveled” (*émerveill[é/s]*), “feeling the sensation” (*éprouvé (...) la sensation*), and “profound emotion” (*émotion profonde*), the political representative used emotional semantics in order to construct an affect-based discourse.

A similar rhetoric appeared in Charles-Roux’s depiction of the encounter with colonial subjects during the exposition: “Ces indigènes dont vous avez pu apprécier pendant des mois la douceur et l’intelligence et à qui vous avez appris à aimer la Métropole.”²⁹⁵ Referring to them as “indigenous people” (*indigènes*), the curator commended the subjects from the colonized

contribuent par leurs importations à développer notre commerce et procurer ainsi à notre population l’abondance et le bien être.”

²⁹³ Bouis, *Le Livre d’Or de Marseille. De Son Commerce et de Ses Industries. Compte-Rendu Annuel de La Situation Maritime, Commerciale, Industrielle, Coloniale*, 1907, 376.

²⁹⁴ Closing speech by M. Milliès-Lacroix, Minister of the Colonies: Charles-Roux, *Rapport Général. Exposition Coloniale Nationale de Marseille 15 Avril-18 Novembre 1906*, 365.

²⁹⁵ Closing speech by J. Charles-Roux, November 18, 1906, Marseille: Chambre de Commerce de Marseille, *La Chambre de Commerce de Marseille et l’Exposition Coloniale de 1906*, 218.

territories who had been ‘exhibited’ during the event for providing exemplary illustrations of the local populations. A somewhat sentimental characterization of these individuals as “gentle” and “soft” (*la douceur*) invoked feelings of sympathy and attachment. This choice of language was inscribed in what can be described as an overall “benevolent and condescending”²⁹⁶ attitude of the metropole towards the colonies. Calling upon a specific quality of relationship and emotional connection, Charles-Roux concluded that the colonizing population had taught the colonized subjects to like the metropole.²⁹⁷

The promotion of the colonies and their populations was carried by the exhibits forming the colonial exposition. These depictions went hand in hand with praising the missions and so-called achievements of colonialism. As described before, traditional artefacts and resources were shown in the pavilions, and the exhibits put emphasis on their exotic and folkloric character. For instance, *La Dépêche Coloniale* published a review of the building dedicated to Western African culture.²⁹⁸ For instance, the staging of an Arab horse (*Le cheval, du plus pur type arabe*) with traditional saddlery (*pittoresquement harnaché*) and accompanied by its cavalier, who was equally arranged according to the local manners (*le cavalier n’est pas moins pittoresque*) retained the reporter’s attention. The language used in the journal described the scenery with references to local traditions. Simultaneously, the recurrent mentions of the term “pittoresque” put the emphasis on the original and exotic – or exoticized – character of the show.

Further along in the article, the landscapes of the Kingdom Dahomey (today: Benin) were depicted. Several exhibition boards, organized according to their chronological relation to French colonization, retraced the area’s history and culture:

²⁹⁶ Blanchard and Boëtsch, *Marseille, Porte Sud 1905–2005*, 21.

²⁹⁷ In most of the present sources, the *Métropole* spelled with a capital “M” referred to the *nation-state* and the *métropole* starting with a small “m” referred to the *city*. On the history and definition of the concept of the metropole, see chapter 1.2. *Theoretical Framework*.

²⁹⁸ *La Dépêche Coloniale Illustrée*, “Exposition Coloniale de Marseille,” 90.

“Deux panneaux (...) sous l’un desquels on lit: Hier, et sous l’autre: Aujourd’hui, nous montrent les Dahoméens fainéantant tout nus à la porte de leurs cases, puis, sous notre influence, transformés en agriculteurs, vêtus de pagnes et même de pantalons blancs et de votons de coutil, la tête abritée par un confortable chapeau de paille.”²⁹⁹

The explanatory comments in the exhibition referred to the differences between times preceding (*Hier*) and following (*Aujourd’hui*) the colonization of the territories. While the representations of the past showed a “lazy” and “unequipped” (“naked”) African population, the contemporary imagery congratulated the civilizing achievements of the French missionaries. Indeed, according to the event’s depictions, the local societies had greatly taken advantage of the colonizing influence and were now “transformed” into skilled farmers. The pavilions were thus extensively used for the sake of exhibiting the so-called progress achieved in the colonies and congratulating the French powers for their alleged civilizing influence. In doing so, these exhibition strategies inscribed this representation in the hegemonic discourse of the French imperial era.

²⁹⁹ Ibid., 91.

2.4. The 1906 Colonial Exposition as a Means of Metropolitan Representation

Concluding, I propose to sum up a few important aspects about the 1906 Colonial Exposition in Marseille. The event was inscribed in a widely spread tradition of international expositions. However, its specificity was that it constituted the very first National Colonial Exposition of France. French colonialism had been displayed in the context of universal expositions before, for instance during the 1900 *Exposition Universelle* in Paris under the lead of the prominent businessman and politician from Marseille, Jules Charles-Roux. This was the same man who mediated the Parisian influence and carried the specialized colonial exposition in Marseille a few years later in accordance with strong regionalist and decentralization beliefs. The exposition project was discussed in the colonial networks with central institutional actors like the geographical society, and among the local imperial elite in Marseille as well. The rivalry with other French ‘second cities’ like Lyon and Bordeaux for instance, was put forward as a reason for Marseille to organize a representative exposition in order to affirm its status and predominance as major colonial city. Another motivation claimed by the organizers was the need for image improvement of the port city after the troubled times of repeated dockers’ strikes between 1900 and 1903. The thematic priority granted to colonial matters and the representational discourse of a ‘perfect match’ between Marseille and French colonization was inscribed in the promotional endeavor for the city, as well.

The 1906 Colonial Exposition was a pioneer both for the nation and for the city itself. The unprecedented organization of the event affected the urban landscape through the original creation of the 25-hectare exposition site at the southern outskirts of the city center. This planning created a new point of centrality on the city map and contributed to a shift in the city’s typography. Additionally, the venue was baptized *Parc Chanot* on this occasion, and this appellation has remained up to the present day and imprinted the urban memory with the legacy of this celebration of colonialism.

In 1906, the numerous pavilions and buildings displayed colonizing and colonized culture, artefacts, and resources. These were built in a spatial arrangement that reflected the geography of the French empire. The exhibition was praised by the local stakeholders and press. It was considered a great popular and commercial success by its organizers, who congratulated themselves for the two million visitors and the positive reviews, and promised a reiteration of the Colonial Exposition in Marseille. Noticeably, this event was essentially conceived and realized by – and for – the Marseille bourgeois elites, in a decentralizing movement rejecting Parisian influences and largely ignored by the representatives of the capital city. Exemplarily, the French President Fallières waited five months until he granted the exposition a visit, as if to wait and see if the provincial enterprise would succeed and reveal itself worthy of his honor.

Instrumentalized Knowledge and Affect-Based Propaganda

The world fairs scholar Robert W. Rydell summed up the function of these types of events as follows: “they propagated the ideas and values of the country’s political, financial, corporate, and intellectual leaders and offered these ideas as the proper interpretation of social and political reality.”³⁰⁰ Accordingly, the Marseille Exposition served two main educational purposes. Firstly, it was intended to provide a popular mass audience with basic knowledge about French colonialism. Secondly, it was meant to display and animate scientific progress in Marseille.³⁰¹ In doing so, the event conveyed propaganda for the colonial system and contributed to the establishing of its official ideology. Complementarily, the focus was set on the scientific community and research, rather than merely on the popular education of the urban crowd. The main incentive for the scientific progress revealed itself to be the local industrial production and commercial activity. Indeed, the city’s economic interests were considered to be significantly informed by – and improved through – scientific know-how. Here, the

³⁰⁰ Rydell, *All the World’s a Fair*, 3.

³⁰¹ Daumalin, *Marseille et l’Ouest africain*, 216.

educational and academic dimensions intertwined with economic purposes in the industrial and commercial port city of Marseille. Science and knowledge production served the enlightenment of the average population, but even more so, they were pursued for the sake of economic development and urban productivity.

In addition to mediating an ideological and political system through educational teachings, the exposition functioned as an emotional link between the imperial nation-state and the colonized territories. Not only did the event contribute to rationally convincing the population of the worth of the colonial project, it also led its visitors to develop an affinity for the colonies themselves. This affectionate dynamic helped to create a mutual and common feeling of affiliation in, and in spite of difference. Indeed, Sylviane Lebrun described the underlying vision of the exposition, “cette idée d’un monde à la fois composite et unifié.”³⁰² Here, ‘diversity’ in the sense of multiplicity and variety goes hand in hand with ‘unity’. Even more so, both notions co-define and support each other. Drawing from a shared sense of belonging and feelings of love and affection for the colonies, the French population was encouraged to favor colonialism as a system. This further implied an unconditional support of the military troupes and political missionaries performing abroad. Hence, this propaganda aimed at forging and guaranteeing popular support of colonialism as a regime and of the colonizers as actors. For this purpose, the affective, condescending, and patronizing rhetoric served as means to the end of a propaganda machinery operating rationally as well as emotionally through the Exposition.

³⁰² Leprun, “Les Motifs Phocéens Du Monde Colonial. Les Expositions Coloniales de Marseille 1906-1922,” 130.

Materializing the Empire and Practicing the Colonial Metropole

In addition to regarding the exposition as a *symbolic universe*³⁰³, its material and practical dimensions contributed to creating a synthesis of the imperial world. Indeed, as recapitulated in this chapter summary, the exposition significantly contributed to *materializing the empire* and to *practicing colonialism*. Not only did the event carry and display an ideological and political set of beliefs, it essentially contributed to producing it.

As discussed in the theoretical introduction of this dissertation, the relational concept of the metropole needs a constitutive counterpart in order to exist. The very concept of the colonial metropole was constructed within the imperial imaginary of the metropolitan “Self” on the one hand, and the colonial “Other” on the other hand. This dichotomy is valid for both significations of the term “metropole”: the city, and the country. Indeed, following Morton: “French colonialism was constructed as an opposition between Métropole and the colony.”³⁰⁴ In other words, the interdependency and dialectic between the ‘mother-country’ and the colonies was indispensable for the coherence of the imperial system.

Drawing from the assumption that French colonialism itself was constructed on the metropole-colonies dichotomy, it appears logical that the *representation* of this very colonial system through the exposition was shaped by this duality as well. Moreover, this dichotomy defined the event’s representational substance, the content of the representation. At numerous levels the exposition worked to convey the metropole–colonies dialectic, to materialize it and render it visible to the audience, to inscribe it in an urban landscape and its cultural legacy. As discussed above, various representational means have been activated in the context of the colonial exposition: from the pavilions’ exhibitions and the geography of the exposition site, to the scientific legitimization of the colonial system over the affective infiltrating of ideology.

³⁰³ Rydell, *All the World’s a Fair*, 2.

³⁰⁴ Morton, *Hybrid Modernities*, 9.

Within the representational rhetoric, this duality was crucial in legitimizing Marseille as host of the colonial event: As discussed, the functionalization and labelling of Marseille as the “colonial metropole of France” was used in order to justify – and assert – the organization of the 1906 event. In other words, because Marseille was considered the “colonial metropole of France,” it was predestinated to host the colonial exposition. Simultaneously, the exposition itself as well as the colonialism theme both reinforced the city’s reputation as the “colonial metropole.” The enhancing of the colonies’ importance, their strong and historic ties with Marseille, and the city’s significance for French colonialism in general cemented the status of Marseille as a metropole. In other words, thanks to the realization of the exposition, Marseille established its image as colonial metropole.³⁰⁵

To conclude, there was a dual legitimizing argumentation based on a constructed causality at stake here. Basically, the exposition’s organizers simultaneously stated that (1) because Marseille was the colonial metropole, it had to host the colonial exposition, and (2) due to the colonial exposition, Marseille was affirmed as the colonial metropole. Apart from the logical invalidity of this argumentation, this circular rhetoric underscores the inherent link between the exposition and urban representation. The 1906 Colonial Exposition was a mass medium of Marseille’s representation as a metropole.

In the following chapter, I will investigate the discursive construction of these representational strategies and attempt to unpack the defining features of colonial metropolitanism disseminated in the context of the exposition. The discourse on the metropole serves as an analytical thread, which will subsequently lead to the second part of this dissertation and a diachronic reflection on the discursive production of the concept of the metropole.

³⁰⁵ Miège, “Genèse Des Grandes Expositions.”

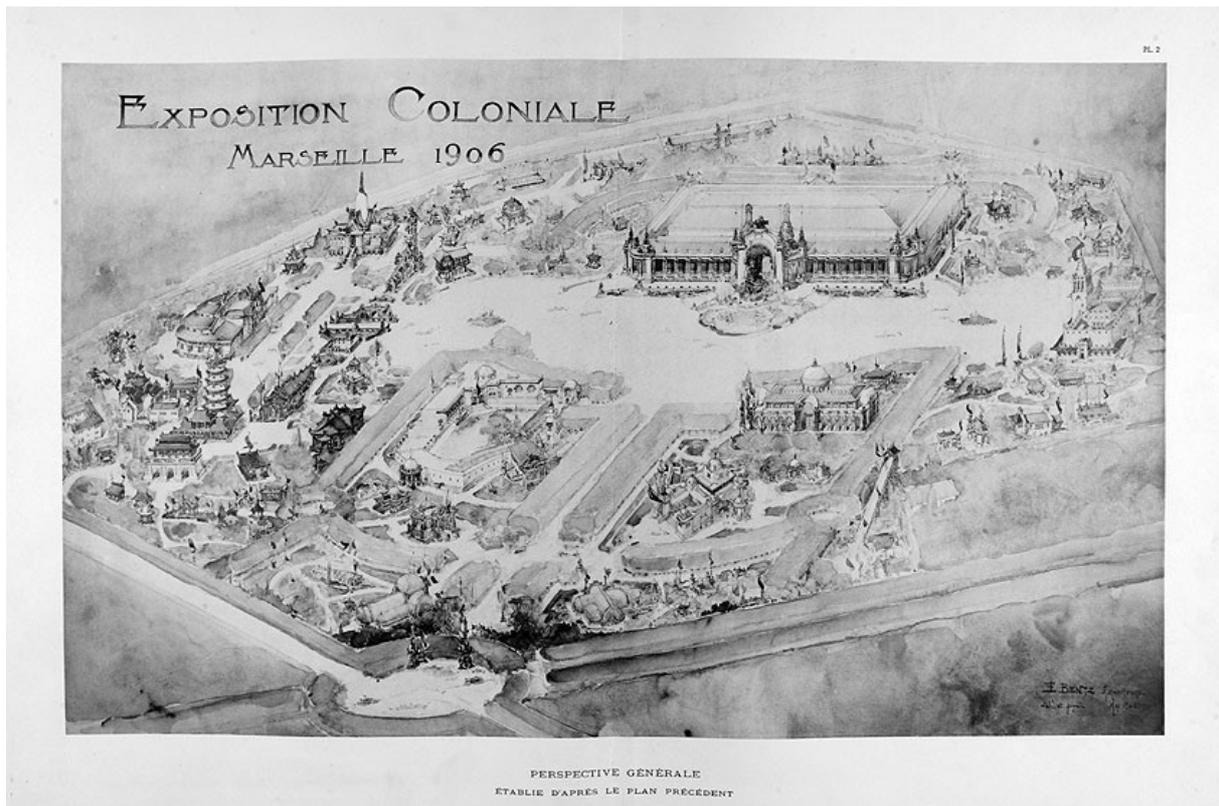


Illustration 1: Unknown, *Exposition Coloniale Marseille 1906. Perspective Général Établie d'après Le Plan Précédent*, 1906, Album commémoratif. Exposition coloniale de Marseille 1906. Pl. 2, in ZWF33_006. Archives de la Chambre de Commerce et d'Industrie Marseille-Provence.

3. Establishing the Colonial Metropole: Representational Discourses and Metropolitanism during the 1906 Colonial Exposition

In the following chapter, I analyze the representational discourse articulated in the context of the exposition that affirmed Marseille's position and function as 'the colonial metropole of France.' Indeed, amongst various functions of the event discussed in the former chapter, local urban elites leveraged the 1906 Colonial Exposition for the sake of establishing a specific status for the city. However, I want to argue that *being* a colonial metropole was by no means a given reality, nor the reflection of an exterior reality. Rather, it was a construct, which was actively produced throughout explicit and implicit discursive representational practices by specific instances of power. Based on this assumption, a set of questions emerge regarding the constitutive features of this representation, its discursive means and articulations, as well as notions of agency. This leads me to the second research question of this work: How and why did the 1906 Colonial Exposition contribute to producing the colonial metropole and what are the features of metropolitanism in Marseille the colonial era? Hence, I inquire how, to what extent and why a cultural event like the Colonial Exposition carries a specific urban image and contributes to producing the "metropole" in real and imagined terms.

Establishing the Colonial Metropole at the 1906 Colonial Exposition

In the former chapter, I have discussed the 1906 Colonial Exposition in Marseille as a mass medium of urban representation. I have focused on the event itself, its spatial structure and thematic curation, as well as its exhibitory functions and purposes. I now propose to use this description as a basis and a prologue for the following analytical investigation.

As discussed earlier, the 'colonial metropole of France' was a recurrent notion shaping the urban rhetoric and the discourse on Marseille during the exhibition. This notion mainly

appeared in two ways: Firstly, it was used in the early stages of planning for the purpose of legitimizing the organization and realization of the event. The assumption of this ‘metropolitan status’ was put forward in order to justify the selection of Marseille as the host city for the exposition. Secondly – and simultaneously –, the affirmation of the city’s position as ‘the colonial metropole of France’ manifested as one of the main aims of the exposition. Navigating between both claims, the urban stakeholders and official representatives constructed a self-verifying logical legitimization, which can be sketched in simplified manner as follows: ‘(1) Since Marseille was a colonial metropole, then it ought to host the colonial exposition. At the same time, (2) since Marseille hosted the Colonial Exposition, its status as a colonial metropole was proved. Both parts of the statement were conjectural and respectively defined each other, which made the argumentative force of the assessment relatively poor. Though, it is revealing – and particularly instructive regarding our research question – that these legitimizing claims were mainly articulated around the specific status and function of the colonial Marseille as a *metropole*.

As it appears, the metropole, a specific form of both urban typology and urban representation, was crucial to making assertions about the city as well as to producing the 1906 exhibition. Therefore, I argue that a particular image and concept of Marseille was developed and produced *during* to Colonial Exposition, *through* the exposition, as well as *for the sake of* the exposition. I propose that this was achieved through discursive practices of urban (self-)representation, which I aim to unpack and critically examine in the following. Keeping the overall aim of this diachronic study in mind, I assume that a comprehensive understanding of these discursive articulations of metropolitanism in the colonial era will allow me to trace their historical trajectory and further, to discuss their impact in the present-day, as well as in the urban future.

State of Research and Bibliographical Frame of Reference

As the research question mentioned above suggests, the following inquiry encompasses several literature fields of reference. While I engaged with international exhibition studies have been engaged with and discussed in relationship to the urban question in the former chapter, this part draws from two further areas: Firstly, the characterization of historical Marseille, and secondly, the image of the colonial metropole and by extension, the construction of metropolitanism during French Imperialism.

Regarding the first area of reference, numerous scholarly works have engaged with the image and function of Marseille around 1900. The existing literature on the modern history of colonial Marseille provides greatly detailed and prolific insights into the function of the port city, its commercial activities and strength, as well as the conflictual relationship to Paris, between decentralization and interdependency.³⁰⁶

Within the bibliographical landscape of Marseille's urban history, several discursive characterizations, labels, and stigmatizations can be identified. According to the historian Yael Simpson-Fletcher, three nicknames, or "sobriquets," are most commonly used as synonyms of the city's name in twentieth-century century scholarship: *La Ville Phocéenne*, *La Reine de la Méditerranée*, and *La Porte de L'Orient*.³⁰⁷ *La Ville Phocéenne* (the Phocean City) refers to the romanticized foundation myth of the city and the proud heritage of an ancient glory.³⁰⁸ *La Reine de la Méditerranée* (Queen of the Mediterranean) implies Marseilles geographic situation at the Mediterranean coast, its maritime trade traditions and network, as well as the marine culture

³⁰⁶ See for instance: Amargier and Joutard, *Histoire de Marseille en treize événements* ; Blanchard and Boëtsch, "Marseille, Port Des Suds"; Jean Lucien Bonillo and René Borruey, *Marseille, ville & port* (Marseille: Editions Parenthèses, 1992); Borruey, *Le port moderne de Marseille*; Gallocher, *Marseille. Zigzags dans le passé*; Roncayolo, *L'imaginaire de Marseille, port, ville, pôle*; Jean-Jacques Jordi and Émile Témime, *Migrance: Histoire Des Migrations à Marseille. Le Choc de La Décolonisation : (1945–1990)*, vol. 4 (Aix-en-Provence: Edisud, 1991); Émile Témime, *Marseille transit: Les passagers de Belsunce* (Paris: Editions Autrement, 1995); Témime, *Histoire de Marseille*.

³⁰⁷ Yael Simpson Fletcher, "City, Nation, and Empire in Marseilles, 1919–1939" (Emory University, 1999), 56–124.

³⁰⁸ On the founding myth of Marseille and its instrumentalization for the sake of urban representation, see chapter 3.1. *Urban Historicity and Colonial Legacy*.

and immigrants' flows literally reaching the French coast via the sea. Last but not least, the widely spread notion of *La Porte de l'Orient* (the gateway to the Orient) puts the emphasis on Marseille's global trade network and connection to the "exotic" oriental territories and culture. This explicitly orientalist representation of the city was criticized from a postcolonial perspective as a "cliché colonial par excellence."³⁰⁹ Overall, the representations and the imaginaries of Marseille conveyed through these sobriquets are informative and evocative. It nicely sums up common functional and definitional aspects of Marseille's characterization – and stigmatization – in the existing literature: The historicity and antiquity of the city, its embeddedness in a global commercial network, the maritime culture, a cosmopolitan and Mediterranean population, and a colonial heritage.

Moreover, in this literature the 1906 Colonial Exposition has been regarded as the decisive moment affirming Marseille as the "capital of the empire."³¹⁰ The notion of capitivity implicitly addresses Paris and triggers the historical rivalry between the French capital and the Mediterranean port city. At the same time, this linguistic formulation puts a deliberate emphasis on the *empire* as the network of reference. In doing so, it detaches Marseille's function from the centralized structure of the French nation-state while enhancing its influential function within the international empire, as well as the city's symbolic and material centrality to French colonization in general. As this quick overview seeks to illustrate, turn-of-the-century Marseille has been investigated as an imperial hub, a historical transit point and gateway into the world, as well as a colonial and an imperial city.

While the city's central function within French colonial system and the mechanisms of the imperial port city have been addressed extensively, the very *metropolitan* features of the city in relationship to colonialism lacked consideration. However, at the same time, the very concept of the metropole has been discussed extensively in (historical) urban studies and urban

³⁰⁹ Philippe Joutard, "Marseille, Porte de l'Orient," *L'Histoire* 69 (August 1984), 1.

³¹⁰ Blanchard and Boëtsch, "Marseille, Port Des Suds," 13.

theory in general.³¹¹ Within this second literature field, it is necessary to highlight terminological specificities. Indeed, there is a linguistic distinction between the colonial *metropole* and the modern *metropolis*. While the latter refers to the core city or nation-state of an empire and is used within a specific colonial context and post-/de-/anti-colonial discussions,³¹² the former addresses a specific urban type of Western modernity, commonly characterized by a high density, richness of resources, functions of centrality (often times, a metropolis is a capital city), diversity, and variety.³¹³

Adding to this wording differentiation, translation issues must be regarded, for the French word “*métropole*” refers to both the notion of the *metropole* as well as the *metropolis*. In spite of a significant scientific coverage of the topic of the *metropolis*, the very concept of the colonial *metropole* lacks critical theoretical investigation. So far, regarding the *metropolis* in the period between the second half of the 19th century and first half of the twentieth century, I identify three main approaches in the literature. In order to contextualize the following discussion, I will rapidly sketch out these different perspectives as well as their respective potential and limitations.

Firstly, the extensive literature on the ‘modern metropolis’ provides prolific and detailed examinations of this urban form of Western modernity *par excellence*.³¹⁴ Around 1900, Paris, London and New York were the top line examples of these big and culturally vibrant cities. However, this approach tends to only investigate capital cities and to neglect second cities and towns, and their respective expressions of what a metropolis might represent. Furthermore, at

³¹¹ Brantz, Disko, and Wagner-Kyora, “Thick Space: Approaches to Metropolitanism.”

³¹² John Darwin, *The Empire Project: The Rise and Fall of the British World-System, 1830–1970* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Jonathan Schneer, *London 1900: The Imperial Metropolis*, Revised ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001).

³¹³ Heinz Reif, “Metropolises: History, Concepts, Methodologies,” in *Thick Space. Approaches to Metropolitanism*, ed. Dorothee Brantz, Sasha Disko, and Georg Wagner-Kyora (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2012), 31–47.

³¹⁴ See for instance: Walter Benjamin, *Das Passagen-Werk*, vol. 2 Vol. (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1983); David Harvey, *Paris, Capital of Modernity* (New York: Routledge, 2003); Georg Simmel, “The Metropolis and Mental Life,” in *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, ed. Kurt H. Wolff (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1950), 409–424.

least in the French context, the interrelation between the ‘modern metropolis’ and colonialism tends to remain unproblematicized.

Secondly, further city types of the Western imperial era appear in the literature and reveal linkages to the topic at hand. Indeed, notions of the (anti-)imperial/(anti-)colonial metropolis and the imperial (port) city for instance address issues of urban life and imperialism.³¹⁵ Insofar, they can be considered historical, functional and definitional ‘relatives’ of the colonial metropole. However, these notions are generally framed as territorial realities inherent to a political system. In this sense, they have not been problematized as processual constructs and as concepts of urban representation produced by – and for the sake of – specific hegemonic instances of power. Nevertheless, these notions will accompany the following discussion as a foil for comparison and emphasis of the specific features of colonial metropolitanism.

Thirdly, studies on colonialism commonly address the metropolitan question within the dichotomy of the colonies versus the metropole.³¹⁶ Here, the metropole is limited to being the constitutive counterpart within the analysis of colonialism as a relational system. Subsequently, the metropole mostly refers to France as a whole, the ‘mother-country’ within the empire. As a consequence, the urban dimension and the ‘city-ness’ of colonial metropolitanism remains neglected.

³¹⁵ Boittin, *Colonial Metropolis*; John Darwin, *After Tamerlane: The Rise and Fall of Global Empires, 1400-2000* (London: Penguin UK, 2007); Darwin, *The Empire Project*; Felix Driver and David Gilbert, *Imperial Cities: Landscape, Display and Identity* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999); Michael Goebel, *Anti-Imperial Metropolis: Interwar Paris and the Seeds of Third World Nationalism*, Reprint edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017); Andrew Lees and Lynn Hollen Lees, *Cities and the Making of Modern Europe, 1750-1914*, 1 edition (Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Jürgen Osterhammel, *Die Verwandlung der Welt: Eine Geschichte des 19. Jahrhunderts*, 4th edition (München: C.H.Beck, 2009); Schneer, *London 1900*.

³¹⁶ Farias and Stemmler, “Deconstructing ‘Metropolis’”; Jürgen Osterhammel, *Kolonialismus: Geschichte, Formen, Folgen*, 6th edition (München: C.H.Beck, 2009).

Approach and Chapter Outline

In general, scholarly debates on the metropolis revolve around the assumption of a bounded territorial entity: the core/capital city, the ‘mother-city’, the nation-state at the core of an empire, and so on. Though, while the localized urban formation of the metropole plays a role, the spatial approach is conceptually limiting and needs to be complicated in order to understand the notion at hand.³¹⁷ In line with a critical urban theory approach, I understand urban questions and formations as the “site, medium and outcome of historically specific relations of social power.”³¹⁸ I propose that the colonial metropole is discursively produced *by* and *within* a historically contextualized system of imperial hegemony. Therefore, in order to grasp the historical potential and ideological force, it is necessary to shift from a spatial to a conceptual approach of metropolitanism. For this purpose, I engage with critical/historical discourse analysis and conceptual history approaches as a theoretical and methodological framework in order to critically unpack the historical concept of the colonial metropole.³¹⁹

For this sake, I aim to question and investigate where the discursive articulations of the colonial metropole appear, who discusses them, according to which characteristics and pursuing which interests. For this purpose, in the following, I elaborate on three major features of metropolitanism, which revealed themselves through an in-depth content analysis of the empirical data at hand: Firstly, the colonial historicity of Marseille and the temporal articulation of past and future imperial imaginaries. Secondly, the networked economic competitiveness, in lights of the colonial port, the ‘gateway’ image of the city, as well as the commercial and industrial functions of Marseille. Thirdly, the contingent relationality, constructed through claims for decentralization, localism and regionalism, and colonial ‘othering’.

³¹⁷ Brantz, Disko, and Wagner-Kyora, *Thick Space*.

³¹⁸ Neil Brenner, “What Is Critical Urban Theory?,” *City* 13, no. 2–3 (September 2009): 198.

³¹⁹ On the analytical approach and methodology, see chapter 1.3. *Conceptual Approach and Case Studies* and 1.4. *Analytical Approach*.

These three dimensions are by no means exhaustive; rather, they are representative of the source corpus at hand and give us insights into central features of metropolitanism displayed discursively in the context of the 1906 Colonial Exposition in Marseille. Overall, the aim of this chapter is to draw from empirical data analysis in order to theorize the representational discourses on Marseille as a colonial metropole and thereby, to contribute to filling the theoretical gap about metropolitanism in the French colonial period.

3.1. Urban Historicity and Colonial Legacy

Claiming the Colonial Metropole

“Fière de son passé, Marseille a voulu justifier dans le présent son titre de Métropole coloniale de la France.”³²⁰ During the exposition closing speech, the main curator of the event, Jules Charles-Roux, on behalf of all the organizers, reminded one of the main purpose of the event: The exhibition served to affirm and establish Marseille as the colonial metropole of France (*Métropole coloniale de la France*). In a stylized fashion Charles-Roux personified the city in order to convey an inherent agency of self-representation: Marseille “wanted” (*a voulu*) to postulate the image and function of a metropole. In this sense, the show was intended to contribute decisively to verifying and legitimizing this status. Subsequently, in this case, the instance “Marseille” served as a metonymy, and stood for the local government and the urban stakeholders. Hence, what was subsumed under ‘what Marseille *wanted*’ must be read as the indirect expression of what a specific group of influential urban actors aimed for. As the referred quote conveys, the historicity of the city (*son passé*) and its colonial legacy played a crucial role in this metropolitan self-depiction. Implicitly, the imperial history of Marseille and France itself was addressed, as well as specific temporalities at stake in the contemporary and future arrangement of this heritage. The past was leveraged in order to project a scenario for the future.

At that time, the colonialism scholar Paul Masson described the city in a similar line of thought: “Par l’antiquité et la continuité des ses traditions, par la grandeur actuelle de son rôle, Marseille mérite bien le nom, qui lui a été déjà donné, de métropole coloniale de la France.”³²¹ According to the author, the seniority and the importance of Marseille’s imperial role justified its labelling as the French colonial metropole. Hence, the references of a bygone epoch

³²⁰ Chambre de Commerce de Marseille, *La Chambre de Commerce de Marseille et l’Exposition Coloniale de 1906*, 210.

³²¹ Masson, *Marseille et La Colonisation Française. Essai d’Histoire Coloniale*, 577.

(*l'antiquité*) and to a notion of steadiness throughout history (*la continuité de ses traditions*) both informed the city's function and status at the beginning of the twentieth century. Even more so, as mentioned here, the fact that Marseille had already been qualified a "colonial metropole" in the past (*le nom, qui lui [Marseille; MdS] a été déjà donné*) was regarded as another justification. Thus, the current role of Marseille – and the way this very role was constructed discursively – was, to a large extent, informed by memories and references to the city's past.

An Ancient Colonial Identity

Mentions of the colonial past contributed to constructing a sense of obviousness, of non-questionability of Marseille's status as a colonial metropole. This notion was extensively built within the creation myth of the city and the corresponding narrative of the Greek colony – a tale which sustains up until today. According to the foundational legend, ancient Ionian Greek colonizers from Phocaea reached the Gallic coast in the bay of Lacydon (today: Vieux Port, Marseille) around 600 BC.³²² Here, they encountered the Celtic tribe Segusiavi, whose princess Gyptis was then wed to the foreign sailor Protis. In celebration of this alliance, the Greek invader was offered lands close to the Mediterranean coast, on which he built his own *cit *: Massalia. With this event, Marseille, the Anatolian Greek colony was born.³²³

Along with this legend emerged the idea that colonialism and multiculturalism was embedded in the city's history and identity. This image was conveyed through the exhibition of the Greek origins of Marseille, the so-called "cit  antique par excellence,"³²⁴ during the Colonial Exposition in 1906. For instance, the introductory text in the official guide related the myth of Marseille's ancient glory:

³²² On the creation myth of the city, see for instance: Temime, *Histoire de Marseille*, 7–18.

³²³ *Ibid.*, 9.

³²⁴ M. Estier, quoted in: Rozays, "Les F tes Du Conseil G n ral   l'Exposition Coloniale," 1.

“Berceau des plus vieilles cités de notre monde occidental, le Méditerranée en a vu naître et grandir d’opulence avant la formation de Massalia. La plupart ont disparu depuis longtemps; d’autres ont été remplacées par d’obscures bourgades. Quelques uns seulement Rome, Byzance, Athènes, Naples, fières de leurs origines lointaines et d’un glorieux passé, jouissent de leur prospérité présente et peuvent rêver un brillant avenir. Massalia, métropole des Gaules, presque aussi vieille qu’elles, a été aussi privilégiée.”³²⁵

The text praised Marseille’s ancient importance and crucial role within the Western world, comparing the city with Rome and Byzantium.

Interestingly, the urban qualifier “métropole” was mentioned in this quote, however, it referred to Marseille in an era prior to French Colonialism. Hence, this revealed that this urban labelling could be – and had been – used regarding several historical periods and was not limited to the imperial context. However, in this case, the term “métropole” seemed to refer to a general notion of urban centrality and significance within a network of cities. This indicated the variability of the “métropole” concept, depending on the historical context and geopolitical agency comprised within the discourse.

In general, the foundational myth of Massilia was widespread amongst the urban representatives. The local actors were not the only ones who activated this tale rhetorically: Even the Mayor of Lyon, one of Marseilles greatest rivals regarding colonial affairs, called the city’s inhabitants “les héritiers directs de ces races privilégiées de l’antiquité” and congratulates them for having secured “l’étincelle grecque”.³²⁶ In they view, the city had been able to continue the great Greek heritage since the Antiquity.

³²⁵ [Unknown], *Guide Officiel de l’Exposition Coloniale de Marseille*, 3.

³²⁶ M. Herriot, Mayor of Lyon, quoted in: Rozays, “Les Fêtes Du Conseil Général à l’Exposition Coloniale,” 2.

Local scholars of the time contributed to disseminating this narrative of a “*long passé colonial*”.³²⁷ Masson, who functioned as the scientific voice and spokesperson of historical colonial knowledge of the exposition’s organization committee, laid out this legacy in details in the central piece “Marseille et la Colonisation” (1906): “L’antique Massalie dut sans doute sa lointaine origine à la colonisation phénicienne, mais ce furent les Grecs qui en firent une ville et lui donnèrent réellement la vie.”³²⁸ Further, he wrote: “Il nous est difficile d’oublier que nous sommes les descendants de Gyptis et de Protis, que notre vieille République de Marseille a été l’émule d’Athènes”³²⁹. Here, the author claimed that colonial matters were inherent to Marseille’s image and history, and reminded the creation legend in a somewhat nostalgic tone. Additionally, based on this heritage. This suggests a reversed and paradoxical history of the city: in line with Masson’s assumptions, Marseille was created as a colony during Antiquity, and now, it established itself as the colonial metropole within modern French colonialism. From the dominated (the colony) to the dominant (the metropole), Marseille’s image remained defined within an imperial system of representation.

The narrative of the colonial legend was displayed through the aesthetics and the design of the exposition site. In the Grand Palais for instance, several local painters exhibited their creations which were dedicated to the history of the city and referred specifically to its colonial heritage. On one of the facades, a massive statue representing an allegory of the Greek Massalia decorated the building. This plastic illustration of Gyptis by Constant Roux provided yet another reference to Marseille’s alleged greatness – and colonial history – in the Antiquity.³³⁰ Another example, M. Montenard’s piece *Marseille colonie grecque*,³³¹ was shown prominently. This work was an explicit interpretation of the historical tale and was praised as an “oeuvre si

³²⁷ Masson, *Marseille et La Colonisation Française. Essai d’Histoire Coloniale*, 8.

³²⁸ *Ibid.*, 15

³²⁹ Charles-Roux, in: *Le Petit Marseillais*, “La Journée de Cloture à l’Exposition Coloniale,” 1.

³³⁰ Louis Sabarin, “A l’Exposition Coloniale. L’Ouverture Du Grand-Palais,” 1.

³³¹ Chambre de Commerce de Marseille, *La Chambre de Commerce de Marseille et l’Exposition Coloniale de 1906*, 67.

vraiment provençale et grecque.”³³² Here, the Ancient Greek and Provençal relic were joint in a shared representation and displayed as Marseille’s most central cultural heritages.

Marseille, “Pénétrée d’Atmosphère Coloniale”³³³

Among several historical themes contributing to Marseille’s urban representation, the ancien régime was stylized as a golden age prior to this of a so-called colonial greatness. According to the narrative, during this time, the nation’s best merchants, the richest ship-owners and most intrepid sailors of the oceans came together in the port city. It was the period of the creation of the lucrative *comptoirs*, courageous maritime adventures and discoveries.³³⁴ The official discourse conveyed a touch of grateful nostalgia of this bygone time, which had allegedly granted the city so much significance and prestige. Commercial Marseille, “pénétrée d’atmosphère coloniale,”³³⁵ was considered integrally shaped and defined by colonialism:

“De par ses plus lointaines traditions d’accueils et d’échanges, sa situation géographique éminemment favorable aux grands essors vers les pays d’outre-mer, son climat attirant et généreux, son caractère si particulier de cité, vivante et colorée, (...) la fièvre du négoce et des affaires (...), une note savoureusement exotique, Marseille réalise un type admirable et complet de grande métropole coloniale.”³³⁶

Here, commercial and human exchange, geographic proximity to France’s territories abroad, as well as an important trade and business culture were defining feature of the “magnificent” (*admirable*) and “whole” (*complet*) colonial metropole. Moreover, the mentioning of an allegedly exotic character (*une note savoureusement exotique*) expressing through a “lively and

³³² [Unknown], *Guide Officiel de l’Exposition Coloniale de Marseille*, 103.

³³³ Bouis, *Le Livre d’Or de Marseille. De Son Commerce et de Ses Industries. Compte-Rendu Annuel de La Situation Maritime, Commerciale, Industrielle, Coloniale*, 1906, 502.

³³⁴ Masson, *Marseille et La Colonisation Française. Essai d’Histoire Coloniale*, 565.

³³⁵ Bouis, *Le Livre d’Or de Marseille. De Son Commerce et de Ses Industries. Compte-Rendu Annuel de La Situation Maritime, Commerciale, Industrielle, Coloniale*, 1906, 502.

³³⁶ *Ibid.*

colorful” (*vivante et colorée*) atmosphere in the city, contributed to imagining links between Marseille and the similarly stigmatized “exotic” colonies. This connecting element supported the image of a shared belonging between Marseille and the foreign territories, making the city a gateway between France and the colonies.

Being a colonial metropole also provided promises and visions for a prosperous urban future: “cette métropole du monde colonial, Marseille, dont la grandeur, la générosité sont la gloire autant que ses richesses sont sa prospérité croissante.”³³⁷ Richness and glorious reputation within the empire was presented as a guarantee for the city’s successful development. Hence, the temporality of colonial metropolitanism was articulated around several notions of past(s), present(s) and future(s). All three notions co-defined, contradicted or complemented each other, depending on the discursive strategies at hand. Overall, the age of city, the seniority of its existence and its historical legacy, was a recurrent theme in the affirmation of the metropolitan status. Not only was the city’s past important, but also, more specifically, its colonial historicity. According to the argumentation, the continuity and steadiness of its imperial role granted Marseille a privileged role and function, which postulated and posited the title of *métropole coloniale*.

A significant aspect of the historical colonial narrative was the imaginary of a natural bond and shared destiny between Marseille and the French colonies. The figure of a common path built up over centuries was constructed in reference to the colonial historicity of the city as well as the geographic proximity of the port city and the French dominated territories abroad, especially in North Africa:

“Marseille est (...) la ville coloniale par excellence. Le sol de ses quais est le premier que foulent les pas de ceux de nos compatriotes qui reviennent d’au-delà des mers, lorsqu’ils prennent contact avec la France, comme la silhouette de ses côtes est la

³³⁷ Rozays, “Les Fêtes Du Conseil Général à l’Exposition Coloniale,” 1.

dernière vision du pays natal qu'ils on emportée au fond de leur regard, lorsqu'ils l'ont quitté. (...) le lien qui unit la métropole et ses colonies part de Marseille et y revient. L'ambiance, à Marseille, est coloniale."³³⁸

The quoted description related the colonizers' journey sailing back and forth across the Mediterranean and the significance of Marseille as gateway to France and the rest of the world. Here, the city was depicted as a nodal point of reference and orientation for the imperial sailors. As the "port des colonies,"³³⁹ it was the geographic, infrastructural and emotional link between the home nation and the colonies. And as a matter of fact, not only was Marseille the main transit point between the French mainland and the colonies overseas, it was also the gate to the Orient and the Far East through the Suez Canal (1869),³⁴⁰ and towards the American continent.³⁴¹ Interestingly, in this quote, it was described as a colonial city (*ville coloniale*) rather than as an imperial city. Hence, Marseille was not represented as node of imperial power, but it was assimilated symbolically and culturally with the colonies themselves. In accordance with the characterization of the city, the local citizens themselves were praised as the most active colonial workers of French colonization.³⁴² The urban imagery disseminated the assumption that colonialism was 'in the city's flair' and that the overall atmosphere in Marseille was colonial (*L'ambiance, à Marseille, est coloniale*).

Depictions based on an allegedly undeniable 'coloniality' of the place remain in today's scientific language and approach of Marseille's urban history. For instance, the historians Paul A. Amargier and Philippe Joutard discussed the organization of the Colonial Exposition in what

³³⁸ Charles-Roux, *Rapport Général. Exposition Coloniale Nationale de Marseille 15 Avril - 18 Novembre 1906*, 9.

³³⁹ Patrick Boulanger, "Marseille, Port Des Colonies," in *Marseille, Porte Sud 1905 - 2005*, ed. Pascal Blanchard and Gilles Boëtsch (Paris: La Découverte, 2005), 46.

³⁴⁰ For further readings about the Suez Canal, see for instance: Zachary Karabell, *Parting the Desert: The Creation of the Suez Canal*, 1. Vintage Books ed. (New York: Vintage Books, 2004); Caroline Piquet, *Histoire du canal de Suez* (Paris: Librairie Académique Perrin, 2009).

³⁴¹ Blanchard and Boëtsch, *Marseille, Porte Sud 1905–2005*, 19.

³⁴² [Unknown], *Guide Officiel de l'Exposition Coloniale de Marseille*, 4.

they called a city dramatically *impregnated* by colonialism.³⁴³ In their view, this very image was at the core of the representational endeavor of the exposition, which was considered the apotheosis of Marseille as a colonial city.³⁴⁴ Therefore, the image of the city which was shaped during the 1906 event is still influential in the present day.

In his closing speech, French Minister of the Colonies M. Milliès-Lacroix praised the Mediterranean port city: “Le salut du gouvernement de la République à la vieille cité phocéenne, à la gloire de son passé, à son avenir plein d’espérance, à son union plus intime avec les colonies françaises.”³⁴⁵ Here, the state’s representative praised the city, referring to its Greek heritage and the strong tie to the colonies, and suggested a causal relationship between its past and future both crystallized in a successful present. The Minister’s recognition comforted the exposition organizers in their successful displaying of Marseille’s greatness throughout history.

Other statements celebrated the city in eulogistic terms as well: “cette merveilleuse Marseille, imposante de puissance, fière de ses souvenirs, confiante dans sa destinée, reine de la Méditerranée sur laquelle les hommes, partant à la conquête du monde, essayèrent leurs premiers pas.”³⁴⁶ Once more, the depiction of Marseille addressed the function as an urban node within the Mediterranean realm, home of the conquering sailors and starting point of the colonial adventure. Additionally, according to this speech, Marseille’s strength built on the city’s history. Its so-called glorious past was used as a means to guarantee and to look forward towards a promising future.

³⁴³ Amargier and Joutard, *Histoire de Marseille en treize événements*, 182.

³⁴⁴ Aillaud and Aillaud, *Marseille, 2600 Ans de Découvertes Scientifiques: Des Origines Au Milieu Du XXème Siècle. Vers La Création de La Faculté Des Sciences*, 343.

³⁴⁵ Chambre de Commerce de Marseille, *La Chambre de Commerce de Marseille et l’Exposition Coloniale de 1906*, 221.

³⁴⁶ Rozays, “Les Fêtes Du Conseil Général à l’Exposition Coloniale,” 1.

3.2. Networked Economic Competitiveness

In addition to the colonial historicity of Marseille discussed in the previous subchapter, the following part will focus on a second defining feature – or rather, set of features – of colonial metropolitanism. Indeed, several infrastructural, economic, and connectivity factors played a central role in the construction and promotion of the metropolitan image: Marseille’s port and the related function as an imperial ‘gateway-city,’ as well as the commercial and industrial activities of the city and its surrounding region in relationship to French colonial trade. Obviously, these are diverse notions and multi-faceted themes, though, in the context at hand, they are connected discursively. Therefore, in the following, these different aspects will be discussed jointly in order to grasp a heterogeneous narrative of the integrated commercial and economic hub of the French empire.

Marseille, the Imperial Port City: Geographic Connectedness and Network

The relationship between Marseille and the geographic context of the French empire defined its function as an imperial city.³⁴⁷ Even more so, throughout events like the Colonial Exposition, the character as an imperial city shaped the local urban imaginary.³⁴⁸ At the edge of the twenty-first century Marseille was considered “un des grands carrefours du monde.”³⁴⁹ During this time, the colonial port of Marseille experienced an intense period of activity, primarily based on commercial and industrial functions.³⁵⁰ The largest maritime transit point of the empire provided a crucial connecting element and a major trigger for commercial activities, which transformed the city into a worldwide node. This opening onto and into the world was highly significant in the context of the 1906 Colonial Exposition. The local organizers and

³⁴⁷ Lees defined imperial cities as the cities which have a “connection to overseas empires via international ports”: Lees and Lees, *Cities and the Making of Modern Europe, 1750-1914*, 246.

³⁴⁸ Lees and Lees, *Cities and the Making of Modern Europe, 1750-1914*, 251.

³⁴⁹ Boulanger, “Marseille, Port Des Colonies,” 45.

³⁵⁰ See for instance: Blanchard and Boëtsch, *Marseille, Porte Sud 1905–2005*; Temime, *Histoire de Marseille*.

representatives deliberately used the event to seal the commercial interdependence between Marseille and the French Colonial empire, and thereby, established the city's connectedness with the (colonial) outside.

Exemplarily, inaugurating the *Grand Palais de l'Exportation*, which was explicitly dedicated to international trade, Lucien Estrine, the person in charge of commercial import at the local Chamber of Commerce, claimed Marseille's geographic worldwide connectivity:

“Tout le monde sait que Marseille est le premier port de France, et que c'est par là qu'il faut passer pour aller en Algérie, dans le Levant ou en Extrême-Orient. Marseille commercial est connue de tous; dire que Marseille est la vraie Métropole coloniale (...) serait un pléonasme.”³⁵¹

According to this representative of the Chamber of Commerce, the national superiority of Marseille's port and its function as the only connecting element between France and North Africa (Algeria) and the Eastern Mediterranean world was indisputable and well-known by all. Based on these defining characteristics, it seemed obvious (*un pléonasme*) to call the city the “true” colonial metropole. It was revealing that Estrine rhetorically linked Marseille's gateway function to the colonial world and the characterization as colonial metropole. Not only did the metropole have an important function *within* a (colonial) network; it was the dominating *center* of this very network too. Thus, adding to the notion of international connectedness, the idea of centrality was crucial for the metropolitan representation as well.

On a side note, the indication about the “true” metropole – which implied, on the contrary, the existence of (a) *false* metropole(s) – can be read as a reference to Marseille's competitors and rivals to this urban status. This view most probably indicated that cities like Lyon and Bordeaux might be illegitimate colonial metropolises in comparison to Marseille. Supporting this

³⁵¹ Inauguration speech by Lucien Estrine, President of *Commission de Réception des Produits* and member of the chamber of commerce: Chambre de Commerce de Marseille, *La Chambre de Commerce de Marseille et l'Exposition Coloniale de 1906*, 129.

idea, an article of the local daily newspaper *Le Petit Marseillais* metaphorically suggested that Marseille tied France to its “colonial daughters” (*le trait d’union incessant entre la mère-patrie et ses filles coloniales*)³⁵² in the same way as the biological affiliation bounds a mother to its children.

In line with this narrative of connectivity, according to Blanchard, the first colonial exposition “shaped Marseille’s destiny”: a colonial and trade-oriented future, open towards the Orient and trans-Mediterranean migrations.³⁵³ This contributed to shaping the port’s landscape, where special transit spaces emerge, like the “hotels for migrants” and the Frioul islands for instance. These developments forged the port’s as well as the city’s culture and demography, between fascination for the ‘exotic’ or ‘oriental’ arrivals and stigmatization of foreign ‘others.’³⁵⁴ Adding to the geographic scale of the French Colonial empire, Marseille was also the central gateway towards the American continent, and a node on the transatlantic journey from the Orient.³⁵⁵ Regarding the movements shaping the connecting nature of the city, Simpson-Fletcher complementarily highlights the function of the port city as a “double gateway,” which sends people to the colonies but also brings the colonies (people, products) back to the metropole.³⁵⁶

In this context, it was no surprise that the official advertisement poster of the Colonial Exposition depicted a port and maritime scenery (see Illustration 2). The work was created by David Dellepiane, an Italian painter considered the best poster artist of the Provence at the time.³⁵⁷ In front of the Marseille skyline, the graphic showed the arrival by the open sea of twelve representatives of the population in the French colonies, gathered on a sailing boat and

³⁵² E. Thomas, “Les Adieux à l’Exposition,” *Le Petit Marseillais*, November 18, 1906, 1.

³⁵³ Blanchard and Boëtsch, *Marseille, Porte Sud 1905–2005*; Temime, *Histoire de Marseille*, 19.

³⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 26.

³⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 19.

³⁵⁶ Simpson Fletcher, “‘Capital of the Colonies’: Real and Imagined Boundaries between Metropole and Empire in 1920s Marseilles,” 137.

³⁵⁷ Boulanger, “Visions d’Empire,” 57.

displaying the announcement of the exhibition. Reflecting the double gateway function of the city mentioned above, the port scenery referred to Marseille as a door towards the outside world on the one hand, and to its function as arrival gate for the colonized population. Either way, it displayed crucial representative features: the port, the maritime force, the imperial hub and gateway function, the tie between the French mainland and the colonies, and the multi-ethnic population.

The involvement of the foreign population and the creation of acclaimed pavilions were considered major achievements of the event, and were regarded as a logical outcome of the cordial diplomatic collaboration between the host city and the ‘exhibited’ societies. Some reviewers even suggested that the success of the exposition was essentially due to the cooperation and realizations of the colonies themselves:³⁵⁸

“L’organisation et la direction des expositions des diverses colonies étant autonomes, nous n’avons eu à y prendre la moindre part, et nous n’avons eu qu’à admirer le travail accompli et nous émerveiller de l’inconnu révélé à nos horizons commerciaux.”³⁵⁹

As expressed here, M. Estrine, President of the Commission for the Reception of the Exhibitors, was very satisfied of the independent involvement of the colonies during the exposition.

However, as a matter of fact, the colonies had been demanded by the organizers to respectively organize and finance their own pavilions, which constituted extensive costs and, in some case, a deficit for the local economy abroad.³⁶⁰ However, this financial independence was reversed – and manipulated rather hypocritically – in the official discourse, in which the colonies’ autonomy and voluntary participation in the exposition was claimed. It was suggested that the colonies themselves had been willing to be part of the imperialist celebration,

³⁵⁸ See for instance: Chambre de Commerce de Marseille, *La Chambre de Commerce de Marseille et l’Exposition Coloniale de 1906*, 62; 72; 152; 223.

³⁵⁹ M. Estrine, quoted in: *Le Sémaphore*, “Exposition Coloniale. Au Palais de l’Exportation,” 1.

³⁶⁰ *La Dépêche Coloniale Illustrée*, “Exposition Coloniale de Marseille,” 87.

independently from the imperatives dictated by the metropolitan government and the urban political stakeholders in Marseille.

Commercial Port City and Colonial Trade Node

“Marseille (...) a prouvé quel centre commercial, industriel et maritime de tout premier ordre elle réalise aujourd’hui et, aussi, elle a conquis de haute lutte le titre de métropole coloniale qui ajoute encore à sa gloire et à sa renommée.”³⁶¹ Recapitulating the 1906 Exposition, the *Livre d’Or*, put forward the label of the *métropole coloniale* explicitly. This book was a yearly published local report and review on the economic sector of Marseille, which conveyed and defended the voices of Marseille’s trade elites. Here, this qualifier was framed as a merit award earned thanks to commercial, industrial and maritime forces and increasing the city’s prosperity and reputation. Therefore, the metropolitan status was directly linked to this nodal position as well as to specific sectors of performance.

A few years earlier, praising Marseille’s trading activities, the same publications affirmed: “Marseille (...) devient sans conteste non seulement le premier port de France, mais encore une ‘Métropole Coloniale’.”³⁶² According to this synthesizing statement, Marseille was the greatest port of the country, the commercial node of the nation, and therefore, was legitimized as the “colonial metropole” of the French empire. With regards to the local commercial achievements, city was further called “la grande métropole commerciale du Midi”³⁶³ and praised as central urban and commercial marker within the Provence region, too.³⁶⁴

³⁶¹ Bouis, *Le Livre d’Or de Marseille. De Son Commerce et de Ses Industries. Compte Rendu Annuel de La Situation Maritime, Commerciale, Industrielle, Coloniale*, 1907, 376.

³⁶² Bouis, *Le Livre d’Or de Marseille. De Son Commerce et de Ses Industries. Compte Rendu Annuel de La Situation Maritime, Commerciale, Industrielle, Coloniale*, 1905, 186.

³⁶³ Sabarin, “Les Fêtes Provençales à l’Exposition Coloniale,” 1.

³⁶⁴ *Le Midi* is a popularized nickname for the Provence region.

In 1900, the total profit of France's foreign trade was estimated at 11,5 billion *Francs*; the port of Marseille itself insured 2 billions of this amount.³⁶⁵ Hence, the city secured almost twenty percent of the total commercial gain of the country. Subsequently, Marseille's influence was even more crucial regarding the *colonial* trade specifically. Indeed, the city's port earned 504 million *Francs* from the colonial trade only, while the national yearly amount reached 948 million. Due to the maritime infrastructural and commercial power, Marseille provided more than half of the country's profit. Thereby, and based on a city ranking calculated according to economic performance, Marseille was established as the first port and maritime commercial city of the nation.

Between 1905 and 1913, Marseille continuously covered over half of French colonial trade, and therefore kept a lucrative and powerful status on the national scale. The colonial economic life in the city was articulated by prosperous local family businesses, industrial transformation and mercantile distribution of colonial products, as well as import-export traders. Shaping the urban rhythms, Blanchard proposed that the city itself lived "au rythme de ses productions."³⁶⁶ Regarding future perspectives, in 1906, the statistics of the *Office Colonial* forecasted an exponential progress of these commercial relations abroad and of the economic dominance of the French over neighboring concurrent nations in the following years.³⁶⁷

Among the numerous colonies linked to Marseille, Algeria and its capital city Algiers had a specific significance. Geographically in close proximity to the port of Marseille, which enabled strong ties in commercial exchange and trade, Algeria was regarded as the closest and most profitable colony. Moreover, a sense of cultural affiliation was cultivated within a narrative of 'city twinning' and neighborhood between Marseille and Algiers.

³⁶⁵ Bouis, *Le Livre d'Or de Marseille. De Son Commerce et de Ses Industries. Compte Rendu Annuel de La Situation Maritime, Commerciale, Industrielle, Coloniale*, 1905, 186.

³⁶⁶ Blanchard and Boëtsch, *Marseille, Porte Sud 1905–2005*, 42.

³⁶⁷ Exposition inauguration speech by J. Charles-Roux: Chambre de Commerce de Marseille, *La Chambre de Commerce de Marseille et l'Exposition Coloniale de 1906*, 63.

Right from the start of the exposition organization, Algeria was considered a crucial partner. Charles-Roux related his personal correspondence with the general governor of the country:

“par ses rapports constants avec le port de Marseille et en raison de l’intérêt qu’elle a à conserver la prépondérance dans les échanges coloniaux avec la première place maritime de la Métropole, l’Algérie plus que toute autre voudrait certainement apporter à la manifestation de 1906 une participation aussi complète que ses ressources le lui permettent. Elle trouvera d’ailleurs ainsi l’occasion d’affirmer de nouveau sa vitalité et son crédit.”³⁶⁸

In this view, commercial interests and the affirmation of the own economic strength represented central imperatives for the colonies in general, and for Algeria in particular. The participation in the Colonial Exposition was not only motivated by financial interests, but it was a question of commercial diplomacy too. As Charles-Roux’s formulation revealed, the colonies were explicitly expected to participate in the Marseille event if they want to guarantee their trade relationship with the port city, which represented the main commercial gateway of the empire.

In the same line argumentation, the economic yearbook of the city of Marseille described the crucial importance of the Algerian pavilion during the period of the Exposition:

“L’Algérie, si rapprochée de nous par les communications maritimes les plus rapides que nous avons acquis le droit de l’appeler notre grande voisine; l’Algérie, avec laquelle nous sommes continuellement en rapport de sympathies et d’affaires, ne peut qu’intéresser, tout particulièrement à l’Exposition coloniale, les Marseillais.”³⁶⁹

³⁶⁸ Charles-Roux, “Rapport de M. J. Charles-Roux Sur Les Travaux Accomplis Depuis La Signature Du Décret Présidentiel. Extrait Du Procès-Verbal de La Réunion Du Comité Supérieur Du 14 Octobre 1904,” 2.

³⁶⁹ Bouis, *Le Livre d’Or de Marseille. De Son Commerce et de Ses Industries. Compte-Rendu Annuel de La Situation Maritime, Commerciale, Industrielle, Coloniale*, 1906, 519.

Due to Algeria's importance for colonial France, it was assumed without a doubt that the corresponding pavilion would be a great factor of attractiveness for the visitors of the exposition and enhance the prolific relationship with this "great neighbor" (*notre grande voisine*).

A Marketing Event for Economic Promotion

To a large extent, the 1906 Exposition ensured the promotion of the colonial trade, of Marseille's prosperity, and of its national significance compared to other ports or second cities. As Charles-Roux confidently claimed:

“Une vérité qui n'est (...) plus à démontrer, c'est que Marseille est le principal pivot, la cheville ouvrière de la vie économique de notre pays, que son port est la grande porte par laquelle pénètrent les produits de nos belles colonies (...) et que cette porte ne peut être fermée sans qu'il en résulte le plus grand trouble et le plus complet désarroi de notre vaste empire colonial et dans les industries françaises.”³⁷⁰

Praising the city's economic strength, the exposition curator highlighted the great port of Marseille, its commercial performance, and the strong ties to the French colonies. This rhetoric was nothing new, however, Charles-Roux's formulation was insightful as it nicely brought two essential notions together: the economic strength of Marseille and French colonial trade. Revealingly, the quote conveyed that, at this point, it was impossible to separate both sectors from one another: Marseille, as the main port city of the empire, guaranteed a productive and lucrative colonial trade for France. At the same time, the involvement in the French colonial trade network secured the economic activity and prosperity of the city itself. Marseille was depicted as the decisive commercial, geographic and working-class "pivot" (*cheville ouvrière*) of the country and the empire.

³⁷⁰ Charles-Roux, "Rapport de M. J. Charles-Roux Sur Les Travaux Accomplis Depuis La Signature Du Décret Présidentiel. Extrait Du Procès-Verbal de La Réunion Du Comité Supérieur Du 14 Octobre 1904," 10.

“Notre [nous, les Marseillaise; MdS] chemin de prospérité est celui de la colonisation. L’expansion de notre commerce et de notre navigation est liée à l’épanouissement des lointaines possessions françaises. Le gouvernement, longtemps aveugle ou distrait à ce point de vue, nous prêterait-il un appui sûr? Espérons-le, grâce aux arguments de notre Exposition.”³⁷¹

Through the Colonial Exposition, the imperial economic interplay was promoted and called for recognition from the central government. The event worked as means to praise Marseille’s colonial commercial success and display these economic capacities to a wide audience.

Overall, colonial import-export and the port activities seemed to be the most crucial tie between the city of Marseille and French colonialism. Masson analyzed that “Les Marseillais n’ont pas travaillé à l’expansion coloniale pour obéir à des théories, ni par amour des conquêtes, mais dans un but pratique. (...) l’exploitation a toujours devancé la prise de possession; le commerce a précédé le drapeau.”³⁷² As the colonialism scholar explained, Marseille’s interest in colonization was not primarily of ideological or territorial nature, but rather based on practical reasons. Indeed, for the stakeholders and merchants of the French port city, the priority rested on the development and exploitation of local resources in the colonies for the sake of trade profit and commercial relationship.

In this line of interpretation, Ian Coller emphasizes the commercial conception of colonization which shaped Marseille’s representational doctrine. Drawing from the history of conquest of Algiers, the scholar explained that, while the colonizing expeditions of the nineteenth century had often been planned as primarily military endeavors, Marseille had injected a “commercial, colonial, and permanent aspect” into the North African missions.³⁷³ This again was the target of liberal anti-colonial criticism, which condemned the state’s human

³⁷¹ Thomas, “Les Adieux à l’Exposition,” 1.

³⁷² Masson, *Marseille et La Colonisation Française. Essai d’Histoire Coloniale*, 466.

³⁷³ Coller, “The Republic of Marseille and the Making of Imperial France,” 4.

and capital costs on colonization, an enterprise which was considered rather expensive than profitable.³⁷⁴ However, the Exposition organizers were concerned about the affirmation of the colonial benefits for the mother-nation and put the emphasis on the commercial and economic success of the imperial port city.

To some extent, the entire show was merely discussed in its commercial dimension and as an economic endeavor in line with the trade oriented achievements of the city:

“Toutes les expositions particulières [each single pavilion of the colonial exposition; Mds] étaient (...) la preuve tangible de la supériorité de Marseille, métropole coloniale, de par l’intensité de ses relations commerciales et industrielles avec nos colonies, comme de par l’intensité coloniale de son grand port ouvert sur les grandes routes d’Afrique et d’Extrême-Orient.”³⁷⁵

Hence, each single building and part of the exposition constituted an explicit evidence of Marseille commercial strength. In spite of the fleeting nature of the exhibition, it contributed to shape the image of the “grande métropole coloniale française” sustainably.³⁷⁶

The preponderant commercial and economic during the exhibition was not sheltered from criticism. This became apparent to external visitors from the colonies like Louis Bonnafont for instance, a delegate from the *Planteurs du Tonkin*. Bonnafont represented the agricultural sector Tonkin in French Indochina and was sent to Marseille especially for the occasion. According to his report, he was invited to Marseille with three of his colleagues in order to attend the festive opening of the Exposition and was quite disappointed with his experience. Overall, he acknowledged the educational value of the event and the pleasant esthetic of the pavilions. However, he complained heavily about the lack of official welcoming for official colonial

³⁷⁴ Ageron, *L’anticolonialisme en France de 1871 à 1914*, 6–10.

³⁷⁵ Bouis, *Le Livre d’Or de Marseille. De Son Commerce et de Ses Industries. Compte-Rendu Annuel de La Situation Maritime, Commerciale, Industrielle, Coloniale*, 1907, 376.

³⁷⁶ Exposition inauguration speech by M. Estier: *Le Petit Marseillais*, “Exposition Coloniale. L’inauguration Officielle,” 2; *La Dépêche Coloniale Illustrée*, “Exposition Coloniale de Marseille,” 87.

representatives like himself. In addition, in his view, the event did not succeed in primarily displaying the colonies: “La foule vint dès l’ouverture, nombreuse, très nombreuse, mais elle vint top pour se distraire, pas assez pour s’instruire et pas du tout pour traiter d’affaires coloniales. Il s’agissait de faire de l’argent.”³⁷⁷ According to Bonnafont, the audience was offered a wide range of useless amusements and was mostly keen on being entertained, rather than educated in colonial matters: “Le but poursuivi parut être un apport d’argent à Marseille et non une manifestation de la vitalité commerciale industrielle de nos Colonies.”³⁷⁸ In his review, he presented the Exposition as a primarily monetary profit-oriented event for the sake of some business people (*quelques entrepreneurs locaux*).³⁷⁹ As it appeared, Marseille’s local profit margin was granted larger importance compared to the benefits of the colonies. This critique contrasted with the overall positive critique of the Exposition officials and the local press, which generally applauded the emphasis put on colonial trade activities and economic achievements.

Establishing the Industrial City

Adding to the characterization of Marseille as a powerful commercial port city, there was an effort in the official discourse to put the emphasis on affirming the *industrial* potential of the city too. The industrial capacities were considered a neglected quality of the city, and the Exposition was a convenient means to put them forward:

“En France, où l’on persiste à croire, que nous [Marseille; MdS] ne sommes qu’un port maritime, un port de transit, tandis que nous avons eu la sagesse et l’intelligence de nous

³⁷⁷ Bonnafont, *Rapport Sur l’Exposition Coloniale de Marseille*, 8.

³⁷⁸ Ibid.

³⁷⁹ Ibid., 32.

convertir en ville industrielle et de transformer sur place la plus grande partie des produits que nous recevons de colonies et de l'étranger"³⁸⁰

The event representatives, in a personifying linguistic gesture, praised the "wisdom and intelligence" (*la sagesse et l'intelligence*) of Marseille, granting the city individual agency to become a performing industrial city, in addition to its commercial power.

A similar rhetoric was used by several officials, like M. Estrine, President of the Commission for the Reception of the Exhibitors, for instance, who promoted the newly grown sector:

"A travers les galeries de ce Palais de l'Exportation, nous pouvons faire de vous des propagandistes de la vérité suivante: Marseille est un grand port (...) mais Marseille est devenue en quelques années, grâce au courage, à l'énergie, à l'esprit d'entreprise et de persévérance de ses enfants, une ville industrielle qui ne le [un grand honneur; MdS] cède à aucune autre en variété et en importance."³⁸¹

In accordance to this report, the Grand Palais successfully exhibited local manufacturing and industry. Indeed, the Colonial Exposition contributed to show that local efforts and spirit of initiative had transformed the great port city into an even more polyvalent and flourishing industrial city. Moreover, the exhibition transformed each visitor into an advocate of these achievements. According to Estrine, Marseille reputation as maritime and commercial bridge to the French colonies was already established. Now, complementarily and thanks to the Exposition, the city represented itself as a major industrial power.

Indeed, in those years preceding the First World War, the specific *système industrialo-portuaire* 'Marseillais'³⁸² was characterized by the joint-activity sectors of the colonial port and the local industries. As explained to the visitors in the official exposition guide, in the course of

³⁸⁰ Exposition inauguration speech by J. Charles-Roux: Chambre de Commerce de Marseille, *La Chambre de Commerce de Marseille et l'Exposition Coloniale de 1906*, 68.

³⁸¹ Sabarin, "A l'Exposition Coloniale. L'Ouverture Du Grand-Palais," 1.

³⁸² Zalio, "D'impossibles notables ?" 97.

the nineteenth century, the franchised port of Marseille gave occasion to the creation of numerous factories and local industries, supplied by the maritime trade of raw material and the increased immigrated work-force.³⁸³ Soap, flour mill, glass work, chemical and tile factories, sugar and oil refineries, as well as mechanic companies flourished. As a result, the census of 1906 revealed an unprecedentedly high percentage of industrial population in the city and a yearly profit of 1,37 billion French Francs.³⁸⁴ As mentioned in the guide, although the city enjoyed “natural” advantage like its geographic proximity to the Suez canal and the North African territories, it owed its prosperity to its “own activities.”³⁸⁵ Hence, the emphasis on the industrial strength seemed to contribute to promoting the city’s local and self-initiated activities, in order to avoid the impression that every achievement of Marseille resulted only from its implication in the French empire and its proximity to the colonies. Indeed, the colonial connection always implied a direct linkage to the central government and to Paris. In line with the already mentioned movement of decentralization of the Marseille elites, it seems plausible the affirmation of the industrial city served a general claim for independence and decentralization. Moreover, the commercial export sector was more lucrative than the import of colonial raw materials via Marseille’s port. Hence, an extensive part of Marseille’s colonial profit was due to the selling of locally transformed goods.³⁸⁶ Therefore, the city’s manufactures and industries played an essential role in the trade activities, and thereby, in Marseille’s overall economic prosperity.

³⁸³ [Unknown], *Guide Officiel de l’Exposition Coloniale de Marseille*, 5–6.

³⁸⁴ Chambre de Commerce de Marseille, *La Chambre de Commerce de Marseille et l’Exposition Coloniale de 1906*, 213.

³⁸⁵ Ibid.

³⁸⁶ Roncayolo, *L’imaginaire de Marseille, port, ville, pôle*, 200.

Promise of a Prosperous Future

Conceptions of technological and industrial performances were inscribed in a rhetoric of progress oriented towards the future. For instance, the imperial connectedness and commercial capacities of Marseille seemed promising with regards to the competition with other French port cities as well, like Le Havre, Bordeaux, Dunkerque (or Dunkirk), and Rouen. In this context of rivalry, Marseille's geographic orientation towards the Mediterranean realm and the Northern African colonies was a guarantee of its preponderant position compared to concurrent cities. For Marseille's advocates, this advantage in comparison to competing cities as well as its promising economic growth were meant to secure its status as the colonial metropole of France in the future.³⁸⁷

A specific understanding of temporality was an integral part of the discourse on the commercial colonial metropole. Indeed, in the context of the 1906 Exposition, the imaginary of Marseille's commercial and industrial strength was inherently connected to promises of a prosperous future. "Elle [Marseille; MdS] est le grand marché français des produits coloniaux, le principal débouché ouvert à nos colons. (...) Ses industries, dont l'essor récent ne fait que commencer, sont, pour nos colons, une sécurité présente et un gage d'avenir."³⁸⁸ As recounted here, Marseille secured the performance and the productivity of the empire's colonial trade. Furthermore, it provided built and human resources for the industrial transformation and distribution platform of the imported raw materials. As such, it was considered that Marseille's essential role in the imperial trade system was a direct contribution to the nation's prosperity. And, as the city's industrial capacities directly increased its commercial output, Marseille's industries had a national impact as well. Hence, according to the colonial historian Masson, Marseille's industrial machinery was a guarantee for a lucrative future.

³⁸⁷ Masson, *Marseille et La Colonisation Française. Essai d'Histoire Coloniale*, 571.

³⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 563.

The economic networks of the chamber of commerce shared similar perspectives with regards to securing the metropolitan status. The institution expressed the “souci vigilant de surveiller les progrès de commerce de nos possessions et de conserver à Marseille son rang de métropole coloniale.”³⁸⁹ As this showed, notions of future economic prosperity and the title of the colonial metropole were imagined hand in hand.

Regarding future commercial developments of imperial Marseille, the Colonial Exposition was overall expected to increase the connection and trade relationships between Marseille and the French colonies. Accordingly, Charles-Roux called the exhibition “la grandiose entreprise de l’Exposition coloniale, qui ajoutera à la gloire et à la prospérité de Marseille et de la France.”³⁹⁰ The official guide predicted similar impacts of the event:

“le résultat immédiat et durable qu’une exposition de ce genre doit atteindre se dessine de lui-même; il faut qu’une fois l’exposition close, les relations réciproques, commerciales et industrielles, entre la France et son domaine colonial, subissent une augmentation dans leur mouvement d’ensemble.”³⁹¹

The local press extensively enhanced these economic goals which were pushed forward by the Exposition, between the promotion of local entrepreneurship and the development of Marseille’s colonial trade relationships.³⁹²

Overall, wishes for a prosperous future in the city were a central element of congratulatory rhetoric at stake during the event. For instance, M. Bourgeat and M. Hénon, respectively president of the Chamber of Commerce of Toulouse and Calais, concluded their visit with encouragements for the so-called “grande et ladorieuse cité”.³⁹³ In similar terms, the Minister

³⁸⁹ Ibid., 579

³⁹⁰ J. L., “L’Inauguration de l’Exposition Coloniale,” 1.

³⁹¹ [Unknown], *Guide Officiel de l’Exposition Coloniale de Marseille*, 14.

³⁹² See for instance: La Dépêche Coloniale Illustrée, “Exposition Coloniale de Marseille”; Ferdy, “A l’Exposition Coloniale. La Journée de Clôture”; J. L., “Exposition Coloniale. Les Fêtes de Clôture,” *Le Sémaphore*, November 18, 1906.

³⁹³ Speeches by M. Bourgeat and M. Hénon, Mai 30, 1906: Chambre de Commerce de Marseille, *La Chambre de Commerce de Marseille et l’Exposition Coloniale de 1906*, 141.

of the Colonies left after his tour of the exposition, proposing a toast to Marseille's "prosperity."³⁹⁴ Referring to Marseille, the motive of the "hard working city," which was awarded its effort through economic flourishing in the future, was repeatedly mentioned. In the same manner, the status of the "colonial metropole" was said to be rightly earned. This revealed a sense of self-realization and fulfilling: There was an idea of the "hard-working" working class popular city of the south of the country which had now finally *made it* and reclaimed the prestigious urban label of the metropole for itself.

³⁹⁴ Speech by M. Millies-Lacroix, in: *Ibid.*, 208.

3.3. Contingent Relationality

As a third and final feature of metropolitanism in Marseille during French colonialism, the following part discusses the historically contingent *relationality* of the discursive and representational formations of colonial Marseille. Indeed, as I will argue, the notion of *independency* played a central role in the metropolitan discourse at the beginning of the twentieth century. This very notion seemed to invoke a specific urban imaginary of self-defining strength and representational power which was defining for metropolitanism. However, the claim for independency was integrally constructed in dependency of the constitutive other, against which claims of autonomy were formulated. In this case, Marseille's relationship to Paris, the Provence region, and a societal 'colonial other' were central themes within this constitutive tension between dependency and independency.

Centrality and Decentralization

The question of Marseille's independence has been a recurring theme for centuries. During the eighteenth century, Marseille's political representatives claimed to be a separate state. Furthermore, the city was the seat of early revolutionary actions and republicanism preceding the French Revolution in 1789. This movement was symbolized by the 'Marseillaise,' the future French national hymn, which federated revolutionary groups as they marched toward Paris.³⁹⁵ A few years later, in 1793, as a reaction against the so-called "federal revolts"³⁹⁶ in Marseille against what was considered the "Parisian dictatorship," the central government dismantled the municipality and took the city's name away, labelling Marseille the *Ville sans nom*. Coller argues that this was "an attempt at radical spatial realignment" and a symbolic gesture "to erase the long-standing spatial exception of Marseille."³⁹⁷ Following on from

³⁹⁵ Coller, "The Republic of Marseille and the Making of Imperial France," 8.

³⁹⁶ Here, *federal* referred to "the devolution of sovereignty to a regional level": Ibid., 9.

³⁹⁷ Ibid.

Fernand Braudel's magisterial global Mediterranean history study,³⁹⁸ Coller discusses what he calls the "exceptionality of Marseille." According to him, this "exceptionality" was based on a revolutionary and contentious character, and was extensively defined as such during the colonial era.

The conquest of Algiers by the French in 1830 was a good example of Marseille's commitment to colonization. While the Parisian leaders remained uncertain of the productivity of this colony, Marseille's commercial elites insisted on the permeant installation of the Algerian territory. As Coller puts it, the deal was "the integration of Marseille into the nation (...) in return for the maintenance of a colonial occupation in North Africa in which Marseille would play a privileged role."³⁹⁹ For instance, the colonization historian Guiral refers to a Marseille delegation of 1834 in order to describe the atmosphere of that time:

"The opinion of Marseille, this metropole of our Mediterranean coasts, wields a great influence all across the South, and the stability of several departments depends upon the tranquility of this city. Marseille has become calmer since its hopes and plans have been turned toward the exploitation of the African coast."⁴⁰⁰

As noted here, the French colonial possessions in North Africa served as a guarantee for Marseille's prosperity and peace. Indeed, due to the geographic proximity of the territories, the domination of Algiers granted Marseille a new importance within the colonial network. As the French writer Alexandre Dumas interpreted: "Since the conquest of Algiers, Marseille has become a capital."⁴⁰¹ Hence, the exceptionality of the Mediterranean port city existed as a subtle

³⁹⁸ Fernand Braudel, *La Méditerranée et Le Monde Méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II*, vol. 2 (Paris: Armand Colin, 1966).

³⁹⁹ Coller, "The Republic of Marseille and the Making of Imperial France," 11.

⁴⁰⁰ Pierre Guiral, *Marseille et l'Algérie* (Paris: Editions Ophrys, 1957), 120.

⁴⁰¹ Alexandre Dumas, 1841, quoted in: Coller, "The Republic of Marseille and the Making of Imperial France," 11.

tension between an intermediary position⁴⁰² (a transit point between two worlds, or more) and a nodal function (a new capitality and centrality).

The very notions of centrality and capitality were at the core of the discourse on the colonial metropole. Indeed, Marseille was affirmed as a colonial metropole due to its particular maritime, commercial, industrial, cultural, and geographic core function within the imperial network. Here, the urban typology and symbolic functions of the “capital city” transcended the classical meaning as the seat of the state’s government. Rather, this capitality referred to a local ambition of becoming the capital of the empire, as well as the colonial capital of France⁴⁰³ or capital of the Mediterranean.⁴⁰⁴ Here, the urban branding dimension joined the colonial ideology:

“L’exposition de 1906 est aussi l’occasion pour Marseille de projeter devant la nation et le monde l’image qu’elle se fait d’elle-même. Et d’abord, de se conforter dans son rôle de place coloniale. L’exposition s’avère comme la plus vaste entreprise publicitaire (...) une éclatante représentation aux yeux de tous du rôle que Marseille joue et jouera plus encore entre le France et son empire.”⁴⁰⁵

In addition to addressing international connections, notions of centrality referred to the national scale as well. Not only was Marseille granted a function of centrality within the French empire as the network of reference, it also affirmed Marseille’s importance in comparison to further second cities – and colonial cities – of France. This goes back to the discussion exposed in the former chapter, where Marseille was claimed “la ville coloniale par excellence”⁴⁰⁶ in order to legitimize its designation as a host for the colonial exposition, in rivalry against Lyon and

⁴⁰² Temime, “Au Carrefour Des Suds,” 7.

⁴⁰³ Blanchard and Boëtsch, *Marseille, Porte Sud 1905–2005*, 19.

⁴⁰⁴ Rozays, “Les Fêtes Du Conseil Général à l’Exposition Coloniale,” 2

⁴⁰⁵ Amargier and Joutard, *Histoire de Marseille en treize événements*, 194.

⁴⁰⁶ Masson, *Marseille et La Colonisation Française. Essai d’Histoire Coloniale*, 578.

Bordeaux. Overall, the centrality and capitality discussion demonstrate new constitutive features of Marseille's representation as a colonial metropole.

Entrepreneurial Strength and Republicanism

With regards to notions of centrality, the independency of Marseille was a recurrent promotional argument for the city. For instance, the entrepreneurial success of the exposition organizers was praised: the “*carrière triomphale*”⁴⁰⁷ of the colonial show was due to the local representatives and their effort to celebrate Marseille. After the closing ceremony, the local press enhanced the event in similar terms:

“En ce jour où les portes vont se fermer et où les paroles définitives seront dites, Marseille ne doit pas oublier ni laisser oublier qu'elle a, par l'effort de sa manifestation nationale, affirmé sa volonté d'être la métropole coloniale. Ses sacrifices, son courage et les succès qu'elle a obtenus n'ont pas d'autres but.”⁴⁰⁸

This quote underscores the city's own agency to affirm and establish its status as a colonial metropole. According to the newspaper, the great success of this major representative event and self-promotional enterprise of national standing constitutes the image of a *brave city*. As this praise suggests, the city made sacrifices, showed courage and power initiative, and is thus crowned with great achievements and recognition.

Here, I propose that this image of *bravery* joins the notion of independency mentioned above insofar as the exposition machinery in Marseille was developed without any help from Paris. The disregard of the French capital was symbolized by the total absence of any national government representatives during the exposition opening ceremony. In general, the colonial exposition was enhanced and glorified in the local press. However, the national press ignored

⁴⁰⁷ Chambre de Commerce de Marseille, *La Chambre de Commerce de Marseille et l'Exposition Coloniale de 1906*, 223.

⁴⁰⁸ Thomas, “Les Adieux à l'Exposition,” 1.

the show, as well as the “jealous” Parisian press.⁴⁰⁹ Marseille’s reviewers complained about this disregard and attempted to justify this lack of interest. For instance, *Le Petit Marseillais* explained this absence due a general business of the state’s representatives in the course of upcoming elections, but nevertheless promised an imminent visit of the French President.⁴¹⁰ Another article in the *Sémaphore* suggested that Charles-Roux had already received a congratulatory telegraph of the Minister of the Colonies M. Leygues by the time the exhibition was inaugurated,⁴¹¹ as some kind of reinsuring about the government’s interest. More critically, the literature suggests that, in reality, the Parisian government was waiting for a guarantee of the exposition’s success before granting the show with its presence.⁴¹²

Le Petit Marseillais discussed the international reception of the exposition too. A metaphorical anecdote related the astonishment of a French citizen coming to Marseille in order to visit the colonial exposition. The man, according to the article, had almost missed this great event because throughout the country, nobody was talking about it. However, by chance, during a trip in Italy, he had met a German person, who had praised the show and vividly encouraged him to travel to Marseille.⁴¹³ This story nicely draws the readers’ attention to the attempted international standing of the exposition, claims its visibility in European neighbor countries and, through the comparison, highlights the lack of emphasis in the home-country.

Five months after the inauguration, the President Fallières, granted the exposition a visit. This was the chance for the exposition organizers to insure their republicanism and commitment to the nation’s prosperity. In a welcoming speech, the mayor of Marseille insured that the City Council was “profondément attaché aux institutions républicaines. S’il garde son indépendance,

⁴⁰⁹ Pascal Blanchard and Gilles Boëtsch, “Marseille, Port Des Suds,” in *Marseille, Porte Sud 1905 - 2005*, ed. Pascal Blanchard and Gilles Boëtsch (Paris: Découverte, 2005), 14.

⁴¹⁰ Galy, “L’Inauguration Officielle de l’Exposition Coloniale,” 1.

⁴¹¹ J. L., “L’Inauguration de l’Exposition Coloniale,” 1.

⁴¹² Aillaud, “L’Exposition Coloniale de 1906,” 67; Morando, “Les Expositions Coloniales Nationales de Marseille de 1906 et 1922 : Manifestations Locales Ou Nationales ?” 233.

⁴¹³ Claude Brun, “L’Exposition Coloniale et l’Etranger,” *Le Petit Marseillais*, May 11, 1906, 1.

il sait marquer ses sentiments par un dévouement sans bornes à la République.”⁴¹⁴ Here, Chanut disguised Marseille’s push for independence in front of the head of the state and guaranteed the municipality’s dedication to the republican system. Two months later, upon the recommendation of Fallières and in spite of his initial reluctance, the Minister of the Colonies Milliès-Lacroix visited the show in November (seven months after the inauguration!) and was pleasantly surprised.⁴¹⁵ In the name of the central government, he congratulated Charles-Rous and called him a good republican. In the following pages, this multidimensional discourse will be read in lights of the tension between the need for Parisian recognition and the omnipresent claims for decentralization formulated in the context of the exposition. But firstly, let us extend shortly on the national dimension claimed by the exposition organizers.

Indeed, the affirmation of a national standing appeared as a crucial aspect of the self-promotional discourse on Marseille during the 1906 event. Masson called the exposition “Une manifestation qui contribuera à glorifier à la fois Marseille, la France et la troisième République.”⁴¹⁶ Chanut rebid and claimed that the Marseille show was a “oeuvre, marseillaise autant que nationale (...) glorification de la grande oeuvre du rayonnement extérieur de l’influence française.”⁴¹⁷ The exposition was conceived as a demonstration of French national patrimony, and was therefore as much a national event as a local project. With regards to this country-wide significance, the ignorance of the national press was even more difficult to justify.⁴¹⁸

Le Petit Provençal described the crowd’s enthusiasm at the closing the president’s visit as such: “des cris vibrants de: Vive Fallières! Vive la République! Se mêlent aux derniers

⁴¹⁴ *Le Petit Provençal*, “Le Président de La République à Marseille,” 2.

⁴¹⁵ Chambre de Commerce de Marseille, *La Chambre de Commerce de Marseille et l’Exposition Coloniale de 1906*, 208.

⁴¹⁶ *Le Petit Marseillais*, “La Journée de Cloture à l’Exposition Coloniale,” 1.

⁴¹⁷ Chambre de Commerce de Marseille, *La Chambre de Commerce de Marseille et l’Exposition Coloniale de 1906*, 73.

⁴¹⁸ Léotard, “Ouverture de l’Exposition,” 1.

accords de la ‘Marseillaise’.”⁴¹⁹ This scenery metaphorically conveyed the coming together of national (references to Fallières and the Republic) and local (the ‘Marseillaise’) symbols. In fact, the ‘Marseillaise’ itself was an icon of this fusion: the piece’s name explicitly displayed the city of Marseille and at the same time, this national hymn explicitly refers to the city’s name and simultaneously invokes the French state as a whole. During the exposition, this duality was even extended, adding up with the presence of the colonial participants from overseas. According to Blanchard, the celebration of National Day on July 14th, 1906, was the “moment patriotique par excellence” when representatives of French nationality, locality, and colonialism sang the ‘Marseillaise’ together.⁴²⁰

Claims for Decentralization

However, the expressions of commitment towards the Parisian government were not the whole story. Rather, the colonial exposition was the stage of vehement claims for decentralization. During his opening speech, Charles-Roux implicitly complained about the centralized organization of the French state and the Parisian guardianship (*tutelle*):

“Le moment me paraît cependant venu (...) d’appliquer les réformes indispensables à une démocratie rationnellement organisée, de supprimer bien des rouages, certaines tutelles qui n’ont plus de raison d’être, et d’accorder aux groupes sociaux, comme la Commune et le Département, un indépendance plus grande.”⁴²¹

He continued:

“Vienne le moment où Paris cessera d’être un objectif indispensable pour les penseurs, les philosophes, les lettrés, les savants, les artistes, où l’on ne sera plus obligé de se rendre à Paris pour obtenir l’autorisation de procéder à un travail quelque modeste qu’il

⁴¹⁹ Le Petit Provençal, “Le Président de La République à Marseille,” 2.

⁴²⁰ Blanchard and Boëtsch, *Marseille, Porte Sud 1905–2005*, 21.

⁴²¹ Chambre de Commerce de Marseille, *La Chambre de Commerce de Marseille et l’Exposition Coloniale de 1906*, 71.

soit et de passer par la filière de cinq ou six ministères, et on verra si la province tardera à affirmer sa vitalité, on verra même si ses productions de toute nature de *présenteront* pas une originalité plus marquée, une saveur nouvelle; on verra si les grands travaux d'utilité publique ne seront pas menés avec plus de rapidité et d'entrain."⁴²²

The curator's voice demanded that economic and political activities, as well as intellectual, academic and artistic life take place outside the French capital. He complained about institutional chaos and malfunction of the centralized ministries due to the exclusive concentration of activities in Paris. In his view, the centralization caused slowness and overall complication of decision-making processes.

In this context, the Marseille exposition is considered a great opportunity to conduct projects and successes independently in the province:

“Ne désespérons pas, Messieurs, et continuons nos efforts. L'Exposition de 1906 est une éloquente preuve de l'esprit d'initiative du Conseil général des Bouches-du-Rhône, de la Municipalité et de la Chambre de Commerce de Marseille; une intelligente tentative de décentralisation, que le gouvernement de la République n'a pas hésité à favoriser.”⁴²³

Carried by three main institutional organs (the General Council of the Department, the City Council, and the Chamber of Commerce), this operation of decentralization was a chance to merge communal and regional political levels, together with local economic powers. Furthermore, Charles-Roux rhetorically turned the support of the Parisian government towards the exposition into an encouragement of decentralizing movements.

The economic periodical *Livre d'Or* shared this interpretation:

“Notre ville a démontré magnifiquement, en cette circonstance, ce qu'elle pouvait faire, de sa propre initiative, de son seul effort, en se passant de l'estampille parisienne. Au

⁴²² Ibid., 71–72.

⁴²³ Ibid., 72.

point de vue de la décentralisation, la ‘Coloniale’, comme on l’appelait (...) aura été un acte d’une portée considérable.”⁴²⁴

La “Coloniale”, a nickname for the Marseille colonial exposition, was widely considered as an evidence of the local capacities, independently from Paris, and a milestone towards the dissolution of the centralized state’s structure.

Going back to the so-called “exceptionality” of Marseille, which was discussed at the beginning of this subchapter, the reputation of the local population worked in accordance to the decentralizing endeavors. In this sense, the colonial Marseille historian affirmed the following: “Les Marseillais supportent mal la tutelle du gouvernement; ils aiment agir par eux-mêmes.”⁴²⁵ It was in line with this urge for self-sufficiency and self-governing that the Marseillais people were introduced to the Minister of the Colonies during visit of the exposition too. On this occasion, Charles-Roux called his fellows “épris de liberté et d’indépendance, amoureux de la décentralisation.”⁴²⁶

Overall, the project, the realization and the organization of the colonial exposition revealed itself as the work of a group of “bourgeois décentralisateurs”⁴²⁷ who aimed to demonstrate their ability to achieve a great project, independently of the Parisian support: “L’Exposition devenait ainsi un outil ‘instrumentalisé’ au service [de; MdS] la bourgeoisie de Marseille.”⁴²⁸ In addition to being initiated and carried out by the local bourgeoisie, the exposition was praised as a unifying project for the urban population as a whole. *Le Sémaphore* called the show “cette oeuvre morale qui a consisté à rendre les Marseillais à la conscience de ce qu’ils sont et de ce qu’ils peuvent faire.”⁴²⁹ According to the newspaper article, the great

⁴²⁴ Bouis, *Le Livre d’Or de Marseille. De Son Commerce et de Ses Industries. Compte-Rendu Annuel de La Situation Maritime, Commerciale, Industrielle, Coloniale*, 1907, 375.

⁴²⁵ Masson, *Marseille et La Colonisation Française. Essai d’Histoire Coloniale*, 563.

⁴²⁶ Speech by J. Charles-Roux: Chambre de Commerce de Marseille, *La Chambre de Commerce de Marseille et l’Exposition Coloniale de 1906*, 14.

⁴²⁷ Morando, “Les Expositions Coloniales Nationales de Marseille de 1906 et 1922 : Manifestations Locales Ou Nationales ?” 232.

⁴²⁸ *Ibid.*, 233.

⁴²⁹ Paul Barlatier, “Pour M. J.-C. Roux,” *Le Sémaphore*, November 1, 1906, 1.

achievement of this event was its “moral” value insofar as it empowered the local population, giving it faith and confidence in its own entrepreneurial potential: “Une victoire de Marseille sur Marseille elle-même!”⁴³⁰

Concluding, the claims for decentralization formulated during the colonial exposition were inherently linked to the construction of Marseille’s image as a metropole. As Masson explained in *Le Petit Marseillais*:

“Marseille a gagné aussi la cause de la décentralisation. Elle a prouvé qu’une entreprise tentée en province (...) pouvait, néanmoins, prendre les proportions d’une grande manifestation nationale aussi bien que si elle avait été lancée à Paris. Notre premier port a fait consacrer brillamment son titre de métropole coloniale.”⁴³¹

According to this representational statement, based on the success of the colonial exposition, Marseille justified that a provincial city could manage a nationally significant project, without the help of the capital. Emphasizing the Mediterranean port once again, an ever recurrent symbol of centrality and strength for Marseille, the press article affirmed the status of the colonial metropole, in relationship with the so-called victory of the decentralizing thoughts.

Concluding, the colonial exposition was conceived as a successful act of decentralization in order to gain more political and economic independence for Marseille.⁴³²

At the same time, numerous references address the national reach and significance of the colonial exposition. Although these very statements contradict the emancipatory purpose of the city, the republicanism argument seemed mandatory in order to legitimize the show’s importance. Hence, there is a double-sided – and inherently paradoxical – representational narrative constructed by the city’s representatives which can be summed up as follows: On the one hand, “we, the city of Marseille, aim to emancipate for the state because this centralized

⁴³⁰ Bouis, *Le Livre d’Or de Marseille. De Son Commerce et de Ses Industries. Compte-Rendu Annuel de La Situation Maritime, Commerciale, Industrielle, Coloniale*, 1907, 375.

⁴³¹ *Le Petit Marseillais*, “La Journée de Cloture à l’Exposition Coloniale,” 2.

⁴³² Amargier and Joutard, *Histoire de Marseille en treize événements*, 194.

power structure is what prevents us from becoming more performant and important”. And on the other hand, “we, the city of Marseille, refer to the state with the colonial exposition because our effect *on* the state (success, approval) and our relevance *for* the state (national/international visibility and influence) are the very criteria which grant us recognition and importance”. This narrative is revealing when it comes to Marseille’s relationship to Paris, a constant tension between closeness and detachment. This brings us back to the notion of relationality introduced at the beginning of this part: Indeed, while the claim for decentralization and independence is constitutive of the production of Marseille’s metropolitanism, it remains inherently relational and internally linked to a significant dependency on a recognition from the centralized state.

Regionalism and Provincialism

When it comes to the constitutive relationality of the metropolitan status, another *defining other* reveals itself throughout the representational discourses on Marseille: the region. Indeed, Marseille’s role within its surrounding Provence region, and the debates on provincialism are recurrent. Revealingly, a strong focus was set on the local agenda of the exposition by its political representatives who took this occasion to conduct a committed promotion of local patriotism. At its forefront, Marseille’s mayor Chanot:

“Il faut le crier bien haut, c’est Marseille elle-même, avec l’appui des colonies, qui a fait sont Exposition. Elle l’a fait parce qu’elle l’a voulu faire. Ce qui prouve bien que la volonté vient à bout de toutes les difficultés. L’Exposition coloniale est uniquement due à Marseille, c’est-à-dire à tout ce qui sent, à tout ce qui pense, à tout ce qui vit, à tout ce qui veut vivre par Marseille et pour Marseille!”⁴³³

Marseille’s voluntarism and merit was taken over by the press and the exposition audience, which welcomed the mayor’s praise with an enthusiastic ovation.⁴³⁴ The local pride was further

⁴³³ La Dépêche Coloniale Illustrée, “Exposition Coloniale de Marseille,” 87.

⁴³⁴ Le Petit Marseillais, “Exposition Coloniale. L’inauguration Officielle.”

emphasized by the scholars in Marseille and its region, and their academic contributions in colonial studies. This so-called “oeuvre de décentralisation intellectuelle”⁴³⁵ was received as an upgrading of to the local heritage and a contribution to intellectual regionalism.

On the other hand, the localism enhanced during the exposition has been criticized in terms of local favoritism at the colonies’ expense. For instance, Louis Bonnafont, a delegate from the Tonkin colony who wrote an overall highly critical report of the exposition, criticized the fact that the colonial exposition was mainly conceived as a lucrative event for Marseille, whose profit would not be shared with the colonial participants. Though none of the profit would be shared with the colonies.⁴³⁶ As an illustration of his opinions, he raised the attention to the self-promotional and marketing orientation of the pavilions, like the exhibition of the local newspaper *Le Petit Marseille*, which was described as “suant la réclame personal par tous les pores.”⁴³⁷ Furthermore, the local visitors were offered all kinds of entry reductions, whereas the “colonials” and foreigners were badly received and had to pay the full price, which, additionally, was too expensive. Overall, this critical voice conveys the strong focus set on Marseille’s affair, at the price of an adequate consideration of the colonies, which was expected of this kind of specialized exhibitions. Accordingly, the event served the purpose of the local economic sphere and failed to provide a truly influential celebration of French colonialism and the territories abroad.⁴³⁸

As a complement to the local goals of the Marseille organizers on the municipal level, the official discourse called for a Provençal regionalism too. The Provence region and its cultural and commercial heritage were displayed prominently at the exhibition. The official guide of the show explained: “si Marseille est la porte de l’Orient, (...) la Provence en est le

⁴³⁵ Masson, *Marseille et La Colonisation Française. Essai d’Histoire Coloniale*, 9.

⁴³⁶ Bonnafont, *Rapport Sur l’Exposition Coloniale de Marseille*, 11.

⁴³⁷ *Ibid.*, 26.

⁴³⁸ *Ibid.*, 24.

portique.”⁴³⁹ Picking up from Marseille’s widespread nickname, “Door of the Orient,” the surrounding Provence was represented as a constitutive feature of this image, the necessary hinterland for a powerful port city. As defining as the gateway function of the Mediterranean city could be, the Provence region was stylized as an essential element of the city’s significance.

In addition to the Provence pavilions, traditional celebrations – so-called *Fêtes Provençales* – were organized. Here, typical rites and artistic performances were staged in order to convey and promote the local cultural patrimony.⁴⁴⁰ Overall, the exposition served as a cultural melting pot, merging the multiple facets of Marseille’s image: The Provence region, the Southern core of Metropolitan France and the French colonies.⁴⁴¹

A particular form of Marseillais-Provençal identity was imagined, forging the image of a unified population in rather conservative regionalist terms. This transpires in Charles-Roux discourse for instance, as his introduction of local population to the Minister of the Colonies from Paris showed: “Nous sommes, Monsieur le Ministre, très Marseillais, très Provençaux, et j’espère que nous le resterons toujours, car le danger des grands ports de commerce est de tourner au cosmopolitisme.”⁴⁴² In this statement, the curator calls upon regional and local loyalty, in opposition to threatening “cosmopolitanism”, which, he said, represented a constant threat for port cities like Marseille. This assumption contradicts the praise of Marseille’s multicultural and multidimensional heritage, which was discussed before. Indeed, as explained in chapter 3.1., the positively constructed imaginary of the Mediterranean port city as *Porte de l’Orient* and *Port des Colonies*, as pivotal transit point between different worlds and cultures, disappeared here. Instead, it gave way to an excluding and racist discourse, for the sake of a unifying identity construction. As the illuminating study of Yvan Gastaut on Marseille’s

⁴³⁹ [Unknown], *Guide Officiel de l’Exposition Coloniale de Marseille*, 33.

⁴⁴⁰ Ferdy, “A l’Exposition Coloniale. La Journée de Clôture,” 2.

⁴⁴¹ Sabarin, “Les Fêtes Provençales à l’Exposition Coloniale.”

⁴⁴² Speech by J. Charles-Roux: Chambre de Commerce de Marseille, *La Chambre de Commerce de Marseille et l’Exposition Coloniale de 1906*, 212.

cosmopolitanism reveals, “‘Marseille cosmopolite’ traduit autant l’image d’une ville de l’accueil des étrangers que celle d’une ville du racisme.”⁴⁴³ The tension between the image of the “open city” and the “racist city” is a historically continuous and constitutive feature of Marseille’s identity.⁴⁴⁴ At this point, it expresses through the opposing pair constituted of provincializing regionalism on the one hand, and multicultural internationalism on the other hand. Within the discourse on metropolitanism, it expresses through a dichotomy between localism and globalism, which, as I we will further argue in this piece, remains up until today.

Imperialist Othering

Last but not least, the relationship between Marseille and the colonies was a defining element within the metropolitan discussion. Before extending on this point, let me take one step back and remember the discussion on universal expositions as a means for urban representation in the former chapter of this dissertation.⁴⁴⁵ There, I examined to what extent universal fairs of the modern period can be regarded as “mass medium of the urban imagination in *fin-de-siècle* Europe.”⁴⁴⁶ Subsequently, it showed that the organizers of the 1906 Marseille exhibition, the so-called “magnifique projet consacrant Marseille comme métropole coloniale de la France,”⁴⁴⁷ pursued the deliberate goal of establishing the city’s status as a colonial metropole with this event. Based on this, the celebration’s thematic focus on French colonial issues revealed that

⁴⁴³ Yvan Gastaut, “Marseille cosmopolite après les décolonisations : un enjeu identitaire,” *Cahiers de la Méditerranée*, no. 67 (December 15, 2003): 275.

⁴⁴⁴ On Marseille, identity and cosmopolitanism, see: Marie-Françoise Attard-Maraninchi and Émile Témime, *Migrance: Histoire Des Migrations à Marseille. Le Cosmopolitisme de l’entre-Deux-Guerres : (1919 - 1945)*, vol. 3 (Aix-en-Provence : Edisud, 1990) ; Jocelyne Cesari, Alain Moreau, and Alexandra Schleyer-Lindenmann, *Plus marseillais que moi tu meurs. Migrations identités et territoires à Marseille* (Paris: Editions L’Harmattan, 2001); Jean-Jacques Jordi and Émile Témime, *Migrance: Histoire Des Migrations à Marseille. Le Choc de La Décolonisation : (1945–1990)*, vol. 4 (Aix-en-Provence: Edisud, 1991) ; Dominique Pons, “Marseille Ou Le Mythe Vacillant de l’intégration,” *Le Monde Diplomatique*, July 1, 1997, <https://www.monde-diplomatique.fr/1997/07/PONS/4812> (accessed June 8, 2017); Emile Temime, “Marseille XXè : De La Dominante Italienne à La Diversité Maghrébine,” *Revue Européenne Des Migrations Internationales* 11, no. 1 (1995): 9–19.

⁴⁴⁵ See chapter 2 *The 1906 National Colonial Exposition in Marseille*.

⁴⁴⁶ Geppert, *Fleeting Cities*, 1.

⁴⁴⁷ Chambre de Commerce de Marseille, *La Chambre de Commerce de Marseille et l’Exposition Coloniale de 1906*, 73.

colonialism was a defining context and feature of the concept of the city which was fabricated in the course of the exposition. Hence, the colonial dimension extensively shaped the urban imaginary.

In the imperial context, the metropole is, by definition, the ‘center’ opposed to the colonial periphery. In terms of representational discourses and cultural history, it is the place where imperialist ‘otherness’ is produced and re-produced, and social, cultural and ethnic identities are conceived. Here, both the colonial and the metropolitan subject are defined in opposition to one another: the ‘Self’ is constituted as a reaction to the ‘Other’, the ‘Other’, as the necessary counterpart, integrally constitutes the ‘Self’. In other words, the colonial ‘other’ is crucial to the existence of the metropolitan ‘self’. Hence, not only was metropolitanism a relational construction, it was based on a *binary* system of representation too, articulated through opposing pairs: the ‘self’ versus the ‘other’, the metropole versus the colonies, modern civilization versus backward wildness.

In order to approach and unpack the mechanisms which constitutes this so-called ‘other,’ I propose to draw from the works of global migration scholar Alison Mountz. She plastically defines the processes of “othering” as follows:

“By placing one’s self at the centre, the ‘other’ always constitutes the outside, the person who is different. (...) As a verb, other means to distinguish, label, categorize, name, identify, place and exclude those who do not fit a societal norm. (...) ‘Othering’ is the process that makes the other. ‘Othering’ is the work of persons who discriminate.”⁴⁴⁸

In the colonial context, and as postcolonial theories in line with Edward Said’s orientalism argue, othering logics are considered constitutive of Western representations and identity-building.⁴⁴⁹ As Frederick Cooper explains: “European colonialism was not just about economic

⁴⁴⁸ Alison Mountz, “The Other,” in *Key Concepts in Political Geography*, ed. Carolyn Gallaher et al. (Los Angeles: Sage, 2009), 328.

⁴⁴⁹ Edward W Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979); Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, Reprint (New York: Vintage, 1994).

exploitation or geopolitical domination but about configuring an ‘other’ that would underscore Europe’s position as the front of social progress, democracy, and rationality.”⁴⁵⁰ Here, one central mode of othering operates through the attribution of specific racial and ethnic identities. Here, I understand these processes of racialization with the racism social scientist Robert Miles, who defines it as “a dialectical process by which meaning is attributed to particular biological features of human beings, as a result of which individuals may be assigned to a general category of persons which reproduces itself biologically.”⁴⁵¹ In Marseille, the construction of this dichotomy and the very orchestration of the encounter and confrontation of both counterparts were essential to the creation of the metropole.

This expressed through the spatial organization of the Marseille exposition, for instance. As mentioned before, the Grand Palais, in which metropolitan resources and cultural heritage were exhibited, was situated in the middle of the site. The pavilions dedicated to the French colonies and protectorates were arranged around the central palace. Hence, the venue’s topography translated the imaginary of the empire’s geography. In the pavilions, the audience discovered artistic artefacts and commercial products illustrating the colonies’ traditions and cultures. Participants were staged as colonial subjects and delivered performances, in the so-called ‘Negro Village’ or the Tunisian Souks, for example. Here, over two million visitors had their first physical encounter with the colonial ‘other.’ This was, in Bancel’s words, the “first contact with alterity”⁴⁵² for the local population, an encounter which was dictated and staged by the exposition’s organizers in line with the official colonial ideology.

⁴⁵⁰ Frederick Cooper, “Provincializing France,” in *Imperial Formations*, ed. Ann Laura Stoler, Carole McGranahan, and Peter C. Perdue (Santa Fe, Oxford: School for Advanced Research Press, James Currey, 2007), 342.

⁴⁵¹ Robert Miles, *Racism* (London: Routledge, 1989), 76.

⁴⁵² Nicolas Bancel, Pascal Blanchard, and Sandrine Lemaire, “Ces Zoos Humains de La République Coloniale,” *Le Monde Diplomatique*, August 2000, <http://www.monde-diplomatique.fr/2000/08/BANCEL/1944> (accessed December 12, 2018), 2.

Furthermore, as in line with Bonnafont's criticism, the exposition set a primary focus on the colonial profit and ideology in the metropole, rather than on the local activities in the colonies.⁴⁵³ This indicates that the exposition was extensively used to promote the French missions abroad and as a means to justify colonization. The so-called 'successes' achieved by the colonizers were showcased in opposition to what were considered 'uncivilized' and 'regressive' methods used by the indigenous populations. This was a stigmatizing and exoticizing portrait of these cultures, that set the pace for the formation of racialized prejudices about the colonized subjects. Here, the colonial 'other' was instrumentalized for the sake of political and ideological legitimization.

Complementarily to the discriminating discourse, a paternalistic and unifying rhetoric shaped the encounter with the 'other' as well. For example, André Lefèvre, Vice-President of the City Council of Paris, visited the Marseille exhibition and claimed:

“Tout cela, tout ce bruit, tous ces efforts, ce n'est pas pour séparer les hommes, c'est pour les réunir, c'est pour éveiller entre elles la France européenne et les Frances coloniales: c'est ici qu'est le bien et c'est pour cela qu'on devait y faire la manifestation commune de tant d'hommes appartenant à des races diverses, mais tendant au même but, au bonheur par la paix et la civilisation.”⁴⁵⁴

Here, this political representative used the term “race” (*race*) explicitly, and marked this discriminating racialized difference in a pseudo pacific argument, disseminating a unifying and inherently racist message. This revealed a double-sided, exclusive-inclusive discursive strategy: On one hand, the racializing discourse was *exclusive*: Indeed, the racialized 'other' was

⁴⁵³ For instance, see the comments on the minor representations of African commercial institutions and the emphasis on the metropolitan commercial missions in the West French Africa pavilion in the part *The West French Africa Section* of chapter 2.2. *The Exposition: Celebrating Colonial Economy and Trade*.

Complementarily, see the depictions of 'progress' insufflated by the colonizers in opposition to the alleged backwardness of the dominated populations overseas in the part *Legitimizing Racism and Disseminating Colonial Ideology* of chapter 2.3. *Educational Endeavor, Colonial Propaganda, and Promotional Mass Event*.

⁴⁵⁴ Rozays, “Les Fêtes Du Conseil Général à l'Exposition Coloniale,” 1.

constructed as an opposition, in order to affirm a specific understanding of the self. On the other hand, the racialization was *inclusive* for the sake of justifying colonization and forging a common identity within the French empire.

As these examples show, colonial othering and racialization processes were constitutive characteristics of the labelling of Marseille as the colonial metropole of France. From a contemporary perspective, constructions of race and racism in the context of French imperial events must be approached and deconstructed critically in line with a post- and anti-colonial critique. In fact, through both temporary and long-term influences, the colonial exposition reveals once again a multi-faceted temporality. In spite of the fleeting nature of the show itself, its impact and symbolic force essentially shaped and established images and stereotypes which constitute contemporary postcolonial legacy in France and elsewhere. Overall, as the empirical examples at hand show, these “race-inflected social situations,”⁴⁵⁵ the relationality given by the dichotomy between the image of a metropolitan ‘self’ and a colonial ‘other’ contribute to the production of metropolitanism.

⁴⁵⁵ David Theo Goldberg, “Racial Americanization,” in *Racialization: Studies in Theory and Practice*, ed. Karim Murji and John Solomos (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 88.

3.4. Metropolitanism in Colonial Marseille

It has been the endeavor of this chapter to identify and analyze the representational features in Marseille of metropolitanism during the era of French colonialism. Arguably, the imperial context was crucial for the urban imagination and typologization. Considering empires as a “series of overlapping networks – political, economic, personal, cultural – which channeled exchanges along a variety of paths,” Andrew Lees claimed that “cities acted as nodes in these vast webs.”⁴⁵⁶ According to him, adding to individual persons and nation-states, they served as a “third force”⁴⁵⁷ in modern European societies. In this sense, they “reflected, shaped, and also diffused the intellectual, financial, cultural, and human capital that supported industrialization, democratization, commercialization, and state formation.”⁴⁵⁸ It was in this mediating zone that the relationship between political territories and individual representations were constituted, and where power structures were imagined and implemented. In a similar line, Felix Driver and David Gilbert set the ground for the discussion on the links between imperialism and the urban experience in the modern age. In their view, “if the imperial city was at the center of the world, the empire was now at the heart of the urban experience.”⁴⁵⁹

In his work on imperial metropolitanism, the German historian Tim Opitz explained that “the ‘great’ European cities around 1900 were global and imperial, for better or for worse.”⁴⁶⁰ Throughout his study on imperial Berlin, he convincingly proposes that a certain “‘global moment’” was defining for the status and function of a so-called metropolis. In spite of the abstract definition of what a “global moment” might mean in particular cases, the causal linkage between notions of globality and metropolitanism are insightful regarding Marseille around 1900. Indeed, the city’s international and trans-territorial connectivity, facilitated by the

⁴⁵⁶ Lees and Lees, *Cities and the Making of Modern Europe, 1750-1914*, 253.

⁴⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 281.

⁴⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 281-282.

⁴⁵⁹ Driver and Gilbert, *Imperial Cities*, 3.

⁴⁶⁰ Tim Opitz, “The Global, Imperial Metropolis: Ideas from 1873 Berlin,” in *Thick Space: Approaches to Metropolitanism*, ed. Dorothee Brantz, Sasha Disko, and Georg Wagner-Kyora (Berlin, 2012), 359.

Mediterranean and imperial port, triggered this very *global moment*, which decisively contributed to establishing Marseille as a metropole.

Furthermore, complementarily to the general role of cities in empires, *port* cities had a crucial function as societal transit points in international networks. In the fields of global and imperial history, there has been a tendency to consider port cities as “ubiquitous icons, visual shorthand for globalization, world economy, and migration.”⁴⁶¹ However, as the historians Lasse Heerten and Daniel Tödt indicated, current academic research on this topic primarily focused on the global networks and “gateway” functions of port cities and tended to leave the importance of specific places aside. This trend called for the analysis of the specifically *urban* dimension of imperial port cities. In other words, as René Borruéy suggested in his major history of Marseille’s port, not only should scholars ask what the port means for the history of Marseille, but they should also examine what Marseille signifies for the history of the port.⁴⁶² This indication seemed particularly relevant for the investigation at hand, for the multiple intersections between imperialism, urban life, and maritime networks were constitutive of metropolitanism in the colonial era.

In the case of Marseille, the 1906 Colonial Exposition provided a productive platform to investigate the discourses which disseminated the image of the port city in the French empire. This study was guided by the intention to understand how and why an event like the Colonial Exposition had carried a specific urban imaginary and contributed to producing the metropole. It addressed the historiography and historicity of Marseille, as well as issues of urban typologization and urban theory. Moreover, it set the grounds and developed one constitutive part of the larger research endeavor pursued with this dissertation, which questions and challenges the very concept of the metropolis in a diachronic comparative perspective. Far from

⁴⁶¹ Daniel Tödt and Lasse Heerten, “Some Reflections on Imperial Port Cities in the Age of Steam,” *Global Urban History* (blog), 2016, <https://globalurbanhistory.com/2016/10/29/some-reflections-on-imperial-port-cities-in-the-age-of-steam/> (accessed February 14, 2016).

⁴⁶² Borruéy, *Le port moderne de Marseille*, 339–340.

manifesting solely as an established urban form and spatial reality, the metropole unfolded as the processual representational enterprise of specific historical actors, mostly the exposition organizers, the political and economic representatives in Marseille, and the press as mediators of the official discourse.

Metropolitan Temporalities: Urban Historicity and Promising Future

Firstly, as developed in the beginning of this chapter, the representations of the colonial metropole constructed in the course of the Colonial Exposition were almost always informed by interpretations of the past and visions of the future. This became explicit in the numerous references to ancient Greece, the *ancient régime*, the history of French colonization, as well as the related promises for prosperity which ensued from it. Here, the present was not conceived as an epochal category which stood for itself. Rather, it was a relational temporal state, defined by complementary temporal axes, and dependent on bygone and upcoming periods.⁴⁶³ The present was almost absent, merely constructed out of imaginaries of precedent or upcoming periods. Hence, images of Marseille produced during a given period always referred to past and future representations. Indeed, the discourse on the colonial metropole was shaped by narratives and symbols engaging with the city's historicity. Based on images of a narrated prosperous past, Marseille's contemporary role as the great colonial metropole of France was affirmed and set the stage for the future.

Inscribed in the temporality of this representational discourse, metropolitanism was at stake in two ways: On the one hand, the status of the colonial metropole was claimed as an ultimate recognition after many centuries of metropolitan history in Marseille. On the other hand, it was framed as the trigger and catalyzing moment for a new upcoming urban era. As such, the colonial metropole was both the final achievement and the starting point in the city's

⁴⁶³ Koselleck, *Begriffsgeschichten*.

narrative. Both interpretations coexisted and forged multi-faceted metropolitan temporalities between urban historicity and promises for the urban future.

The Performant Port City

The second part of the inquiry showed that the maritime and the commercial potential of Marseille was constitutive of the definition as a colonial metropole. However, as unfolded in the previous pages, this labelling was based on a complex assemblage of several specific urban functions. Indeed, not only were Marseille's port infrastructure and the French colonial trade interrelated, but the geographic conditions of intra-imperial import/export networks, the regional industrial sectors, as well as technological innovation research were constitutive of metropolitanism too.

In both the discussion on urban historicity⁴⁶⁴ and on commercial activity, internationality and temporality were a common thread. Indeed, the acknowledgement of Marseille's commercial and economic strength was repeatedly attached rhetorically to promises for a prosperous urban future. There was a sense of causality, a logical chain of continuity and progress, which suggested that, because the present day was prosperous, the future would automatically be (even more) prosperous as well. Moreover, imaginaries of upcoming successes seemed to automatically emphasize current achievements and make them appear even more promising. Indeed, not only were specific forms of success positive and profitable for the present, they also carried fruitful potential for the future. While imaginations of the past played a crucial role within the construction of a historical colonial identity for Marseille,⁴⁶⁵ discussions of commercial interests and economic growth were essentially rooted in the present and within deterministic perspectives into the future. In spite of differentiated approaches to temporal periodization, the label of the 'colonial metropole' provided both a representative

⁴⁶⁴ See chapter 3.1. *Urban Historicity and Colonial Legacy*

⁴⁶⁵ Ibid.

recognition of past and present achievements, and a prestige status claimed for a prosperous urban future.

Relationality as Feature of Metropolitanism

Concluding, the third part of this chapter revealed that *relationality* was a recurrent feature of metropolitanism. Etymologically, the term “metropole” or “metropolis” stems from ancient Greek *metera* (the mother) and *polis* (the city): the Mother-City. In this sense, it is not a notion that exists on its own, but it is rather defined through this relational character: It is the mother of the child. Without ‘the child’, without a constitutive entity of reference, the ‘mother’ cannot be a ‘mother’. Thus, the metropole is an urban concept that exists in interdependency to another, or various other, unities.

As the urban scholars Ignacio Farias and Susanne Stemmler have defined, the metropolis is a “relational concept that implies a distinction between center and periphery and enables promoting a city as though it were at the top of a system of cities.”⁴⁶⁶ As discussed, the status of the ‘colonial metropole’ was discursively assigned by the colonizers and the hegemonic powers to define the imperial center as opposed to the colonial periphery. In this context, the term referred to both to France as a whole – in other words, the imperial nation-state – and individual cities, which had a particular function of centrality. As implied by this definition, the colonies were a crucial constitutive other to this relational urban representation as a metropole. However, according to the investigation of Marseille’s colonial image, further constitutive elements have been identified. Indeed, the relationship to Paris, to the centralized state, and the French nation in general provided an essential foil, in relationship to which the label of the colonial metropole was constituted. Additionally, the tendencies to regionalism and provincialism invoked a representational dependency between Marseille (as the core city) and

⁴⁶⁶ Farias and Stemmler, “Deconstructing ‘Metropolis,’” 65.

the Provence region (as the constitutive periphery). Overall, as the discussion at hand reinforced and extended, the relational dimension, in various forms, was a crucial constitutive feature of metropolitanism in the colonial era.

Hence, particularly in the imperial context, a constitutive colonial ‘other’ was invoked, in opposition to which the metropolitan ‘self’ could emerge. This constitutive other was permanent and mandatory. As such, the urban label was dependent on its counterpart and was inherently relational. Moreover, this relationality was insofar historically contingent as its constitutive content (in this case, Paris, the nation-state, the Provence region, the colonial ‘other’ as constitutive entities of the relationality) may change over time and experience continuities or breaks, depending on the historical context in which it navigated. Overall, as this study will investigate further, the notion of relationality reveals a historical continuity essential to the following discussion of the twenty-first-century metropolis.



Illustration 2: David Dellepiane, *Exposition Coloniale Marseille 1906*, 1906, Poster, 1906, Collection d'affiches, QAF00564, Archives de la Chambre de Commerce et d'Industrie Marseille Provence.

PART II – Making the Metropolis in Post-Colonial Marseille

4. The *European Capital of Culture* “Marseille-Provence 2013”

Marseille around 2000: Life and Death of the Imperial City

Following a prosperous period during the French imperial expansion, Marseille’s significance as an urban node for colonial trade and port-based industry was drastically challenged over the course of post-war decolonization from 1945 until 1962.⁴⁶⁷ The break down of the colonial markets confronted the city with resource deficits and geographic isolation, adding to imperatives of infrastructural and functional reconstruction after World War II.⁴⁶⁸ Following on from these developments, in the 1960s, the port was displaced to Fos-sur-Mer (70 km from Marseille) in order to enlarge, modernize, and thereby regenerate the industrial sector of the main state-led trade seaport of France. However, the deindustrialization of the inner-city activity sectors, as well as a generalized population decline due to middle-class and industrial working-class peripheral emigration, as well as economically weak immigration, contributed to general impoverishment as Marseille went from 345’500 jobs in 1975 to 293’000 in 1999.⁴⁶⁹

Marseille’s urban landscape differed from an urban-suburban-rural city typography,⁴⁷⁰ and was characterized by an “*éclatement des centres et fonctions*”⁴⁷¹ spread over its 111 neighborhoods and 16 districts. This heterogeneous urban space was assimilated into an archipelago. The city center was one of the many islands constituting Marseilles.⁴⁷² Due to this

⁴⁶⁷ Marie-Françoise Attard-Maraninchi and Émile Témime, *Migrance: Histoire Des Migrations À Marseille. Le Cosmopolitisme de L’entre-Deux-Guerres : (1919 - 1945)*, vol. 3 (Aix-en-Provence : Edisud, 1990); Bonillo and Borruy, *Marseille, ville & port*; Courdurié and Miège, *Marseille colonial face à la crise de 1929*; Jean-Jacques Jordi and Émile Témime, *Migrance: Histoire Des Migrations À Marseille. Le Choc de La Décolonisation : (1945 - 1990)*, vol. 4 (Aix-en-Provence : Edisud, 1991); Minayo Nasiali, *Native to the Republic: Empire, Social Citizenship, and Everyday Life in Marseille since 1945* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2016).

⁴⁶⁸ Donzel, *Marseille, l’expérience de La Cité*; Blanchard and Boetsch, *Marseille, Porte Sud 1905 - 2005*; Sheila Crane, *Mediterranean Crossroads: Marseille and Modern Architecture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011).

⁴⁶⁹ Simon Ronai, “Marseille : une métropole en mutation,” *Hérodote* 135, no. 4 (2009): 131.

⁴⁷⁰ Morel, *Marseille. Naissance d’une métropole*.

⁴⁷¹ Bertonecello and Dubois, *Marseille, Euroméditerranée*, 35.

⁴⁷² Club d’échange sur l’aire métropolitaine marseillaise 1994, quoted in: Brigitte Bertonecello and Rachel Rodrigues-Malta, “Euroméditerranée : Les Échelles D’un Grand Projet de Régénération Urbaine,” in

unique constellation, scholars have interpreted that there were no *banlieues* (French suburbs) around Marseille, but rather that the *banlieues* were situated within the very inner-city.⁴⁷³ Reflecting on the postindustrial socio-economic urban decline, the architectural composition of the 1960s housing complex, and the multi-ethnic population, some authors even described, not unproblematically, the whole city as a French *banlieue*.⁴⁷⁴ This social and spatial diversity of the inner-city, which the historian Daniel Tödt characterizes as a “mosaic of various life-worlds,”⁴⁷⁵ was the physical and symbolic place of heterogeneity and in- and exclusion mechanisms.

Adding to this plurality, a spatial and representational north-south separation structured the urban landscape. Since the expansion of the Vieux Port infrastructure towards *La Joliette* (northern sector of the inner-city) from the end of the nineteenth century onward, working class districts developed accordingly in this zone, prefiguring the so-called *Quartiers Nord* (Marseille’s northern districts). Largely constituted of social tower blocks, the *Quartiers Nord*s welcomed much of the migration flow from the Maghreb and the Comoros after decolonization, and have remained some of the poorer and most strongly stigmatized districts of the city up until this day. In contrast, the districts in the south of the center developed as middle-class residential neighborhoods, separated from the northern districts by the *Canebière*, the central representative avenue that leads to the Old Port and marks the division between two geographic sectors and two social realities.⁴⁷⁶

Accounting the social composition of these urban spaces, the National Institute for Statistics and Economics Studies (INSEE)⁴⁷⁷ sociodemographic statistics have shown that an

Métropolisation, Gouvernance et Citoyenneté Dans La Région Urbaine Marseillaise, ed. André Donzel (Paris: Maisonneuve Et Larose, 2001), 414.

⁴⁷³ Alain Médam, *Blues Marseille* (Marseille: Jeanne Laffitte, 1999), 78.

⁴⁷⁴ Baptiste Lanaspèze, *Marseille : Energies et frustrations* (Paris: Editions Autrement, 2006), 19–20.

⁴⁷⁵ “Mosaik verschiedener Lebenswelten” (translation by the author): Daniel Tödt, *Vom Planeten Mars - Rap in Marseille und das Imaginäre der Stadt*, 1., Aufl. (Münster, Westf.: LIT, 2012), 34.

⁴⁷⁶ Bertonecello and Dubois, *Marseille, Euroméditerranée*, 35.

⁴⁷⁷ *Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques*: National Institute for Statistics and Economics Studies (translation by the author)

average 17% of the city's population was unemployed, while one quarter lived under the poverty line, 55% of which were located within the inner-city and 44% in the *Quartiers Nords*, in 1999.⁴⁷⁸ These statistics published at the turn of the millennium are relevant to the following inquiry: Firstly, this period marked a time of large-scale urban regeneration and renewal projects in the inner-city since the mid-90s⁴⁷⁹, which, as I will expand later on, extensively activated a metropolitan imaginary and branding discourse. Secondly, these socioeconomic records were informative in order to understand the societal state of Marseille at the dawn of the 2013 European Capital of Culture (ECOC) bidding prospects, which began around 2004.

Regarding the beginning of the twenty-first century, the urban sociologists André Donzel and Thomas Bresson summarized: “parmi les grandes villes françaises (...) elle [Marseille; MdS] est aujourd’hui l’une de celles où les disparités sociales se manifestent avec les plus d’évidence, que ce soit en termes de revenus, d’emplois ou d’insertion résidentielle.”⁴⁸⁰ The intersecting social heterogeneity described by the scholars framed a cultural imaginary of post-industrial Marseille. This imaginary drew on the impoverishment and infrastructural downfall of the inner-city districts, as well as high criminality rates and drug trafficking, to forge a persistent bad reputation of the city altogether.⁴⁸¹ In terms of development politics, Marseille was represented a French problem child since the post-war period, “portée à bout de bras par l’Etat depuis la décolonisation,”⁴⁸² according to Baptiste Lanaspèze, territorial development activist and expert in Marseille and the Provence region.

⁴⁷⁸ INSEE 1999, quoted in: Bertonecello and Dubois, *Marseille, Euroméditerranée*, 38; Louis Maurin and Violaine Mazery, “Les taux de pauvreté des 100 plus grandes communes de France,” *Compas études* 11, January 2014.

⁴⁷⁹ *Euroméditerranée*, the twenty-year long major urban regeneration project in the inner-city of Marseille started out in 1995.

⁴⁸⁰ André Donzel and T. Bresson, “La Métropole Marseillaise et Ses Fractures,” in *Marseille: Une Métropole Entre Europe et Méditerranée*, ed. Philippe Langevin and Jean-Claude Juan (Paris: La Documentation Française, 2007), 93.

⁴⁸¹ Temime, *Histoire de Marseille*.

⁴⁸² Lanaspèze, *Marseille*, 23.

The City in Crisis

At the cusp of the new millenium, Marseille seemed inseparable from the dominate narrative of post-industrial urban downfall. As described by the social and political scientists Michel Peraldi and Michel Samson, since the mid-1980s, one theme has repeatedly and dominantly marked the city: the crisis.⁴⁸³ This topic has manifested and reproduced in all kinds of urban sectors from the economic crisis of the post-colonial and post-industrial port, to the related social and demographic crisis of the delocalized industrial workers and the “*Quartiers Nord*”, over the post-decolonization migration flows and integration issues, and a political crisis featuring a rising right-wing populism (e.g. the *Front National* party). It set the ground for a rich account of stereotypes, too, and led the way to a persistent bad reputation of the city.⁴⁸⁴ Simultaneously, relational notions of progress and salutary improvement appeared as a constitutive outside throughout the crisis discourses. In the same fashion as the negative stereotypes were popularly reproduced, there was an ongoing effort to imagine promises for a prosperous urban future. Even more so, specific threads of more recent journalistic and popular scientific literature attempted almost desperately to undo the disadvantageous stigmatizations of Marseille, after decades of image problems.⁴⁸⁵

Marseille’s negative reputation was composed of several complementary defining features: Adding to the negative image of Marseille as a ‘failing’ and ‘backwarded’ city, specific notions of ‘marginalization’ and ‘otherness’ constituted the representation too. Bullen insightfully traced this back to the nature of Marseille as a port city. She explains that, in spite of the historically nodal significance of Marseille’s maritime functions for the French empire,

⁴⁸³ Michel Peraldi and Michel Samson, *Gouverner Marseille: Enquête sur les mondes politiques marseillais* (Paris: La Découverte, 2006).

⁴⁸⁴ Blanchard and Boëtsch, “Marseille, Port Des Suds”; Gastaut, “Marseille cosmopolite après les décolonisations”; Morel, *Marseille. Naissance d’une métropole*; Michel Peraldi, Claire Duport, and Michel Samson, *Sociologie de Marseille* (Paris: La Découverte, 2015); Marcel Roncayolo, *Lectures de villes : Formes et temps* (Marseille: Parenthèses, 2002); Temime, “Au Carrefour Des Suds”; Jean Viard, *Marseille, le réveil violent d’une ville impossible* (La Tour-d’Aigue: Nouvelles éditions de l’Aube, 2014)

⁴⁸⁵ Peraldi and Samson, *Gouverner Marseille*, 112.

due to the large and historically continuous “working-class and migrant population (...) [Marseille was; MdS] regularly stigmatised and marginalised as ‘other’ within national imaginaries.”⁴⁸⁶ As indicated here, being ‘other’, different, or anormal, as opposed to a homogenized identity discourse based on national belonging, influenced imaginaries and stigma on Marseille, as well. At the same time, however, this notion of particularity was positively re-claimed in artistic milieus such as the rap scene from the 1980s onward, in which the ‘otherness’ provided a compelling legitimation of an alternative cultural stream that moved beyond traditional and high-culture artistic references, allowing a counter-position towards Parisian rivals. For instance, the iconic hip hop group IAM popularized terminologies like “UFO” or “planet”/”mars”⁴⁸⁷ (the planet metaphor picked up on the semiotic proximity of mars and Marseille, the former being used as a nickname for the latter), which become a sort of trademark and recurrent lyrical reference.

Marseille’s reputation was laced with clichés that drew on specific facts or statistics from the city’s past. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, the city had an exceptionally high rate of unemployment (17%) while 25% of the population lived under the poverty line,⁴⁸⁸ which explicitly contributed to notions of urban downfall. Nevertheless, Marseille’s situation calls for a critical examination of the urban imaginaries and a contextualized discussion of the elements of crisis in order to understand the motivations and logic of a ‘bad reputation.’

Urban Governance Reform and Metropolitan Branding

During the second part of the twentieth century, significant urban planning and administrative restructuring measures were undertaken in Marseille. Often, these were associated with a rhetoric of progress for the city that responded to an enduring post-war

⁴⁸⁶ Bullen, “Comparing the Cultures of Cities in Two European Capitals of Culture,” 102.

⁴⁸⁷ IAM, *Planète Mars* (Virgin France S.A., 1991).

⁴⁸⁸ INSEE 1999, quoted in: Bertonecello and Dubois, *Marseille, Euroméditerranée*, 38

downfall. In exemplary cases, planning and policy projects were negotiated in metropolitan terms; this terminology seemed to symbolize prospects of urban recovery, prosperity, or visibility.

The most prominent illustration of this phenomenon was the launch of the *Métropole Aix-Marseille-Provence* (MAMP). The MAMP emerged from a plan for national territorial reform, in the course of which 13 so-called ‘metropolises’ were formed legally between 2015 and 2016 (see Illustration 3).⁴⁸⁹ In the case of Marseille, the legal and politico-administrative restructuring, which merged 92 municipalities distributed into 6 *Etablissements Publics de Coopération Intercommunale*⁴⁹⁰ (short: EPCI) essentially merged Marseille, Aix-en-Provence (short: Aix) and the Provence into an integrated metropolitan region (see Illustration 4). Juridically rooted in the MAPTAM⁴⁹¹ (2014) and the NOTRe⁴⁹² (2015) laws on territorial governance, the reform resulted in the fusion the existing inter-communal entities, forming the largest and most socially heterogeneous metropolis in France by surface area (3,173 square km and 1.8 million inhabitants).⁴⁹³ Since 2016, the urban apparatus was led by Jean-Claude Gaudin,

⁴⁸⁹ E.g. The *Grand Paris* and *Grand Lyon* metropolises were created in this context as well.

⁴⁹⁰ The *Communautés d’Agglomération* and the *Etablissements Publics de Coopération Intercommunale* constituted inter-municipal structures preceding the creation of the MAMP on the regional territory including and surrounding Marseille. The 6 EPCI constituting the MAMP were the *Communauté urbaine Marseille Provence Métropole*, *Communauté d’agglomération du Pays d’Aix*, *Communauté d’agglomération Agglopolé Provence*, *Communauté d’agglomération du pays d’Aubagne et de l’Étoile*, *Syndicat d’agglomération nouvelle Ouest Provence*, and the *Communauté d’agglomération du pays de Martigues*: “La Métropole Aix-Marseille Provence,” accessed December 12, 2018, <http://www.marseille-provence.fr/index.php/la-metropole/la-metropole-aix-marseille-provence>.

⁴⁹¹ *Loi pour la modernisation de l’action publique territoriale et d’affirmation des métropoles* (MAPTAM): Law for the modernization of the territorial public action and the affirmation of the metropolises (translation by the author): “LOI N° 2014-58 Du 27 Janvier 2014 de Modernisation de l’action Publique Territoriale et d’affirmation Des Métropoles,” 2014-58 § (2014), accessed March 21, 2018, <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000028526298>.

⁴⁹² *Loi portant nouvelle organisation territoriale de la République* (NOTRe): Law conveying the new territorial organisation of the Republic (translation by the author): “LOI N° 2015-991 Du 7 Août 2015 Portant Nouvelle Organisation Territoriale de La République,” 2015-991 § (2015), accessed March 21, 2018, <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000030985460&categorieLien=id>.

⁴⁹³ On hard facts regarding the creation of the MAMP, see: Interview by the author, *Interview 6*, Digital recording (Marseille, October 6, 2016).

the right-wing *Union pour un Mouvement Populaire*⁴⁹⁴ (UMP) mayor of Marseille since 1995.⁴⁹⁵

Arguably, the creation of the MAMP was a key urban planning, policy and economic, as well as sociodemographic development in and around the city. In reference to the post-war crisis, it contributed to a discourse of regeneration that on a narrative of Marseille recovery like a ‘phoenix out of the ashes.’ Strikingly, this project appropriated the imperial-era metropolitan vocabulary, giving it a new historical context that shaped a contemporary metropolitan imaginary and discourse.

The *Métropole* and the European Capital of Culture 2013

While the metropolitan entity was still in early planning stages, in 2008 Marseille and the surrounding Provence region successfully bid to be the 2013 European Capital of Culture (ECOC), which led to the creation of the designation of “Marseille-Provence 2013” (MP13). The MAMP and the ECOC project were connected by the territorial redefinition of Marseille and Provence, as the ECOC was planned on the largest spatial proportion of the 2016 launched *Métropole*.

The ECOC nomination is awarded yearly by the European Commission to one or two cities/city regions. This status is intended as a catalyst for showcasing and developing the arts and culture heritage of specific cities within an endeavor of European cultural diversity, richness and unity. Originating in Athens in 1985, this program was initiated by the former Greek cultural minister Melina Mercouri, who also gave her name to the significant purse funded by the EU to the elected city(-ies), the Melina Mercouri International Prize, which is currently 1.5 million Euros). The ECOC program emerged out of the realization that arts and culture were

⁴⁹⁴ Popular Movement Union (translation by the author)

⁴⁹⁵ From 2000 on, Gaudin had been the President of the *Communauté Urbaine Marseille Provence Métropole*, which prefigured the MAMP.

just as important as economy and technology for urban development, in a time when post-industrial cities in crisis were turning to culture to stimulate urban revitalization.⁴⁹⁶ Often, the ECOC status and the related events are articulated in a wider context of urban regeneration, city image marketing, tourism, and economic growth. This was true for Marseille. In light of the metropolitan developments in and around the city, MP13 constituted in many regards the first large-scale collaborative cultural and popular manifestation on the polycentric territory. While it encompassed a larger perimeter as the MAMP in total, it was the first regional cultural operation across the new metropolitan area.⁴⁹⁷ As such, MP13 served as a representative instrument, which showcased, sold, and contributed to establishing an unprecedented metropolis concept in the making.

Hence, in the second half of the dissertation, I investigate the function of MP13 as carrier and producer of metropolitanism in Marseille. Building on the preceding historical investigation, I transport my main empirical inquiry into the contemporary case study of the 2013 ECOC. Beginning in chapter 4 *The European Capital of Culture “Marseille-Provence 2013”*, I tackle the third research question of this work: How and why did the cultural mass event MP13 serve as means of urban representation. The subsequent chapter 5 *Representing the Metropolis “Aix-Marseille-Provence”: Metropolitanism in Post-Colonial Marseille* then addresses my fourth related problematization: How and why does MP13 contribute to producing and disseminating a specific image of the metropolis in Aix-Marseille-Provence?

⁴⁹⁶ Boualem Kadri and Valérie Burnet, “La Métropole Culturelle : Un Nouveau Visage de La Triade Mondialisation-Métropolisation-Mise En Tourisme? Le Cas de Marseille et de Montréal,” in *Dynamiques Métropolitaines et Développement Touristique* (PUQ, 2014), 37–60.

⁴⁹⁷ In addition to the upcoming MAMP territory, the intercommunalities *Communauté d’Agglomération* (CA) Arles-Crau-Camargue-Montagnette, CA Terre de Provence, and *Communauté de Communes* Vallée des Baux Alpilles participated in the MP13 project as well. See: Illustrations 4 and 5.

Literature Frame of Reference

In my investigation, I draw from two main fields of literature: scholarly works on the ECOC program, and publications on the realization of MP13.

The European Capital of Culture Program

Firstly, I engage with the ECOC phenomenon in its relationship to urban development. As Beatriz Garcia showed in the case of Glasgow 1990, the earning the title of ‘City of Culture’ is strongly tied to large-scale urban development ambitions.⁴⁹⁸ Furthermore, these events contribute to shaping innovative modes of urban governance⁴⁹⁹ and boosting the cultural economy of places.⁵⁰⁰ They are inscribed in the logics of culture-led urban regeneration⁵⁰¹ in the search for sustainability and long-term impact of the event.

Over the course of ECOC proceedings, specific city marketing and place branding strategies have developed, as well.⁵⁰² The labelling as ‘European Capital of Culture’, i.e. the *naming* of specific cities, has laid the cornerstone for the ECOC to function as a polyvalent instrument for city branding and marketing. The European dimension of the award explicitly referred to in the title constituted a important scale for the negotiation and marketization of

⁴⁹⁸ Beatriz Garcia, “Deconstructing the City of Culture: The Long-Term Cultural Legacies of Glasgow 1990,” *Urban Studies* 42, no. 5–6 (May 1, 2005): 841–68.

⁴⁹⁹ Lauren Andres and Caroline Chapain, “The Integration of Cultural and Creative Industries into Local and Regional Development Strategies in Birmingham and Marseille: Towards an Inclusive and Collaborative Governance?” *Regional Studies* 47, no. 2 (2013): 161–82.

⁵⁰⁰ P. Campbell, “Creative Industries in a European Capital of Culture,,” *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 17, no. 5 (2011): 510–22.

⁵⁰¹ Franco Bianchini, “Cultural Planning for Urban Sustainability,” in *City and Culture. Cultural Processes and Urban Sustainability*, ed. Louise Nyström and Colin Fudge (Stockholm: The Swedish Urban Development Council, 1999), 34–51; Graeme Evans and Jo Foord, “Shaping the Cultural Landscape: Local Regeneration Effects,” in *Urban Futures: Critical Commentaries on Shaping the City*, ed. Malcolm Miles and Tim Hall (London: Routledge, 2003), 167–181; Hans Mommaas, “Cultural Clusters and the Post-Industrial City: Towards the Remapping of Urban Cultural Policy,” *Urban Studies* 41, no. 3 (2004): 507–32; Deborah Stevenson, *Cities and Urban Cultures*, 1 edition (Maidenhead: Open University Press, 2003); Nils Wählin et al., *Urban Strategies for Culture-Driven Growth: Co-Creating a European Capital of Culture* (Edward Elgar Publishing, 2016).

⁵⁰² Jean-Louis Fabiani, “Marseille et son projet culturel : la ville, l’Europe et la Méditerranée,” *L’Observatoire, la revue des politiques culturelles*, no. 34 (2008): 28–30.

urban heritage.⁵⁰³ As shown by Graeme Evans, the ECOOC events were used as a festivalized marketing masthead for the European vision: “The use of culture as a conduit for the branding of the ‘European Project’ has added fuel to culture city competition, whilst at the same time celebrating an official version of the European Renaissance.”⁵⁰⁴ As tackled here, the idea of a rising European patrimony were mixed with local city marketing ambitions.⁵⁰⁵ Hence, image improvement, media visibility, touristic attractiveness, and place branding merged in the cultural capitals program. Regarding the geographical frame of reference touched upon by the ECOOC title, the labelling occurred at a very local and restrictive level (i.e. the exclusive selection merely awarded one or two winner cities), while it simultaneously invoked a supra-national European scale of cultural representation and recognition.⁵⁰⁶ The co-existence of local and supra-local scales therefore required a multi-faceted branding project.

“Marseille-Provence 2013”

Following the ECOOC literature, MP13 has been closely examined in terms of urban regeneration processes, both symbolic and infrastructural.⁵⁰⁷ The urban geographer Lauren Andres conducted insightful analyses on the production of a positive cultural cosmopolitanism discourse and the development of new infrastructures for the arts and culture in Marseille on the occasion of 2013.⁵⁰⁸ According to her, these measures aimed at improving the image of the

⁵⁰³ Kiran Klaus Patel, ed., *The Cultural Politics of Europe: European Capitals of Culture and European Union since the 1980s* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013).

⁵⁰⁴ Graeme Evans, “Hard-Branding the Cultural City – from Prado to Prada,” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 27, no. 2 (2003): 426.

⁵⁰⁵ Ronan Paddison, “City Marketing, Image Reconstruction and Urban Regeneration,” *Urban Studies* 30, no. 2 (1993): 339–350.

⁵⁰⁶ Evans, “Hard-Branding the Cultural City – from Prado to Prada,” 425.

⁵⁰⁷ Andres and Chapain, “The Integration of Cultural and Creative Industries into Local and Regional Development Strategies in Birmingham and Marseille”; Bernard Morel, “Marseille-Provence 2013, capitale européenne de la culture: la vision de l’urbaniste et du politique,” *Méditerranée. Revue géographique des pays méditerranéens / Journal of Mediterranean geography*, no. 114 (September 1, 2010): 31–34; Claire Bullen, “European Capital of Culture as a Regional Development Tool? The Case of Marseille-Provence 2013,” *Taifed Journal*, no. 42 (December 2011): 1–8; Viard, *Marseille, le réveil violent d’une ville impossible*.

⁵⁰⁸ Lauren Andres, “Alternative Initiatives, Cultural Intermediaries and Urban Regeneration: The Case of La Friche (Marseille),” *European Planning Studies* 19, no. 5 (2011): 795–811; Lauren Andres, “Marseille 2013 or the Final Round of a Long and Complex Regeneration Strategy?,” *Town Planning Review* 82, no. 1 (2011): 61–76.

city and transcending the local ‘city in crisis’ stigma. Furthermore, MP13 has been studied in terms of innovative modes of collaborative cultural governance.⁵⁰⁹ Regarding policy implementation issues, scholars have discussed the ECOC’s role in the elaboration of new regionalized governance formats, as well as distinct forms of cooperation amongst the diverse MP13 actors.

Another group of publications has focused on the cultural economy and the eventization of MP13.⁵¹⁰ The urban and cultural geographer Boris Grésillon provides detailed accounts of event elaborations dialoguing with the new metropolitan structure in the making. Among other occasions, he conducted an interview with the great urban geographer and Marseille expert Marcel Roncayolo. The two scholars framed their discussion around “,”⁵¹¹ an agenda which provided a useful summary of key constitutive concepts regarding this topic: event/eventization, culture, metropolis, and capital. Complementarily, the urban anthropologist Claire Bullen focused on cultural policymaking in a comparative approach and investigated the interconnectedness of cultural policies and social factors in the ‘creative city-region’ MP13.⁵¹² Another illuminating work is the discussion of the political scientist Nicolas Maisetti on the social landscape of MP13.⁵¹³ In his book, he proposes a critique of the exclusive and excluding selection of official cultural production actors. He sheds light on the seemingly inherent to logics of neoliberal urban festivalization and mirrored Marseille’s specific dynamics of social

⁵⁰⁹ Lauren Andres and Boris Grésillon, “‘European Capital of Culture’: A Leverage for Regional Development and Governance? The Case of Marseille Provence 2013,” *Regions* 295, no. 1 (2014): 8–10; Léa Baron et al., “Marseille-Provence 2013: Leçons D’une Expérience. Rapport Projet” (Marseille: INET, November 2, 2014); Léa Baron et al., “Marseille-Provence 2013: Leçons D’une Expérience. Synthèse Du Rapport Du Projet Collectif” (Marseille: INET, November 2, 2014); Nicolas Maisetti, “« Jouer collectif » dans un territoire fragmenté,” *Gouvernement et action publique*, no. 1 (May 4, 2015): 61–85.

⁵¹⁰ Boris Grésillon, *Un enjeu capitale: Marseille-Provence 2013* (La Tour d’Aigues: Aube, 2011).

Nicolas Maisetti, *Opération culturelle et pouvoirs urbains : instrumentalisation économique de la culture et luttes autour de Marseille-Provence Capitale européenne de la culture 2013*, 1 vols., Questions contemporaines (Paris: l’Harmattan, 2014).

⁵¹¹ Boris Grésillon and Eric Verdeil, “Entretien avec Marcel Roncayolo,” *Rives méditerranéennes*, no. 47 (February 15, 2014): 13.

⁵¹² Claire Bullen, “Comparing the Cultures of Cities in Two European Capitals of Culture,” *Etnofoor, Anthropological Journal, The City*, 28, no. 2 (2016): 99–120.

⁵¹³ Nicolas Maisetti, “Marseille 2013 Off: L’institutionnalisation D’une Critique ?,” *Faire Savoirs. Sciences de L’homme et de La Société En Provence-Alpes-Côte d’Azur*, no. 10 (2013): 59–68.

segregation and class struggles. Overall, this research area triggered both questions of vision(s) and regulation(s) for the local cultural economy and the creative milieu, scenes, and artistic producers in the city.

Approach and Chapter Outline

Building from my problematization and the state of research, I investigate how and why MP13 was written into an urban representational strategy. I aim to understand in what manners it shaped the production of a twenty-first century concept of the metropolis in and for Marseille. In spite of the extensive amount of works published on cultural-led urban regeneration, neoliberal cultural economy and urban branding, this very analytical angle still constituted a desideratum in the literature. Hence, while I ground my study in the existing literature, I chose to conduct expert interviews with representative cultural and urban stakeholders, as well. In doing so, I aim to distill goals, forms, and content of metropolitan conceptualizations based on their statements.

For this purpose, in accordance with considering MP13 a means of urban *representation*, I did not solely engage with cultural actors of the ECOC, but rather I turned to urban development stakeholders, as well. Indeed, I argue that, in order to grasp the concept of the metropolis, it is necessary to comprehend the interlinkages of both the cultural industry and urban policy discourses respectively. Therefore, I have carefully selected representative actors of both sectors in the context of 2013 and systematically dissected the actors, causes, features, and promises of metropolitanism indicated throughout the interview accounts. The contact persons, as indicated in the general introduction of this dissertation, stemmed from both the MAMP administration and the MP13 organization.⁵¹⁴ They were consulted in line with the

⁵¹⁴ See chapter 1.5. *Data Collection and Analysis*:

- The two MP13 chief executive officers (CEO) (2004-2011; 2011-2013) (2)
- The cultural programming director of MP13 and member of the European Commission for the selection of the European Capitals of Culture (1)

specific aim of unveiling the connections between the territorial politico-administrative reform, the cultural mass event, and urban discourses and imaginaries of the metropolis.

The following chapter investigates the application process for the ECOC, the involvement of economic actors in the cultural industry, the development of a regionalized strategy and the challenges of the fragmented territory at hand. Further, I examine the realization and impact of MP13. Here, in order to keep an analytical focus according to my research question, I do not elaborate on the event's program or artistic productions as such. Rather, I draw from the cultural event in order to have a conversation on the urban conceptualizations which existed in its context. Therefore, I concentrate on specific spheres of governance-related, programmatic, and sociocultural conflicts, which show defining points of ruptures and characteristic topics of MP13. Lastly, I discuss the results and the impact of the 2013 ECOC, as well as its interrelatedness with the new metropolitan structure in and around Marseille.

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- The head of public-relation and director's right-hand-man at the chamber of commerce and industry Marseille Provence (1)
 - One out of three founding members of the official *Off* festival (during MP13) (1)
 - The creator of the *Alter Off 2013* festival (the alternative Off-festival during 2013) (1)
 - The founder of the metropolitan trail *Grande Randonnée 2013* (GR2013) (1)
 - The second CEO of the *Métropole Aix-Marseille-Provence* (1)
 - A representative at the *Métropole Aix-Marseille-Provence* and former municipal administration official (1; e-mail message to the author)
 - The head of public relations at the *Agence d'Urbanisme de l'Agglomération Marseillaise* (AGAM) and representative at the ministry assignment for the *Métropole Aix-Marseille-Provence* (2014-2015) (1)

4.1. Towards “Marseille-Provence 2013”

Governing the ‘City in Crisis’

The ‘city in crisis’ topos appeared repeatedly throughout the interviews conducted for this case study. With regard to the situation preceding the ECOC planning, many interviewees emphasized conflicts or paralysis in urban leadership. For instance, an economic representative at the *Chambre de Commerce et d’Industrie Marseille Provence* (CCIMP; short: CCI) stated that

“c’est très inquiétant parce que la population a pris conscience des choses, les entreprises ont pris conscience des choses, les cultureux ont pris conscience des choses, le monde politique, la technostucture a pris conscience... Le monde politique, ici, n’a pas pris conscience des choses. Ceux qui ont pris conscience des choses sont totalement marginalisés.”⁵¹⁵

According to this person, the situation was alarming due to the discrepancy between obvious imperatives for the city’s future and a failing local political leadership. For her/him (or ‘them’), there was a large-scale popular awareness about the need for change; However, the mayor’s office was not reactive accordingly. And due to their power and influence, the politicians managed to exclude progressive mindsets and to maintain a frustrating status quo. Therefore, in lights of urban renewal and image redefinition ambitions, the city’s government was repeatedly criticized for limpness in political leadership and backwardness in urban management. Another particular sector of difficulty was the management of the tourism economy and the lack of international visibility factors:

“Parce qu’à Marseille, en dehors du fait que c’est une très belle ville qui a une lumière géniale, qu’est-ce que vous faites à Marseille en 2005? Vous allez voir la Bonne Mère

⁵¹⁵ Interview by the author, *Interview 10*, Digital recording (Marseille, September 21, 2016), #00:31:50-0#, 10:49.

– si vous êtes laïque, vous en avez rien à foutre. Vous allez voir parce que c’est le plus beau panorama de Marseille. Mais ensuite, vous allez où? Les musées étaient nazes, tout était à l’abandon, etc.”⁵¹⁶

The interviewee painted a dreadful portrait of Marseille’s attractiveness potential – or lack thereof – at the beginning of the twentieth century. Apart from the advantageous climate and geographic conditions, the city had nothing to offer in terms of up-to-date mainstream touristic standards.

At least from the economic sector’s standpoint, there was an urge to develop infrastructures and boost city marketing. The municipality, in an attempt to react to a similar urge, launched the place branding campaign “Marseille Attractive 2012-2020”⁵¹⁷ in 2012. This global development strategy aimed at economic and image improvement in order to constitute a high-performing Euro-Mediterranean core-city as the beating heart of the developing metropolitan area. This new urban attractiveness policy promoted collaborative territorial marketing, international trade, real estate strategy prioritizing financial sectors, and the development of a cultural and creative hub. However, in spite of initiatives like *Marseille Attractive*, the deputy CEO of MP13 and ECOC commission expert maintained that there was a proportionally significant incapacity from the local political sphere to identify the productive correlation between tourism economy, urban development, and cultural sectors.⁵¹⁸ Overall, when it came to the urban management and development of Marseille, cross-sector stakeholders tended to be very critical towards the political government:

“Marseille est à la bourre sur tous les indicateurs. Et Marseille est a la bourre, non pas parce qu’elle aurait des handicaps structurels très lourds – il y en a, bien sur, mais toutes

⁵¹⁶ Ibid., #00:13:54-3#, 10:24.

⁵¹⁷ Ville de Marseille, “Marseille Attractive. Un Projet Pour Une Stratégie Partenariale 2012-2020,” 2012.

⁵¹⁸ Interview 7, #00:47:08-3#, 7:58; On the use of culture as an urban development tool in France: Maria Gravari-Barbas, *Aménager La Ville Par La Culture et Le Tourisme* (Paris: Le Moniteur, 2013); Jean-Michel Kosianski, “Territoire, culture et politiques de développement économique local : une approche par les métiers d’art,” *Revue d’Économie Régionale & Urbaine* février, no. 1 (May 5, 2011): 81–111.

les collectivités en ont – mais c’est parce que la gouvernance de ce territoire, depuis des années, est incapable, INCAPABLE, de faire franchir, enfin, de valoriser ses potentiels.”⁵¹⁹

MP13’s former executive director repeated a notion that was expressed often during the ECOC selection process,⁵²⁰ that Marseille was late in every respect (“à la bourre sur tous les indicateurs”). In addition, the worrying lack of responsiveness from the local representative powers prevented progress. As my interviewee working at the *Métropole* administration emphasized, there was a problematic passivity, as well as a high disparity of the development measures, and the unstructured governance stood in the way of a sustainable development:

“Y a pas de stratégie de long terme. On [stakeholders on the local territory; MdS] fait pas de projet ‘sans S’. On fait plein de projets ‘avec des S’, ça, y en a plein, des opportunités, y en a, des porteurs de projets, y en a. Mais en quoi chacun participe d’un sédimentation qui va faire hisser ce territoire d’une année sur l’autre, pour l’instant, y a pas.”⁵²¹

This quote highlights a crucial dimension: the need for sustainable development and long-term strategies, in line with a common collaborative purpose, and the current lack thereof. As illustratively expressed during the exchange, there was a myriad of projects (*projet ‘avec des S’*), but no plan (*projet ‘sans S’*). Summing up the pre-2013 situation dramatically, the former director of MP13 claimed, “Marseille est en retard sur tout, sur tout.”⁵²²

The Opportunity of Becoming the European Capital of Culture 2013

It was in this very context that the application call for ECOC 2013 was made public. Building on the campaigns of Paris 1989, Avignon 2000, and Lille 2004, the Marseille run for

⁵¹⁹ Interview by the author, *Interview 12*, Digital recording (Paris, September 19, 2016), #00:34:39-7#, 12:63.

⁵²⁰ Latarjet, “Marseille-Provence 2013.”

⁵²¹ Interview by the author, *Interview 11*, Digital recording (Marseille, October 6, 2016), #00:21:47-1#, 11:51.

⁵²² Interview 12, #00:34:39-7#, 12:71.

the 2013 ECOC title was an unhoped for opportunity for the second city of France in desperate need for a reconversion. While these previous campaigns influence the Marseille bid, Lille 2004 represented a perfect role model. This post-industrial city in the search for a profile renewal had delivered a successful ECOC year in terms of visibility and city image.⁵²³ Most importantly, it managed to effect a positive and sustainable impact. Not only did the post-2004 tourism economy and urban marketing boom, but the cultural event decisively contributed to forging a collectivized governance, building infrastructures, and creating a positive image of the forthcoming metropolitan region *Métropole Européenne de Lille* launched in 2015.⁵²⁴ The post-industrial crisis, the second-city status on the national scale, the ECOC opportunity, and the *Métropole* under construction were many relatable identification features for Marseille's stakeholders, which added to the hopes of a similar perspective of success and long-term growth.

In 2004 EU commission announced that the 2013 title would be awarded a French and a Slovak city or city-region, a declaration that occurred parallel to the events in Lille, which may have contributed to making the opportunity of applying particularly attractive. Following the announcement, both the municipal government and the economic elite in Marseille became involved in the process. At this point, there were competing narratives regarding which of these spheres represented the most powerful catalyst for the city's application:

“En 2003, la mairie et un certain nombre d'autres personnes prennent conscience qu'en 2013, la prochaine Capitale Européenne de la Culture sera en France. A l'époque, on ne parlait pas beaucoup des Capitales Européennes de la Culture (...) et la Ville de Marseille commence à regarder ce que ça pouvait dire.”⁵²⁵

⁵²³ Bruno Lusso and Marie-Thérèse Grégoris, “Pérenniser l'événementiel culturel dans la métropole lilloise après la Capitale européenne de la culture,” *Rives méditerranéennes*, no. 47 (2014): 61.

⁵²⁴ Christine Liefooghe, “Lille 2004, capitale européenne de la culture ou la quête d'un nouveau modèle de développement,” *Méditerranée. Revue géographique des pays méditerranéens / Journal of Mediterranean geography*, no. 114 (2010): 35–45.

⁵²⁵ Interview 10. #00:00:44-4#, 10:4

According to this interviewee, several actors, among them the mayor's officers, identified the promising character of such a title, which had not been strongly visible in Marseille up until 2004, and initiated the process of composing an application. Among the MP13 team it was argued that the decisive impetus was granted the municipality, "la Ville de Marseille, qui était à l'origine de ce projet – c'était vraiment la Ville, c'était une idée de la Ville!"⁵²⁶

Simultaneously, an interest for the ECOC qualification grew amongst the local economic leaders at the CCIMP. A leading proponent of this project explained:

"Et parallèlement à ça [the project launch of the municipal government], un groupe d'associations qui s'appelle Mécènes du Sud, dont moi j'étais, à l'époque, un des fondateurs – on est en 2003 – (...) voit la même chose, c'est-à-dire en 2013, on devra choisir une ville française. Donc, on se décide de se mettre sur le dossier, on commence à travailler là-dessus sérieusement entre 2003 et 2005. En 2005, Jacques Pfister est nommé Président de la CCI à Marseille, moi je deviens son collaborateur à la comm' [service de communication; MdS] et au cabinet (...). Avec nos amis de Mécènes du Sud, on vient présenter le dossier à Jacques Pfister en disant: 'Voilà, c'est un challenge'"⁵²⁷

Jacques Pfister represented a key figure in the theatrics surrounding MP13. This Parisian engineer, businessman, and former Orangina CEO (1981-2004) was elected head of the CCIMP in 2004. His arrival symbolized a new era within the chamber's leadership, a seat that had been occupied by the patriarchs of Marseille's *Grande Familles*.⁵²⁸ Pfister's background and expertise on global markets and branding campaigns promised a revival for the institution. He himself considered that running the CCIMP would be a challenge in the context of the sadly famous difficulties of the second city of France and in the lights of the upcoming metropolization projects of the MAMP. However, disseminating a positive official message of

⁵²⁶ Interview 12. #00:00:38-6#, 12:3.

⁵²⁷ Interview 10. #00:00:44-4#, 10:5.

⁵²⁸ Gilles Rof, "Jacques Pfister, Le Parti Des Patrons. L'ex-PDG d'Orangina a Porté L'opération Capital Européenne de La Culture 2013. Sans S'engager Politiquement," *Le Monde*, February 14, 2014.

vision for progress and in the hope of a promising regeneration, he claimed that “Marseille est un laboratoire de la France à venir.”⁵²⁹ In this context, the newly elected Pfister took the opportunity of an ECOC selection, and the CCIMP became, together with the municipality, a motor of the application.

Overall, the ECOC perspective embodied promises for a ‘better future’ in the city. Therefore, the discussion about whether the municipality of Marseille or the CCIMP had the most decisive influence on the bid for the ECOC was significant symbolically. Indeed, if most credit for the title win and the MP13 realization was given to the politics, it would represent a positive, objectively successful and proactive measure of the mayor’s office. This achievement might then help contrasting the government’s reputation of passivity, and potentially bettering its image. On the other hand, however, other views considered that the 2013 project was primarily the works of the economic sector, led by the CCIMP. This perspective would give the urban cultural project a whole other turn: It embedded MP13 in a neoliberal city-marketing endeavor in which culture served primarily as a means for branding and economic profit.⁵³⁰ As I will extend on later on, it was in those terms that the pivotal role of economic stakeholders and the corresponding symbolic connotation of 2013 were criticized by actors of the arts scene. Overall, this debate was essentially a conversation about whether the economic or the political sphere was the decisive driving force of culture-led urban regeneration.

The “Top 20” Strategy or When Economists Take the Cultural Lead

In Marseille and its surroundings, another significant group of actors played a key role in the conversation: the collective *Mécènes du Sud* (Patrons of the South, own translation). The group was created in 2003 and brought together CEOs of key industrial companies and

⁵²⁹ Ibid.

⁵³⁰ Franco Bianchini and Michael Parkinson, *Cultural Policy and Urban Regeneration: The West European Experience* (Manchester University Press, 1993).

businesses of the Provence region. The formation took place in the context of a new legal code in 2003, which set an increased 60% tax reduction on donations from economic stakeholders to cultural projects.⁵³¹ Building on this new profitable legislation, representatives of seven influential enterprises gathered around a joint purpose of company image management, territorial strategy, and cultural sponsoring.⁵³² Among others, the *Olympique de Marseille* (Official football club, strong symbol of Marseille's local pride), *Ricard* (French beverage company, specialized in the production of pastis, a well-known popular Provençal alcoholic specialty), and *Société Marseillaise de Crédit* (SMC, French bank from Marseille, long-term local economic institution since 1865) participated in *Mécènes du Sud* and represented a strong symbolic capital for Marseille's economic patrimony and the territory.

It is worth noting the SMC has figured as a diachronic thread over the course of the modern and contemporary metropolitan history of the city. Indeed, Jules Charles-Roux, the curator of the 1906 Colonial Exposition, presided the bank from 1911 to 1918.⁵³³ During the early decades of the 20th century, by means of political and commercial activities, the businessman and his entourage were directly involved in marketing Marseille's metropolitan function on a national and supra-national scale. Hence, via Charles-Roux's persona and works, the SMC represents a historically continuous institutional player within the negotiation of Marseille's status as a colonial metropole.

The businessman Pfister was close to the patron network and, with his arrival at the head of the CCIMP in 2004, he offered the *Mécènes* representative support and an institutional frame in Marseille⁵³⁴. Initiated by the newly designated president, a promotional enterprise called "Club Ambition Top 20" was launched, sealing the collaboration between the collective and the

⁵³¹ "LOI N° 2003-709 Du 1er Août 2003 Relative Au Mécénat, Aux Associations et Aux Fondations" (2003), accessed October 19, 2017.

<https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000000791289&categorieLien=id>.

⁵³² "Mécènes Du Sud," accessed October 19, 2017, <http://www.mecenesdusud.fr/>.

⁵³³ Chapter 2.1. *The 1906 National Colonial Exposition in Marseille*.

⁵³⁴ Maisetti, *Opération culturelle et pouvoirs urbains*, 65.

CCIMP. This project arose as a reaction to a study of the *Délégation interministérielle à l'aménagement du territoire et à l'attractivité régionale* (DATAR)⁵³⁵ on the demographic, political and economic integration of 180 European cities with more than 200,000 inhabitants.⁵³⁶ In this ranking, Marseille reached the 23rd position. The ‘disappointing’ account of this so-called *Championnat d'Europe des métropoles*⁵³⁷ provided an impulse for a development strategy amongst the patrons and chamber members, who made it their mission to position Marseille as one of the twenty most successful European cities.

Here, I draw from an interview passage with a spokesperson at the CCIMP, in order to retrace the history of the “Top 20” project and to explain its relationship to culture and the ECOC award. Indeed, this series of quotes seemed particularly insightful in order to grasp the economic sphere’s vision of such developments in Marseille, and raised several topics and arguments, which became crucial in understanding a phase of new impulses in the city’s cultural economy. The person narrated the story as follows:

“Dans le programme de Jacques Pfister, il y avait ce qu’on a appelé après la démarche ‘Top 20’, c’est-à-dire on avait regardé et, à l’époque, la DATAR avait fait un classement des métropoles européennes d’où il apparaissait à l’époque qu’on était, à l’époque, 27ème sur 180. Et nous, on s’est dit – alors, c’est une traduction un peu marketing – mais on va rentrer dans le 20. C’est-à-dire, on va intégrer le Top 20 des entrepr– des métropoles européennes.”⁵³⁸

Interestingly, while defining the nature of the “Top 20”, the person stumbled over the word “entreprise” (*entrepr-*) before interrupting himself and correcting by “the metropolises” (*les métropoles*). Hence, it seemed like the spokesperson confused a ranking of cities with a ranking

⁵³⁵ The DATAR was the French delegation for territorial planning and regional action from 1963 to 2014.

⁵³⁶ Céline Rozenblat and Patricia Cicille, “Les Villes Européennes. Analyse Comparative” (Paris: DATAR, 2003).

⁵³⁷ Chambre de Commerce et de l’Industrie Marseille Provence, “Les Vrais Atouts de Marseille Provence,” Cahiers Du Top 20 (Marseille: Chambre de Commerce et de l’Industrie Marseille Provence, 2008).

⁵³⁸ Interview 10. #00:00:44-4#, 10:6.

of enterprises. This interference may have been a coincidence, though, it revealingly pointed to the linkage between economic and urban factors. In fact, limiting “the metropolises” to their economic instruments, or rather considering a set of enterprises as a *pars pro toto* for a metropolis, was in line with what the interviewee considered as the marketing translation (“une traduction un peu marketing”) of the cities ranking.

She/he continued:

“Et donc, cette démarche ‘Top 20’, elle était appuyée sur des critères d’accélérateurs de rayonnement du territoire. Et parmi – il y en avait une vingtaine, je crois – et parmi cette vingtaine, il y avait la culture. Alors, ce n’était pas présenté comme ‘la culture’, c’était le nombre de musées, le nombre de gens qui vont au musée, etc. Et donc, toute notre démarche stratégique a été de dire: la culture est un accélérateur du développement économique, nous, Chambre, on est un acteur économique donc, on va investir ce champs.”

Here, the ‘culture factor’ was specifically treated quantitatively in terms of cultural infrastructure and museum entries (“‘la culture’, c’était le nombre de musées, le nombre de gens qui vont au musée, etc.”). Hence, culture was measured by numeric standards. This approach was enhanced further along as well:

“Sur les 15 critères, il y avait le nombre de passagers d’aéroport, le nombre de destinations en direct dans les aéroports, le nombre de publications scientifiques, le nombre de gens – s’il y avait un port – le nombre de croisiéristes, enfin il y avait tout ça. La culture était un élément parmi d’autres.”⁵³⁹

The “Top 20” project was conceptualized to increase the city’s competitiveness on the European scale by instrumentalizing the cultural sector, among others, as a motor of development.

⁵³⁹ Ibid., #00:08:01-9#, 10:11.

Shortly after the creation of the “Top 20” initiative, prospects for the ECOC application emerged as an opportune chance to put the ambitions into practice:

“Simplement que ce titre-là de Marseille– de Capital Européenne de la Culture, nous, on s’est dit: Ben, on se débrouille, on prend ce qu’on a. Et donc, on a pris ça et il y’est avéré qu’il y avait une réponse formidable de la part de Marseille parce que c’est une ville historiquement mélangée, parce que c’est une ville diverse, c’est une ville cosmopolite et qu’est-ce qui rassemble les gens, c’est quand même le vecteur de la culture, quoi! Mais ça, on l’avait pas prévu. Nous, on était, je dirais, dans une démarche marketing qui consistait à dire: Trouvons les éléments qui nous permettent de progresser. (...) Et donc, dans cet éventail, à un moment donné, c’est la culture”⁵⁴⁰

At the beginning of this passage, the interviewee justified the collective’s interest in the ECOC title rather nonchalantly; According to the statement, it seemed like the group was looking for any opportunity to leverage culture for any economic gain whatsoever, and that the ECOC was merely a timely solution. Additionally, the *Mécènes* served as an optimal resource and network for the constitution of an application framework: Indeed, the very nature of the group, which was at the intersection of culture as a sector of activities and economic stakeholders as actors,⁵⁴¹ legitimized their involvement on the municipal level.

Though, according to the interview partner, while this integration of culture into the program seemed like a perfect possibility to some members, others remained skeptical:

“ça a posé problème parce que nous, monde économique avec les petites entreprises, tout ça... La Chambre de Commerce, c’est 91% de petites entreprises, qui correspondent aux 91% des entreprises du territoire donc le petit patron de PME qui a

⁵⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁴¹ Maisetti, *Marseille, Ville Du Monde. L’internationalisation d’une Métropole Morcelée*, 233–237.

deux salariés, il se dit: Mais pourquoi on va dans la culture? Donc il fallait faire de la pédagogie.”⁵⁴²

Here, the *Petites et Moyennes Entreprises (PME)*, the rather traditional small and medium-sized enterprises (SME)) that constituted a large majority of the enterprise landscape in Marseille and its surrounding region, were reticent to invest in cultural productions. These opponents represented a reactive counter-position to the progressive cultural economics logics underscored by the *Mécènes*. As mentioned above, defenders of the cultural economy needed to explain and promote (*faire de la pédagogie*) their approach in order to convince the PME to support the endeavor. This situation revealed a clash between two economic traditions, an older, local, and hard-factor-oriented philosophy on the one hand, and a more recent, global, and soft-factor-oriented mission on the other.

In addition to the internal zones of friction within the enterprise network, as mentioned before, different – and at times, conflicting – positions arose amongst the economic world and political spheres. The CCIMP representative sketched two strategies as follows:

“Tout ça pour dire que y avait pas de stratégie métropolitaine, y avait rien de tout ça. Et c’est ça, le côté très différent, je dirais, du monde de l’économie par rapport au monde politique, et du monde des patrons par rapport au monde de la technosstructures d’Etat et des collectivités. Il y avait pas– Il y avait une stratégie qui s’appelle ‘Top 20’ mais qui était quand même quelque chose d’assez vague et ensuite, il y a des éléments sur lesquels on s’accroche et qu’on développe.”⁵⁴³

Here, on the one hand, she/he characterized the political stance by referring explicitly to the “metropolitan strategy” (*stratégie métropolitaine*) as a state-led program of urban development carried out by the municipalities. In this view, the multi-scalar regeneration strategy preceded

⁵⁴² Interview 10. #00:08:01-9#, 10:11.

⁵⁴³ Ibid., #00:08:01-9#, 10:11.

the ECOC in terms of timeframe and agency setting. In this context, MP12 served as a milestone within a long-term planning and renewal process.

The alternative position endorsed by the economic sphere was a strategy to set the goals of the “Top 20” agenda first, and move on from there to identify opportunities to implement and realize their purpose. This position was rooted in a unified set of economic aims, which then developed into a fragmented program of discreet and individual actions. Taken from this perspective, MP13 constituted one (particularly prominent and fruitful) project among many, while culture was one instrument of economic development among others. However, even though the political and economic milieus defended different values, activated different actors, and put different strategical modes into action, they both agreed on one decisive matter: The ECOC constituted a unique and promising opportunity for positive urban change in Marseille and its surroundings.

Comprehending the “Top 20” deployment of ‘culture’ is essential at this point of the analysis, because it extensively contributed to explaining MP13’s function for the local/regional cultural economy. Furthermore, it illustrated the philosophical conception of culture which was imagined and projected onto Marseille’s and the Provence’s heritage in the ECOC context. Via the *Mécènes* collective and the “Top 20” strategy, the CCIMP’s involvement in the ECOC manifested the renaissance of the local economic forces’ role in Marseille’s urban production processes.⁵⁴⁴ From a comparative perspective, it was noticeable that local economic actors were taking on crucial roles in the production of cultural events for the promotion of the city: Indeed, both in 1906 and in 2013, popular mass celebrations (e.g. the Colonial Exposition and MP13) were carried by the local economic elite, mostly the CCIMP, in order to catalyze financial profit as well as a branding momentum for the city. Hence, an urban marketing triade of ‘representative (cultural) event – territory – economy’ reveals a diachronic continuity. All

⁵⁴⁴ Maisetti, *Opération culturelle et pouvoirs urbains*, 60.

three features worked in a productive entanglement dictated by urban stakeholders' purpose, while their interrelation inevitably contributed to constructing the urban discourse and imagination.

4.2. The Application Framework

The Regionalized ECOC

In December 2006, the association *Marseille-Provence 2013* was created in order to assemble the application program and supervise the realization of the project. The association brought together spokespersons from each municipality involved in the regional and collective cultural endeavor.

From the outset, the bid for 2013 ECOC in Marseille was conceived on a regional territorial scale which extended beyond the city borders (see Illustration 5). The regionalization of the program was neither new nor completely exceptional. Over the past years, several ECOCs have unfolded on a regional scale, e.g. Lille (2004), Luxemburg (2007) or the Ruhr (2010). “Lille 2004” was the first recipient to orchestrate its program of 2,500 ECOC celebrations and events over a supra-national region that included the Nord-Pas-de-Calais and Belgian territories, as well. In this exemplary case, the award did not only serve the affirmation of a new ‘cultural city’ status for Lille; it was used to attract economic capital and boost tourism for the whole region, too. According to Uta Staiger, Lille’s work underscored the potential to optimize the European title’s impact on the region thanks to the geographical expansion of ECOC program of events.⁵⁴⁵

In the context of Marseille, the reasons for regionalizing the promotion as “Marseille-Provence” were many fold. The initial director of the project summarized the intentions of the ECOC 2013 into four main arguments:

“le premier [argument; MdS], c’est que l’offre culturelle internationale, qu’il était nécessaire de mobiliser, n’était pas disponible à échelon de la seule ville de Marseille.

⁵⁴⁵ Uta Staiger, “The European Capitals of Culture in Context: Cultural Policy and the European Integration Process,” in *The Cultural Politics of Europe: European Capitals of Culture and European Union since the 1980s*, ed. Kiran Klaus Patel (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013).

Marseille n'était pas en mesure d'offrir, par ses équipes, par ses acteurs, par ses actions culturelles, une capacité de production et de programmation suffisante par rapport à un grand projet de CEC, donc il fallait rassembler une offre culturelle sur un territoire plus important. (...) Donc ça, c'était une question, j'allais dire, de force d'offre artistique et culturelle. Ça, c'est la première raison."⁵⁴⁶

The interviewee described a necessity for artistic and cultural resources and the lack of cultural infrastructure in pre-MP13 Marseille. During that time, the offer was considered not consistent: I.e. the opera, the national theatre *La Criée* and the Cantini museum situated in the city-center were complemented by the *Gyptis* cinema/theater and the *Merlan* theatre surrounding the popular *La Friche la Belle de Mai*, an industrial brownfield repurposed as an interdisciplinary cultural center in the 1990s in the northern border of the inner-city third arrondissement.⁵⁴⁷ In the southern residential districts were the contemporary art museum (*MAC*) and the *Borély* museum too, for instance. According to Grésillon, the city enjoyed heterogeneous arts and cultural amenities, however, they were unequally distributed across the city. The *Quartiers Nord*, for example, lacked cultural infrastructure. For the city missed opportunities to elevate its high-culture standing.⁵⁴⁸ This deficiency in cultural amenities is even more striking when compared to the regional high-culture counterpart Aix-en-Provence (Aix), with internationally renowned institutions like the lyrical art festival, the dance theatre *Pavillon Noir* or the *Granet* Museum, or the international photography festival in the city of Arles. Therefore, in order to be competitive in the ECOC title run, Marseille needed to join forces with its Provence neighbors.

“La deuxième raison, elle est peut-être économique et financière: Marseille n'avait pas les moyens, seule, de financer un projet comme ça et qu'il fallait rassembler des moyens

⁵⁴⁶ Interview 12, #00:00:38-6#, 12:10.

⁵⁴⁷ Andres, “Marseille 2013 or the Final Round of a Long and Complex Regeneration Strategy?”

⁵⁴⁸ Grésillon, “Marseille-Provence 2013, Analyse Multiscalaire D'une Capitale Européenne de La Culture,” 1–2.

sur un territoire plus important et mutualiser autant que faire se peut ces moyens. (...)

Donc, il y avait aussi une exigence économique et financière.”⁵⁴⁹

In addition to a robust cultural infrastructure, financial imperatives of the ECOC title represented another challenge for Marseille. The local crisis discussed before conditioned economic shortcomings in Marseille, which could be balanced by a regional cooperation thanks to resource collectivization.

Furthermore, the heterogeneous and socially dispersed audience on the parceled territory called for a large-scale event transcending the traditional municipal boundaries:

“Il y avait une exigence aussi de public. C’est-à-dire que, à la fois, les publics locaux – je ne parle pas des publics nationaux ou internationaux – des manifestations culturelles et des futures manifestations culturelles de la capitale, c’était des publics sur un territoire beaucoup plus vaste que la seule ville de Marseille (...) Le public, lui, se déplace, vient, va d’un endroit à l’autre, d’un théâtre à l’autre, d’une manifestation à l’autre. Donc, il circule sur un territoire beaucoup plus vaste que la seule municipalité de Marseille.”⁵⁵⁰

Benefiting from a well-established highly mobile audience throughout the region, there was a push for the circulation of cultural products as well:

“Et puis, toujours dans cette logique de public, il y a aussi l’exigence de, pour les acteurs, d’aller chercher les publics plus loin que la seule ville de Marseille. Elle essaie de diffuser, de se diffuser sur le territoire le plus vaste possible, ne serait-ce que pour amortir l’investissement de leur production artistique. Les spectacles ont besoin de circuler, les ensembles ont besoin de circuler, les artistes ont besoin de circuler, d’aller chercher les publics au-delà de leur proximité immédiate.”⁵⁵¹

⁵⁴⁹ Interview 12, #00:00:38-6#, 12:10.

⁵⁵⁰ Ibid., #00:00:38-6#, 12:10.

⁵⁵¹ Ibid., #00:00:38-6#, 12:10 and 12:11

Finally, the former MP13 leader expressed the necessity for interregional and international mobility of actors and productions in what was imagined as a global cultural city region. Hence, producing the ECOC at a regional scale would only be adequate to an existing reality of inter-municipal cultural life.

Revealingly, closing the list of regionalization criteria, the spokesperson concluded: “Donc, pour l’ensemble des ces raisons, la métropolisation du projet était indispensable”⁵⁵². Referring to the metropolitan structure MAMP in construction, she/he replaced the ‘regional’ with the ‘metropolitan’ terminology. In this view, metropolization served as a notion that connected the spatial/infrastructural form and the cultural/social/economic function of the process, bringing together notions of territorial regionalization, resources collectivization, and collaborative cultural governance. In spite of the resistance, it became clear that there would be no ECOC possible if it was not for this plural territory.⁵⁵³

A Collaborative Cultural Project for a Fragmented Territory

Spatially, the regionalization of the 2013 ECOC encompassed a significant section of the area known as Provence. This area was marked by a polycentric network around core cities, from Marseille to Aix, over Toulon and Arles. Beyond the circumscription of a single limited urban frame, MP13’s territory created a 4’600 square km “metropolitan region,”⁵⁵⁴ encompassing 97 municipalities and 1.8 million inhabitants. In this context, the metropolitan dimension of the project was measured in terms of inter-municipal cooperation for the production of a unifying event on a fragmented territory. This implied a collective resource and infrastructure sharing, a collaborative cultural governance structure, and a joint branding strategy. As Grésillon summarized: “c’est ni plus ni moins que l’invention de la métropole et

⁵⁵² Ibid., #00:00:38-6#, 12:12

⁵⁵³ Ibid., #00:00:38-6#, 12:19.

⁵⁵⁴ Nicolas Maisetti, “« Jouer collectif » dans un territoire fragmenté,” *Gouvernement et action publique*, no. 1 (2015): 68.

de la ‘métropolité’.”⁵⁵⁵ This quote suggests that MP13 was a catalyst and cultural prefiguration of the metropolis. I have addressed the ambivalent causal relationship between the ECOOC and the MAMP, and here, the metropolitan terminology served as a synonym for inter-municipal cooperation.

In line with the conflicting constitution of the MAMP, the poly-centrality and cooperative structures required for a regionalized ECOOC lead to multiple disagreements. Indeed, historical, image-related, infrastructural, and politico-ideological divergences – to only name a few examples – set the ground for the highly conflictual terrain of a fragmented regional space. Without detailing every single case of tension between each municipality, I propose to take a closer look at the relationship between Marseille and Aix. The latter was a provincial city of 145,763 inhabitants⁵⁵⁶ situated 40 km north from Marseille. Led by Maryse Joissains-Masini (mayor of Aix since 2001) and the right-wing *Union pour un mouvement populaire* (UMP) government, it was often depicted as a bourgeois city with a strong high-culture and academic heritage, as well as a prosperous service economy. In several regards, Aix was the true historical capital of the Provence region.⁵⁵⁷

In the literature, Aix and Marseille were commonly positioned as two rival poles and entrenched in opposed and incompatible stereotyped images: On the one hand, there was Marseille, the impoverished post-industrial city with a long-standing working class and left-wing tradition, plagued by migration, social integration, and criminality issues. On the other hand, there was Aix, the aristocratic, traditionally right-wing, aesthetically pleasing and quiet town, enjoying an established recognition and touristic attractiveness. My interviewees frequently emphasized the differences and rivalry between both places, too, describing Aix as

⁵⁵⁵ Grésillon, *Un enjeu capitale*, 117–118.

⁵⁵⁶ INSEE, “Recensement de La Population. Populations Légales En Vigueur à Compter Du 1er Janvier 2017. Arrondissements - Cantons - Communes,” Recensement de la population (Bouches-du-Rhône: INSEE, December 2016).

⁵⁵⁷ Roncayolo, *Lectures de villes*, 113.

a rich city, with a strong consciousness of the own capital, a significant high-culture sector, and a much better reputation than Marseille.⁵⁵⁸ Another interview partner emphasized the strong service sector oriented mainly towards regional and local enterprises too.⁵⁵⁹

The relationship between both cities was mostly described in terms of a traditional and negative competition: as one of MP13 cultural producers summarized, “Y a une sorte de complémentarité-hostilité Aix-Marseille qui a 2’000 ans.”⁵⁶⁰ The long-term character of this idea was emphasized by other actors as well: “Y a une conflit historique entre Marseille et Aix”⁵⁶¹ or “Aix-Marseille, c’est historique,”⁵⁶² for instance. The longevity of the Aix-Marseille conflict was emphasized here in order to legitimize the statements through a historical verifiability.

The tensions between both cities manifested in the cultural sector too. However, in the perspective of a joint ECOC project, a dialogue needed to take place: “les culturels, ici à Marseille et Aix et autres (...) ont commencé à se parler pour préparer le programme de 2012, enfin, c’est en 2012, c’était pas historique. Enfin, même historiquement, c’était même l’inverse. L’inverse, c’était qu’on dupliquait les événements.”⁵⁶³ The second MP13 director narrated the preparation of 2013 as a new experience of inter-municipal collaboration between Aix, Marseille, and the further places involved. In this view, it contrasted with what was described as a systematically separated – even, “duplicated” – cultural production practice in the past.

Simultaneously, as one interviewed actors pointed out, the common ECOC was not enough to solve a long established antagonism: “ils ont fait semblant qu’il y avait une unité Marseille-Provence mais la vérité c’est que y a Aix et y a Marseille. Aix, ça va. Marseille, ça

⁵⁵⁸ Interview by the author, *Interview 14*, Digital recording (Marseille, September 21, 2016), #00:32:12-2#, 14:45.

⁵⁵⁹ Interview 6, #00:18:47-0#, 6:29.

⁵⁶⁰ Interview by the author, *Interview 9*, Digital recording (Marseille, October 4, 2016), #00:45:18-2#, 9:67.

⁵⁶¹ Interview 14, #00:06:20-1#, 14:10.

⁵⁶² Interview 12, #00:48:51-7#, 12:93.

⁵⁶³ Interview by the author, *Interview 13*, Digital recording (Marseille, September 23, 2016), #00:37:34-7#, 13:47.

va pas.”⁵⁶⁴ The person further concluded: “Marseille, c’est plus le côté rebelle alors que Aix, c’est plutôt le côté bourgeois. Et y a un incompatibilité.”⁵⁶⁵ According to the informant, the project was only unifying in appearance, though, in fact, both cities remained drastically separated due to inherent discrepancies (“Aix, it’s fine. Marseille, it’s not fine”) and urban cultural differences. This quote exemplifies reductive and cliché city images, mentioning a certain rebellious or marginal character of Marseille, constructing an imagined ‘other’ in opposition to a neat and well-ordered Aix. The ECOOC expectations added pressure to an already conflictual state and, in Andres and Grésillon’s terms, created “an arranged marriage which was highly tumultuous.”⁵⁶⁶

The Organization Structure

A particularity of the organization structure of the ECOOC was the choice of Pfister, head of the CCIMP, as the president of the association. MP13’s first director took credit for this impulse:

“ma demande – je l’ai obtenu de Gaudin très vite, et puis de l’ensemble des élus – que, justement, ça ne soit pas un élu qui soit le président, et donc l’animateur de cette gouvernance, que ce soit le Président de la Chambre de Commerce, c’est-à-dire un représentant du monde économique. Par ailleurs, on souhaitait associer dès le départ le monde économique parce qu’on savait qu’on aurait besoin d’une forte contribution des mécènes, donc dès le départ, j’ai demandé au monde économique d’être un des acteurs essentiels du projet.”⁵⁶⁷

⁵⁶⁴ Interview 14, #00:32:12-2#, 14:43.

⁵⁶⁵ Ibid., #00:32:12-2#, 14:44.

⁵⁶⁶ Andres and Grésillon, “‘European Capital of Culture’: A Leverage for Regional Development and Governance? The Case of Marseille Provence 2013,” 9.

⁵⁶⁷ Interview 12, #00:08:53-5#, 12:24.

In terms of a cross-sector governance frame, she/he considered that it would be profitable for the project's development and funding to distance the association from the established hierarchies of the local government. Hence, following cultural economy logics, the head of the economic sphere was given the lead. Discussing the nomination process, my interview partner at the Chamber explained further:

“on a commencé a travailler avec la Ville et quand l'association a été crée – association ‘Marseille-Provence 2013’ – pour concourir à la capitale, le politique avait assez peur parce qu’il n’y croyait pas du tout et il se sont dit: Tiens, qui peut être le président de ça? Comme ça, s’il perd (hands clapping), c’est pas grave, et s’il gagne, de toute façon, on est les plus forts. Et donc, ils ont demandé à Jacques Pfister de devenir président de l’association ‘MP13’ pour concourir au titre.”⁵⁶⁸

This quote conveyed the idea of ‘scared politics,’ which joined the image of passivity mentioned above, and suggested the existence of a consuming fear of failure which prevented the municipal government from taking progressive measures. According to the interviewee, the fact that the MP13 association was constituted of various representatives across different spheres of activity, represented a secure context of action for the politics. Indeed, in case of a defeat of the project, the municipality would be able to extract itself from the responsibility and blame the economic leadership, and in the case of a successful achievement, the totality of the organizing body would enjoy recognition. As such, Pfister’s nomination was regarded as a safety choice, allowing less risk for the municipality.

The cultural programming director of MP13 and EU Commission member interpreted the function of this role distribution in terms of political responsibilities too:

“de laisser présider le projet du Président de la Chambre de Commerce. Bon, ça montre aussi l’intérêt du monde économique pour ce projet (...) mais le fait que ce n’était pas,

⁵⁶⁸ Interview 10, #00:00:44-4#, 10:8.

disons, le maire de Marseille ou le président de la région, un élu, un politique, ça a beaucoup aidé à garder le projet un peu en dehors de la bataille politique.”⁵⁶⁹

As underlined here, Pfister’s presidency sealed the economic motivation underlying the ECOC application. In addition, this nomination partly cleared the executive focus on the political realm and thereby, proposed to minimize the potential for political conflicts.

While supported by the elite stakeholders of the project, Pfister’s presidency encountered vehement criticism, too. For instance, the Alter Off Founder, witnessed that

“la Chambre de Commerce, (...) c’est eux qui ont co-piloté pas mal le truc. C’est lui le président de l’association, on est d’accord? Monsieur [high-pitched voice] Pfister! Euh, et quand vous regarder tous ceux qui étaient dans le Conseil d’Administration et autres, y avait pratiquement pas d’acteurs culturels.”⁵⁷⁰

This discontent was based on the impression that ‘the economists *made culture*.’ This gave the ECOC project a neoliberal city marketing dimension, in which culture was instrumentalized for profit, while neglecting the arts and culture producers and artists on the ground. Here, the quote referred to an ideological divergence regarding the instances in power deciding what was worthy of and what was (financially) supported as culture.

From this point, the team approached Bernard Latarjet, a cultural administrator from Paris. After a long prestigious career in the arts and culture sectors (e.g. from 1991 to 1992, he was a cabinet member under the iconic Minister of Culture Jack Lang, one of the co-founders of the ECOC programm). For over a decade (1996-2006) Latarjet was at the head of the public cultural institution *Établissement public du parc et de la grande halle de la Villette* (EPPGHV, short *La Villette*). Based on his significant expertise and recently gained availability (Latarjet

⁵⁶⁹ Interview 7, #00:16:43-3#, 7:22.

⁵⁷⁰ Interview by the author, *Interview 15*, Digital recording (Marseille, September 28, 2016), #00:15:31-3#, 15:25.

had retired from *La Villette* in 2006), the administrator was invited to Marseille as a cultural consultant for the ECOC application.

Soon thereafter, in what he described as an “organic”⁵⁷¹ process, he became the director of the project. The way he portrayed the ‘natural selection process’ leading to his position at MP13 served as a response to harsh criticism, which the organization team committee and himself received throughout the project. Indeed, several local cultural actors and producers resisted what was considered the encroachment of an intruding high-culture executive from the central administration on the Marseille project. Bullen analyzed the commissioning of an external person in charge to be “indicative of a general lack of confidence in local capacity.”⁵⁷² Adversaries of this nomination backed by a large portion of the political sphere⁵⁷³ saw Latarjet as a distant “technocrate parisien,”⁵⁷⁴ and regarded his nomination as the symbol of both the disturbing controlling presence from the centralized state and the appropriation of what should have been a local representative leadership. Hence, similar lines of criticism towards top-down and elitist leadership towards both Pfister and Latarjet can be identified, representing an ideological clash in Marseille’s cultural policy.

Features of the Cultural Capital

Despite the resistance, Latarjet, who has been described as the “père de la candidature,”⁵⁷⁵ led the prefiguration and application period. The main task consisted in articulating the European Commission’s selection criteria in accordance to the local potential, image and heritage of the city. My interview partner at the Commission described the six following main criteria of Brussel’s “leading base”: (1) “long-term cultural strategy”; (2)

⁵⁷¹ Interview 12, #00:00:38-6#, 12:2.

⁵⁷² Bullen, “Comparing the Cultures of Cities in Two European Capitals of Culture,” 102.

⁵⁷³ Grésillon, *Un enjeu capitale*, 64.

⁵⁷⁴ Interview 14, #00:02:43-2#, 14:6.

⁵⁷⁵ Grésillon, *Un enjeu capitale*, 27.

“European dimension of the project”; (3) “cultural and artistic content”; (4) “outreach” and “audience development”; (5) “capacity to deliver”; and (6) “management.”⁵⁷⁶

In order to respond to the imperatives of the selection, Latarjet’s team developed a strategy based on a transparent communication about Marseille’s negative assets. The application document put forward five sectors considered as underdeveloped by global market competitiveness standards and were expected to be solved with the help of the ECOC title. The so-called ‘weaknesses’ were building on the ‘city in crisis’ topos discussed before: Marseille’s (1) economic,⁵⁷⁷ (2) urban,⁵⁷⁸ (3) European,⁵⁷⁹ (4) “good governance”,⁵⁸⁰ and (5) cultural⁵⁸¹ delays.⁵⁸² In the face of local disadvantages, the ECOC opportunity was praised by the organizers as a springboard for improved urban development, allowing Marseille to pursue a “culture-led regeneration”⁵⁸³ and reach the rank of a competitive European metropolis.⁵⁸⁴

The official application file programmatically asked: “Comment la titre de Capitale peut-il aider Marseille-Provence à devenir une véritable métropole de la culture?” Branded notions of cultural metropolitanism were promoted along the lines of a five dimensional ‘potential’

⁵⁷⁶ Interview 7, #00:28:23-7#, 7:34 – 7:41. Unlike the rest of the interview, which was conducted in French, the selection criteria were listed in English.

⁵⁷⁷ I.e. according to the official application file, Marseille was at the 23rd position in the European metropolises ranking, its unemployment rate was higher than the national average (13% to 8%), and its tax system was notably weaker compared to similar municipalities.

⁵⁷⁸ I.e. according to the official application file, there was an important need for urban regeneration in several inner- and suburban districts, as well as an improvement necessity for key public service sectors such as waste magnet, public transportation, and night life structuration.

⁵⁷⁹ I.e. according to the official application file, inspite of European projects conducted at the municipal and regional level, there was no shared feeling of European belonging amongst the Marseille population.

⁵⁸⁰ I.e. according to the official application file, the cooperation between local and regional authorities was inexistent due to unequal resource distribution, historical rivalries, and political disagreements.

⁵⁸¹ I.e. according to the official application file, Marseille suffered from resources and actors dispersal in the arts and culture field, lacked artistic production on an international quality standard, and was unable to establish itself as a global creative hub.

⁵⁸² Marseille-Provence 2013, *Marseille-Provence 2013: capitale européenne de la culture. Dossier de candidature* (Marseille: Marseille-Provence 2013, 2007), 285.

⁵⁸³ Andres, “Marseille 2013 or the Final Round of a Long and Complex Regeneration Strategy?” 67.

⁵⁸⁴ Bernard Latarjet, “Marseille-Provence 2013: genèse, objectifs et enjeux d’un projet culturel métropolitain,” *Méditerranée. Revue géographique des pays méditerranéens / Journal of Mediterranean geography*, no. 114 (2010): 27.

which the Marseille-Provence territory enjoyed and which would be catalyzed by the “capital” title.⁵⁸⁵

I summarize the five aspects in the following: The (1) “geographic potential” referred to the nodal position of Marseille, at the intersection between Europe and the Mediterranean sea. It also enhanced the mobility infrastructures insuring a “hub” function, like the Marseille Provence international airport, the touristic and industrial port, the train stations and highways, for instance. Additionally, a somewhat romanticized heritage of multi- and intercultural Marseille provided the so-called (2) “cultural potential.” Thirdly, the (3) “economic and urban potential” was targeted, in line with urban development measures. Further, Marseille’s involvement in European Union networks was identified as (4) “international potential,” and lastly, the so-called (5) “human potential” emphasized the intention of pursuing a collaborative and integrative cultural territorial policy.

The urban renewal ambition pursued by the ECOC resonated with *Euroméditerranée*, a major state-driven regeneration project in the inner-city districts of Marseille, which had begun in 1995. Linking urban planning and economic strategy, this *Opération d’Intérêt National*⁵⁸⁶ (OIN) comprised significant 313 hectares in the third first *Arrondissements* of the city center, encompassing the neighborhoods of Joliette, Arenc, Saint-Charles Porte d’Aix, Belle-de-Mai and Rue de la République.⁵⁸⁷ In 2007, the area was enlarged with a *Euroméditerranée II* sequel, which involved 170 hectares of city planning at the Northern end of the initial territory.⁵⁸⁸

⁵⁸⁵ Marseille-Provence 2013, *Marseille-Provence 2013*, 286-288.

⁵⁸⁶ The *Opération d’Intérêt National* is specific French legal status for an urban planning project which holds the state’s ownership and decision power over the involved territories: “Code de l’urbanisme - Article L102-12,” L102-12 Code de l’urbanisme §, accessed March 12, 2018, <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichCodeArticle.do?cidTexte=LEGITEXT000006074075&idArticle=LEGIARTI000031210110&dateTexte=&categorieLien=cid>; “Code de l’urbanisme - Article L102-13,” L102-13 Code de l’urbanisme §, accessed March 12, 2018, <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichCodeArticle.do?cidTexte=LEGITEXT000006074075&idArticle=LEGIARTI000031210112&dateTexte=&categorieLien=cid>.

⁵⁸⁷ Betty Jista, “La Maitrise D’ouvrage Urbaine Des Projets Iconiques Ou La Gouvernabilité de La Production Urbaine Des Territoires Métropolitains. Etude de Trois Cas À Travers La Gestion de La Programmation Urbaine. Ile de Nantes > Rives de Loire, Lyon Confluence, Euroméditerranée À Marseille” (Université Paris 8, 2007).

⁵⁸⁸ “Euroméditerranée 2,” *Euroméditerranée2.fr*, accessed October 1, 2013, <http://www.euromediterraneeacte2.fr/de> euromediterranee>1>a>euromediterranee>2/euromediterranee>2/>.

Through the modernization and re-functionalization of the inner-city districts, the project aimed at booming the economic, social, and cultural development, while also guaranteeing the international attractiveness of the city. In line with its slogan *Euroméditerranée, accélérateur de métropole*,⁵⁸⁹ according to the ambition, the renewed city center took on representative function for the city in its push for reaching the ‘level’ of rival European metropolises. Insofar, *Euroméditerranée* was another example of a planning project in Marseille, which combined urban renewal measures and metropolitan discourses.

Parts of *Euroméditerranée* were dedicated to the development of cultural infrastructures and high-standard artistic centers. In this context, the *Musée des Civilisations d’Europe et de la Méditerranée* (MuCEM) was imagined and realized in the course of the ECOOC award in 2013. As one of my interviewees recalled, the urban regeneration master plan became a key asset in the run for the EU title, especially with regards to the developments of an iconic cultural space like the museum.⁵⁹⁰ Andres emphasized *Euroméditerranée*’s role in what she regarded as a “30-year regeneration policy for Marseille”:⁵⁹¹

“Euroméditerranée has been a condition *sine qua non* to the success of the ECOOC bid. It is and has been a catalyst for Marseille to rebuild its image and stature in France and in Europe and the ECOOC bid fits with the broader perspective of the urban transformation of the metropolis. (...) The combination of *Euroméditerranée* and Marseille 2013 offers the opportunity of promoting a more coherent policy of culture-led regeneration.”⁵⁹²

⁵⁸⁹ Bertonecello and Dubois, *Marseille, Euroméditerranée*, 13; Camille Tiano, “Les Fauteurs D’imaginaire. Construction D’un Imaginaire et Jeu D’acteurs Dans Les Opérations de Requalification Urbaine Euralille, Euroméditerranée” (Université Paris 8, 2007), 189.

⁵⁹⁰ Interview by the author, *Interview 7*, Digital recording (Marseille, September 26, 2016), #00:28:23-7#, 7:34.

⁵⁹¹ Andres, “Marseille 2013 or the Final Round of a Long and Complex Regeneration Strategy?” 61.

⁵⁹² *Ibid.*, 67–68.

Winning the ECOC title or Narrating Marseille's Renaissance

In 2008, Marseille-Provence won the title against Lyon, Toulouse and Bordeaux. Looking a century back, it was noticeable that these very cities have remained Marseille's main competitors in the run for national representative events since 1906. Due to an uncontested superiority, Paris was not considered for the race in the first place, however, the network of 'second cities competition' was very relevant. In 2008, according to an EU representative, the victory did not come as a surprise for the exclusive sphere of ECOC stakeholders and jury.⁵⁹³

In a press release following the announcement, the CCIMP president congratulated the collaborative efforts which, in his view, had made this victory possible: "Marseille 2013, c'est la victoire d'une méthode: le jouer collectif. (...) Les acteurs politiques, économiques et culturels de cent trente communes ont su se rassembler autour d'un même projet."⁵⁹⁴ Interestingly however, in this source, the event title was abbreviated and assigned to Marseille only, which might indicate a tendency of self-appropriation of the EU award by the city's economic leaders. At the same time, this very quote enhanced quite the opposite notion, celebrating a multi-scalar governance mode, which had successfully brought various activity sectors and geographic territories together.

⁵⁹³ Interview 7, #00:05:35-8#, 7:8.

⁵⁹⁴ Jacques Pfister, quoted in: Maisetti, *Opération culturelle et pouvoirs urbains*, 59

4.3. Making the Conflicted ‘Capital’

Realizing MP13

From 2008 on, Latarjet’s and a ten-person team developed the ECOC concept until the director announced his resignation in March 2011. Several factors might have influenced this departure: The official version claimed Latarjet’s age and fatigue.⁵⁹⁵ Additionally, the ongoing conflicts amongst the municipalities and political stakeholders involved most probably were a factor too. As such, it was not unusual in an ECOC directory board; most ECOC project get several directors.⁵⁹⁶

Latarjet was quickly replaced by Jean-François Chougnet, a high-standard cultural administrator from Paris. Chougnet, historian and graduate from the prestigious French *Hautes Ecoles Sciences Po* and the *Ecole Nationale d’Administration*, had held positions as an administrator at the *Centre Pompidou* and the Jewish History Museum in Paris, as well as at the National Museum in Lisbon. In addition, he had worked closely with Latarjet in Jack Lang’s cabinet (1988) and as the director of the *Grande Halle* at *La Villette* (2001–2006).⁵⁹⁷

In the course of Chougnet’s restructuring from 2011 onwards, the organization team significantly grew up to 57 cross-sector employees, and welcomed amongst others a new artistic programming director, Ulrich Fuchs, former co-director of the ECOC 2008 in Linz, and an executive manager, Thierry Roche. The official team was cemented around the board of director representing the totality of the public financial partners and the enrolled municipalities. Adding to the variety of actors, arts and culture representatives, as well as local/regional performers played an influential role. Among others, prominent personalities and institutions were formally involved in the cultural programming:⁵⁹⁸ E.g. the internationally acclaimed Ballet Preljocaj

⁵⁹⁵ Grésillon, *Un enjeu capitale*, 64.

⁵⁹⁶ Maisetti, *Opération culturelle et pouvoirs urbains*, 155.

⁵⁹⁷ Interview 13, #00:03:28-6#, 13:2.

⁵⁹⁸ Grésillon, *Un enjeu capitale*, 66.

company and the *Ballet de Marseille*, directors of local and regional theaters like the *Jeu de Paume* and the *Grand Théâtre de Provence et du Gymnase* and the *Théâtre du Merlan*, as well as leaders of the interdisciplinary cultural center *La Friche de la Belle de Mai*) and the eclectic *Festival de Marseille*.

The numerous partners were spread over 130 municipalities⁵⁹⁹ in the Department *Bouches-du-Rhône*, 13 local and regional governments on various scales: *Conseil Régional*, *Conseil Général* (Department), 6 *Communautés d'Agglomération* (short: CA) or EPCI (*Marseille Provence Métropole*, *communauté d'agglomération du pays d'Aix*, *Agglopoie Provence*, *communauté d'agglomération Arles-Crau-Camargue-Montagnette*, *communauté d'agglomération du Pays de Martigues*), the state represented by the *Direction Régionale des Affaires Culturelles* (short: DRAC), *Euroméditerranée* (state and local governments), 4 institutions of the economic sector (among others, the CCIMP) and 3 universities (the universities merged but kept an own administration board respectively).⁶⁰⁰ However, in the course of inter-municipal disagreements, Toulon however left the project in 2011, withdrawing 7 Mio from the total budget. Overall, the ECOC was a success which hosted 900 different events and welcomed a total of over 10 Mio. visitors.⁶⁰¹ From the selection onwards, MP13's budget reached 102 Mio. Euro, mostly carried by EU and governmental public funds, representing one of the best funded and most expensive ECOC of the last years (e.g. In comparison, Lille 2004 cost 74 million.).⁶⁰²

The broad spectrum of cultural productions, the longevity of the event, the variety of actors, and the large heterogeneous territory, to list the least, caused a challenging negotiation of the ECOC scales: as its first director metaphorically expressed, implementing the MP13 was

⁵⁹⁹ Andres, "Marseille 2013 or the Final Round of a Long and Complex Regeneration Strategy?" 61.

⁶⁰⁰ Baron et al., "Marseille-Provence 2013: Leçons D'une Expérience. Rapport Projet," 8.

⁶⁰¹ Claire Bommelaer, "Marseille veut capitaliser sur sa saison exceptionnelle," *Le Figaro*, December 30, 2013; Daniel Winkler, "Glanz Und Elend Des Status ‚Europäische Kulturhauptstadt‘. Kulturpolitik, Gentrifizierung Und Segregation in Marseille-Provence 2013," *Dérive. Zeitschrift Für Stadtforschung*, no. 52 (2013).

⁶⁰² Baron et al., "Marseille-Provence 2013: Leçons D'une Expérience. Rapport Projet," 25.

similar to “faire rentrer un gigantesque éléphant dans un magasin de porcelain.”⁶⁰³ The quote emphasizes the somewhat disproportional ambition of a shared identity as the European Capital of Culture on the Marseille-Provence territory. It also suggested an inadequate oversize and claimed homogeneity of an all-including ‘bulldozer’ label, abruptly applied onto a geographic, cultural, and social mosaic, whose plurality it could impossibly capture all at once. Aware of the conflict potential comprised within the ECOC title, the the first MP13 director had adopted a rather fatalist position towards criticism and opposition in the official discourse: “en général, les capitales européennes de la culture, c’est de la fabrication de mécontents.”⁶⁰⁴ This formulation exaggerated with humour the inherently conflictual character and indicated towards the points of rupture featured by the ECOC.

Drawing from Latarjet’s interpretation, and for the sake of a critical investigation of the case, rather than elaborating on the event’s description, I propose to investigate the realization and impact of the ECOC through spheres of conflict. Firstly, I examine a governance conflict sphere, encompassing inter-municipal and inter-sectorial disagreements as well as political rivalries. Secondly, I investigate what I called a programmatic conflict sphere, which entailed institutionalized critique and counter-voices of the ECOC. Thirdly, I look at a sociocultural conflict sphere, engaging with questions of European and Mediterranean integration, cosmopolitanism and social integration/exclusion mechanisms.

This conflict-oriented analytical lens allows to distill both consensual and challenging processes during MP13. Moreover, following on from the starting hypothesis of this chapter, I assume that insofar as MP13 functioned as a producer and conveyor of Marseille’s new metropolitan image, the conflicts inhabiting the event informed the urban representation accordingly and must be investigated in these very terms.

⁶⁰³ Bernard Latarjet, quoted in: Grésillon, *Un enjeu capitale*, 67.

⁶⁰⁴ Interview 12, #00:22:18-9#, 12:45.

Governance Conflicts: Inter-municipal, Inter-sectorial and Intra-Political Disputes

Last but not least, I will focus on a third zone of conflicts: the governance of the ECOC, mostly with regards to the relations between and amongst the political and economic spheres. At the center of these interactions were the tensions between the municipal governments of Aix and Marseille. The event was instrumentalized in the context of unresolved resentments from both sides. The cultural programming director of MP13 remembered: “il y avait des tensions entre Aix et Marseille (...) et parfois le projet était pris en otage pour d’autres sujets.”⁶⁰⁵ Referring to the well-know and historical antagonisms between both cities, the interview underscored the instrumentalization of the ECOC for the sake of political conflicts.

In this context, Joissains-Masini’s mayor office was skeptical about the collaborative project:

“D’ailleurs, ça explique en partie les réticences d’Aix sur 2013. Les réticences d’Aix sur 2013, elles sont fondées– Parce qu’il y a trois événements (...) qui arrivent sur les territoire en même temps (...), c’est la fusion des trois universités (...), c’est MP13 et c’est les reflections à partir de – portées par la Chambre de Commerce au départ, puis par les politiques, puis par le gouvernement Ayrault après les élections de 2012 – du fait de la Métropole administrative.”⁶⁰⁶

This depiction of the situation comprised several key aspects and inscribed Aix’s hesitations in a wider context of negotiations, which had already challenged the inter municipal relationships over the preceding years. One crucial factor was the state-led merging of three universities (Provence University, University of the Mediterranean and Paul-Cézanne University) that took place between 2007 and 2012. This represented a precursor to inter-municipal institutional merging on what would later become the MAMP territory.

The second head of MP13 recalled the vehement conflict:

⁶⁰⁵ Interview 7, #00:16:43-3#, 7:24.

⁶⁰⁶ Interview 13, #00:53:24-4#, 13:71.

“L’université, ça a été une bataille horrible. (...) C’était la guerre, hein! (...) Parce que Aix, historiquement, est universitaire bien avant Marseille, donc y a une noblesse d’université en quelque sorte, comme aurait dit [Pierre; MdS] Bourdieu, à Aix que vous n’avez pas à Marseille. (...) C’est très symbolique (...) Et c’est une des raisons pour lesquelles Aix freinait sur MP13 en disant: ‘y a l’université, vous allez nous faire le coup sur la culture et ensuite arrive la collectivité.’”⁶⁰⁷

Aix, which had a historical academic tradition, protested against colliding with another institution, not to mention giving up its prominence in favor of Marseille, which would host the center of the newly created Aix-Marseille-University. The interviewee referred to the work *La Noblesse d’Etat: Grandes écoles et esprit de corps* (1989) in which Pierre Bourdieu developed the concept of *noblesse d’Etat* as a key notion of the traditional French correlation of elite education and social and societal status.⁶⁰⁸ Transforming the terminology, the quote above explains why Aix jealously guarded its established position as high-standard academic center in order to maintain national recognition and historical prestige. Furthermore, the university battle was regarded as the premise of invading collaborative measures, which would only intensify and reach further sectors in the future (“vous allez nous faire le coup sur la culture et ensuite arrive la collectivité”). Indeed, the municipality in Aix was reticent to collaborating with its historical ‘enemy’ Marseille in the context of an ECOC application and even threatened to leave the boat as the university issues peaked.⁶⁰⁹

Last but not least, the perspective of becoming a metropolitan region, merging administrations and sharing resources and responsibilities was considered critically. In fact, it seemed to only enhance the resistance against any form of cooperation with Marseille. In this context, the ECOC served as means of pressure and an alibi feeding the conflicted ground. The

⁶⁰⁷ Ibid., #00:53:24-4#, 13:72.

⁶⁰⁸ Pierre Bourdieu, *La Noblesse d’Etat : Grandes écoles et esprit de corps* (Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 1989).

⁶⁰⁹ Interview 7, #00:16:43-3#, 7:25.

initial MP13 director regretted the “problèmes politiques entre Aix et Marseille, qui utilisaient la capitale pour nourrir la machine à conflits, pour nourrir la machine à s’engueuler.”⁶¹⁰ Overall, a conflictual triad of education, culture and local government activated a complex mix of intellectual, social, politico-administrative, economic, and immensely symbolic capital which caused ongoing conflicts.

The interrelatedness of the regionalized ECOOC project and the intended metropolis in planning played a key role. It pointed to inherent challenges of the inter-municipal imperatives and became the object of wider political negotiations. The situation was particularly complex due to an affirmed resistance against metropolization both from the right and the left:

“il y avait et il y a une opposition de droite et de gauche. Alors, Aubagne, ville, à l’époque, ville communiste, s’est opposée à la métropolisation comme Aix-en-Provence, une ville plutôt gouvernée par la droite. (...) l’opposition contre la Métropole, c’était les deux côtés alors, la gauche et la droite. (...) Parfois, ils [left-oriented municipalities; MdS] ont interprété le projet de MP13, où il y avait un grand intérêt; ils se sont engagés, vraiment, Aubagne, Arles, à participer avec plaisir et volonté et engagement mais ils ont quand même cru que le projet MP13, c’est le choix de droite pour aller après direction Métropole.”⁶¹¹

Hence, the opposition, which seemed to transcend political orientation differences, constituted a major obstacle. Moreover, according to the quote above, adding to general right-left tensions throughout the metropolitan territory,⁶¹² there was a sense from the left that the MAMP project was an attempt from the opponent parties to impose a vision and gain supremacy.

Among other topics, the funding of the collaborative project, both during MP13 and regarding the MAMP prospectively, caused resistance against budget collectivization and raised

⁶¹⁰ Interview 12, #00:52:02-8#, 12:101.

⁶¹¹ Interview 7, #00:44:37-7#, 7:55.

⁶¹² Ibid., #00:16:43-3#, 7:22.

the risk of unequal impact distribution: it was difficult to convince the other local governments of the future metropolitan territory to take part in ECOC because they felt like they were expected to participate merely in order to ‘pay for Marseille’ which could not carry to costs of such an event on its own.⁶¹³

Overall, the conflict management, mainly revolving around issues of the supremacy of Marseille and the tax distribution,⁶¹⁴ required much time and effort:

“Toute cette pédagogie. On a passé, et Jacques Pfister, en particulier, a passé un temps (...) monstrueux à empêcher l’explosion par les politiques du projet et de la réalisation. (...) une fois, c’est le président du Conseil Général qui veut partir, ensuite c’est la mairie d’Aix, ensuite c’est la mairie de Toulon qui finit par partir, enfin on a passé un temps à calmer le jeu!”⁶¹⁵

Talking about “pedagogy,” this representative of the CCIMP recalled the institution’s role as a mediator and the ongoing worry about a possible dismantlement of the ECOC ambition due to ever changing but constantly reproducing inter-municipal conflicts.

The political tensions impacted directly on the other sectors of the cultural governance and on the atmosphere during the realization of MP13 too:

“Mais on a vécu depuis 2006 (...) jusqu’au (...) 11 janvier 2013 dans l’hostilité des politiques. Dans l’hostilité permanente, dans la peur, dans la déchéance. Et donc, on a avancé parce qu’on y croyait, parce que au fond, le mouvement a été tellement fort qu’à un moment donné, le politique, il a beau essayer de freiner, il peut plus arrêter la machine!”⁶¹⁶

⁶¹³ Interview 12, #00:00:38-6#, 12:16.

⁶¹⁴ Andres and Gresillon, “‘European Capital of Culture’: A Leverage for Regional Development and Governance? The Case of Marseille Provence 2013,” 10.

⁶¹⁵ Interview 10, #00:10:30-8#, 10:15.

⁶¹⁶ Ibid., #00:18:07-1#, 10:29.

Latarjet was extensively exposed to and dependent on the disagreements between the municipalities and the representative politicians, the specific Aix-Marseille quarrels as well as the internal obstacles at the *Ville de Marseille*. During my interviews Latarjet's exhaustion was mentioned several times and his departure in 2011 was often explained as a result of these multiple conflicts.⁶¹⁷

The disputes amongst the municipal governments and other urban and cultural stakeholders were the expression of a changing governance on a new metropolitan scale in progress. The administrators and the politicians found themselves in a transitory phase, unable to formulate an explicit guiding metropolitan endeavor. The head of cultural programming during MP13 described this 'trial and error' situation as well as the frustrations which derived from it:

“il y avait pas vraiment une structuration claire de la coopération au niveau métropolitain – on a pas parlé de la Métropole à l'époque, ou pas encore, mais avec des différents partenaires au niveau du territoire de MP13. Alors, comme vous le savez, il y avait, je crois, 92 ou 93 communes, et c'était un peu par hasard que les uns et les autres se sont rencontrés. On avait pas, disons, une structuration de ce travail.”⁶¹⁸

Interestingly, the interviewee pointed to the fact that *there was no* public discourse about the metropolis by the time the ECOC planning phase started. Rather, there were unstructured imperatives for territorial cooperation whose guidelines and goals remained vague. Though, the inter-municipality endeavors were nothing new in the Department (the discussion had been going on for decades);⁶¹⁹ rather, the problem lied in the incapacity to concretize them:

⁶¹⁷ E.g. interview 13, #00:03:28-6#, 13:5 and interview 14, #00:06:20-1#, 14:9.

⁶¹⁸ Interview 7, #00:10:04-6#, 7:2.

⁶¹⁹ René Borruey, “L'aire Métropolitaine Marseillaise En Projets Au XXe Siècle. Esquisse D'une Histoire,” in *Metropolisation, Gouvernance Et Citoyennete Dans La Region Urbaine Marseillaise*, ed. André Donzel (Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 2001), 153–172.

“MP13, y avait pas une cohésion et jusqu’à maintenant y a une grande difficulté d’une coopération sur ce territoire. Et vous connaissez certainement les raisons pour lesquelles Marseille est en retard. C’est la politique de Gaston Defferre qui n’a jamais voulu créer une Métropole autour de Marseille pour pas impliquer les maires communistes autour de Marseille dans une forme de gouvernance. (...) et le monde économique a toujours souffert de ce retard.”⁶²⁰

As expressed here, there was the notion of a historical political conflict narrative, which had prevented the implementation of efficient collaborative governance modes on the metropolitan territory so far. For a long time, Gaston Defferre, who had been the mayor of Marseille for over 30 years (1944–1945 and 1953–1986), had been opposed to merging with surrounding communist regional governments. In spite of a shift towards right-left battles discussed above, the intra-political obstacles to metropolization have perpetuated up until the beginning of the 21st century.

Even though there was a consensus regarding the general idea of a regionalized ECOC,⁶²¹ the conflicted metropolization and governance grounds on the territory often revealed themselves as a barriers obstructing the successful unfolding of MP13:

“il n’y avait pas un substrat partagé culturel, métropolitain, qui soit la base de MP13. Ça a été un élan, ça a été mobilisateur, ça a été populaire, donc c’est énorme, rien que ça, c’est énorme. Mais je suis pas dupe, je suis pas naïf, (...) On a pas produit le meilleur de ce qu’on aurait produit si, toutes choses égales par ailleurs, on avait un vrai modèle, enfin, un vrai mode de gouvernance métropolitain avec un projet métropolitain dans toute sa plénitude.”⁶²²

⁶²⁰ Interview 7, #00:40:29-9#, 7:50.

⁶²¹ Interview 12, #00:52:02-8#, 12:102.

⁶²² Interview 11, #00:16:29-5#, 11:41.

The lack of collaborative governance, which was, in return, supposed to be at the heart of the cultural collaborative measures constituting MP13, was a great handicap. The EU commission expert noted the catalyzing function of 2013 in the process of metropolization as a positive result. However, in this view, the event could not unfold its full potential due to the unresolved governance issues it had to face in the first place. Furthermore, the representative, who had experienced different ECOC in the years preceding MP13, underlined the difference between the latter and the ECOC “Ruhr.2010” for instance.⁶²³ According to the interview partner, a regional cohesion throughout the Ruhr region had existed already since the 1980s–90s. In this process, the ECOC title was received as the crowning moment of these very governance achievements. In contrast, Marseille had not even begun to install the necessary cohesion and this very relay in territorial cooperation remained a great challenge for the 2013 ECOC.

Programmatic Conflicts: The Institutionalized Critique

In the analysis of MP13 through the lens of conflicts, I identify another sector of frictions: the formal counter-collectives to MP13. Anti-establishment movements were characteristic of the 2013 ECOC, because it was the first event of this kind to ever have an institutionalized ‘off’ program. In Marseille-Provence, it took two forms: the ‘official’ off-program, “Marseille 2013 OFF” (short: Off), and the more radical “Alter Off” association.⁶²⁴ In the following, I retrace the emergence process of both formations based the self-depiction and stories of involved and active actors. For the sake of synthesis, I have selected two core interviewees out of a wider empirical record, which I chose according to the richness and analytical potential of the accounts.⁶²⁵

⁶²³ Interview 7, #00:40:29-9#, 7:49.

⁶²⁴ Maisetti, “Marseille 2013 Off: L’institutionnalisation D’une Critique ?” 59.

⁶²⁵ Interview 14 was conducted with one of the three founding members of the OFF and interview 15 was held with the creator of “Alter Off”.

At its origins, the Off was a group of three graphic designer friends and colleagues based in Marseille: Martin Carrese, Antonin Doussot, and Éric Pringels. Following on from the EU commission's announcement that a French city would be awarded the 2013 ECOC status in 2004, they launched an independent project idea. One of them reminded:

“tout se termine en 13 puisqu'on est dans le Département 13, donc toutes leurs opérations [at the departmental Conseil Général; MdS] c'était 'Seigneur 13', 'Artisans 13', 'Jeunes 13', 'Sport 13', tout ce que tu peux imaginer en 13. Et donc c'était un peu la blague, on parlait en 13, tu vois, 'sympa-treize', 'cool-treize'. Et à ce moment-là, Eric, lui qui venait de Belgique, il avait travaillé sur Lille 2004 et sur Bruxelles 2000 et sur le calendrier des Capitales Européennes de la Culture, on a vu qu'en 2013 ce serait en France qu'ils choisiraient, donc en 2013 on s'est dit: 'c'est obligé que ce soit Marseille'.”⁶²⁶

Starting out as a joke around the number 13, the designers founded the association “Marseille 2013” and, among other things, blocked the brand and domain name “marseille2013.com” well before the municipality engaged with the ECOC application. This provoked ongoing terminological confusions and disputes in the following years⁶²⁷: politicians, consumers, and marketers regularly mistook “Marseille 2013” for the official ECOC denomination “Marseille-Provence 2013.”

Though, originally, as the interviewee underlined, there was neither an explicit project to become an established ‘off’ program, nor the ambition to take the lead of a potential ECOC title for Marseille; at that time, “Marseille 2013” was rather a project imagined on its own terms by an independent creatives group. It was only later on that, in order to distance oneself from the official organizers of MP13 and to clarify the confusions between both organisms, the collective adopted an institutionalized ‘Off ECOC’ status and launched a programmatic call for projects

⁶²⁶ Interview 14, #00:00:17-5#, 14:1.

⁶²⁷ Ibid., #00:01:39-6#, 14:3 and #00:02:43-2#, 14:4.

at the margins of the official selection.⁶²⁸ In essence, it aimed at proposing a network and online visibility for Marseille-based artists, and giving a voice to projects and ideas which had been rejected by the MP13 selection or wished to take place outside the ECOC structure. In short: “c’était une manière de montrer ce qui n’avait pas voix de presse dans le truc officiel.”⁶²⁹ Insofar, it intended to counterbalance what the OFF founder regarded as failing cultural politics in Marseille in general and more specifically during 2013:

“[L’idée; MdS] c’était de représenter un peu la base, tu vois, des artistes qui ont pas forcément voix au chapitre. Parce qu’en fait on est dans une ville où y a énormément des gens qui font des trucs chouettes mais qui n’ont pas forcément la visibilité parce qu’ils ont pas forcément l’occasion et y a très peu de coordination entre toutes les structures, ça c’est un problème politique.”⁶³⁰

Challenging local politics and cultural policy, the members of the group felt at ease with a subversive ‘disturber’ role, a *position rebelle*⁶³¹ formulating a ‘soft’ critique that would gain strength and impact through material realizations and artistic production. The interviewee explained as follows: “à l’origine, c’est vraiment une blague,”⁶³² “petite contribution rigolote pour faire réagir, pour piquer un peu, tu vois, on était des poils à grater. Mais on avait pas l’intention de révolutionner le truc.”⁶³³ Overall, the Off had envisioned a project with a light and humorous character to create a platform for artistic creation rather than a political activist movement.⁶³⁴

Beyond the name constraints and the critical endeavor at its core, the Off entertained a peaceful relationship with MP13. Passed initially imagined collaboration ideas which did not

⁶²⁸ Ibid., #00:18:53-7#, 14:29.

⁶²⁹ Ibid., #00:38:00-4#, 14:54.

⁶³⁰ Ibid., #00:12:23-7#, 14:18.

⁶³¹ Ibid., #00:01:16-9#, 14:17.

⁶³² Ibid., #00:01:16-9#, 14:2.

⁶³³ Ibid., #00:38:15-1#, 14:55.

⁶³⁴ Ibid., #00:39:25-8#, 14:58.

concretize, both structures existed in parallel. The Off group remained rather distant from Latarjet, a “technocrate parisien,”⁶³⁵ who was perceived as an ally to the politicians and uninvolved in the field. This depiction might provide a summary justification for the superficial relationship between the actors: according to the interviewee’s view, the initial MP13 director represented the antipodes of the bottom-up anti-establishment, original and non-elitist program which the Off promoted. However, Chougnet, which took the lead of the realization of MP13, enjoyed a more open and democratic reputation. His relationship with the Off developed accordingly: “Chougnet était sympa (...), on était en relation avec lui, il venait à nos évènements, il était adhérent de notre association et pendant l’année 2013, ça s’est plutôt bien passé.”⁶³⁶ Hence, while the alternative 2013 program engaged with the margins, limitations, and critique of the ECOC, it cultivated pacific and diplomatic exchanges with the institutions in charge, representing a productive complement rather than an aggressive opponent.

Though, the association faced its own limits was well. My interview partner considered that the longevity of the project (2004–2013) implied a risk of losing track of the guiding thread and mission.⁶³⁷ In addition, structural and organizational conflicts often expressed in a incapacity of decision making.⁶³⁸ As a consequence of this, the conflictual atmosphere led to the replacement of Pringels, of the three founding members, by the journalist Stéphane Sarpaux in 2012.⁶³⁹ The clash in leadership – or general lack thereof – sometimes came on top of a missing guiding vision and specific mission.⁶⁴⁰ These very difficulties were traced back to the inherently challenging nature of the self-managed organization.⁶⁴¹ Not only within the Off association but also with regards to the external counterparts like MP13, the group tended to

⁶³⁵ Ibid., #00:02:43-2#, 14:7.

⁶³⁶ Ibid., #00:11:15-2#, 14:16.

⁶³⁷ Ibid., #00:16:29-6#, 14:24 and #00:39:54-7#, 14:61.

⁶³⁸ Ibid., #00:13:41-8#, 14:21.

⁶³⁹ Ibid., #00:13:41-8#, 14:21.

⁶⁴⁰ Ibid., #00:20:58-5#, 14:32 and #00:39:39-0#, 14:59.

⁶⁴¹ Ibid., #00:39:54-7#, 14:62.

find itself “le cul entre deux chaises, entre ‘on donne la parole à tout le monde’ et ‘on fait ce qu’on a envie de faire’.”⁶⁴² Here, the interviewee recalled the challenges of being a democratic structure, caught between all-integrative intentions and productivity imperatives. Concluding, the interview partner revealed: “J’aurais aimé pouvoir dire: ‘voilà, j’ai fait ça et j’ai passé le flambeau, et maintenant c’est ça’. Le problème c’est que je dis: ‘j’ai fait ça, on a bien rigolé et mais maintenant, c’est fini quoi, ciao!’”⁶⁴³ According to this statement, the impact of the Off remained limited due to a missing sustainable legacy. Indeed, the project existed in parallel and in reaction to MP13 but failed to generate a solid long-term dynamic on its own, and was dismantled after the closing ceremony of the ECOC.

Nevertheless, there was an attempt to perpetuate the development of platforms for local artists: Sarpaux carried on with the self-managed, collaborative and interdisciplinary gallery/co-working/event space called “3013” in the Rue de la République. Following on from the 2013 Off structure, this project aimed at sustaining the bottom-up and experimental representation of artistic production in Marseille, taking on a representative role as a self-assigned “utopie créative.”⁶⁴⁴ In this sense, the space allowed for a continuity of the Off’s mission. Though, due to internal conflicts at the dawn of MP13, the team splitting and the transformation onto to *3013*, members of the initial structure did not always recognize themselves in the new endeavor: according to my interview partner, *3013*, “c’est la suite mais foireuse.”⁶⁴⁵ However, it was noteworthy that, according to the self-presentation respectively, both the Off and *3013* shared a common philosophy and pursued the same main goals: Repairing the omissions of the official cultural producers and providing a platform for a plural, inclusive, and experimental artistic landscape in the city.

⁶⁴² Ibid., #00:18:53-7#, 14:31.

⁶⁴³ Ibid., #00:48:28-3#, 14:70.

⁶⁴⁴ KissKissBankBank, “Marseille 3013, l’utopie créative a son lieu,” KissKissBankBank, accessed March 2, 2018, <https://www.kisskissbankbank.com/marseille-3013-l-utopie-creative-a-son-lieu>.

⁶⁴⁵ Interview 14, #00:23:16-3#, 14:34.

In the context of the ECOC, next to the Off, another group complemented the representation of the alternative scene: the *Alter Off* association. Created by the Marseille based plastic artist Louis Alessandrini, the group aimed at forming a ‘truer’ Off, a voice of the local alternative and contemporary artistic milieu, without any form of official recognition from or collaboration with the ECOC leaders. Claiming a subversive force, its founder received the nickname “emmerdeur culturel”⁶⁴⁶ and aimed at displaying the richness of local production through independent projects as well as activating a critical discourse.⁶⁴⁷ An important part of the ambition was the notion of artistic diversity throughout the ECOC territory. As explained during my interview, the head of *Alter Off* considered that the MP13 brand conveyed a symbolically reductive and geographically restricted vision of the Provence region. Drawing for this critique, the group aimed at a more challenging and truly integrative approach to the territory: an encompassing perspective on the regional heritage, transcending the administrative delimitations of the Department or the *Métropole*.⁶⁴⁸

In practice, the *Alter Off* remained a small and largely informal structure, which produced two exhibitions as well as some debate meetings or independent radio shows. Throughout the year, the association lead described an ongoing intention to integrate official MP13 representatives into the *Alter Off* round tables.⁶⁴⁹ However, even though the collective was not fatally persecuted or censured, these invitations remained disregarded by the ECOC organizers.⁶⁵⁰ Referring to the French saying *poser un lapin* (to stand somebody up), my interviewee recalled called MP13’s second director “Monsieur Lapin”⁶⁵¹ as a result of the unfulfilled promises of participations and a symbol of his disregard.

⁶⁴⁶ Interview 15, #00:09:07-4#, 15:13.

⁶⁴⁷ Ibid., #00:11:51-2#, 15:19 and #00:21:41-9#, 15:33.

⁶⁴⁸ Ibid., #00:09:07-4#, 15:12; #00:28:35-9#, 15:40; #00:34:24-4#, 15:49.

⁶⁴⁹ Ibid., #00:24:00-6#, 15:36; #00:25:41-0#, 15:37.

⁶⁵⁰ Ibid., #00:11:10-2#, 15:17.

⁶⁵¹ Ibid., #00:11:10-2#, 15:17.

The relationship with the Off remained rather distant too; there were few informal collaboration initiatives between both structures, which remained unrealized.⁶⁵² One of the founding members recalled ironically: “quand on a fait le Off, lui, il [L. Alessandrini; MdS] s’est dit qu’il était encore plus rebelle que les rebelles et il a fait le ‘Alter’ Off.”⁶⁵³ Interestingly, topos of ‘being a rebel’ seemed to be as much an issue in the cultural policy protests as it was continuous in the city’s representation. Here, both alternative structures competed over who would appear most rebellious (*plus rebelle que les rebelles*). The Off was careful to develop a more structured approach and criticized the fact that the *Alter Off* had not ‘done’ much in the end and remained a somewhat chaotic organism which essentially functioned in reaction to and as contestation against the official organizers. However, in doing so, the allegedly nebulous project caricatured the up- and downsides of the ECOC, which, in return, made it interesting: “Quelque part (...), c’était excellent en fait, c’était le mieux, quoi. L’Alter Off, en fait, c’était délirant.”⁶⁵⁴ Responding to the Off’s criticism, the *Alter Off* defended different aesthetic choices and demanded more radical and coherent political engagements.⁶⁵⁵ In spite of their disagreements, both groups existed in parallel; the shared context of protest formed their implicit common ground. Even though they criticized each other in terms of artistic or structural choices, neither of them questioned the core purpose or motivation of contestation respectively.

Socio-cultural Conflicts: Collective Event and Exclusive Practices

At the core of the ECOC program existed an intention to promote European urban and cultural diversity. Hereby lied an inherent contradiction: The event was implemented in the name of multicultural Europe and it essentially existed due to and through manifestations of variety (heterogeneous territories, variety of actors and artistic productions). At the same time

⁶⁵² Ibid., #00:02:57-0#, 15:2; #00:05:31-8#, 15:3; #00:05:59-1#, 15:5.

⁶⁵³ Interview 14, #00:44:27-2#, 14:64.

⁶⁵⁴ Ibid., #00:45:23-5#, 14:64.

⁶⁵⁵ Interview 15, #00:02:57-0#, 15:2 and #00:21:41-9#, 15:34.

however, the notion of diversity was formatted as an ECOC brand, causing an automatically reductive synthesis of its constitutive complexity.

Considering “Europe as an identity project,”⁶⁵⁶ Aiello and Thurlow have explained that representational means of ECOCs were commonly “explicitly designed to generate symbolic capital through the exploitation and creation of these European mythologies.”⁶⁵⁷ The image of a heterogeneous Europe, pulsating thanks to multiculturalism, was a vital aspect of the “Marseille-Provence” campaign as well. One of my interviewee, who conducted the cultural programming, depicted the project accordingly:

“Chaque ville est différente – heureusement, d’ailleurs! Ça, c’est la grand narration de l’Europe, cette diversité culturelle et chaque ville connaît d’autres défis. Presque jamais on peut comparer les défis des uns et des autres. (...) Et ça, c’est lié à la différence et à cette diversité culturelle et comme ça, il faut vraiment pour regarder les impacts et aussi les défis, il faut chaque fois se demander: bon, c’est quoi le point de départ, où sont les faiblesses et les forces?”⁶⁵⁸

As described here, the endeavor navigated between the imperatives of local urban-cultural particularities and the embedding into a large scale unifying European narrative.

Additionally, MP13 comprised another complex frame of reference: the Mediterranean. Indeed, as explained by the organizers, this very dimension and the Marseille-Provence territorial development constituted the two main programmatic axes.⁶⁵⁹ The former manifested practically through the *Ateliers de la Méditerranée* for instance. These workshops brought together artistic, academic and governance actors in the aim of creating a space of dialogue between European and Mediterranean cultures. Andres understood these measures as part of

⁶⁵⁶ Giorgia Aiello and Crispin Thurlow, “Symbolic Capitals: Visual Discourse and Intercultural Exchange in the European Capital of Culture Scheme,” *Language and Intercultural Communication* 6, no. 2 (2006): 150.

⁶⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁵⁸ Interview 7, #01:14:07-3#, 7:84.

⁶⁵⁹ Interview 13, #00:37:34-7#, 13:46.

MP13's general goal to "to create a platform of cultural cooperation,"⁶⁶⁰ not only formally through collaborative cultural governance, but also in terms of content. For this purpose, Marseille's (partly mythologized) cultural diversity and cosmopolitanism were praised throughout the application process, and turned into a factor of attractiveness for marketing purposes.

According to the political scientist Jean Viard, "Marseille-Provence 2013 doit avant tout être vu comme un projet politique de valorisation du cosmopolitisme en tant que projet urbain viable."⁶⁶¹ The city was put forward as a unifying urban node, at the geographic and cultural junction point of Europe and the Mediterranean. Marseille's socio-cultural diversity nourished the myth of the cosmopolitan metropolis⁶⁶² and contributed to an distorted understanding of its cultural potential, leaving out the fact that it was neither the most striking example of cosmopolitanism in the country, nor the only site of the ECOC.⁶⁶³

Throughout Marseille's image construction and instrumentalization for MP13, a dualism between the local (municipal, regional) and a more global (European, Mediterranean) realm was forged. These spheres were entangled respectively and constituted neither distinct nor fixed entities on their own. Rather, they were characterized by internal pluralism, which challenged the construction of a homogeneous and coherent branding image. Discussing the constitutions of identity and drawing from imaginaries of Europe, cultural theorist Stuart Hall analyzed insightfully:

"In so far as identities depend on what they are not, they implicitly affirm the importance of what is outside them – which often then returns to trouble and unsettle them from the inside. Nothing could be more true of Europe, which has constantly at different times,

⁶⁶⁰ Andres, "Marseille 2013 or the Final Round of a Long and Complex Regeneration Strategy?" 61.

⁶⁶¹ Viard, *Marseille, le réveil violent d'une ville impossible*, 63.

⁶⁶² Donzel, *Marseille, L'expérience de La Cité*; Peraldi and Samson, *Gouverner Marseille*.

⁶⁶³ Andres, "Marseille 2013 or the Final Round of a Long and Complex Regeneration Strategy?" 62–63.

in different ways, and in relation to different ‘others’, tried to establish what it was – its identity – by symbolically marking its difference from ‘them.’”⁶⁶⁴

The process of cultural othering discussed by Hall as constitutive of identity building, resonated with the case study at hand. Indeed, it indicated two major aspects: (1) the consideration of Europe (and related notions such as European culture, European heritage, European identity and so on) as a mobile construct, and (2) the necessity and omnipresence of a constitutive ‘other’ in the process of identity making. Both dimensions showed during MP13, and I suggest that what Hall found true for Europe could be applied to the Mediterranean narrative too: while the Mediterranean based on a set politico-geographic entity, the extrapolations of this reference in terms of culture, identity-making and image functioned as historically specific, political and contingent representative constructs.

The claim for cultural and social diversity was not always mirrored in the MP13 programing. For instance, the lack of cooperation and cultural projects with and/or in the “quartiers” or *Quartiers Nord* of Marseille as well as the inexistent targeted social integration of their populations were widely criticized.⁶⁶⁵ Living in what French top-down urban typologization called “quartiers sensibles,”⁶⁶⁶ the inhabitants were commonly considered less educated, mobile, and culturally oriented.⁶⁶⁷

Discussing the limitations in terms of audience and participation, the MP13 director regarded the fact that population groups, especially living in the *Quartiers Nord*, were missing as “normal”⁶⁶⁸ according to the social realities in segregated suburbs and the existing integration

⁶⁶⁴ Stuart Hall, “‘In but Not of Europe’: Europe and Its Myths,” in *Figures d’Europe: Images and Myths of Europe* (Brussels: Peter Lang, 2003), 38.

⁶⁶⁵ Bullen, “Comparing the Cultures of Cities in Two European Capitals of Culture.”

⁶⁶⁶ The term “*quartiers sensibles*” stemmed from the appellation “*zones urbaines sensibles*” (ZUS), a French state-established category from the 1990s defining and mapping segregated and impoverished urban districts. This appellation is commonly associated with stigmatized considerations of urban violence, racism and criminality: Cyprien Avenel, *Sociologie des quartiers sensibles* (Armand Colin, 2010) and Alain Vulbeau, “L’approche sensible des quartiers ‘sensibles,’” *Informations sociales*, no. 141 (2007): 8–13.

⁶⁶⁷ In this view, *culture* is essentialized in the sense of an official cultural representation and branding carried by urban elites in programs such as the ECOC.

⁶⁶⁸ Interview 13, #00:37:34-7#, 13:57.

inequalities in Marseille. This was partly justified by the lack of infrastructure and of federating representatives of the arts and culture fields in the *banlieues*, which complicated potential collaborations. The ‘absent’ audience of this type of event has been discussed as so-called *non-publics* (non-audience) in French art sociology and ethnography.⁶⁶⁹ In Alain Pessin and Pascale Ancel’s approach, the *non-public* is not set as an identifiable group of people with an inexistent or incompatible cultural capital *per se*. Rather, it is produced as such in the same terms and manners as a targeted audience can be imagined and activated by arts and culture stakeholders. Implicitly referring to this concept, and in an attempt to reduce its radical excluding character, the MP13 director qualified the *banlieues* population as *peu publics*⁶⁷⁰ (not much/little–audience). This formulation expressed the notion of absence, while hinting at a potential for inclusivity. Overall, the urban typography revealed race and class based discriminations (a wide range of the *Quartiers Nord* population stemmed from migration flows and/or were non-white) manifesting infrastructural under-equipment and spatial isolation. Strikingly, it was precisely this this model of social inequality that was referred to – if not implicitly accepted – as a norm (normal).

During MP13, issues of cultural integration added to social inclusion factors. For instance, in terms of artistic production, the quasi complete disregard of hip-hop culture and rap music provoked vehement criticism.⁶⁷¹ Indeed, Marseille, alongside with Paris, represented the main hub in the world’s second most significant country for hip hop culture production.⁶⁷² Hence, it seemed inadequate and repressive to leave this genre disregarded. Noticeably, the fact

⁶⁶⁹ Pessin, Alain/Ancel, Pascal, *Les non-publics: Les arts en réception*, Paris 2004.

⁶⁷⁰ Interview 13, #00:37:34-7#, 13:58.

⁶⁷¹ Charlotte Ayache, “Marseille-Provence 2013 : où est passé le hip-hop ?,” *Marsactu*, July 23, 2012; Keny Arkana and Collectif La Rabia del Pueblo, *Marseille Capitale de La Rupture* (Marseille, 2013), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CEgljMeTljQ> (accessed February 21, 2018); Daniel Winkler, “Glanz Und Elend Des Status ‚Europäische Kulturhauptstadt‘. Kulturpolitik, Gentrifizierung Und Segregation in Marseille-Provence 2013,” *Dérive. Zeitschrift Für Stadtforschung*, no. 52 (2013).

⁶⁷² Murray Forman, “‘Represent’: Race, Space and Place in Rap Music,” in *That’s the Joint. The Hip Hop Studies Reader*, by Murray Forman and Mark Anthony Neal, Routledge (New York, 2012), 247–269.

that this genre was massively left out the program⁶⁷³ suggesting a correlation between a long-standing urban segregation and cultural elitism. In fact, in spite of its global mainstream marketization, hip-hop culture seemed to remain associated with the *banlieues* population. Hence, both these very districts and the according artistic genre were excluded.⁶⁷⁴

Overall, it seemed crucial to remember the distinction between what MP13 was able to provide as an event, on the one hand, and the general discussion on the culture of the city on the other. For, as Roncayolo sensibly reminded in the context of the ECOC, the *event* was by no means synonym for *culture*.⁶⁷⁵ Rather, it was an expression, a punctual and useful illustration of it, but culture was still to be considered as a process on a wider ideological and societal scale.

⁶⁷³ Interview 13, #00:37:34-7#, 13:56.

⁶⁷⁴ In 2018, on the occasion of the five-year anniversary of the ECOC, a cultural program entitled “Marseille 2018, *Quel Amour!*” planned to capitalize on the legacy of 2013 and to install a continuity of events. In this context, it was noticeable that the organizers were careful to implement the hip-hop scene more visibly, as events like the festival “Hip-Hop Society” (La Friche la Belle de Mai, Marseille, February 24 – May 5, 2018): “Hip Hop Society,” Hiphopsociety.fr, accessed December 13, 2018, <http://www.hiphopsociety.fr/>.

⁶⁷⁵ Boris Grésillon and Eric Verdeil, “Entretien avec Marcel Roncayolo,” *Rives méditerranéennes*, no. 47 (February 15, 2014): 14.

4.4. Prefiguring the Metropolis?

Life After 2013: Tale of an Anachronistic Disillusion

At the conclusion of a year-long celebration, the organizing parties of MP13 congratulated themselves on a very successful event with great positive impact on the region. Adding to the official evaluation report,⁶⁷⁶ a series which was programmatically entitled *Impact* was published.⁶⁷⁷ Here, the CCI, the MP13 association, as well as *Bouches-du-Rhône Tourisme*, an association for the promotion of tourism in the Department (today: Provence Tourisme), collected numerous pragmatic data in order to measure the effect of the European label and the event series in 2013. Among others, they calculated that over ten million people had taken part in the cultural program throughout the year and that the opening celebrations alone had attracted around 600'000 visitors.⁶⁷⁸

In relation to these numbers, a tourism boom resulted in an average 8% increase in hotel bookings, which accounted for 21% more international clients than usual. In the reports, the involvement of the economic sector was viewed as profitable, too, with 207 firms and businesses providing 18% of the annual budget (15 million Euros). Additionally, MP13 was mentioned around 11,000 times in the national and international press, which guaranteed its contribution to boosting the international visibility of the place as well. In addition to the international scale of impact, at the regional level two thirds of the population enjoyed at least one cultural manifestation, which served as a local promotion for the territory, too. Hence,

⁶⁷⁶ Marseille-Provence 2013, "MP13: L'évaluation," July 2014.

⁶⁷⁷ Chambre de Commerce et d'Industrie Marseille Provence, Marseille-Provence 2013, and Bouches-du-Rhône Tourisme, "Impact MP2013. Edition Spéciale J-100" (Marseille, 2013); Ibid., "Impact MP2013. Premier Épisode Deux Millions de Visiteurs" (Marseille, 2013); Ibid., "Impact MP2013. Premier et Deuxième Épisode, 5 Millions de Visites" (Marseille, 2013); Ibid., "Impact 2013. Année Capitale Européenne de La Culture Plus de 10 Millions de Visites" (Marseille, 2014).

⁶⁷⁸ For the number of visitors and the following statistics, see: Chambre de Commerce et d'Industrie Marseille Provence, Marseille-Provence 2013, and Bouches-du-Rhône Tourisme, "Impact 2013. Année Capitale Européenne de La Culture Plus de 10 Millions de Visites."

audience numbers were one of the main “indicators for success of an eventful city.”⁶⁷⁹ In addition to the human capital, the financial resources and territorial marketing were impact sectors measuring the achievements of MP13, too.

After 2013, the European Commission’s evaluation report Euréval praised MP13 for successfully boosting the attractiveness and image of the territory, as well as shaping practices of cultural governance in this very area.⁶⁸⁰ According to this review, the event had managed to bring together a wide range of diverse and heterogeneous actors in a productive manner, to catalyze new patterns for compromises amongst disagreeing instances, and to develop close cooperation between actors.⁶⁸¹ Building on these positive results, though, the evaluation committee underlined the following desiderata, which seemed to constitute the most urgent challenges for the future: the need for a sustainable cultural strategy, the implementation of a solid and functional cultural governance, and the creation of an *ensemblier culturel*⁶⁸² to put the called-for strategy in practice during given events.

These challenges pointed to a more general, yet central issue: the continuity of the ECO program. Indeed, while it manifested essentially in the form of a short-term event (one year), the award was intended to have a long-term effect, as well, which granted this status dual temporalities. The interviewed experts were well aware of this complex issue of sustainability: “Il y a pas beaucoup des villes qui créent vraiment des structure permanentes après une année CEC. Il y a plutôt des effets durables comme je les ai décrits avec l’expérience de partenariats, changement de la notoriété, effet touristique et tout ça.”⁶⁸³ As expressed in this quote, while the ECO title represented a promising opportunity, only few cities succeeded in deriving long-

⁶⁷⁹ Richards and Palmer, *Eventful Cities*, 245.

⁶⁸⁰ Euréval, “Evaluation Des Imapcts de Marseille Provence 2013, Capitale Européenne de La Culture – V1” (Euréval, 2014).

⁶⁸¹ Ibid., 81.

⁶⁸² Ibid., 82.

⁶⁸³ 7:72

lasting benefits from it. In most cases, prolific results manifested in specific sectors of governance or tourism economy for instance, but failed to create a generalized urban change. The temporary character of the program was indeed criticized by cultural actors who disliked the potential superficiality of this type of urban festivalization: “la plupart du temps, ce genre de label, c’est vrai que c’est des opérations très événementielles, très spontanées, ‘clic clac, on envoie 50 millions d’euro et puis après, en fin d’année, on plie tout et ciao!”⁶⁸⁴ In this depiction, the ECOC was assigned a disturbing, intrusive character and was regarded as an analog of a top-down parachuting with extensive exceptional financial capital, but without pre- nor post-event long-term implications. Cultural policy scholar Beatriz Garcia offered a critical take on the continuity issues:

“the contrast between the long-term survival of memories linked to creative personal development and the poor maintenance (or local appreciation) of tangible outcomes (...) indicates that hosting an ECOC can lead to a marked imbalance between the sustainability of tangible and intangible benefits.”⁶⁸⁵

While she claimed that ECOCs have a good reputation overall, she regarded their impact as limited in terms of sustainable strategic output on culture-led urban regeneration, mainly due to the “poor standards of event monitoring and evaluation, particularly in the long term.”⁶⁸⁶

On the Correlation of MP13 and the MAMP: The Chicken and Egg Discussion

In this case study specifically, the debates on short-term impact versus sustainability and catalyst versus achievement of urban processes were crucial. As mentioned earlier, the function of the ECOC as forerunner to the metropolis was central with regards to the realization and the impact of the event. However, in the words of one of my interviewees, “Ça, c’est l’histoire

⁶⁸⁴ 14:71

⁶⁸⁵ Garcia, “Deconstructing the City of Culture,” 861-862.

⁶⁸⁶ Ibid., 863.

qu'on raconte après, hein, c'est 'nos ancêtres les Gaulois', hein, en réalité ça s'est pas passé comme ça."⁶⁸⁷ In fact, contradictory conceptions of the MP13-MAMP relationship and causality unfolded as a sort of chicken and egg issue. Schematically, there were two readings of the processes at stake: (1) 'MAMP preceded and antedated MP13' and (2) 'MP13 preceded and antedated MAMP.'

Those making the first argument defended the fact that the metropolization processes were already taking place prior to the ECOOC prospects. In this context, MP13 was described as one of many implementation steps of the metropolis. It was regarded as the first large-scale realization on the new territory and an ephemeral trial-and-error opportunity to experiment with the new governance and to promote the metropolitan endeavor.⁶⁸⁸ In this line of thought, the Marseille scholar and head of *Euroméditerranée* (2014-2015) Bernard Morel noted explicitly that, by conceptualizing MP13 as a metropolitan project, there had been a decisive change of scale and an "anticipation" of political measures which had been blocked until then:

"cette métropole n'avait jamais trouvé de réponses institutionnelles, pour des raisons politique, historiques qu'il conviendrait d'expliciter. Or, Marseille-Provence 2013 définit un périmètre de la métropole et engage une démarche. (...) Marseille-Provence 2013 aura été la première opération réalisée à cette échelle."⁶⁸⁹

This view emphasized the existing metropolitan measures and the pre-defined inter-municipal territory. Though, as the quote underlined, various barriers had prevented the successful integration of the metropolization processes so far, and MP13 played the role of the first materialized realization on the new metropolitan scale.

In contrast to this understanding, others put forth an alternative perspective that emphasized the fact that the inter-municipal structures were not in place yet when MP13 started.

⁶⁸⁷ Interview 10, #00:12:10-7#, 10:74.

⁶⁸⁸ Interview 6, #00:28:24-4#, 6:37; Interview 7, #00:39:49-9#, 7:47 and #00:40:29-9#; Interview 10, #00:16:32-9#, 10:25.

⁶⁸⁹ Morel, "Marseille-Provence 2013, capitale européenne de la culture," 5.

In their opinion, the organizers had to invent a collaborative cultural governance from scratch. According to the first director, this temporal articulation had significant repercussions on the ways the ECOC was received:

“le projet de loi, à l’époque, n’était pas à l’ordre du jour, donc personne ne s’est dit: ‘C’est un cheval de Troie du gouvernement, la Capitale Européenne de la Culture c’est le cheval de Troie de la métropolisation imposée par le gouvernement pour nous obliger à...’ Personne ne s’est dit ça.”⁶⁹⁰

As described here, the metropolis was not centrally on the agenda during the prefiguration of the ECOC. The timing of the events therefore allowed for MP13 to develop as a cultural project as such, and to not only be regarded as a political instrument – and a tricking subterfuge (*le cheval de Troie*) – of the centralized state for the legitimization of top-down legal and executive measures. For this reason, on the one hand, MP13 faced the particular challenge of creating a non-existent governance mode for the ECOC, which went beyond the primary function of a cultural event. On the other hand, the realization of unprecedented cooperations between actors on the territory was simplified insofar as it took place before the launch of the metropolitan law and thereby circumvented the resistances towards the MAMP.⁶⁹¹ Even more so, the successful event was then utilized in hindsight as a way to reinsure MAMP’s opponents and prove the advantages of cooperative measures.⁶⁹² At the *Institut National des Ecoles Territoriales* (INET), a student project produced a report of activity focusing on the governance of MP13 under supervision of the second director of the event. In this review, MP13 was explicitly considered a “projet de coopération territoriale inédit”⁶⁹³; Literally, the actors’ cooperation taking place in the context of 2013 *tested* the idea of collaborative modes on the metropolitan scale which was yet to come. In this sense, one of the great achievements of MP13 was to initiate collaboration,

⁶⁹⁰ Interview 12, #00:48:51-7#, 12:89.

⁶⁹¹ Interview 12, #00:57:29-3#, 12:107.

⁶⁹² Interview 10, #00:12:10-7#, 10:18; Interview 13, #00:53:24-4#, 13:77; Interview 12, #00:10:28-7#, 12:27.

⁶⁹³ Baron et al., “Marseille-Provence 2013: Leçons D’une Expérience. Rapport Projet,” 8.

independently of a Parisian monitoring, between people and instances who were aware of each other, but did not want to work together before.⁶⁹⁴

Overall, depending on the different scales of metropolization, each sphere of conflict shaping MP13 revealed different stages of development and various functions of the events. Hence, on the one hand, MP13 can be depicted as an achievement with regards to material and physical urban development measures (e.g. *Euroméditerranée* had been at work for almost two decades and the realization of the MuCEM during 2013 was the final point of a longer process). On the other hand, however, in terms of governance mode, as well as political and cultural identity, it was a precursor and a catalyst for future developments inscribed in the MAMP creation. Concluding, both understandings (1) and (2) placed face to face provide a self-legitimizing – but illogical – argumentation, which can be simplified as follows: The MAMP project allowed for MP13, and MP13 was a precursor for MAMP. The ‘who was here first’ question might not have to be answered in a radical manner; However, it was revealing as such in terms of the role of urban policies compared to the function of cultural interventions as urban development motors. Moreover, it formed a conditional establishment of the metropolitan status based on a cultural event, which was as such dependent on metropolization processes. These representational logics repeated similar legitimization mechanisms encountered during the first case study⁶⁹⁵ of this dissertation and thereby constitute a diachronic comparative moment which will be discussed more extensively in the conclusion of this work.

⁶⁹⁴ Ibid., 11.

⁶⁹⁵ See chapter 2.4. *The 1906 Colonial Exposition as a Means of Metropolitan Representation*.



Illustration 3: Superbenjamin, *Carte Des Métropoles Françaises*, Map, December 21, 2013, WikiCommons, accessed December 17, 2018, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:M%C3%A9tropolles_en_France.svg.

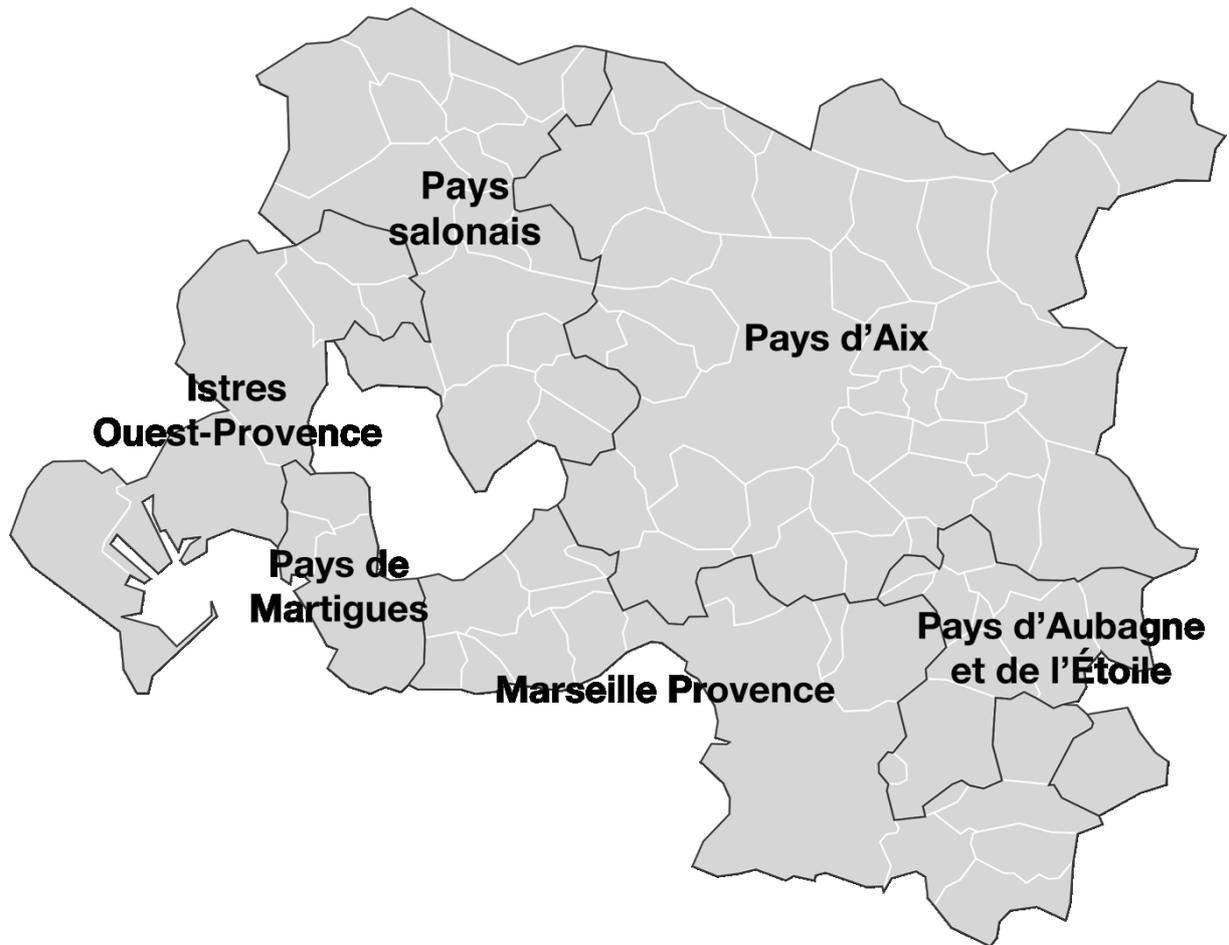


Illustration 4: Superbenjamin, *Territoires de La Métropole d'Aix-Marseille-Provence*, Map, October 16, 2015, WikiCommons, accessed December 17, 2018, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Territoires AMP.svg>.



Préfecture, Services d'Informations Documentaires, Mission Etudes et Prospectives, Marseille Provence 2013

Crédit : <http://geoconfluences.ens-lyon.fr>

Conception, réalisation : Boris Grésillon, Aix-Marseille-Université ; Adaptation : H. Parmentier, ENS Lyon.

Illustration 5: Boris Grésillon and H. Parmentier, *Le Périmètre de l'opération Marseille-Provence 2013*, Map, <http://geoconfluences.ens-lyon.fr/>, accessed December 17, 2018, <http://geoconfluences.ens-lyon.fr/informations-scientifiques/dossiers-regionaux/la-france-des-territoires-en-mutation/articles-scientifiques/marseille-provence-2013-analyse-multiscale-d2019une-capitale-europeenne-de-la-culture>.

5. Representing the Metropolis “Aix-Marseille-Provence”: Metropolitanism in Post-Colonial Marseille

While Marseille-Provence 2013 (MP13) deployed the terminology and imaginary of a “capital” (e.g. *European Capital of Culture*), its embeddedness within a larger metropolization project for Marseille and its surrounding region transformed the ECOC into a means for the production of the metropolis. Hence, mirroring the investigation of metropolitanism in the colonial age,⁶⁹⁶ I now analyze the representational discourses around the metropolis in twenty-first-century Aix-Marseille-Provence. More specifically, I look for features of contemporary metropolitanism constructed through and articulated in the context of the ECOC. For this purpose, I engage with the fourth research question of this dissertation: How and why did MP13 contribute to producing the metropolis Aix-Marseille-Provence and what are the features of metropolitanism in post-colonial Marseille?

Following the methodology applied in my first case study, the premise of the following investigation is that *being* a metropolis was neither an objective assertion about a given city, nor the reflection of an exterior pre-existing reality. Rather, the metropolis was a concept constructed by specific instances of power in place and established through representational discourses and practices. Due to its plural and malleable character,⁶⁹⁷ the concept of the metropolis revealed a rich potentiality, which could be manipulated by specific instances of power in order to pursue an urban agenda. Therefore, in an attempt to grasp what the metropolis might have meant and for whom, matters of representation, discursive practices, as well as notions of agency and power need to be questioned. Moreover, drawing from the analysis on the colonial metropole, I argue that metropolitan terminologies in the twenty-first century inherently mobilize a historical heritage and hold neocolonial connotations. Hence, through the

⁶⁹⁶ See chapter 3 *Establishing the Colonial Metropole: Metropolitanism in Marseille in the Colonial Era*.

⁶⁹⁷ See chapter 1 *Introduction*.

lens of metropolitanism, I question why imperialist terminologies exist in the urban discourse of the post-colonial age – and what this existence means. Grounded in these issues lies a necessity to identify the diachronic threads of imperialism and neo-imperialism, as well as challenging the (im)possibilities of decolonizing the concept of the metropolis. This orientation mirrors the positioning of the study at the intersection of local urban history and urban theory.

The Process of Becoming a Metropolis through the 2013 ECOC

As discussed in the preceding chapter, local urban stakeholders framed the ECOC as a springboard for urban development. Building on the recurrent trope of the ‘city in crisis,’ the organizers rhetorically transformed Marseille’s weaknesses into an asset. In the same manner, MP13 served as a means for urban regeneration endeavors, for which culture represented a vector of urban renewal. Led by local economic elites, the regional project provided an impulse for innovative cultural governance and marketing-oriented collaborative policies. Analytically, I propose that the interrelatedness of MP13 and the creation of the MAMP had two major implications. Firstly, it implied the interconnectedness of urban policies and cultural interventions as motors for urban development. Secondly, it emphasized the mutual dependence of the cultural event and urban re-structuring processes within the constitution of a new metropolitan concept.

Based on these points of junction, I identify three main areas in which metropolitanism was negotiated. Firstly, the *territorial* sector: notions of space, geographic scales of the urban, and regionalization were key elements in the conceptualization of the new metropolis. Secondly, the *administrative and political* sector: the metropolis served as an instrument of territorial legislation and as a governance model. Thirdly, the *cultural* sector, which manifested in two ways: on the one hand, the metropolis was produced through a cultural event. On the other hand, it was negotiated through questions of place-based culture in terms of local

identities, traditions and heritage. In the following, I will navigate through these different sectors in the attempt to extract specific features of the representational discourses on the metropolis.

Theoretical Frame of Reference

In the previous chapter, I have approached my case study with the help of literature on the ECOC title and on MP13 as an instrument for urban development and representation. This second part of the investigation primarily draws from scholarly fields addressing metropolization theories and neoliberal urban governance issues.

In an age of globalization, mechanisms of urban policy-making and geographies of urban spaces were re-negotiated.⁶⁹⁸ Among other effects, this manifested in processes of metropolization. Geographer Guy di Méo considered this phenomenon as the multiplied re-functionalization of urban space,⁶⁹⁹ while scholars such as Evert Meijers, Marloes Hoogerbrugge, and Koen Hollander considered it a mechanism of regional integration of the city.⁷⁰⁰ Others primarily considered new forms of inter-regional or inter-city urban networks.⁷⁰¹ Mostly understood as a process of *collectivization*, metropolization set the grounds for new modes of collaborative and regionalized urban governance.⁷⁰² These shifts in urban geography and policy shaped imaginaries and inform the investigation of metropolitanism.

⁶⁹⁸ Neil Brenner, *New State Spaces: Urban Governance and the Rescaling of Statehood* (Oxford New York: OUP Oxford, 2004).

⁶⁹⁹ Guy Di Méo, "La métropolisation. Une clé de lecture de l'organisation contemporaine des espaces géographiques," *L'Information géographique* 74, no. 3 (2010).

⁷⁰⁰ Evert Meijers, Marloes Hoogerbrugge, and Koen Hollander, "Twin Cities in the Process of Metropolisation," *Urban Research & Practice* 7, no. 1 (2014): 35–55.

⁷⁰¹ Sophie Deraëve, "Pôles Métropolitains: The French Approach towards Inter-City Networking," *Regional Studies, Regional Science* 1, no. 1 (January 1, 2014): 43–50; Enrico Gualini, *Multi-Level Governance and Institutional Change: The Europeanization of Regional Policy in Italy* (Aldershot, Hants, England ; Burlington, VT: Ashgate Pub Ltd, 2004); Liesbet Hooghe and Gary Marks, *Multi-Level Governance and European Integration* (Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001); Willem Salet, Andy Thornley, and Anton Kreukels, "Institutional and Spatial Coordination in European Metropolitan Regions," in *Metropolitan Governance and Spatial Planning: Comparative Case Studies of European City-Regions* (London; New York: Routledge, 2003), 3.

⁷⁰² Chris Ansell and Alison Gash, "Collaborative Governance in Theory and Practice," *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 18, no. 4 (2008): 543–571; Patrick Le Galès, *European Cities: Social Conflicts and Governance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); Christian Lefèvre, *Gouverner les métropoles*

A second influential area of research engages with place branding processes and urban neoliberalism. Market analysts Sebastian Zenker and Erik Braun discussed place branding as both an individual apprehension and a political project of space.⁷⁰³ Specific urban brands commonly serve city marketing endeavors and can be analyzed with regards to neoliberal imperatives of global city competition and economic performance. The impact of globalized capitalism on cities has been extensively investigated by critical urban theorists such as David Harvey, Neil Brenner, and Saskia Sassen,⁷⁰⁴ for instance. The following inquiry engages with these works in order to consider the construction of the metropolis as a global competitive brand.⁷⁰⁵

A third main field of literature in this chapter deals with the role of culture in the city. I draw from the cultural analysts Graeme Evans and Phyllida Shaw's multi-dimensional approach to the so-called "cultural impact" of cultural activities,⁷⁰⁶ which considers their economic, infrastructural, social and identity-related effects. In a similar manner, Greg Richard and Robert Palmer discuss the role of cultural events in establishing an all-encompassing project of society.⁷⁰⁷ Joining the discussion on urban neoliberalism mentioned above, the

(Paris: LGDJ, 2009); Gilles Pinson, *Gouverner La Ville Par Projet. Urbanisme et Gouvernance Des Villes Européennes* (Paris: Presses de Sciences Po, 2009).

⁷⁰³ Zenker and Braun, "Branding a City – a Conceptual Approach for Place Branding and Place Brand Management."

⁷⁰⁴ David Harvey, "From Managerialism to Entrepreneurialism: The Transformation in Urban Governance in Late Capitalism," *Geografiska Annaler. Series B, Human Geography* 71, no. 1 (1989): 3–17. Neil Brenner and Nik Theodore, "Neoliberalism and the Urban Condition," *City* 9, no. 1 (April 1, 2005): 101–7. Saskia Sassen, *The Global City – New York, London, Tokyo*, Revised edition (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1991).

⁷⁰⁵ Brantz, Disko, and Wagner-Kyora, *Thick Space*.

⁷⁰⁶ Graeme Evans and Phyllida Shaw, "The Contribution of Culture to Regeneration in the UK: A Review of Evidence" (London: Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 2004).

⁷⁰⁷ Greg Richards and Robert Palmer, *Eventful Cities: Cultural Management and Urban Revitalisation* (Routledge, 2010).

cultural “eventisation”⁷⁰⁸ of cities, creative city debates,⁷⁰⁹ and cultural economy literature⁷¹⁰ help understanding the function of twenty-first century ‘metropolitan culture.’

Approach and Chapter Outline

The Marseille scholar Roncayolo once discussed Marseille and the metropolis as follows: “Ce n’est pas dans l’espace que l’on trouve l’explication de la notion de métropole par rapport à Marseille. l’espace n’est qu’un ‘effet.’”⁷¹¹ Further, he claimed: “la notion de métropole devient une procédure, utile donc pour l’avenir, plus qu’une fonction accomplie.”⁷¹² In his view, two elements seemed crucial: Firstly, spatial dimension was not at the core of the metropolitan question; rather, it was ‘merely’ the *effect* of a more widely framed phenomenon. Secondly, rather than formulating an accomplishment in itself, the metropolis held both a processual character and a projection into the future, which was yet to happen. These assumptions implied a shift in approach to metropolitanism, from a spatial to a conceptual, on which I base my analysis. In the following, with the help of the systematized qualitative analysis of my data, I identify three main features of the metropolis. While these categories are neither exhaustive nor completely fixed, they serve as a categorization of my analytical results and structure the the chapter into subparts.

The first part is entitled *Urban Re-Scaling and Governance Model* (5.1.) and engages with the territorial-geographical dimension of the discourse on the metropolis, as well as with

⁷⁰⁸ Andrew Smith, *Events in the City: Using Public Spaces as Event Venues* (Routledge, 2015).

⁷⁰⁹ Franco Bianchini and Charles Landry, *The Creative City* (London: Demos in Association with Comedia, 1995); Richard Florida, *The Rise Of The Creative Class: And How It’s Transforming Work, Leisure, Community And Everyday Life* (New York: Basic Books, 2002); Richard Florida, “Cities and the Creative Class,” *City & Community* 2, no. 1 (2003): 3–19; James E. Doyle and Biljana Mickov, *The Creative City: Vision and Execution* (Routledge, 2016).

⁷¹⁰ Alan Peacock, Ilde Rizzo, and Giorgio Brosio, *Cultural Economics and Cultural Policies* (Norwell, MA: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1994); Lily Kong, “Introduction: Culture, Economy, Policy: Trends and Developments,” *Geoforum* 31, no. 4 (2000): 385–390; Chris Gibson and Lily Kong, “Cultural Economy: A Critical Review,” *Progress in Human Geography* 29, no. 5 (October 1, 2005): 541–561.

⁷¹¹ Roncayolo, *L’imaginaire de Marseille, port, ville, pôle*, 106.

⁷¹² Roncayolo, *L’imaginaire de Marseille, port, ville, pôle*, 204.

governance issues on the MAMP territory. The second part is called *Economic Growth and Place Branding* (5.2.), which addresses the imperatives of global competition between cities, the ambition of ‘centrality’ within a planetary network, as well as profit-oriented resource optimization strategies conducted in the course of metropolitan developments. Finally, the third subchapter *Metropolitan Culture: Eventization and Heritage* (5.3.) discusses the link between metropolitanism and culture twofold: Initially, it looks at the metropolis both as an object and as the content of cultural eventization and urban marketing. Complementarily, I investigate notions of ‘metropolitan culture’ in terms of place-based identities and socio-spatial cohesion, as well as shared heritage and urban historicity.

5.1. Urban Re-scaling and Governance Modell

Metropolitan Territory

The establishment of the politico-administrative region MAMP was decisive both for the practical realization of MP13 and for discourses on the metropolis. Particularly, the notion of territory – and territorial restructuring – constituted one significant aspect of this urban development measure. A spokesperson from the local urban planning sector in Marseille described this dimension as follows: “la première [raison pour laquelle la Métropole a été créée; MdS], pour le gouvernement, c’était donc de structurer, d’avoir une seule institution qui reprend un périmètre des territoires interdépendants.”⁷¹³ As the interviewee explained, for the French government the primary aim of the project was to fix fragmented spaces geographically into a single entity. Therefore, the current metropolitan discussion was directly linked to a re-negotiation of urban geographies and scales. Hence, this understanding revealed that the *spatial* dimension was crucial for the conceptualization of metropolitanism. Carrying on, the same actor underlined:

“on revient à la question géographique. C’est la Métropole la plus vaste de France avec des espaces de nature très importants, 92 communes – c’est aussi le nombre de communes le plus important de France. Quand tu es à Mimet, tu es sur une colline, un tout petit village absolument magnifique, entouré d’espaces de verdure où tu ne vois ni Aix, où tu ne vois ni Marseille – et pourtant, t’es à des distances kilométriques je crois très faibles qui sont de l’ordre de 20 kilomètres ou même pas peut-être, tu vois. Mais t’as vraiment une impression forte d’être en pleine campagne, quoi. Alors que t’appartiens à un territoire métropolitain.”⁷¹⁴

⁷¹³ Interview 6, #00:31:13-7#, 6:44.

⁷¹⁴ Ibid., #00:45:10-0#, 6:59.

As described here, characteristic of the new MAMP structure was to link vibrant urban spaces with smaller villages and rural areas. While all of these elements seemed to be more or less disconnected, they coalesced under the umbrella of one territorial category: the metropolis.

Technically, the structure was constituted through the administrative and institutional merging by law of 92 municipalities throughout the Provence-Alpes-Côtes-d'Azur region on January 1, 2016. As a result, the metropolitan perimeter stretched over 3.173/3.148 km² and included 1,831/1.841.460 inhabitants,⁷¹⁵ which corresponded almost exactly with the Department des Bouches-du-Rhône (a 5,087 km² area and 1,993,177 inhabitants; census: 2013).⁷¹⁶ This made the MAMP the largest metropolitan region by size in the country,⁷¹⁷ which, throughout my interviews, was more often than not considered an equivalent or substitute of the Department.⁷¹⁸ Accordingly, it was embedded within a governance shift in France, which granted more executive power to inter-municipalities at the expense of the departmental governments.⁷¹⁹

At the level of decision making, enclosing a polycentric and heterogeneous space raised new issues of power distribution and of hierarchy: Who would govern the metropolis? Are all constituent parts of the territory truly equal in significance and function? How does the institutional merging translate on the governmental level? In this debate, the position of Marseille was both advantageous and ambivalent. Indeed, since 2016 Marseille's long-time mayor Jean-Claude Gaudin had been designated President of the MAMP. Adding to the representational power, due to its geographical and demographic size, Marseille fulfilled a

⁷¹⁵ "La Métropole Aix-Marseille Provence," Marseille-provence.fr, accessed June 15, 2018, <http://www.marseille-provence.fr/index.php/la-metropole/la-metropole-aix-marseille-provence>.

⁷¹⁶ INSEE, "Recensement de La Population. Populations Légales En Vigueur à Compter Du 1er Janvier 2017. Arrondissements - Cantons - Communes."

⁷¹⁷ For instance, *Grand Paris* and *Grand Lyon* were formed in the course of similar territorial restructuring processes and count 814 km² and 534 km² respectively.

⁷¹⁸ E.g. Interview 12, #00:46:21-1#, 12:82 and 12:85; Interview 14, #00:34:36-2#, 14:49.

⁷¹⁹ Daniel Béhar, "Paris, Lyon, Marseille: La Gouvernance Métropolitaine Entre Standardisation et Différenciation - Métropolitiques," *Métropolitiques*, September 22, 2014, <http://www.metropolitiques.eu/Paris-Lyon-Marseille-la.html> (accessed July 1, 2016); Jérôme Dubois, *Les Politiques Publiques Territoriales: La Gouvernance Multi-Niveaux Face Aux Défis de L'aménagement* (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2009).

function of center of the *Métropole*. Metaphorically, it constituted the metropolis (mother-city) of the metropolis itself.

The conflictual question of centrality and hierarchy of and within the metropolis was discussed by the actors involved. For instance, one of my interviewee drew from an evoking comparison with processes of expansion and regionalization of *Grand Paris*.

“on parlait beaucoup du Grand Paris à l’époque mais on parlait pas de Grand-Marseille. (...) autant Paris est le chef incontesté de sa banlieue – personne ne doute qu’on est à Paris – autant ici, un martégal [inhabitant of Martigues; MdS] , il se définit jamais comme marseillais, un aubagnais [inhabitant of Aubagne; MdS] non plus, un aixois [inhabitant of Aix-en-Provence; MdS] non plus. Jamais! (...) Donc, c’était le Grand-Marseille mais personne ne veut être Marseille, donc c’est le ‘Grand-pas-Marseille’.”⁷²⁰

Marseille’s inability to be recognized as the main city by its *hinterland* constituted a significant obstacle to the implementation of a unifying metropolitan entity. The quote above raised the idea that, for territorial integration to succeed, a certain sense of consensus was necessary. In fact, there needed to be an agreement both on the overall aim of the regionalization and on the power hierarchies within the very region. Moreover, it mobilized complicating dimensions of place-based identity and collaborative governance, which will be discussed in more details later.

Furthermore, the explicit comparison to Paris and the word plays with “big...” (*Grand*)”big not...” (*Grand-pas-...*) shed light on the importance of language in defining the urban structure. I argue that meaning and agency of urban policies were conveyed through appellations. Indeed, if a whole region was summed up under the name of one specific city, then it contributed to establishing the superiority of this very city explicitly. Whereas *Grand-pas-Marseille* implied the *de facto* existence of the *Grand-territory* – hence, there was no negation of the regionalized entity as such –, but refused the leading role for Marseille.

⁷²⁰ Interview 9, #00:19:53-9#, 9:32.

What is more, the opposition of *Grand Paris* versus *Grand-pas-Marseille* suggested a rivalry between these cities. Not only did it built on an imagined and lived competition, but it emphasized their inequality: while Paris had succeeded in implementing and dominating ‘its’ *Grand Paris*, Marseille failed and was left with a *Grand-pas-Marseille*. Through these names and discourses, the idea of the difficult and unsuccessful Marseille, the ‘city in crisis’ was reproduced.

The Process of Metropolization

From an urban planning and urban geography perspective, the process of *metropolization* was a relevant dimension of the regional re-territorialization. Metropolization can commonly and etymologically be defined as “le développement des ‘villes mères.’”⁷²¹ Metropolises – *metera* (mother)-*polis* (city) –, mother-cities have experienced significant changes in the wake of the post-World War II period.⁷²² Waves of decolonization and post-Fordist deindustrialization, paired with globalized capitalism and neoliberalism, shifted the metropolitan paradigms.⁷²³ In lights of these developments, the French geographer Di Méo provides his insight into the development process of these metropolises with the following lines:

“La métropolisation, c’est cette volonté et cette capacité d’intégration fonctionnelle globale, de contrôle par les mécanismes de l’urbanisation d’espaces toujours plus vastes, placés sous l’autorité de cités, de centres opérant en réseau (...) jusqu’à constituer, par-delà la ville proprement dite, une sorte d’entité unique et virtuelle (toile) d’échelle mondiale.”⁷²⁴

⁷²¹ Méo, “La métropolisation. Une clé de lecture de l’organisation contemporaine des espaces géographiques,” 23.

⁷²² See chapter 1 *Introduction*.

⁷²³ Saskia Sassen, *The Global City – New York, London, Tokyo*, Revised edition (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2001); Neil Brenner, “Theses on Urbanization,” *Public Culture* 25, no. 1 69 (2013): 85–114.

⁷²⁴ Méo, “La métropolisation. Une clé de lecture de l’organisation contemporaine des espaces géographiques,” 24.

This statement defined metropolization processes as the constitution of integrated urban structures which transcended or reinvented the spatial entity of the city. In this context, the imperative of overcoming existing city-periphery urban geographies was contingent on understanding metropolization as regionalized and networked urbanization processes. Hence, this implied a re-defining and re-scaling of the ‘urban’ as a category as well as a re-inventing of its territoriality.

A complementary perspective was proposed by the planners Meijers, Hoogerbrugge, and Hollander, who understood metropolization essentially in terms of structural and cultural integration of a network of cities embedded within a distinct territory.⁷²⁵ These developments were both the grounds for and the result of the dissolution of binary representations of space (e.g. center/periphery, urban/rural). Moreover, metropolization did not merely effect spatial infrastructures but also informed local cultural standards. In contrast to the colonial metropole, which defined a closed system of hegemonic power distribution, a contemporary urban geographical and planning approach to metropolization invoked a more fluid and multi-scalar perspective.

In the French context, as previously discussed, a metropolitan vocabulary was central to the framing and imposing of an imperialist world view. This function was renegotiated in the course of the de-colonization in the 1960s and -70s. Noteworthy was that from the same period onwards, similar terminologies were continuously mobilized in the context of territorial administration and planning policy developments. Legislative milestones such as the so-called *métropoles d'équilibre* (1960s-70s) promoted the creation of city-networks.⁷²⁶ Inter-municipal (*intercommunalités*) and *aires métropolitaine* policies in the 1990s and 2000s continued this tendency. Eventually, the emergence of the *Métropoles* (2000s-2010s) translated into the case at hand (MAMP). At the present time, regionalization and territorial integration received an

⁷²⁵ Meijers, Hoogerbrugge, and Hollander, “Twin Cities in the Process of Metropolisation.”

⁷²⁶ Deraëve, “Pôles Métropolitains.”

increased importance in related urban planning and urban governance measures. Hence, discourse on the metropolis remained continuous throughout the twentieth century.

Walking the Metropolis: The GR2013

One principal project that placed the metropolitan territory at the core of the planning scheme was the *Grande Randonnée 2013* trail (short: GR2013). Conceived as an urban and hiking trail, this 365 km long path through the *Métropole* area was envisioned and executed by local *artistes-marcheurs* (walking-/walker-artists) over the course of the 2013 ECOC. It formed an open public space at the intersection of an artistic performance and a lived practice of the territory. Underscoring this artistic-geographical conceptualization of the trail was the language used to describe the project: “L’objectif [du GR2013; MdS], c’était de dessiner la Métropole, en fait. La dessiner sur le territoire.”⁷²⁷ “‘dessiner un chemin’”⁷²⁸ by walking (in and through) a territory.

The creators of the trail decidedly chose metropolitan terminologies in order to qualify the parameters of this space. At the same time, this decision was also influenced by the opening of the MAMP, which was taking place at the same time as the trail. While the term did not merely evoke administrative measures, the metropolitan question was deployed in terms of spatial imaginary and performance of an urban-rural territory, too:

“Tu prends un manuel de géographie de seconde, y a marqué ‘Aire Métropolitaine’, on l’a tous appris en seconde (...). C’est le mot qui était le plus évident pour qualifier, non pas tant la relation ville-nature, non pas tant la relation centre-périphérie que ces espèces de grosses villes qui dépassent, qui finissent par englober les villes d’à côté et créer une espèce de magma administrativement indéfini mais morphologiquement, quand même,

⁷²⁷ Interview 13, #00:37:34-7#, 13:45.

⁷²⁸ Interview 9, #00:27:07-9#, 9:48.

qui existe quoi. (...) En fait, c'était le bon mot pour qualifier l'ambiguïté ou, je dirais (...), le hiatus entre l'aire morphologique et l'aire administrative."⁷²⁹

With reference to a primary school curriculum (*on l'a tous appris en seconde*), the interviewed co-founder of the GR2013 implied that the meaning of a metropolitan area was common knowledge, a long-established and popularized concept, which was relatable and self-explanatory. For this reason, it was an immediate and suitable description of the trail's space. "Sauf que comme 'l'aire métropolitaine', c'est moche, du coup, on l'a appelé la métropole tout court."⁷³⁰ Then again, for aesthetic reasons, the term 'metropolis' replaced 'metropolitan area,' both of which were used as synonyms. Overall, the choices of terminology were justified by their ability to express the ambivalence of a heterogeneous territory. Thus, the interviewee understood the metropolis as a multiple, diverse, both urban and non-urban territorial entity.

"Y a eu des spots très importants qui étaient fédérateurs et donc qui faisaient converger des gens de la Métropole sur des lieux, mais des opérations comme le GR2013 qui lui, était vraiment métropolitain parce qu'il décloisonne la géographie, il fait voir le territoire autrement. Moi, je trouvais ça absolument fantastique."⁷³¹

The MAMP stakeholder underlined the crucial importance and symbolic value of the GR2013 in the course of establishing the new metropolis. As quoted above, the project was a catalyst for collaborative engagement, but it also enabled a way of seeing the territory in a different and innovative manner. The trail transcended intraregional and cultural barriers and thereby allowed visitors to *see* the perimeter and to render it visible (*faire voir*) as a newly merged entity. According to the interview, the GR2013 was "truly metropolitan" (*vraiment métropolitain*).

⁷²⁹ Ibid., #00:19:53-9#, 9:33.

⁷³⁰ Ibid., #00:19:53-9#, 9:34.

⁷³¹ Interview 11, #00:16:29-5#, 11:45.

Overall, notions of *culture* and *territory* were at the heart of the trail's conception.⁷³² Considered by some as “fabricant de culture métropolitaine,”⁷³³ the GR2013 perfectly illustrated how, in the metropolitan discourse, issues of territorial environment and urban ecology linked with culture and performance. Not only was the territorial dimension key to constructing metropolitanism, but the *kind* of territorialization was decisive. Here, intentions of decompartmentalizing – recurrent vocabulary of “décloisonner”⁷³⁴ within the MAMP administration – described how becoming a metropolis was not merely about constituting a large territory. More to the point, it was about opening up territorial frontiers, consolidating a fragmented area, and collectivizing the spatial potential.

Metropolitan Governance

The territorial reform occurred with the creation of the MAMP and demanded new regional management structures. Indeed, as quoted above, one of the government's primary objectives was the unification of the perimeter through a merging of institutions.⁷³⁵ A spokesperson at the MAMP underlined this intention to define “un fil directeur partagé, que la Métropole va porter (...) C'est toute la dimension partenariale, l'alignement des acteurs (...) c'est un processus.”⁷³⁶ Hence, the new regional entity was expected to embody and transport a shared purpose (*un fil directeur partagé*) amongst its actors. Notions of *sharing* and of *unification*, described the processual fusion of instances and partnerships throughout the territory. Underscoring the partnership lay a promise of progress. In other words, the optimization of the territorial potential through (human and infrastructural) resource collectivization was key to the promotion of the metropolis. Beyond the discursive articulation

⁷³² Interview 9, #00:19:53-9#, 9:36.

⁷³³ Ibid., #00:01:50-0#, 9:5.

⁷³⁴ See for instance: Interview 11, #00:00:28-7#, 11:7; Ibid., #00:16:29-5#, 11:45; Ibid., #00:31:09-2#, 11:65.

⁷³⁵ Interview 6, #00:31:13-7#, 6:44.

⁷³⁶ Interview 11, #00:09:10-3#, 11:30.

of what the metropolis ought to be, the practical implementation of a legal groundwork created a new form of regional administration. For example, the Urban Planning Agency for the Marseille Agglomeration primarily considered the institutional impacts: “la Métropole, (...). C’est une fusion des budgets, c’est une fusion de la fiscalité, c’est une fusion des modes de gouvernance.”⁷³⁷ This very technical definition conveyed how, through the creation of a governance model, the imagined metropolis became a reality.

The shift in territorial administration occurred within the larger context of twenty-first century urban policy developments. Metropolization processes were effected directly: “The crucial challenge of metropolitan policy coordination is the spatial complexity of social and economic activities in the context of institutional fragmentation and the resultant diversity of power coalitions.”⁷³⁸ Indeed, in a post-welfare-state era, the power and influence of traditional nation-states in terms of policy-making and governance was renegotiated. This resulted essentially from globalization processes, international cooperative measures (e.g. the European Union) and fluid territorial geographies (e.g. regionalization) that transformed the monopoly of the national government into a multi-level governance model.⁷³⁹ In this context, heterogeneous urban regions became arenas of innovative policy negotiations.⁷⁴⁰

In an attempt to grasp the redistribution of legislative and executive power, definitional discussions revolved around a recurrent narrative of the ‘shift from government to governance.’⁷⁴¹ Though, while governance can be framed as the general renegotiation of governing relationship networks,⁷⁴² it also offers new qualities in comparison to *government*. According to the political science scholar Jon Pierre, “Governance, unlike ‘government,’ looks

⁷³⁷ Interview 6, #00:31:13-7#, 6:43.

⁷³⁸ Salet, Thornley, and Kreukels, “Institutional and Spatial Coordination in European Metropolitan Regions,” 3.

⁷³⁹ Gualini, *Multi-Level Governance and Institutional Change*; Hooghe and Marks, *Multi-Level Governance and European Integration*.

⁷⁴⁰ Brenner, *New State Spaces: Urban Governance and the Rescaling of Statehood*.

⁷⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 3–19.

⁷⁴² Enrico Gualini, *Planning and the Intelligence of Institutions: Interactive Approaches to Territorial Policy-Making Between Institutional Design and Institution-Building* (Aldershot, Hampshire, England ; Burlington, VT: Ashgate Pub Ltd, 2001).

at the interplay between state and society and the extent to which collective projects can be achieved through a joint public and private mobilization of resources.”⁷⁴³ In this sense, beyond a shift in policy-making processes in itself, it is the redefinition of the government’s role that is decisive within a governance model.⁷⁴⁴ National governments and state institutions still played a crucial role; however, the policymaking hierarchies were renegotiated and the stakeholder’s arena was diversified.⁷⁴⁵ Furthermore, the multiplication of governance actors implied a levelling of traditional hierarchies and induced a new contingency of governing processes. The question of “*who* holds power?” need to be asked under new premises, and answered variably on multiple scales.⁷⁴⁶ According to political geographer Peter Shirlow, “good governance is constructed around heterarchy (inclusion) rather than hierarchy (exclusion).”⁷⁴⁷ Hence, the mode in which power structures were implemented was re-defined.

Building on the same understanding, the policy scholars Alison Gash and Chris Ansell explained that a heterarchical or integrative approach suggested specific forms of collaborative governance. That is, essentially those which emphasized cooperation between public and private sectors, as well as across institutional and civil society actors.⁷⁴⁸ The pluralization of power and the complexity due to an increasing number of stakeholders, represented new opportunities as well new challenges in decision-making processes. According to the authors,

“collaborative governance is not a ‘winner-take-all’ form of intermediation between single separated interests. In collaborative governance, stakeholders will often have an adversarial relationship to one another, but the goal is to transform adversarial relationships into more cooperative ones.”⁷⁴⁹

⁷⁴³ Jon Pierre, *The Politics of Urban Governance* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 5.

⁷⁴⁴ Jon Pierre and B. Guy Peters, *Governance, Politics, and the State* (St. Martin’s Press, 2000).

⁷⁴⁵ Hooghe and Marks, *Multi-Level Governance and European Integration*; Brenner, *New State Spaces: Urban Governance and the Rescaling of Statehood*.

⁷⁴⁶ Peter Shirlow, “Governance,” in *Key Concepts in Political Geography*, ed. Carolyn Gallaher et al. (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2009), 41–50.

⁷⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 50.

⁷⁴⁸ Ansell and Gash, “Collaborative Governance in Theory and Practice.”

⁷⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 547.

Hence, the re-negotiation of power hierarchies transformed into a model based on productive agonistic interactions. Developments towards collaborative governance had various scales of impact as well: from territorial geography, over economic and political stakeholders, to social processes and cultural integration. Hence, through governance, modes of government and administration did not only become diversified, they also became cross- and multi-scalar.

In France, twentieth-century metropolitan governance constituted a unique chapter in the national postmodern administrative and urban political history. Developments in metropolitan policies were the expression of a shift of paradigm in the country's territorial administration, tending towards the multiplication of (in)formal policy-makers in a post-decentralization period.⁷⁵⁰ Among the various scales on which urban settlements were negotiated throughout the country, both departmental and regional authorities tended to lose their relevance in light of contemporary metropolization politics. The national scale remained significant in the context of traditionally and administratively centralized France. However, following the wave of territorial and functional decentralization laws since the 1980s, the Jacobin nation-state model was transformed to favor clustered territorial areas, partly managed through new forms of metropolitan governance. Additionally, the European Union contributed to promoting metropolitan development politics, forming yet another influential scale on which urban structures were imagined anew.

Practicing Collaborative Governance on the MAMP Territory

In this context, MP13 was a crucial step in the imagination and the experimentation of a collaborative governance mode. For instance, a local *Métropole* stakeholder explained: “côté MP13, on était déjà en train de faire des initiatives d'échelles métropolitaines, qui étaient assez intéressantes parce qu'y compris le pays d'Aix, y compris les opposants à la Métropole

⁷⁵⁰ Le Galès, *European Cities*; Lefèvre, *Gouverner les métropoles*; Pinson, *Gouverner La Ville Par Projet. Urbanisme et Gouvernance Des Villes Européennes*.

finalement travaillaient ensemble.”⁷⁵¹ This quote put the emphasis on the fact that both long-terms rivals (*le pays d’Aix*, as opposed to Marseille)⁷⁵² and current opponents to the metropolitan reform (*les opposants à la Métropole*) – both of which partly overlapped – collaborated in the course of MP13. This cooperation was understood as *initiatives d’échelles métropolitaines*. Hence, illustrating Ansell and Gash’s theoretical assumptions, agonistic collaborations throughout a fragmented territory were characteristic of a new metropolitan scale of actions.

As the first director of MP13 put, “c’était une logique de gouvernance très métropolitaine, très démocratique, très égalitaire. Très égalitaire.”⁷⁵³ Interestingly, this quote reveals the assumption that there existed a specifically metropolitan governance; It was characterized as particularly democratic (*très démocratique*) and egalitarian (*très égalitaire*). The description therefore conveyed an understanding based on democratic principles,⁷⁵⁴ activating key notions such a equal power distribution, freedom of action and civic participation. In the official planning discourse, this very democratic governance vision then translated into collaborative governance model which framed the principles of metropolitan governance. Hence, the Capital of Culture was promoted an opportunity to improve the image of the metropolitan governance model in progress:

“Non seulement ça fait pas mal, la Métropole, mais en plus, ça permet de faire des initiatives qu’on aurait pas faites autrement. Et que finalement, travailler ensemble, c’est quelque chose qui produit un résultat qui est mieux que la somme des compétences ou des actions de chacune des– Ou chacun des protagonistes.”⁷⁵⁵

⁷⁵¹ Interview 11, #00:00:28-7#, 11:9.

⁷⁵² On the rivalry between Aix and Marseille, see chapter 4.2. *The Application Framework*.

⁷⁵³ Interview 12, 12:20, #00:08:53-5#.

⁷⁵⁴ Ricardo Blaug and John Schwarzmantel, “Introduction. Democracy – Triumph or Crisis,” in *Democracy: A Reader*, ed. Ricardo Blaug and John Schwarzmantel (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), 1–20.

Ronald J. Terchek and Thomas C. Conte, “Introduction,” in *Theories of Democracy: A Reader*, ed. Ronald J. Terchek and Thomas C. Conte (Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, n.d.), xiii–xvi.

⁷⁵⁵ Interview 11, #00:00:28-7#, 11:15.

According to this person, MP13 was able to prove that the metropolis, by extension, ‘would do no harm’. On the contrary, it offered unprecedented possibilities due to its collaborative mode of action allowed. Following on from this experience, the cultural governance created for 2013 would translate into the new metropolitan governance.

In terms of introducing an unprecedented mode of governance, the very nature of MP13 was significant. In fact, as Morel described, “On aurait pu penser que la dynamique métropolitaine serait impulsée par les questions économiques ou d’aménagement. Or, c’est la culture qui est au coeur de ce processus.”⁷⁵⁶ According to the scholar, it was significant that *culture* formed the main motor for metropolitan governance. While the MAMP encountered difficulties to establish itself because of historical, political and institutional conflicts, it was a cultural event which provided the first successful project on the new metropolitan scale. In doing so, the ECOOC was a pioneer operation, which then enabled and catalyzed further realizations at the metropolitan scale.

Conflicted Governance

In spite of a promising promotional discourse, the new metropolis faced major obstacles on the local level. To some extent, the MAMP was considered a state-led top-down obligation which collided with the ambitions of the local politics. A *Métropole* stakeholder recalled: “L’Etat qui voulait imposer la Métropole. Contre tous les élus qui n’en voulaient pas, sauf Gaudin.”⁷⁵⁷ Marseille’s mayor seemed to recognize the (fiscal, infrastructural, image-related) benefits he might draw from the institutional reform, while many others considered the project as invasive and threatening. The joint tax system constituted the primary ‘danger’ for some of the members, which feared to have to ‘pay for the others’, which mostly meant paying for

⁷⁵⁶ Morel, “Marseille-Provence 2013, capitale européenne de la culture,” 5.

⁷⁵⁷ Ibid., #00:00:28-7#, 11:2.

Marseille.⁷⁵⁸ Unlike other cities like Lyon, Toulouse or Bordeaux – Marseille’s historical ‘second cities’ counterparts –, in which a wider consensus towards metropolization existed,⁷⁵⁹ the Bouches-du-Rhône municipalities seemed to refuse to assemble. While there was no alternative to the law, the atmosphere of its implementation was described as difficult and tense. One of the interviewees even violently summed up: “c’est la guerre.”⁷⁶⁰

The fact that the intra-political disagreements were grounded in a larger hierarchical power struggle within the traditionally centralized nation significantly contributed to its conflicted nature. In other words, the negotiation of the metropolitan governance activated issues of decisional power distribution amongst the municipalities between the state and the municipalities on the one hand, and amongst the municipalities on the other hand. At the same time, some saw the MAMP entity as an opportunity to transcend the traditional state and municipal scales, and go beyond the respective conflicts. For, according to this view, the MAMP embodied a promising blank slate for an innovative and potentially more successful governance model.⁷⁶¹

Moreover, beyond the institutional issues, the new territorial governance was confronted with divergent sociocultural realities: “C’est-à-dire que l’Etat a lancé un processus de métropolisation qui est administratif, politique, mais qui a pas encore de culture métropolitaine.”⁷⁶² This statement reminded that the state-led politico-administrative instrument was not sufficient to actually create an essence for the metropolis. The metropolis was not merely the technical execution of urban politics; it was also the imagination of a new sociocultural assemblage on a shared territory. Therefore, a sense of shared belonging and

⁷⁵⁸ See for instance : Interview 12, #00:12:40-9#, 12:35; Interview 13, #01:08:20-3#, 13:85; Interview 14, #00:33:19-1#, 14:47.

⁷⁵⁹ Interview 6, #00:01:18-6#, 6:11.

⁷⁶⁰ Interview 14, #00:33:19-1#, 14:46.

⁷⁶¹ Interview 11, #00:26:31-1#, 11:58.

⁷⁶² Interview 9, #00:33:24-5#, 9:53.

“metropolitan culture” (*culture métropolitaine*) – whatever this might include – were mandatory in order to implement a new lived entity.

5.2. Economic Growth and Place Branding

The Metropolis as a Project for Economic Growth

Economic growth was a key element of the marketing and political discourse accompanying the creation of the metropolis. At the urban planning agency AGAM in Marseille, a stakeholder listed the reasons why the MAMP needed to be created. Firstly, the person addressed issues of territorial governance.⁷⁶³ Subsequently, the interviewee discussed the financial dimension:

“La deuxième raison [de créer la Métropole; MdS], c’est de faire en sorte que justement Marseille, qui est la deuxième ville de France, et Marseille-Provence ne soient pas seules face aux difficultés fortes et aux défis importants qu’il y a sur ce territoire. (...) avant la Métropole, Marseille Provence c’était finalement une intercommunalité faible en matière budgétaire (...) Donc voilà, c’était aussi fusionner des budgets, fusionner des fiscalités pour pouvoir avoir un accompagnement de l’action publique forte.”⁷⁶⁴

Marseille, which had been weak economically compared to the rest of the Department since the post-WW II urban crisis, was hoped to associate with more prosperous municipalities through metropolization processes. Through the creation of an integrated urban region, the collectivization of spatially disparate resources would indirectly increase the monetary and fiscal capital of the second city of France.

This same shift of territorial scale would change the paradigms of the traditional business model and affected its networks too. A member of the MP13 organization depicted how two different poles encountered in the course of this transition: “les grand entreprises marseillaises sont complètement a-territoriales et le tissu économique territorial, c’est un tissu de petites

⁷⁶³ Chapter 5.1. *Urban Re-scaling and Governance Modell*.

⁷⁶⁴ Interview 6, #00:35:33-2#, 6:45.

entreprises familiales qui sont le reliquat du passé, le reliquat d'une économie passé."⁷⁶⁵ The interviewee illustrated the tension between two economic traditions: on the one hand, there were spatially disconnected big and modern firms, and on the other hand, small family business with a strong place-based identity. The new urban governance model of the MAMP challenged the established organization and pushed for the participation in a globalized economy.

The CCIMP, a significant economic actor, both historically and for the contemporary metropolitan territory, was caught in the middle of these two tendencies. In an effort to modernize in the course of MP13 and with the involvement in the "Top 20" project,⁷⁶⁶ the Chamber claimed to support a more innovative business approach: "La Chambre de Commerce (...) avait un discours très, justement, très anti-politique locale, très 'avenir de Marseille', très 'métropolisation'".⁷⁶⁷ According to this actor, the institution turned away from a traditional localism and favored an orientation towards metropolization movements, a process which, in this quote, was synonym for "the future of Marseille". Economically speaking, localism and traditionalism were regarded as bygone and not-profitable. On the contrary, metropolitanism resonated with global perspectives and a promising wind of change.

One of MP13's directors reflected on how the representation of the metropolis correlated with territorial economy ambitions:

"je pense qu'il y a une défense de la Métropole qui est une défense économique, qui est largement rhétorique aussi d'ailleurs, mais qui existe. Parce que les entreprises des Bouches-du-Rhône, (...) elles sont toutes sorties de Marseille (...). Pas forcément les sièges sociaux mais les activités économiques elle-mêmes. Elles sont sorties vers le Port de Fos-sur-Mer, donc, morceaux de la Métropole aussi. Et surtout, elles sont sorties vers le plateau de l'Arbois, ça, c'était la grande innovation en fait des années 2000, c'est de

⁷⁶⁵ Interview 12, #00:34:39-7#, 12:115.

⁷⁶⁶ Chapter 4.1. *Towards "Marseille-Provence 2013"*.

⁷⁶⁷ Interview 12, #00:34:39-7#, 12:73.

voir Aix-en-Provence passer du statut de petite ville, bourg rural avec des juristes – enfin, je caricature – à un endroit dans lequel y a des emplois. (...) Donc, y a une identité économique, c'est pour ça que les patrons se sont mis sur la Métropole tout de suite, parce qu'ils étaient déjà eux-mêmes métropolitisés.”⁷⁶⁸

Since the deindustrialization wave and the displacement of Marseille's port towards Fos-sur-Mer in the 1960s, the demographics and geographies of activity in the region have shifted massively. As summarized in the quoted passage, the economic sector moved to the periphery, and representative centers such as Aix underwent a functional transformation into business quarters and provided employment for the regional population. Overall, these shifts happened over several decades and contributed to establishing “an economic identity” (*une identité économique*) in the region around Marseille, which later became part of the metropolis. In other words, prior to 2016, regional businesses already functioned and identified as a network on a regionalized polycentric territory. Ultimately, the MAMP merely fixated an existing economic system institutionally. Therefore, it seemed logical and mostly “rhetoric” (*une défense économique, qui est largement réthorique*) that the regional actors of the economic realm defended the creation of the metropolis. As a result, the push for economic progress became a significant part of metropolitanism.

Since the post-1970s crisis, economic rehabilitation and growth had been at the core of the urban planning sector in Marseille too. One of the most prominent examples of this tendency was the urban regeneration and renewal plan *Euroméditerranée*⁷⁶⁹ which was launched in 1995. It aimed to catalyze an economic and image boom for Marseille, among others through the creation of a new financial district in La Joliette for instance. Significantly, it was promoted as

⁷⁶⁸ Interview 13, #01:15:21-1#, 13:92.

⁷⁶⁹ For general information about *Euroméditerranée*, see chapter 4.2. *The Application Framework*.

a “metropolis-accelerator,”⁷⁷⁰ which emphasized the connection between metropolitanism and urban regeneration. An interview explained accordingly:

“pourquoi Euroméditerranée dit qu’ils font, qu’ils sont accélérateur de Métropole? C’est parce qu’ils structurent, ils renforcent la polarité tertiaire qu’est Marseille à travers des objets architecturaux mais au-delà en créant de l’emploi, en accueillant des grandes entreprises, etc.”⁷⁷¹

Based on this understanding, it seemed revealing that this kind of masterplan, which focused on service sector development, employment creation and international business hub branding, was described as a catalyst for becoming a metropolis. This showed how, through urban renewal and city image strategies, economic ambitions constituted a core feature of metropolitanism.

This same logic was true for the political sector as well. According to a spokesperson at the AGAM, economic development constituted a main focus and a converging point for the political instances involved.⁷⁷² Additionally, from a cultural policy perspective, one of the leaders of MP13 commented on the economic function of the metropolitan production:

“Donc, le fait métropolitain, moi je pense qu’il va toujours avoir plus d’avance en économie – personnellement, je trouve pas ça choquant – qu’en imaginaire culturel. Bon, ce qu’il faut, c’est que l’imaginaire– Je pense, ce que les patrons ont un peu compris, c’est que l’imaginaire culturel contribuait. C’est-à-dire, Marseille CEC, le Mucem, le machin et tout ça, ça aide aussi les élus, s’ils savent s’en servir, pour faire du développement économique. C’est ce qu’on a essayé de démontrer. Mais ça reste, on est bien d’accord, ça reste une dimension de propagande, c’est pas aussi mécanique que ça. Mais c’est vrai que ça y contribue. Une bonne université, la bonne réputation.”⁷⁷³

⁷⁷⁰ The official slogan was *Euroméditerranée, accélérateur de métropole*: Bertonecello and Dubois, *Marseille, Euroméditerranée*, 13.

⁷⁷¹ Interview 6, #00:18:47-0#, 6:26.

⁷⁷² Interview 6, #00:27:11-5#, 6:36.

⁷⁷³ Interview 13, #01:17:48-2#, 13:95.

Le fait métropolitain seemed to refer to a certain ‘metropolitan reality’, somewhere at the intersection between features of metropolitanism and metropolitan policies. Either way, according to this person, *the metropolitan* was driven economically in the first place. Following on from this characteristic, then, ensued notions of image, imaginary and reputation. The interviewee claimed in a confident entrepreneurial logic that, strategically, the business leaders needed to capitalize on this causality. *Je trouve pas ça choquant*: According to this MP13 organizer, the articulation of metropolitan development, cultural imaginary, and economic progress was a convincing match which could be a boon for the region on multiple levels.

Branding a Global City?

At the CCIMP, supporters of the metropolitan developments faced the challenges of labelling the new urban entity:

“Avant, on était, nous, de façon un peu naïve et laborieuse dans ‘les grandes villes’, ‘les grandes métropoles’... ça avait pas de nom, pour nous! C’était l’idée qu’on a un territoire et ce territoire, vu de Hong Kong, Aix, Marseille, Provence, tout ça, c’est la même chose, donc (...) en terme de marketing international, la démarche elle doit être collective.”⁷⁷⁴

This statement pointed to the importance of the terminology in use and of the name given to the new urban dispositive, between “big cities” (*les grandes villes*) et metropolises (*les grandes métropoles*). According to the actor, the definition, the profiling and the marketing of the territory needed to be based on one collective endeavor; The MAMP had to be displayed as one coherent and internationally visible entity. Hence, in the push for global attractiveness and competitiveness, a specific place marketing strategy was mandatory.

⁷⁷⁴ Interview 10, #00:18:07-1#, 10:33.

Branding the new metropolis was an indispensable part of the territorial restructuring. As the urban geographer Michel Rochefort claimed, in twenty-first century France, a metropolis was not solely defined as such by the centralized power. Rather, a metropolis had to be able to sell itself.⁷⁷⁵ Indeed, in the context of unbridled rivalry between cities, places became competitive brands according to specific positive and profitable attributes, ranging from quality of life and creative output, to sustainable social and environmental development, over smart technologies. Zenker and Braun described place branding as “a network of associations in the consumers’ mind based on the visual, verbal, and behavioral expression of a place, which is embodied through the aims, communication, values, and the general culture of the place’s stakeholders and the overall place design.”⁷⁷⁶ According to this definition, in branding processes, individual cognitive apprehensions merged with the agenda of power instances, and the materiality of space.

In the case at hand, the politico-administrative apparatus, which was at the origins of the MAMP, was complemented by a brand. This was particularly visible regarding issues of economic performance. In fact, it crystallized through the interviews that, when it came to promoting the metropolis in terms of capital increase, the governance structure as such was not key; Rather, it was the imagination of a ‘big and vibrant city’ that was at the forefront. Exemplarily, the following statement illustrated this distinction:

“à l’époque [during the creation of MP13; MdS], le mot ‘métropole’, (...) il ne fait pas partie du vocabulaire. (...) S’il est employé, c’est de façon globale, quoi. Comme je dirais ‘la métropole de Hong Kong’ ou voilà. Je ne nomme pas ce que j’appelle moi le véhicule juridico-administratif qui permet de pérenniser les choses.”⁷⁷⁷

⁷⁷⁵ Michel Rochefort, “Des métropoles d’équilibre aux métropoles d’aujourd’hui,” *Strates. Matériaux pour la recherche en sciences sociales*, no. Hors-série (January 1, 2002).

⁷⁷⁶ Zenker and Braun, “Branding a City – a Conceptual Approach for Place Branding and Place Brand Management,” 5.

⁷⁷⁷ Interview 10, #00:26:03-4#, 10:39.

In this quote, different interpretations of metropolitanism crystallize and various spheres of impact appeared: Indeed, when the actor discussed a global understanding of the metropolis and compared it to Hong Kong for instance, the urban region was positioned on an international competition scale rhetorically. In accordance to this, related statements showed that there was a will from the local stakeholders to create an urban development strategy inspired from great global cities like London and New York City.⁷⁷⁸

At the same time however, the juridical and politico-administrative dimension of the metropolis was considered to be the more sustainable part of the project (*le véhicule (...) qui permet de pérenniser les choses*). Hence, there were (at least) two meanings of the metropolis at play here: Firstly, there was the conception of a large and internationally competitive global city (*de façon globale*). And secondly, there was the understanding of a state-led governance apparatus established from 2016 onwards.

The concept of the global city was coined by the urban and globalization sociologist Saskia Sassen in the 1990s. In her book *The Global City – New York, London, Tokyo*,⁷⁷⁹ she examined the correlation between the world economy and cities. She posited that, in the course of the 1970s and '80s, a spatial dispersal as well as a global integration of the international economic world had taken place. These processes reflected particularly on certain cities, like New York, London and Tokyo e.g., which became command points, central locations for service firms, centers for production and innovation, and markets, all at once. These so-called global cities were, on the one hand, the biggest producers and, on the other hand, the most important marketplace for specialized services and financial goods. The spread of this urban type was linked to a re-negotiation of the relationship between cities and the central state power, new forms of labor markets and economic structures.

⁷⁷⁸ Interview 10, #00:41:29-0#, 10:58.

⁷⁷⁹ Sassen, *The Global City – New York, London, Tokyo*.

The attempt to become such an economically performant and internationally networked city could serve as an urban regeneration strategy for postindustrial cities. Insofar, the place marketing and the economic ambitions of the MAMP joint characteristics of the global city. A key and recurrent notion, which mirrored Sassen's concept, was the internationality of the metropolis. The metropolitan features of the MAMP were imagined in relation to other examples around the globe. These very points of comparison were not only inspirations, but they constituted competitors too, which the MAMP needed to grow to be measured up to. In this line of thought, an actor admitted: "C'est vrai que le côté international, il revient souvent. Rayonnement international."⁷⁸⁰ Here, reflecting on the justification for creating and promoting a metropolis, the interviewee emphasized the often mentioned call for international visibility and standing. Indeed, both the development of a metropolitan brand surrounding the 2016 juridical launch and the production of a metropolitan consciousness through events such as MP13 were inscribed in a race for global attractiveness conditioned by the competition between cities.

Overall, many local urban stakeholders shared a long-term ambition, which went beyond the punctual Capital of Culture for one year. According to a cultural producer in Marseille, there was an idea to be part of "les grandes métropoles régionales européennes de niveau international sur le plan économique, culturel, politique."⁷⁸¹ Hence, within the metropolitan restructuring lied a promise of granting the port city and its region a new leadership amongst the great European city-regions as well as an international hub function. And in this attempt, MP13 constituted a catalyzing moment as well as a motor for a new international centrality. In the push for global competitiveness and recognition, the institutional leaders of the MAMP emphasized the potential of a transition phase towards the implementation of the new metropolitan structure:

⁷⁸⁰ Interview 9, #00:10:48-1#, 9:17.

⁷⁸¹ Interview 12, #00:34:39-7#, 12:62.

“En fait, le déséquilibre, c’est pas quelque chose que la plupart des gens aiment. Mais là, la Métropole, elle se met en place et elle va, pendant encore un certain temps, faire du déséquilibre pour tout le monde. Il faut utiliser ce déséquilibre pour franchir des étapes et monter des marches deux fois plus vite qu’on ne le ferait s’il y avait pas de déséquilibre. C’est un accélérateur potentiel. Le fait de mettre en déséquilibre, ça permet de lancer des actions qui sont plus ambitieuses. Ne viennent dans le déséquilibre, ou n’apparaissent dans le déséquilibre, que les plus énergiques. Ceux qui ont un peu plus de modernité dans leur mode de faire. Plus d’innovation, plus de volonté de réussir. C’est en agrégeant ces énergies-là qu’on peut faire mieux.”⁷⁸²

The possibilities arising from a situation of unbalance and the potential of discomfort were conveyed through a rhetoric of progress: “faster” (*plus vite*), “ambitious” (*ambitieuses*), “energetic” (*énergiques*), “modernity” (*modernité*), and so on. In this sense, capitalizing innovation in order to make processes of re-negotiation profitable was discussed positively.

The MAMP stakeholders encouraged a self-entrepreneurial and progress-oriented mode of action: “Ce qui est important, c’est le mouvement. (...) Ce qu’il faut, c’est créer le mouvement. Et l’entretenir. Et le faire de manière solide, portée politiquement, de faire converger les efforts. C’est comme ça que les métropoles réussissent.”⁷⁸³ As postulated here, constant motion was key to establishing as a metropolis. The idea that a city would be able to succeed or not (*que les métropoles réussissent*) applied a business-like entrepreneurial thinking to an urban concept in terms of development strategy and success measuring.

Ideas of movement, progress, constant innovation, and reinvention resonated with theoretical conceptions of the neoliberal city.⁷⁸⁴ In the late twentieth century, neoliberalism spread globally as the “organizational, political and ideological reorganization of capitalism

⁷⁸² Interview 11, #00:29:42-0#, 11:61.

⁷⁸³ Interview 11, #00:34:06-6#, 11:68.

⁷⁸⁴ Brenner, *New State Spaces: Urban Governance and the Rescaling of Statehood*; Jamie Peck and Adam Tickell, “Neoliberalizing Space,” *Antipode* 34, no. 3 (2002): 380–404.

that has been imposed through the attempted institutionalization of (...) 'free market' doctrines in specific historical and geographical contexts."⁷⁸⁵ These processes have strongly effected the organization and functioning of cities. As a consequence, following on from the economic crisis of the 70s and the spread of global capitalism in the 1980s, in the words of the urban geographer David Harvey, "cities are taking an entrepreneurial stance to economic development."⁷⁸⁶ Parallel to the rise of the global city discussed before, Western urban governance shifted towards profit- and competition-oriented neoliberal development.

Certainly, the MAMP was not solely an instrument of economic growth; it was a political and administrative reform, as well as a territorial redefinition. As I will discuss later on, it shaped a new cultural imaginary of space and expressed a lived social reality too. However, its implementation explicitly pursued economic goals as well, which were partly carried by MP13 too. Hence, economic increase characterized the conception of metropolitanism dissemination in the context of 2013. Furthermore, the metropolitan branding revealed that internationality and global competitiveness were features of this project. Additionally, a narrative of post-crisis economic rehabilitation and neoliberal performance were constitutive parts of the discourse on metropolitanism.

⁷⁸⁵ Brenner and Theodore, "Neoliberalism and the Urban Condition," 102.

⁷⁸⁶ Harvey, "From Managerialism to Entrepreneurialism: The Transformation in Urban Governance in Late Capitalism," 4.

5.3. Metropolitan Culture: Eventization and Heritage

Last but not least, culture was an essential part of the *projet métropolitain*⁷⁸⁷ in twenty-first century Marseille-Provence. Amongst the cultural and urban stakeholders interviewed in Marseille, there seemed to exist a consensus that culture served as a motor of metropolitan development. The ways in which and periods when this manifested were diverse and effected several sectors. As one of my interviewees argued, “trouver vraiment un vecteur, un âme de fond sur comment traiter la culture avec l’outil Métropole, c’est le sujet du moment.”⁷⁸⁸ In this quote, the correlation of the metropolis and culture was central in order to functionalize the implementation of the MAMP, as well as to imagine and produce metropolitanism.

In order to approach this topic, I draw from Evans and Shaw’s claim that, in addition to considering the environmental, economic and social effect of a given cultural operation, a fourth sector, the so-called cultural impact, required extended focus. They addressed this notion in two manners:

“One is the impact on the cultural life of a place. For example, the opening of a gallery where there was non before (...). The other use refers to the impact of cultural activity on the culture of a place or community, meaning its codes of conduct, its identity, its heritage and what is termed ‘cultural governance.’”⁷⁸⁹

Following on from this, I will discuss the interconnectedness twofold. To begin, I investigate culture in the metropolis in the sense of arts and culture manifestations in an urban setting, and the role of cultural events in the production of a specific urban image. Complementarily, I then examine notions of ‘metropolitan culture’, which are claimed in the joint context of MP13 and the MAMP, in terms of place-based belonging, traditions and socio-cultural cohesion.

⁷⁸⁷ Interview 11, #00:09:10-3#, 11:31.

⁷⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁸⁹ Evans and Shaw, “The Contribution of Culture to Regeneration in the UK: A Review of Evidence,” 6.

Culture as a Motor of Development

Discussing the role of culture in local urban development processes, one of the representatives at the MAMP stated: “La culture est un vecteur d’attractivité et de rayonnement.”⁷⁹⁰ Culture was explicitly represented as a means to achieve attractiveness, impact and visibility, which were key endeavors and measures of success of the current urban performance ambitions.⁷⁹¹ For example, one of the directors of the ECOC 2013 explained the following: “notre discours c’est de dire: ‘vous avez vraiment besoin d’un événement culturel métropolitain. (...) Réfléchissez deux minutes; vous en avez vraiment besoin. Parce que sinon vous allez être que la Métropole qui met des trains sur les rails.’”⁷⁹² Local cultural stakeholders push for a unifying cultural event in order to reach the mentalities and creating a societal cohesion, in order to catalyze support for metropolitan developments. Such a celebration would, according to these actors, synthesize current policy developments and induce of feeling of belonging among the population, and thereby prevent the MAMP from being a mere technical apparatus (*la Métropole qui met des trains sur les rails*).

Furthermore, in the face of ongoing inter-municipal conflicts surrounding the creation of the metropolis, the ECOC served as a positive label and MP13 was framed as a “projet culturel métropolitain”.⁷⁹³ For the first director of the ECOC, this dimension constituted a major achievement of 2013.

“MP13 a été un exercice en vraie grandeur de métropolisation avant la mise en place de la politique de Métropole officielle, l’application de la loi et la création de la Métropole. On a créé une métropole culturelle avant que la Métropole n’existe dans d’autres domaines.”⁷⁹⁴

⁷⁹⁰ Interview by the author, “Interview 8,” E-mail message to the author, October 1, 2016, page 2, 8:2.

⁷⁹¹ See chapter 5.3. *Metropolitan Culture: Eventization and Heritage*.

⁷⁹² Interview 13, #01:23:19-5#, 13:102.

⁷⁹³ Latarjet, “Marseille-Provence 2013.”

⁷⁹⁴ Interview 12, #00:10:28-7#, 12:25.

This statement conveys two significant messages: Firstly, it asserts the idea that MP13 played an explicit role in the establishment of the metropolis. Not only was it essential for the administrative and juridical restructuring of the region, but it was a precursor, creating the metropolis before it had even become a reality in legal terms. Secondly, this quote implies different dimensions, even different types, of metropolis: cultural (*métropole culturelle*), political (*politique de Métropole officielle*) and juridical (*l'application de la loi et la création de la Métropole*). Thus, it suggests that the metropolis could exist in several variations and in different sectors. Hence, this shaped the understanding that the metropolis was neither a fixed geographic entity, nor a mono-definitional urban form. Rather, it could unfold in diverse versions and functions, as well as in simultaneous or asynchronous temporalities.

In addition to the promotion of a new urban conception, culture served pushing the economy forward: “La culture est un vecteur de développement économique. MP13 (...), ça a généré du fric, donc ça a aussi un énorme bénéfice financier.”⁷⁹⁵ As a measure of the significance of this logic, the involvement of the CCI in MP13’s organization was essentially due to the hopes of a promising connection between culture and financial profit.⁷⁹⁶

“cette CEC [Capitale Européenne de la Culture; MdS] a été présidée par un représentant du monde économique, non pas (...) à l’issue d’une démarche d’un patron éclairé s’intéressant à la culture ou au mécénat etc., mais par un chef d’entreprise qui a bien compris, au-delà de ses propres goûts, que la culture (...) la culture était un levier de développement.”⁷⁹⁷

Here, my interviewee at the CCI made an explicit distinction between two forms of patronage: an aesthetically and intellectually driven support on the one hand, and a financial one, for the sake of economic profit, on the other. In the case of MP13, the former was applied through the

⁷⁹⁵ Interview 11, #00:31:09-2#, 11:64.

⁷⁹⁶ See chapter 4.2. *The Application Framework*.

⁷⁹⁷ Interview 10, #00:00:44-4#, 10:10.

CCI's implication and Pfister's directorship: the involvement in culture was considered by and motivated from an economic development and marketing perspective, rather than from an artistic and content related drive. As mentioned before, this constituted grounds for criticism among the local artistic scene for instance, which considered this cleavage negatively and regretted the economic instrumentalization of the arts and culture field. However, this approach turned out to be profitable in other sectors; exemplarily, investors like *Mécènes du Sud*, who were skeptical initially, ended up being convinced precisely by the perspective of profit linked to the participation in the cultural event:

“[The CCI played; Mds] Un rôle normal, qui était de mobiliser les entreprises, donc la pédagogie en disant: Voilà, il va y avoir des retombées, ça va être bon pour votre image, ça va être bon pour votre tiroir-caisse, ça va être bon pour vos salariés et tout ça”⁷⁹⁸

Campaigning strategically (*la pédagogie*), Pfister's team built on culture's economic potential in order to promote and recruit partners for MP13.

The *Mécènes*'s reticence seemed almost backward in the face of a globalized cultural economy and the established recognition of culture as a factor of economic profit. Had the iconic Minister of Culture Jack Lang not already stated his watchword “Economie et culture, même combat”⁷⁹⁹ during his first speech in office at the National Assembly in 1981? The seeming delay might have been a local specificity in and around Marseille, a territory which had been building on small-to-medium-sized, historically established family businesses acting on a local regional scale.⁸⁰⁰ 2013 was the occasion to broaden the scope of action and modernize the economic strategy through the involvement in the cultural industry. In this sense, MP13 marked a turning point both in the local economic practice and in the cultural governance, and gave the impulse to align with new global imperatives of cultural production.

⁷⁹⁸ Interview 10, #00:10:30-8#, 10:14.

⁷⁹⁹ Jack Lang, quoted in: Marie-Françoise Levy, “Interview de Jack Lang,” *Matériaux pour l'histoire de notre temps*, no. 101–102 (2011): 74–76.

⁸⁰⁰ See chapter 5.3 *Metropolitan Culture: Eventization and Heritage*.

The developments in Marseille and its surrounding region can be read in line with postmodern culture, which what Jameson insightfully described: “what characterizes postmodernity in the cultural area is the supersession of everything outside of commercial culture, its absorption of all forms of art high and low, along with image production itself. The image is the commodity today.”⁸⁰¹ Culture became commercialized and commodified,⁸⁰² and, to a wide extent, served the metropolitan production carried by the ECOC project.

The commodification of the arts and culture fields in the urban context resonated with the well-known concept of the ‘creative city.’ This typologization suggests that innovation and economic growth in cities were driven by social diversity and creativity⁸⁰³ The investigation of the use of culture during the implementation of the *Métropole* might suggest that the metropolis was conceived as a creative city too. In this sense, the Canadian urban tourism scholars Boualem Kadri and Valérie Burnet defined the so-called “concept-programme” of the ‘cultural metropolis’ according to six defining features: artistic and cultural activity, potential for development, promise for the future, urban planning laboratory through culture and tourism, cosmopolitanism, and collaborative governance on the local scale.⁸⁰⁴ Arguably, all of these factors resonate with the instrumentalization of culture for the sake of implementing a metropolitan consciousness during 2013.

⁸⁰¹ Fredric Jameson, *The Cultural Turn: Selected Writings on the Postmodern, 1983-1998* (Verso, 1998), 135.

⁸⁰² Allen J. Scott, *The Cultural Economy of Cities: Essays on the Geography of Image-Producing Industries* (SAGE, 2000), 204.

⁸⁰³ On creative city and creative class theories, see for instance: Franco Bianchini and Charles Landry, *The Creative City* (London: Demos in Association with Comedia, 1995); Richard Florida, *The Rise Of The Creative Class: And How It's Transforming Work, Leisure, Community And Everyday Life* (New York: Basic Books, 2002); Richard Florida, “Cities and the Creative Class,” *City & Community* 2, no. 1 (2003): 3–19; Jamie Peck, “Struggling with the Creative Class,” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 29, no. 4 (December 1, 2005): 740–770.

⁸⁰⁴ Boualem Kadri and Valérie Burnet, “La Métropole Culturelle: Un Nouveau Visage de La Triade Mondialisation-Métropolisation-Mise En Tourisme? Le Cas de Marseille et de Montréal,” in *Dynamiques Métropolitaines et Développement Touristique* (PUQ, 2014), 37–60.

Culture as Event

Discussing contemporary cultural production in the urban context of Marseille, Donzel analyzed the role of cultural events in the production of an urban identity or image. He argued that there had been a functional continuity in a series of decisive events in the city, from the 2'500 years anniversary celebrations of the foundation of the city in 1899 onwards, over the Colonial Expositions in 1906 and 1922, until the more recent period with the ECOC 2013.⁸⁰⁵ According to the author, through the staging and promotion of the local political power, of specific geopolitical visions for the territory, and of the ongoing search for a shared cultural heritage, all of these examples served as “catalyseurs de l’imaginaire de Marseille, des moments clef dans son anamnèse identitaire.”⁸⁰⁶ These events listed above functioned as historical markers and impulses in times in which Marseille’s stakeholders were most in need of affirming a specific identity for the city. In the push for the establishing of a metropolitan image, just like the Colonial Exposition in 1906,⁸⁰⁷ MP13 served as an “accelerator of history.”⁸⁰⁸ It synthesized imaginaries of a collective past within a given territory, labeled threads of shared identities and summed up perspectives of a common future within the unifying image of the metropolis.

In their book *The Eventful City* published in 2010, Richard and Palmer examined the twenty-first century interplay of events and cities in an international perspective.⁸⁰⁹ Amongst other examples, they investigated the role of ECOC celebrations in the practice of the “eventful city.” Drawing from empirical analyses, and echoing Donzel’s interpretation, the author claimed that:

⁸⁰⁵ André Donzel, “Une écologie culturelle de la ville,” *Rives méditerranéennes*, no. 47 (2014): 26.

⁸⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 27.

⁸⁰⁷ See Part I *Making the Colonial Metropole*.

⁸⁰⁸ Sewell, *Logics of History*.

⁸⁰⁹ Greg Richards and Robert Palmer, *Eventful Cities: Cultural Management and Urban Revitalisation* (Routledge, 2010).

“events are increasingly designed to deliver a complex range of cultural, social and economic impacts. Events act as meeting places and as catalysts for aesthetic excellence, economic activity, regional redevelopment and tourism, while supporting education, local identity and civic pride, and stimulating diversity and social cohesion.”⁸¹⁰

As this multidimensional description conveys, events were conceived to draw an all-encompassing picture of society, impact all cultural, economic and social sectors. The events’ influence on establishing, verifying and securing the societal project imagined by their organizers constituted the measure of their significance. Due to their function for local profiling and marketing, there was a widespread trend of mobilizing cultural events as a tool to respond to current global competition between cities.⁸¹¹ Mass events were functionalized, and culture was to a large extent instrumentalized, for the sake of image improvement and economic increase.⁸¹² In this logic, culture was not necessarily the main purpose of the events; rather, it served mostly as a means to an end. Indeed, borrowing the words of the geographer Allen J. Scott, the situation that crystallized in Marseille around 2013 showed how today, “place, culture, and economy are symbiotic on one another.”⁸¹³ Overall, the definition and restructuration of a new metropolitan territory, the creation of a representative cultural event and the push for economic performance were interrelated and codependent.

In his insightful study on *Events in the City*, the urban tourism researcher Andrew Smith explained how large-scale mass celebrations were specifically conceived to constitute an exceptional moment in the city’s everyday life.⁸¹⁴ Through a particular uniqueness, events were

⁸¹⁰ Ibid., 335.

⁸¹¹ Claire Bullen, “European Capital of Culture as a Regional Development Tool? The Case of Marseille-Provence 2013,” *Tafer Journal*, no. 42 (December 2011): 1–8.

⁸¹² Keith Bassett et al., “Urban Dilemmas of Competition and Cohesion in Cultural Policy,” in *Changing Cities : Rethinking Urban Competitiveness, Cohesion and Governance*, ed. Nick Buck et al. (Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 132–153; R. Griffiths et al., “Capitalising on Culture: Cities and the Changing Landscape of Cultural Policy,” *Policy & Politics* 31 (April 1, 2003): 153–69.

⁸¹³ Scott, *The Cultural Economy of Cities*, 4.

⁸¹⁴ Smith, *Events in the City*.

able to produce a punctual snapshot of local realities, while catalyzing extra-ordinary processes. In order to characterize this phenomenon, he described “the process through which events affects the urban spaces they occupy”⁸¹⁵ as the concept of “eventisation.” In the face of a globalized competition between cities, the eventisation of cities served purposes of urban performance and attractiveness. In this context, commercialized cultural events became vectors of urban neoliberalization. At the roots of this process figured central features of urban neoliberalism such as a “trend for marketization,” “the rise of cultural economy,” “the introduction of new forms of governance” and “promotion of an enterprise culture.”⁸¹⁶ Events operated at a new scale of economic governance too: they were used as vectors of urban entrepreneurialism in order to create financial profit for the city independently of national funding⁸¹⁷ and often served a government’s neoliberal project in an age of decentralized and globalized resource management.

Cultural Imaginary and Lived Reality

The instrumentalization of culture in the making of a new metropolis served economic and marketing goals. Additionally, and in order to articulate efficiently in the long run, the cultural sector needed to correlate with a lived cultural experience for the population. A local actor claimed that the involvement of the economic elite had gained awareness about this dimension too: “les patrons ont un peu compris (...) que l’imaginaire culturel contribuait. (...) on est bien d’accord, ça reste une dimension de propagande, c’est pas aussi mécanique que ça. Mais c’est vrai que ça y contribue.”⁸¹⁸ This quote argues that, beyond the material infrastructures and punctual events, an immaterial cultural imaginary was essential to sustaining

⁸¹⁵ Ibid., 2.

⁸¹⁶ Peter Brand, “Green Subjection: The Politics of Neoliberal Urban Environmental Management”, *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 31, n° 3 (2007): 616–632.

⁸¹⁷ Andrew Smith, “Animation or Denigration? Using Urban Public Spaces as Event Venues”, *Event Management* 21, n° 5 (2017): 609–619.

⁸¹⁸ Interview 13, #01:17:48-2#, 13:95.

culture as a motor of development. In line with the entrepreneurial thinking encountered before, the interviewee underlined the propaganda use of this notion too: when the economic leaders (*les patrons*) engaged with imaginary, it was for the sake of implementing a vision and an ideology for marketing purpose. However, overall, this consideration contributed to affirming that the metropolis was not only a technical administrative apparatus; rather, it was produced and represented as a specific urban imaginary.

As expressed illustratively during one of my interviews, “c’est des affaires de culture au sens ‘mode de faire’, ‘mode de pensée.’”⁸¹⁹ Hence, cultural management built on a marketed imaginary and referred to a particular mindset. Furthermore, it was concerned with what Evans and Shaw described above as the “culture of a place”⁸²⁰ and the “codes of conduct.”⁸²¹ All in all, drawing from Alois Wirth’s canonic urban sociology thesis, metropolitan culture was represented as “a way life.”⁸²² Regarding the concept of the metropolis in this manner pointed to the lived dimension and the socially performative component of its production.

Cautioning against prioritizing a mere critical theoretical stance of the phenomenon at hand, a representative at the MAMP and former municipal administration official emphasized that “avant d’être un présupposé idéologique néolibéral, la notion de Métropole renvoie à une réalité quotidienne vécue par plus de 700 000 habitants d’un territoire dans lequel les affinités culturelles et les liens historiques sont assez nombreux.”⁸²³ This person insisted on the everyday reality, which the MAMP embodied, even long before its administrative implementation in 2016. According to her/him, this was based on shared cultural references and on a common historical heritage among the population which *lived* or experienced the new territory. In the same vein, the interviewee criticized an alleged reductive tendency amongst scholars in recent

⁸¹⁹ Interview 11, #00:25:03-9#, 11:57.

⁸²⁰ Evans et Shaw, “The Contribution of Culture to Regeneration in the UK: A review of evidence”, 6.

⁸²¹ Ibid.

⁸²² Louis Wirth, “Urbanism as a Way of Life”, *American Journal of Sociology* 44, n° 1 (1938): 1–24.

⁸²³ Interview 8, page 2, 8.3.

years, who, in his/her view, considered the metropolis as an essentially technical and top-down neoliberal instrument of urban development.⁸²⁴

The emphasis on the ‘lived’ aspect of the metropolitan concept consequently pushed the social perspective to the forefront. Indeed, amongst local stakeholders, there seemed to be a will to enhance the human factors, which embodied and carried the image of the metropolis, as opposed to only focusing on the juridical aspect of the MAMP:

“le cadre métropolitain (...) correspond plus à la vraie vie des habitants de ce territoire qui peuvent vivre à Marseille, travailler à Aix, enfin, les gens vivent comme ça aujourd’hui, ils vivent pas dans leur municipalité, (...) aujourd’hui, la vie des gens, elle est métropolitaine.”⁸²⁵

As conveyed in this quote, there was an understanding that the metropolitan way of life had been practiced for some time already, prior to the juridical creation of the metropolis. In this view, the inhabitants’ life, jobs, commute habits and so on, preceded the administrative restructuring of the territory. And due to this precedence, the way of life – as such, the culture of the place – constituted a decisive feature of metropolitanism.

Hence, projects which contributed to producing a sense of place-based cultural belonging played a prominent role. One of my interviewees described for instance how she/he considered “le GR aussi comme projet métropolitain, tu vois. Comme fabricant de culture métropolitaine.”⁸²⁶ Accordingly, through performative interactions with the territory, the local population was able to co-produce and appropriate the metropolis through a physical experience of the space. For this reason, the GR was considered a maker of ‘metropolitan culture.’ Through the correlation between the lived territory, the urban concept, and the culture of the place, “un projet culturel révèle sa dimension de projet urbain.”⁸²⁷ Indeed, in the particular context of

⁸²⁴ Ibid.

⁸²⁵ Interview 13, #00:31:15-4#, 13:42.

⁸²⁶ Interview 9, #00:01:50-0#, 9:5.

⁸²⁷ Interview 9, #00:03:25-6#, 9:11.

MP13 and the MAMP, the artistic project revealed a key function in the making of a new urban mode.

Societal Cohesion and Cosmopolitanism

Together with the social dimension of the metropolitan concept, a societal vision was sketched: “Donc, un objet tel la Métropole n’est pas qu’un objet technique et financier, c’est aussi l’occasion de souder les populations, les sociétés locales.”⁸²⁸ In the same manner in which the spatial, infrastructural and administrative-political resources were collectivized, the creation of the MAMP was expected to bring a heterogeneous and territorially fragmented population together too. Not only would the inhabitants be linked to the same urban entity, but they would also need to identify with one another. In this endeavor, MP13 played a key precursor role in imagining a new form of social cohesion:

“Notamment avec Chougnnet, lui qui venait faire pousser ses dossiers dans les enceintes du projet métropolitain et nous, inversement. C’était pas qu’un prétexte; C’était aussi pour montrer que la culture était un rassembleur. Donc, un objet tel la Métropole n’est pas qu’un objet technique et financier, c’est aussi l’occasion de souder les populations, les sociétés locales.”⁸²⁹

As expressed here, the executive sectors of MP13 and the MAMP interacted and influenced each other. Indeed, the two projects shared a common thread: the ECOC served as a unique opportunity to catalyze the unification of the regional population on the metropolitan territory. According to the stakeholders, this aspect constituted an essential point of junction of the metropolitan development policy and the cultural event. Indeed, the unifying function of culture conditioned the ability of a large-scale celebration in the city to aggregate individuals and shape

⁸²⁸ Interview 11, #00:00:28-7#, 11:1.

⁸²⁹ Interview 11, #00:00:28-7#, 11:16.

notions of shared belonging. Thereby, MP13 was conceived as a way to show that the metropolis was not merely a technical instrument, but a social unifier too.

Building on Evans and Shaw's statement,⁸³⁰ which I introduced at the beginning of this section, culture was represented as a vector of social cohesion, shared belonging and identity building. Indeed, MP13's organizers deployed much means and energy to "créer un consensus global de la population avec la société civile, des politiques, les cultureux"⁸³¹ during MP13. The notion of consensus was crucial here, and necessary in order to sustainably implement a new image of the metropolitan society. Regarding the future of the MAMP my interviewee at the CCI stated explicitly: "Je pense que ça va dépendre des hommes, des femmes."⁸³² In this view, the population was responsible to incarnate the metropolis. Political and economic imperatives were decisive, however, this statement showed that notions of shared cultural and popular representation were an essential component of metropolitanism. "Ensuite, ce dont on a besoin ici beaucoup, c'est l'identité métropolitaine. Et ça, ça se construit, c'est pas immédiat. Il faudra qu'on prenne des initiatives en 2017–2018 pour forger cette culture commune, ce qui nous unit."⁸³³ While shared belonging and expressions of social cohesion were mandatory, they constituted a challenge for the metropolitan future and were yet to be reached. It is noticeable that, in this statement, issues of metropolitan identity (*l'identité métropolitaine*) were synonym with the idea of shared culture and shared belonging (*culture commune, ce qui nous unit*). Similar formulations appeared throughout my data, such as "sentiment métropolitain"⁸³⁴ or a "conscience métropolitaine,"⁸³⁵ which revealed an affect-based conception of metropolitan culture.

⁸³⁰ Evans et Shaw, "The Contribution of Culture to Regeneration in the UK: A review of evidence", 6.

⁸³¹ Interview 10, #00:10:30-8#, 10:16.

⁸³² Interview 10, #00:45:29-8#, 10:61.

⁸³³ Interview 11, #00:34:06-6#, 11:70.

⁸³⁴ Interview 13, #01:17:48-2#, 13:97.

⁸³⁵ Interview 6, #00:45:10-0#, 6:59.

At the same time, beyond unification, the culture of the metropolis functioned as diversification, as well. One interviewee explained to what extent this conception was linked to a territorial understanding as well: “Y a rien de plus éloigné de la culture métropolitaine que le localisme. Quelqu’un qui veut avoir une culture métropolitaine, il faut aussi qu’il aille d’une métropole à l’autre; c’est une cosmopolitisme quand même un peu, la culture métropolitaine.”⁸³⁶ Here, metropolitan culture became synonym of cosmopolitanism and mobility. Furthermore, the GR2013 creator recalled: “Et donc, ça, que j’appelle le ‘fait métropolitain’, ce truc-là, cette dimension centre-périphérie, qui en plus est toute imprégnée de questions de dialogues inter-culturels ou de multi-culturalisme.”⁸³⁷ The so-called *fait métropolitain*, a recurrent formulation, was constructed based on a similar idea of an inter- and multicultural urban concept. Notions of plurality went hand in hand with the deconstruction of traditional city center–periphery topographies too: the metropolis was conceived as a pluricentral and heterogenous territorial entity.

Metropolitan Heritage and Colonial Connotations

The discourse on cosmopolitanism, which several sources represented as constitutive of the metropolitan society, was built on the ethnic diversity and migration history of Marseille. This heritage is widely recognized to be bound to the history of the French Empire, in which Marseille had served as an imperial gateway and flagship of French colonialism.⁸³⁸ And, as discussed extensively before, it was in this specific context that the port city was established and celebrated as the ‘colonial metropole’ of France. Hence, beyond the sociocultural marks of this period in the present-day, I propose that there is a discursive continuity in urban representation due to the re-use of the metropolitan vocabulary.

⁸³⁶ Interview 9, #00:34:36-9#, 9:55.

⁸³⁷ Interview 9, #00:11:13-6#, 9:26.

⁸³⁸ See Part I *Making the Colonial Metropole*.

Throughout my empirical inquiries with contemporary actors, however, the colonial legacy of the metropolitan concept has been, for the most part, silenced and ignored. Indeed, the metropolis had another meaning and different connotations to most urban stakeholders in Marseille today. An exception amongst my interviewees, the creator of the GR2013 did manifest a strong awareness about these issues. This was most probably due to this person's biography, international activities, and individual interest in critical studies, history, and theories of racism. For instance, this actor told me the story about the exportation of the *Sentiers Métropolitains* to Tunis. The urban trail project had been successful in France and enjoyed an international cooperation with Tunisia. However, the implementation of the project on site turned out to be conflictual:

“une fois là-bas, dans ce monde francophone cultivé des tunisois, le mot ‘métropolitain’ – personne n’a fait la réflexion vraiment mais moi, ça a commencé à monter, je me suis dit: ‘putain! Merde, j’arrive en Tunisie, je débarque avec un projet de sentier métropolitain et là, tout d’un coup, ça sonne faux’. Pour quelqu’un de Tunisie, je pense que ça résonne colonial (...). Et ça fait vraiment chier. Mais ici, pendant les trois ans où on l’a porté ici, on avait pas cette résonance-là parce que c’est pas notre histoire directement.”⁸³⁹

As the interviewee recalled, it was only once the project arrived in Tunis that the colonial connotations of the term metropolis became obvious. A group of West-European creatives was bringing a so-called ‘metropolitan’ project into a Tunisian territory: this narrative evoked imperialist associations and a shameful French past for the GR2013 creator.

However, the stakeholder defended the project and its name, claiming that there was a distinct point of rupture between the colonial context of meaning up until the 60s and the contemporary use of the metropolis since the 2000s:⁸⁴⁰

⁸³⁹ Interview 9, #00:05:19-4#, 9:14.

⁸⁴⁰ Interview 9, #00:07:57-9#, 9:15.

“Ce thème ville-nature et ce thème centre-périphérie, tu le retrouves, je crois, dans toutes les grandes villes du monde aujourd’hui, c’est le fait métropolitain et nous, on le voit comme le fait urbain du 21^e siècle et profondément non-colonial, profondément–Nord-Sud que (i) flottait complètement donc c’est peut-être pas si mal, au final, de revendiquer Sentiers Métropolitains pour dire: ‘Métropole, y en a partout dans le monde aujourd’hui.’”⁸⁴¹

The interviewee seemed embarrassed about the seemingly obvious connection between the urban trail concept and the imperialist meanings of its vocabulary. Responding to potential insinuations of perpetuating colonial logics through the *Sentiers métropolitains*, the person emphasized the existence of a different meaning of the metropolis today. Indeed, in this view, the so-called *fait métropolitain* at stake was inscribed in a geographic approach and the performative constitution of a heterogeneous and polycentric metropolitan territory. Additionally, a worldwide distribution of metropolitan trails might represent an opportunity to democratize the concept and to positively undo the colonizing meaning of the term. Hence, these aspects might point to a definitional and paradigmatic shift in the understanding of metropolitanism. However, the inherently colonial dimension of the terminology may potentially re-surface, depending on the context of application and the purpose of use of the word, and therefore calls for a critical and differentiated discussion at all times.

In order to circumvent the definitional debates about the colonial heritage of the metropolis, the GR2013 founder proposed to gain some distance from the terminology itself. This person suggested using this concept as an opportunity to reflect on the way in which urban and rural areas can be approached together today.⁸⁴² At the same time, members of the GR2013 imagined all kinds of related concepts conveying alternative imaginaries of the metropolis, such

⁸⁴¹ Interview 9, #00:11:13-6#, 9:27.

⁸⁴² Interview 9, #00:11:13-6#, 9:20.

as “provenço-politain,”⁸⁴³ “hyper-village provençal,”⁸⁴⁴ or “méga-bled.”⁸⁴⁵ As it shows, each of these word-plays articulated a particular place-based conception of culture. While the first one imagined a joint metropolitan and Provençal identity, the second one drew to an ‘augmented’ (*hyper*) version of regional forms of settlements (*village provençal*). The image of the Provençal village did not only refer to regional infrastructures, but it also represented local traditions and communities. In this idea, the societal frame of reference for the traditional village would upscale as a new regional entity.

In the third example, the *méga-bled* implied yet another type of territorial culture. Indeed, the *bled* is the designation for a small traditional North-African village – and a racialized slang expression, often used in the suburbs, symbolizing a tension between modern French citizenship and the integration of socially and ethnically diverse populations.⁸⁴⁶ Hence, this word-play referred to the schematized sociocultural composition of Marseille and its high percentage of Maghreb and Arabic population. According to this image, the restructuring of Marseille as a metropolis symbolically equaled the scalar increase of a *bled*. Overall, through these metaphors, the metropolitan culture was imagined at the intersection between Provençal and North-African heritage, urban growth, and societal heterogeneity.

⁸⁴³ Interview 9, #00:19:53-9#, 9:37.

⁸⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁴⁶ Chantal Tetreault, “Cultural Citizenship in France and Le Bled among Teens of Pan-Southern Immigrant Heritage,” *Language & Communication*, Figuring Citizenship: Communicative Practices Mediating the Cultural Politics of Citizenship Age, 33, no. 4, Part B (2013): 532–543.

5.4. Negotiating Metropolitanism

In this chapter, I investigated the discourse on the metropolis MAMP produced and disseminated in the context of ECOC event. For this purpose, I extracted three main features of current metropolitanism analytically. Obviously, these are neither exhaustive nor fixed definitionally. Moreover, they are in and of themselves plural and complex. Nevertheless, they provide a systematized examination of the representation of the metropolis in the context. Additionally, they contribute to understanding how and why MP13 contributed to producing and disseminating a specific image of the metropolis for Marseille and its surroundings. Summing up my findings, I firstly proposed that metropolitanism was a redefined scale of urban territory and urban governance. Secondly, my analysis showed that urban economy and global financial performance were key aspects of metropolitanism. Lastly, culture played a key role in the representational production of this concept; it was all found at the intersection between eventisation and identity-building.

Throughout the investigation, the notion of *collectivization* has revealed as a continuous thread in the current discourse on the metropolis. Indeed, this concept was shaped by a strong territorial collectivization, which manifested in terms of decentralization politics, polycentricity of new urban structures, and regionalization of urban development. Moreover, there was a distinct political and administrative collectivization at stake. This was evident in the creation of a new governance mode, which implied a diversification of the governing instances as well as a merging of the institutions. Furthermore, metropolitanism was characterized by collectivization of resources, such as financial and fiscal capital, as well as infrastructures for transport (unified commuter networks throughout the MAMP territory, e.g.), education (University Aix-Marseille, e.g.), and culture (shared cultural infrastructures during 2013, e.g.). Finally, a social and cultural collectivization was evident in the efforts to create a cohesive

population at a new heterogeneous territorial scale. With this, there were attempts to shape a common sense of belonging and inventing a ‘metropolitan culture’.

Illustrating these achievements, a stakeholder at the MAMP claimed: “Y a une forme de risque d’enfermement sur– De simplification du discours alors que le projet métropolitain, il est dans une diversité d’actions qui vont rebondir les unes sur les autres.”⁸⁴⁷ Warning against the potentially reductive representation of the metropolis, the actor suggested that it was present in all kinds of sectors and on various different scales. The consideration of multiple vectors of development was encouraged, together with a will to dare for complex projects and to avoid the fragility of isolation. As put here, “a diversity of actions” (*une diversité d’actions*) reproduced itself and thereby catalyzed prolific progress. In this sense, collectivization was as pluralization of modes of thinking and modes of actions too.

A sense of decompartmentalization was decisive territorially as well, for the metropolis was conceived as a heterogeneous and polycentric congregate. The main aim pursued with the creation of the MAMP was not so much to condense its functions in one active core. Rather, it was about exploding city boundaries, transcending urban-rural or center-periphery dichotomies, and collectivizing heterogeneous and structurally dispersed resources. However, at the same time, the metropolization of the territory did aim at the creation of one single umbrella institution, the *Métropole*, which would bring together interdependent areas and constitute a competitive hub within a network of global city regions around the world. There was an intention of assembling disconnected territorial elements for the sake of creating a new centrality. Hence, there was a dichotomy between an understanding of metropolization as a homogenizing process of territorial integration, and its conception as a pluralization of resources and potential.

⁸⁴⁷ Interview 11, #00:31:09-2#, 11:62.

Building on this, the new metropolitan community was imagined twofold: on the one hand, identity was linked to an idea of belonging, which was based on a physical territory in the relation to a defined societal unity on a local scale. In this case, culture served as a unifier in the search for social consensus. I qualify this first approach as a *localist* conception of metropolitanism. On the other hand, however, there was an image of the metropolis based on a functional plurality. The city of Marseille and its region were merging in order to create a multicultural and highly performant urban apparatus. In this view, the process of building a metropolitan identity was inherently plural, where culture served as a multiplier in the push for diversity. I call this second approach a *globalist* notion of metropolitanism. Both approaches co-existed as constitutive representational features of metropolitanism. The opposing character of the *localist* and the *globalist* understandings might seem potentially conflictual or contradictory. However, it might as well reveal the potential of a concept with little definitional fixity, such as the metropolis: It can be articulated discursively and might therefore be instrumentalized in different – and at times even opposing – ways, depending on the interests it helps pursuing and on the power structures at play.

6. Conclusion

6.1. General Summary

It has been the aim of this dissertation to contribute both theoretically and empirically to the conceptualization of metropolitanism in Marseille between the era of the fin-de-siècle French Empire and the present day. As posited in the introduction of this work, the concept of the metropolis has undergone many contextual, definitional, and functional shifts over the past several centuries. Thus, I asked why the concept of the metropolis has been constitutive of urban discourses on Marseille recurrently until the present early twenty-first century. Additionally, I wondered what features of metropolitanism could be identified, who or which instances have defined them, and in pursuit of what interests. In order to help answer these questions, I distilled key defining characteristics of metropolitanism analytically and examined diachronically the production of the representational discourses on the metropolis.

Integrating the historicity of the metropolis into this inquiry, the comparative diachronic research design allowed me to trace continuities and breaks over the course of a century of metropolitan representations of Marseille. First, I investigated the image of the colonial metropole at the beginning of the twentieth century. Then, I turned to the metropolis, or metropolitan region, *Aix-Marseille-Provence* in the first decades of the twenty-first century. For each time period, I selected a representative mass event, which arguably contributed to the production and dissemination of the notion of the metropolis. These events (the 1906 Colonial Exposition in Marseille and the *European Capital of Culture* “Marseille-Provence 2013”) served as my two cases of inquiry, which also structured the work chronologically and analytically. In the following, I summarize the empirical analyses of both case studies. Based on the results of the diachronic investigation, I then discuss the respective features of metropolitanism comparatively, and finish with several conclusions.

The 1906 Colonial Exposition in Marseille

In the first part of this dissertation, I investigated the making of the colonial metropole Marseille. In the first chapter, I began by engaging with my initial research question, asking how and why the 1906 Colonial Exposition served as a means of urban representation in the turn-of-the-century port city.⁸⁴⁸ Around 1900, Marseille was the second largest city in France after Paris and the biggest port of the French Empire, constituting the most significant gateway between the mainland and the colonies overseas. Maritime activities shaped the commercial and industrial function of the place, which was characterized socially by a strong working class as well as an influential local imperial bourgeoisie. In 1906, the first Colonial Exposition of the country was hosted in Marseille to celebrate the city's role within the empire and the achievements of French colonialism. The event occurred within the context of a widespread phenomenon of international exhibitions that took place in the western world, largely western Europe and the Americas, at the turn of the nineteenth and early twentieth century. While it contributed to the endurance of an established tradition of universal fairs in urban centers, the Marseille Exposition was unprecedented due to its primary focus on colonial topics.

In the port city of Marseille, the chamber of commerce collaborated with the municipal government and mayor Amable Chanot, as well as the regional and departmental councils in order to launch the project. Jules Charles-Roux and Edouard Heckel, two central figures in Marseille's colonial lobby and imperial bourgeoisie, led the realization of the exhibition. The event was conceived as an educational and entertaining celebration of French imperialism that constituted a major promotional project for the city of Marseille and its imperial elite. As an instrument in the competition with other 'second cities' of France, such as Lyon and Bordeaux, it was also an opportunity to improve the image of the city after a period of political crisis. In this context, Marseille was presented as the main urban hub of French imperialism, laying the

⁸⁴⁸ See Chapter 2 *The 1906 National Colonial Exposition in Marseille*

groundwork for the status as the so-called “métropole coloniale”⁸⁴⁹ of France. Through the success of the event Marseille asserted its economic, industrial, and ideological strength independently from Paris. Locals leveraged the success of the event to push for decentralization.

Following an analytical description of the 1906 event, this chapter investigated the official goals of the Colonial Exposition. This examination revealed major ideological, philosophical, and political visions conveyed by the show, which helped institutionalize imperialist power structures. For instance, the event served as a deliberate didactic mission and contributed to producing the scientific and academic justification of a discriminating and racialized system of knowledge. This exhibitory practice nourished a hegemonic power hierarchy between metropolitan and colonial subjects, while conveying an affectionate rhetoric of shared belonging in order to consolidate the empire socially. Overall, the Exposition was a means to instrumentalize information and education to advance contemporary imperial propaganda and economic profit for the elites of this system.

Overall, the event presented a material and symbolic reproduction of the empire, and offered a setting in which to ‘practice colonialism.’ In doing so, not only did it mediate a political and ideological system; it participated in producing it as well. This included an articulation of the dichotomy between the colonies and the metropole, a defining aspect of imperialist logic aimed at justifying colonial ambitions. Functioning as both the showcase and the producer of this system of knowledge, the 1906 Exposition essentially contributed to defining the function of a colonial metropole. For this reason, I argued that the Exposition served as a means to represent imperial Marseille, and to constitute and establish the metropole concept in the colonial era.

⁸⁴⁹ See for instance: Chambre de Commerce de Marseille. *La Chambre de Commerce de Marseille et l'Exposition Coloniale de 1906*. Marseille: Barlatier, 1908, 73.

Producing Metropolitanism in the Colonial Era

In the second chapter of this work, I leverage the presentation of the 1906 Exposition to unpack several representational discourses that established the image of the colonial metropole in the course of the show.⁸⁵⁰ I focused on central actors and discursive moments in order to trace the creation of the urban imaginary. For this purpose, speeches and statements delivered in the context of the exhibition revealed how the curatorial team, national and municipal politicians, and colonial delegates each discussed the question of the metropole. Additionally, reports from local, regional, and national newspapers reflected contemporary discourses and official ideologies. In addition, several scientific publications of the Exposition, as well as economic report sheets and administrative reports, provided insightful sources.

Methodologically, I conducted a computer-based qualitative analysis of my empirical source material, which allowed me to extract systematically key metropolitan terminologies and semantics from my data. I then interpreted the results of this research and sorted the findings into three main categories I determined to be core features of metropolitanism produced in the context of inquiry. The three categories dictated the structure of the chapter as well, and are entitled as follows: *Urban Historicity and Colonial Legacy* (Chapter 3.1.); “*Networked Economic Competitiveness*” (Chapter 3.2.); and *Contingent Relationality* (Chapter 3.3.).

In subchapter 3.1., I argued that the representational discourse on the colonial metropole was based extensively on a specific narrative of Marseille’s colonial historicity. The long existence of the city, which had been founded as the settlement Massalia by Ancient Greek sailors in 2600 B.C., served to legitimize a position of dominance. The organizers of the 1906 Colonial Exposition claimed that Marseille had constituted an urban center of ‘western civilization and culture’ since Antiquity and, therefore, deserved to be praised as a “*métropole*

⁸⁵⁰ See chapter 3 *Establishing the Colonial Metropole: Metropolitanism in Marseille in the Colonial Era*.

des Gaules.”⁸⁵¹ The early use of this qualifier, centuries before the colonial period, seemed to justify its affirmation at the beginning of the twentieth century. Furthermore, the story of the old Greek colony, which later turned into the metropole of the French Empire, was romanticized in order to assert the imperialist traditions shaping Marseille’s history.

Furthermore, descriptions of everyday life in the city were emphasized in order to validate the colonial metropole. Marseille, gateway of the empire, formed the transit point to and from the colonies, where migrants, sailors, and local inhabitants came together. This underscored a kind of cosmopolitanism, which resulted from this exchange platform, that contributed to an imagining of Marseille as inherently colonial, socially mixed, multi-ethnic, and at the edge of France. Marseill’s geographic proximity to the North African territories and its function as a hub for colonial trade justified the claim of a long-established and privileged bond to the colonies. Through the simultaneous articulation of different periods of the city’s history, the establishment of Marseille’ status as a colonial metropole revealed a plural temporality. Indeed, it signified both the rewarding achievement of a prosperous past development and the branded catalyzer for a promising future. In a complex interplay between past, present, and future images of the city, traditions and past glories were displayed to guarantee even greater, more prosperous times to come.

A second major characteristic of the representation as a metropole was the question of urban economic competitiveness and prosperity (3.2.). In the specific case of imperial Marseille, these issues were negotiated in the joint sectors of maritime and port activities, colonial trade networks, and industrial production. Due to its transit function in the colonial network, the city enjoyed not only wide international connectedness, but also a specific centrality with the empire. Moreover, Marseille’s connection to Algiers, the so-called “grande

⁸⁵¹ [Unknown], *Guide Officiel de l’Exposition Coloniale de Marseille*, 3.

voisine”,⁸⁵² was decisive for its prosperity and representation. Commercial activities in the colonial network contributed to a key positioning within the regional Provençal realm, as well, which earned Marseille’s characterization as both “Métropole Coloniale”⁸⁵³ and as “métropole commerciale du Midi.”⁸⁵⁴ Therefore, metropolitanism was not only constructed based on imperial functions, but also to commercial productivity in general.

Adding to the import of colonial goods, the transformation of raw materials and the exportation of resources were characteristic of the “système industrialo-portuaire Marseillais.”⁸⁵⁵ Hence, the industrial productivity contributed to affirming the significance of the city. Based on this, establishing the status as a metropole served as an assertion of the local prosperity, as well as a promise for the future. Here, notions of connectivity and internationality were intrinsically linked to the imperatives of economic performance, flavoring the discourse on metropolitanism with a significant market orientation and profit-oriented place branding goals. Already around 1900, economic growth and competition between cities were aimed at through metropolitan labelling.

Thirdly, the construction of the metropole has proven to be inherently relational (3.3.). Indeed, the image of Marseille in 1906 was built in reference to capitality, nationalism, and regionalism, as well as French imperial expansion and colonialism. By consistently referencing Marseille as the metropole, local and imperial leaders continually reaffirmed its distinction from the colonies, from the capital city Paris, from other ‘second cities’ like Lyon and Bordeaux, and so on. This also shaped the dual images of a metropolitan *society* and *identity*, which functioned in opposition to colonial equivalents. Through the means of the exhibition, the metropolitan ‘Self’ was confronted with the constitutive colonial ‘Other.’ Here, social and cultural

⁸⁵² Bouis, *Le Livre d’Or de Marseille. De Son Commerce et de Ses Industries. Compte-Rendu Annuel de La Situation Maritime, Commerciale, Industrielle, Coloniale*, 1906, 519.

⁸⁵³ Bouis, *Le Livre d’Or de Marseille. De Son Commerce et de Ses Industries. Compte Rendu Annuel de La Situation Maritime, Commerciale, Industrielle, Coloniale*, 1905, 186.

⁸⁵⁴ Louis Sabarin, “Les Fêtes Provençales à l’Exposition Coloniale,” *Le Petit Provençal*, November 1906.

⁸⁵⁵ Zalio, “D’impossibles notables ?” 97.

imaginaries contributed to creating a kind of racialized othering and imperial racism. Thus, the image of the metropole did not merely convey an imaginary of the city, nor did it rely solely on economic supremacy, it also contributed to producing a societal project, as well. These historically contingent and relational characteristics of metropolitanism rendered the political and ideological implications of urban typologization visible.

The *European Capital of Culture* “Marseille-Provence 2013”

In the subsequent part of the dissertation, I discussed a second case study focused on the concept of the metropolis in post-colonial Marseille more than one century later.⁸⁵⁶ Here I examined the early twenty-first-century metropolitan discourse disseminated during the “Marseille-Provence 2013” (MP13) project within the context of the creation of the *Métropole Aix-Marseille-Provence* (MAMP) region. According to the design of my analysis, I focused on this second historical moment, which, I argue, provides a comparative foil to the concept of the colonial metropole analyzed previously. Each case reveals a specific conceptualization of the metropolis, which I analyzed respectively and confronted in a diachronic perspective.

In this third core chapter, I turned to the representation of Marseille in the present day. At the turn of the twenty-first century, Marseille was slowly growing out of a long-term post-industrial urban downfall. Adding to the post-war socio-economic crisis, a marginalizing alterity characterized the city; a troubled reputation had established itself in stark contrast to the so-called Golden Age of Marseille’s colonial era.

Urban regeneration projects and discourses attempted to respond to the conflicts of this ‘city in crisis.’ As a potential engine for urban renewal, the European Capital of Culture title (ECOC) provided both a symbolic and material opportunities to situate Marseille into globalized and mainstream cultural markets in effort to restore the city’s image and catalyze

⁸⁵⁶ See chapter 4 *The European Capital of Culture “Marseille-Provence 2013”*.

economic growth. Embedded in the prospect of the European award was also the promise of a ‘better future’ for the city and its inhabitants. Following the logic of globalized cultural economics, *culture* was instrumentalized as a key factor of urban (re)development. Under the lead of the CCI, local economic networks became involved in the cultural industry, anticipating a new booming sector of activities. The economic sector collaborated with municipal, regional, and departmental governments in order to prepare the application and, later on, to make the event a reality. For the sake of resource optimization, all parties involved focused on collaborative cultural policies, which were put into practice explicitly during the ECOC application process. Exemplarily, the leading association *Marseille-Provence 2013* brought together political and urban stakeholders under the lead of the business CEO, Jacques Pfister.

The production of the ECOC happened in the context of national urban policy reforms promoting the formation of so-called *Métropoles* throughout France. From 2014 onwards, new legal frameworks shaped the administrative restructuring and re-naming of 13 polycentric urban entities in France.⁸⁵⁷ Among others, the metropolis *Aix-Marseille-Provence* was launched in 2016 and brought together 92 municipalities in and around Marseille in the Bouches-du-Rhône Department. In the course of the metropolization, new territorial campaigns and urban labelling discourses emerged, promoting an unprecedented image of the metropolis.

Inscribed in this regional restructuring, MP13 was planned at a regional scale. However, in practice the ECOC project was realized before the official launch of the *Métropole*. As the *Mission Interministérielle* in charge of the prefiguration of the metropolis claimed, MP13 constituted “L’expression créative et populaire du sentiment métropolitain.”⁸⁵⁸ Hence, the EU program took on a function of catalyst and cultural imagination of the metropolis. At the same time, the ECOC project was inherently challenged by the metropolization of the territory which

⁸⁵⁷ LOI n° 2014-58 du 27 janvier 2014 de modernisation de l’action publique territoriale et d’affirmation des métropoles; LOI n° 2015-991 du 7 août 2015 portant nouvelle organisation territoriale de la République.

⁸⁵⁸ Mission interministérielle pour le projet Aix-Marseille-Provence, *Convergences Métropolitaines: Aix-Marseille-Provence*, 28.

confronted pre-existing regional conflicts between Aix and Marseille, as well as other rival municipalities, and granted the cultural event a unique political responsibility.

Concluding a successful prefiguration period, Marseille won the ECOC title against its historical competitors Bordeaux, Lyon, and Toulouse in 2008. A widespread promotional campaign leveraged the city's alleged 'weaknesses' as promising potential for progress. Under the leadership of Bernard Latarjet, and then Jean-François Chougnet, the realization of MP13 began together with the narration of Marseille's renaissance.

In the context of state-led metropolization reforms and the governmental regionalization, MP13 was marked by several confrontations. Building on the MP13 director's assumption that an ECOC was "de la fabrication de mécontents,"⁸⁵⁹ I investigated the realization and impact of the cultural event through the lens of conflict. Firstly, I focused on disagreements among the partner municipalities and across different sectors (e.g. political versus economic networks) and ideologies (i.e. intra-political disagreements), which formed the basis for governance disputes. Secondly, I argued that the institutionalization of formal and informal counter-collectives such as the Off and the *Alter Off* revealed programmatic conflicts, too. Finally, I showed that exclusive-inclusive 'identity' narratives based on European and/or Mediterranean cultures and cosmopolitanism were constructed in order to create a feeling of shared belonging to the new metropolitan entity. The ideals underscoring collective events heightened socio-cultural tensions because they were inherently exclusive and reinforced mechanisms of socio-spatial segregation and cultural elitism.

Overall, while it remains a dispute whether the cultural event influenced Marseille's urban development project or vice versa, the correlation between MP13 and the MAMP was evident and revealed in several sectors. In this sense, the ECOC event provided a useful frame to investigate a new image of the 'metropolis in the making.'

⁸⁵⁹ Interview 12, #00:22:18-9#, 12:45.

Producing Metropolitanism in a Post-Colonial Age

In a fourth analytical chapter, I drew from the inter-dependence of the MAMP creation and the MP13 project in order to analyze the imaginary of the early twenty-first century metropolis.⁸⁶⁰ Similar to the approach adopted for the previous case study, I presented the cultural event as both a setting and a co-producer of metropolitan discourse. This provided a framework to interrogate various actors, their goals, and key features of urban representation.

While I rooted my investigation in the existing literature on the 2013 ECOC and the contemporary history of Marseille, I engaged with oral history methods in order to collect exclusive testimonies of actors involved in these recent urban and cultural processes. A set of 10 interviews conducted with stakeholders of the MAMP and of MP13 allowed me to gather first-hand material in order to tackle my research question and to investigate the representation of Marseille as a metropolis. Using a methodology similar to the first case study, I provided a computer-based qualitative content analysis of the data in order to extract the semantics and the statements referring to this very concept. Based on these results, I was able to systematically connect and order the different aspects of the discourse. These were then sorted into three main categories, which organized my discussion of the features of metropolitanism in present-day Marseille.

To begin, the interconnectedness of territorial scale and governance constituted a major dimension of the discourse. Indeed, a geographic frame of reference shaped the creation of the MAMP, as well as the way in which a place-based consciousness was imagined in the context of MP13. Firstly, the concept of the *Métropole* transcended traditional city boundaries. Instead of existing as a synonym for one specific urban core dominating a group of cities,⁸⁶¹ the metropolis was a network of cities in itself, encompassing 92 municipalities. Even more so, it

⁸⁶⁰ See chapter 5 *Representing the Metropolis "Aix-Marseille-Provence": Metropolitanism in Post-Colonial Marseille*.

⁸⁶¹ Farias and Stemmler, "Deconstructing 'Metropolis,'" 65.

included towns and villages of various sizes, as well as rural areas. Secondly, the redefinition of the territory went hand-in-hand with a restructuring of its governance. Indeed, the polycentric entity was characterized by a collaborative mode of governance, which drastically modified processes of policy-making and enhanced the potential of multi-actor and cross-sector cooperation. Therefore, I argue that in the present-day, multi-scalar territorial geography and governance constituted a feature of metropolitanism.

Moving on, in this chapter I showed that urban economic and global financial performance were key elements in the conception of a metropolis, too. In and around Marseille, the implementation of a new territorial governance and of a collaborative resource management was expected to induce capital increase. Building on the same idea, representatives of the economic sectors at the CCI promoted the logics of metropolization as a way to avoid a localized and enclosed business-model.⁸⁶² *Euroméditerranée* followed a similar logic, too, of urban regeneration, economic development, and metropolitan labelling.⁸⁶³ Based on this understanding, the metropolis was branded as a globally performant urban core. Along with this imaginary, the MAMP was marketed through an entrepreneurial rhetoric, in line with neoliberal performance imperatives. In this context, MP13 served as a strategic city marketing and tourism boost. Hence, the metropolis was conceived as an instrument for economic growth and as an internationally attractive brand.

Finally, culture was a main topic in the representation of the metropolis. As my analysis revealed, this was negotiated in two ways: on the one hand, culture was played out in the sense of a *cultural event*, as the case of MP13 showed. This means that it served as an instrument for popular gatherings and artistic activity. Additionally, in line with neoliberal logics of commodification and profit, the cultural event was also used for the sake of city marketing and

⁸⁶² Interview 12, #00:34:39-7#, 12:73.

⁸⁶³ Bertonecello and Dubois, *Marseille, Euroméditerranée*.

economic boost.⁸⁶⁴ This purpose was supported by urban stakeholders who installed the metropolis at the regional scale. Indeed, they recognized that in order to not merely be a politico-administrative dispositive, the metropolis needed a cultural event in order to forge its ‘identity’ and produce an urban imaginary.⁸⁶⁵

At the same time, culture also was negotiated in terms of place-based feeling of belonging and identity-building.⁸⁶⁶ The integration of a heterogeneous regional territory required defining shared sets of beliefs and references in order to shape a social cohesion based on a common ‘metropolitan culture.’ For instance, an interviewed representative at the CCI underscored that the population was a decisive factor for a successful implementation and functioning of the new territorial entity.⁸⁶⁷ Overall, a visible and multi-dimensional “cultural impact”⁸⁶⁸ constituted a main feature of current metropolitanism.

⁸⁶⁴ Scott, *The Cultural Economy of Cities*.

⁸⁶⁵ Interview 13, #01:23:19-5#, 13:102.

⁸⁶⁶ Richards and Palmer, *Eventful Cities*.

⁸⁶⁷ Interview 10, #00:45:29-8#, 10:61.

⁸⁶⁸ Evans and Shaw, “The Contribution of Culture to Regeneration in the UK: A Review of Evidence.”

6.2. Comparative Discussion of the Analytical Findings

The selection of the two case studies was rooted in their functional similarity. Both events were instrumentalized for the sake of the production of the image of the metropolis. In both cases, metropolitanism was shaped by a multilayered intersection of materialized and representational practices. As the first case study on imperial Marseille revealed, the metropolis was a representational construction used to assign specific functions to the Mediterranean port city. The status of the colonial metropole was charged ideologically and served as a promotional label for the city, which the 1906 Colonial Exposition helped popularize and concretize. Hence, schematically, the exhibition was a material event, while the metropolis was a representational discourse.

In contrast, the second case study showed that the twenty-first-century metropolis functioned both as an abstract representational concept and as a concrete project of urban development. Indeed, the metropolitan question was not merely negotiated in terms of urban labelling; rather, it implicated materialized processes of urban policymaking and territorial restructuring. In this context, as discussed in chapter 4, MP13 constituted the first cultural manifestation of the metropolis. Hence, both the MP13 and the MAMP carried material realities and correlated representational functions. In other words, each event represented an image of the metropolis, which was grounded in a tangible urban project.

In this sense, there was a shift between both case studies: on the one hand, the first one examined a specific mass event (the 1906 Colonial Exposition) and its effects on shaping and establishing one particular urban concept (the colonial metropole). On the other hand, the second case study engaged with one specific mass event (MP13) and both its correlation with the planning measures of metropolization processes, and the representational construction of an urban concept (the metropolis MAMP). In both cases, the metropolis was an urban promotional label. However, in 1906, it served primarily as an ideological means of

representation, while in 2013, it was rooted in territorial planning and governance restructuring too. Hence, comparing 1906 and 2013 in Marseille, there was a difference in the idea of the metropolis and a fundamental transition in the conception of metropolitanism.

Although the metropolis in 2013 diverged from its corollary in 1906, its discursive articulation followed similar patterns in each year. Indeed, there was a consistency in the ways the realization of the event was connected rhetorically to the affirmation of Marseille as a metropolis. For instance, in the context of 1906, some local officials considered the organization of the Colonial Exposition justified the metropolitan status for Marseille. Simultaneously, other statements claimed that Marseille was entitled to hosting the exhibition because it was the colonial metropole of France in the first place. This type of illogical and self-legitimizing link between the image of the metropolis and the producer of this very image was found in the analysis of the second case of inquiry, too. In fact, several actors explained that the MAMP prospects conditioned the win of the 2013 *ECOC* title. In this view, MP13 was the large-scale cultural manifestation of an existing metropolitan project. However, other voices defended the precedence of the cultural event: MP13 had imposed an innovative form of collaborative governance onto a heterogeneous regional territory, which laid the grounds for the implementation of the regionalized metropolis structure from 2016 onwards. Hence, here too, there was a conflicted chicken-and-egg causality debate regarding the origins and the impact of the metropolis.

Envisioning a Promising Urban Future

Beyond similarities and differences in the forms of the discourse, the initial theoretical issue of the meaning of the metropolis remains: Why has this very concept been constitutive of Marseille's urban representation around 1900 and up until today despite its significant contextual, definitional, and functional shifts? This question underpinned the project; while my

studies did not provide definitive and closed answers to it, the inquiry offered a thread along which I identified continuous logics in the representation of the Marseille metropolis.

A first recurrent feature of metropolitanism was rooted in the negotiation of temporality and expressed as a promise for a better urban future. Indeed, both metropolitan moments investigated in this work were constructed discursively in reaction to a recent period of crisis. In this context, the two events which contributed to carrying and producing the image of the metropolis respectively served the regeneration of Marseille's image and reputation. A good illustration of this tendency was the promotion of the Colonial Exposition in the aftermath of a series of dockers' strikes at the beginning of the twentieth century. In the course of these events, according to the local stakeholders, the maritime productivity, the relationship between bourgeois and the working class, as well as the image of the city were affected negatively. In response, Charles-Roux planned a large, glorious event in Marseille, the Colonial Exposition, in order to restore the atmosphere and to prove the city's strength and potential to the outside world.⁸⁶⁹

Similar ambitions were evident in the context of my second case study. Indeed, in the 2010s, the representation of Marseille functioned as a reaction to decades of urban downfall. The interplay of post-Second World War deindustrialization and decolonization processes had challenged the city's economy and demography deeply. During the second half of the twentieth century, Marseille was characterized and stigmatized by postindustrial urban crisis, poverty, and criminality. In this context, the creation of the MAMP was inscribed in a both local and national project of urban renewal.

The metropolis was presented as a strategy for regionalized resource optimization and as a framework for attractive place branding, to which the 2013 ECOC event contributed. In fact, during the application process for MP13 the organizers constructed a promotional

⁸⁶⁹ See chapter 2.2. *The Exposition: Celebrating Colonial Economy and Trade.*

discourse based on a didactic rhetoric of regeneration. Marseille's alleged and stigmatized backwardness and bad reputation were strategically reoriented into a positive marketing strategy. Of all French candidates running for the European title, Marseille was the city which 'needed it the most'.⁸⁷⁰ Therefore, it was able to win the award. This weakness-as-a-strength argumentation was imagined to positively undo the stigma of the city in crisis, and inscribed itself onto a diachronically continuous representative motive for Marseille.

As this work showed, in both cases of investigation the project of the metropolis was initiated as a coping strategy in the face of a past urban crisis and in the hope for a 'better future.' Its promotion recurrently manifested as a phoenix-out-of-the-ashes narrative and the crisis-regeneration binary turned out to be a constitutive dimension of metropolitanism, both in the colonial and in the post-colonial era. This narrative of recovery articulated different temporal phases (troublesome past, opportunity for change in the present, promise of a prosperous future), and thereby shaped the temporality of metropolitanism, too.

In the case studies at hand, the temporal moments expressed varied. For instance, the image of the colonial metropole was based on a positive discursive instrumentalization of an ancient and long bygone past. However, the more recent past and its crises (e.g. the dockers' strikes) set the grounds for a rhetoric of rebirth of the city. Building on a traditional prosperity while reacting to past conflicts, the status as a metropole was the promise of a good and peaceful future.

In constructing the image of the current metropolis in post-colonial Marseille, however, the metropolitan heritage of the French Empire was almost totally ignored. Rather than building on Marseille's past as a metropolis, urban stakeholders used other contemporary examples of metropolis as a frame of reference (e.g. the recently formed Lille metropolis, the global metropolis New York). Regarding the relation to the past, similar to my first case, the twenty-

⁸⁷⁰ See chapter 4.2. *The Application Framework*.

first-century metropolis in Marseille was constructed in line with an urban renaissance discourse responding the crises in the city during the second half of the twentieth century. And here, too, the metropolitan future was filled with a positive imagination of attractiveness and profit. In this sense, the making of the metropolis was the turning point, the moment of change marking the shift from urban crisis to urban regeneration. Metropolitanism and change related in an ambivalent causality. The latter was both the achievement of a regeneration period, and the starting point for future prosperity

In both cases, economic growth was an important vector in the negotiation of urban change and a prosperous future. Ambitions for capital increase (e.g. intensification of the trade relationships with the colonies due to the Colonial Exposition, or growing attractiveness for tourism through the 2013 *ECOC*) played a central role. Moreover, both events received extensive institutional and financial support from the economic sector (e.g. the chamber of commerce in Marseille was an essential sponsor and carrier of the 1906 Colonial Exposition and of MP13 as well). In line with these aims, the events were frequently discussed as local promotional operations and urban marketing instruments. Since the beginning of the century and up until the present day, visions of urban change were catalyzed by the promotional and representational affirmation of the ‘metropolis’ label.

Accordingly, economic strength was inherent to the logics of metropolitanism. However, while notions of urban promotion and performance were at stake during both the 1906 Colonial Exposition and MP13, the means instrumentalized to pursue similar representative goals were different. The status of the colonial metropole extensively relied on imperial commercial economy, and, in the post-colonial and neoliberal age, cultural economy became a key asset for the productivity of the metropolis. Hence, while economic performance was essential to the logic of metropolitanism in both periods, a trade-based economy seemed to have made way for a cultural economy in the twenty-first century.

Negotiating Local and Global Scales

Highlighting a second repeating feature, this dissertation has shown that metropolitanism was constructed on different scales, and itself activated multi-scalar frames of reference. A first illustration of this phenomenon was the oscillation between French national affirmation and claims for decentralization in the discourse on the metropolis. On the one hand, the metropolitan project seemed to always happen in times in which Marseille needed to re-position and claim itself on the map of France. During colonialism, in the course of the 1906 Exposition, the local elites used the status of the metropole in order to push the city's importance for the empire. In post-colonial Marseille, the same logic endured. In a period following decades of decline, the creation of the MAMP reaffirmed the significance of Marseille and its region as one of the main urban cores of the country. Moreover, due to the win of the *ECOC* title, the *Marseille-Provence* region constituted a flagship for France within the European Union.

Additionally, in both cases, the term of metropolis was negotiated alongside the notion of capital, too. In fact, descriptions such as *Capital of the Empire*, *Capital of the Mediterranean*, and *European Capital of Culture* conditioned the representational discourses. Here, the relationship of the metropolis to the French Empire or the French nation constituted the defining frame of reference. Hence, through references to capitality, metropolitanism was defined by conceptions of supremacy and centrality within a given institutional and geographic framework (e.g. the nation, the empire). Moreover, the relationship to a localized "Hinterland" was essential: in 1906, the French colonies formed the hinterland of the metropole. Over a century later, Marseille reshaped its image as a metropolis anew through the collaboration with its regional hinterland. This very notion referred to a specific space or places (e.g. the North-African colonies, the Provence region and parts of the Bouches-du-Rhone Departement) but it fulfilled a symbolic function as well. Indeed, the idea of connectivity and centrality in relation

to a subordinated periphery (the hinterland) was key to the imagination and discursive representation of the metropolis.

On the other hand, in both cases the metropolitan project carried claims for decentralization. As I showed, the imperial lobby and the Exposition organizers in Marseille were strong defenders of decentralization. In fact, the exhibition itself served as a means to prove the logistic and financial capacity of the city, in spite of any support from the government in the form of capital. Furthermore, the local elites called for a more independent management of the colonial trade system from and to the main international port of the empire. Comparably, the creation of the metropolis AMP could be regarded as a national measure of decentralization. Indeed, in line with juridical reforms, twenty-first-century French territorial governance promoted large urban entities other than Paris. Complementarily, the neoliberal branding discourse on the MAMP praised a new metropolis with a global competitiveness and attractiveness on its own, independently from the national-state context in which it figured.

With regards to scales, this work revealed that in both instances, the local and the global were articulated in and for urban promotion strategies. Metropolitanism was conceived in the interaction of both levels. In the course of the 1906 Colonial Exposition, the image of the colonial metropole was constructed based on provincializing regionalism and multicultural internationalism.⁸⁷¹ In a comparable way, the metropolitan image of the MAMP was constructed both in terms of homogenized local identity and global cosmopolitanism.⁸⁷² Hence, the dichotomy between regionalism and internationalism, and between localism and globalism, constituted a diachronic continuity in the metropolitan discourse. Both at the beginning of the twentieth century and of the twenty-first century, local identity building and global multiculturalism were features of metropolitanism.

⁸⁷¹ See chapter 3.4. *Metropolitanism in Colonial Marseille*.

⁸⁷² See chapter 5.4. *Negotiating Metropolitanism*.

Integrative Diversity and Discriminating Othering

The tension between inclusion and exclusion within the discursive production of metropolitanism was a third recurrent feature, which I identified in this dissertation. In fact, for instance, according to its organizers, the Colonial Exposition brought French metropolitan subjects together with colonial populations from abroad. Furthermore, it was praised as an accessible event for all kinds of society groups (woman, students etc.) and displayed allegedly democratized access to ‘knowledge’ and entertainment. While some kind of excellence and exclusiveness seemed necessary to guarantee the exhibition's attractiveness and prestige, a condescending inclusive social discourse existed simultaneously. Accordingly, the metropolitan project represented by and through the exhibition navigated between an inclusive and a discriminating purpose: colonial subjects and foreign cultures were displayed, but this mostly served the relational affirmation of the metropolitan image. Indeed, the colonial periphery was the necessary constitutive counterpart of the imperial metropolis. Therefore, the encounter of individuals from the colonies and the French mainland essentially affirmed the dominance of the colonizers over the colonized. Insofar, what may have seemed as an integrative act revealed to reinforce positions of hegemony as well as unequal and racialized social power relations.

The 2013 event was conceived and realized collaboratively by multi-level governance instances, scattered across a heterogeneous regionalized territory. Regarding the audience, it was framed as a popular mass event as well, directed as all ranges of local, regional, national, and international participants. However, MP13 was shaped by social and societal unevenness as well. While it was supposed to forge a feeling of shared belonging among the population of the emerging metropolis AMP, social groups were left out of the event (e.g. *Quartiers Nord*s inhabitants).⁸⁷³ This exclusion, for instance, illustrated social mechanisms of metropolitanism in this period as well. In fact, in this study, I showed that the stakeholders of the MAMP

⁸⁷³ Interview 13, #00:37:34-7#, 13:58.

envisioned a social cohesion in the metropolitan region. They promoted a place-based feeling of shared belonging in order to establish and cement the new governance structure. However, the social and territorial integration was a challenge due to the high spatial and cultural heterogeneity of the MAMP. Moreover, especially in Marseille, assigning the label “metropolitan” to the local cosmopolitan population, which, to a large extent, stemmed from post-colonial migration flows, seemed hypocrite historically.

As explained above, the imagination of the metropolis seemed to reflect an all-encompassing societal vision. Metropolitanism was not only a way of conceiving urban developments; it channeled a way of life, entailed a political force and carried ideological beliefs as well. Therefore, metropolitanism functioned as an indicator of social dynamics and structures of power. In line with this scope, on the one hand, both case studies were framed as collective and collaborative events. As the investigation showed, the events conveyed aims and messages of integration. On the other hand, during both periods, the purpose for social inclusion remained conditional. Hence, in 1906 and in 2013, similar politics can be observed, at the intersection of conditionally integrative popular mass events and high-class status-seeking prestigious congregations. Overall, both manifestations of metropolitanism were produced at the intersection of including diversity and excluding othering.

Shortcomings

Inevitably, this dissertation, the elaboration of its topic and its research design have shortcomings. To begin, in both investigated cases, it was apparent that the representational discourses on the metropolis were produced by mostly political and economic urban elites. Hence, this study primarily channeled the voices of established stakeholders and misses a bottom-up perspective. As a complement for further research, I think that statements by external or unofficial actors, for instance, might add an insightful analytical layer to the findings. In a

similar line, I found that analyzing events as case studies implied a central focus on official and formal moments of urban representation. While this methodological choice offered rich empirical data, it left little room for the study of informal phenomena and micro-historical processes. Furthermore, the structure of the project along two key temporal phases of inquiry raised the issue of the time ‘in between’ them. In fact, the long century, which divided my two cases temporally, was sketched in order to contextualize the investigations historically, but was not granted detailed focus. Last but not least, the theoretical focus of this work on the concept of the metropolis only allowed for a rather marginal discussion of adjacent urban concepts, such as the global city or the capital city. I am convinced that the investigation of further manifestations of urban typologization might reveal fascinating complementary insights.

While acknowledging these limitations in order to make them productive for future research, the discussion of my findings offered several conclusions. The investigation addressed significant contextual, definitional and functional shifts of the term “metropolis” throughout Marseille’s colonial and post-colonial history. Simultaneously, based on the diachronic analysis, I identified continuous features of metropolitanism in both eras. I presented these in three categories, which constitute the central takeaways of this work: First, I showed that the envisioning of a promising urban future was a recurrent characteristic of metropolitanism. Second, I argued that the negotiation of local and global scales was inherent to its conceptualization. Third, I demonstrated that metropolitanism was recurrently produced at the intersection of integrative diversity and discriminating othering practices.

6.3. Theoretical Abstractions and Outlook

Concluding, I draw from Neil Brenner's critical urban theory understanding of the "politically and ideologically mediated, socially contested and therefore malleable character of urban space – that is, its continual (re)construction as a site, medium and outcome of historically specific relations of social power."⁸⁷⁴ As announced in the introduction of this work, I did not regard the metropolis primarily as a fixed spatial entity. Rather, I examined it as a discursive representational concept. As a result, I found out that the imagination of the metropolis still built on the negotiation of spatial scales insofar as these were spatialized manifestations of colonial and post-colonial power structures.

The urban scholars Ignacio Fariàs and Susanne Stemmler identified the inherent imperialist connotations of the term "metropolis":

"metropolis is a concept through which social and political identities are constructed. Nevertheless, metropolis is less a category used for self-identification, i.e. for the self-definition of a center as a center ('we' are the metropolis) than it is a category for referring to an 'Other' ('they' are the metropolis). In this sense, metropolis creates a counter-image against which the 'rest of the world' defines itself."⁸⁷⁵

I follow the authors in their understanding of the metropolis as a product of othering processes. However, I argue that, in most cases, the driving forces in these very processes were embodied by the label "metropolis" as such. Therefore, the rest of the world mostly did not get a chance to *define itself*; rather, it was through the affirmation of the metropolis that hegemonic power instances defined *the rest of the world*.

Regarding the decolonization of metropolitan history, Sophia Basaldua-Sun recently wondered: "can discourse on the modern metropolis continue to ignore the material connection

⁸⁷⁴ Brenner, "What Is Critical Urban Theory?" 198.

⁸⁷⁵ Fariàs and Stemmler, "Deconstructing 'Metropolis,'" 57.

between coloniality and the modern metropolis in this time period?”⁸⁷⁶ She claims that modern metropolitan scholarship often fails to productively and innovatively engage with a postcolonial approach to the metropolis. This valid revendication applies to current tendencies too: How and why can discourses on the post-modern metropolis in a post-colonial age keep silencing their inherent colonial connotations?

Concluding, in a postcolonial approach, there is still much to be done on the critical deconstruction of urban concepts and terminologies. In this process, this dissertation contributed to underscoring the power of language and discursive representations as producers of urban realities. It showed the political and ideological force of metropolitan typologization. Building on this, I call for historical awareness and diachronic perspectives in order to critically and subversively address representations of the metropolis today and in the future.

⁸⁷⁶ Basaldua-Sun, “An Interdisciplinary Look at Metropolitanisms,” 76.

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