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ID 1330 | MAKING THE MOST OF THE EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE. CULTURAL EVENTS AND SPATIAL STRATEGIES IN EUROPEAN PORT CITIES

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1 INTRODUCTION

Since the experience of Glasgow, European City of Culture in 1990, and Barcelona, which hosted the Olympic Games in 1992, European port cities have displayed a growing interest in hosting cultural mega-events – i.e. "large scale cultural (including commercial and sporting) events which have a dramatic character, mass popular appeal and international significance" (Roche, 2000, p. 1) – as a strategy to trigger or boost urban regeneration and local development (Qu and Spaans, 2009). Mega-events have increasingly been interpreted as chances to accelerate existing urban projects, to encourage discussions about future development scenarios and strategies, to improve local institutional capacities and to raise local communities' ambition. In other words, cultural mega-events are understood as potential drivers of urban development and as unique occasions for producing positive intangible legacies in the long term.

In this context, the European City/Capital of Culture (ECoC) programme has played a crucial role in the last decades. Major European port cities such as Rotterdam and Genoa attempted to capitalise their year as ECoC in order to deliver a renewed image and reposition themselves within global urban networks. Aarhus in Denmark and Paphos in Cyprus are the ECoC 2017, while Valletta and Rijeka have been awarded the title respectively for 2018 and 2020. Liverpool, ECoC in 2008, inspired the UK City of Culture initiative with the aim of extending the positive benefits of event-led and culture-led regeneration to other British cities (DCMS, 2009; ICC, 2012): so far, two port cities have been designated as UK City of Culture, namely Derry-Londonderry in 2013 and Hull in 2017. This interest appears to some extent fostered by a recognition of the potential contribution of cultural mega-events – such as the ECoC – to urban regeneration and development in port cities. In this context, legacy has become a key concept in the rhetoric of the ECoC, while the embeddedness of cultural strategies into long-term planning agenda is increasingly considered a precondition for achieving a positive legacy from the event (Smith, 2012), as well as for cultural mega-events more generally (Bramwell, 1997). Surprisingly, there is little understanding of

the extent to which the socio-economic and spatial strategies entailed by ECoC programmes are integrated – or ought to be integrated – to broader planning frameworks. This connection appears particularly relevant in port cities, where the rationale for the ECoC is associated with the need of responding to the profound structural socio-economic consequences of deindustrialisation and loss of maritime functions.

This paper discusses the rationale, the key questions and methodological approaches of an early-stage PhD research on event-led regeneration in European port cities. In particular, it aims to propose a research agenda and methodology to examine how event-led regeneration – driven by the ECoC – is embedded into broader frameworks and strategies of urban planning in European port cities and how it may introduce new planning concepts and procedures. Section 2 summarises the common structural changes and challenges that have been characterising the transition to a post-industrial economy in most European port cities, which set the rationale for event-led regeneration. Section 3 briefly reviews the literature on culture-led and event-led regeneration, as well as on urban regeneration in port cities, and on the ECoC programme. Section 4, presents the rationale for studying the ECoC in the context of port cities, identifying a few key research questions, on the basis of the issues and gaps arising from the literature review. Section 5, proposes a methodology to approach these issues, while section 6, gives account of the expected results of this study.

2 PORT CITIES IN TRANSITION

European port cities have historically been a key driving force in the spatial organisation of economies and societies (Hoyle and Pinder, 1992). Harbour areas and quays have contributed to the development of European urban culture itself, as public spaces and places of encounter. However, since the 1960s, major structural changes have contributed to reshaping this traditional port-city relationship. Technological developments such as containerisation, the increase of ships size and the reorganisation of maritime transport raised the need of deeper water, more space and greater accessibility (Hayuth and Hilling, 1992) which fostered the migration of ports to new locations outside the city and the consequent separation between port and urban functions (Hoyle, 1988). The abandonment of traditional harbour areas produced derelict urban environments in central urban locations and on waterfronts that set the rationale at the basis of the worldwide phenomena of waterfront redevelopment (Schubert, 2011; Brownhill, 2013; see section 2.1). Since the 1990s ports have been more and more interconnected to transnational networks (Meyer, 1999) and their fortunes increasingly depend on external phenomena on which they have no control (Hayuth and Hilling, 1992; Ducruet and Lee, 2006). In this context, the interdependency between ports and cities is weakening: ports are less dependent from urban labour markets, while cities may explore other thriving economic functions (Ducruet et al., 2010, in Hall and Jacobs, 2012). European port cities have had different fortunes in coping with these structural changes. For instance, Rotterdam and Hamburg managed to retain their role as maritime hubs and to diversify their economies (Hein, 2014; Savitch and Kantor, 2002). However, many of them – such as Hull in the UK – were unable to respond to these challenges and have experienced rising unemployment, urban decay and socio-economic decline.

2.1 WATERFRONT REDEVELOPMENT

Since the 1960s, derelict quays and traditional inner harbours have increasingly been perceived as strategic areas for pursuing extensive urban regeneration. Waterfront redevelopment projects began to be deployed in many port cities throughout the world with the aim of recovering the key role played by their centres (Meyer, 1999) and of re-launching these cities through the development of a single area (Bruttomesso, 2001). Schubert (2011) suggests that four generations of projects have characterised this worldwide phenomenon from the 1960s to the 2000s. First, a number US cities – in particular Baltimore – displayed project-led approaches to waterfront redevelopment in the 1960s. Second, many port cities across the world undertook larger-scale projects in the 1980s, for instance the redevelopment of London Docklands. Third, waterfront projects in the 1990s were characterised by a more participatory approach. Finally, waterfront redevelopment in the 2000s has been generally based on public-private partnerships in context of scarce public resources.

Despite being such a widespread phenomenon, many authors question that it has also been a worldwide story of success (Hoyle, 2000). Waterfront redevelopment projects have been criticised for having failed to meet their socio-economic and political goals (Hoyle, 1988) and for being renewed expressions of forces of capital (Malone, 1996). They have also been considered an effective means to affirm post-modern socio-cultural values (Nordcliffe et al., 1996) and city-making paradigms (Marshall, 2001) under the dominant discourse on neoliberal urbanism. However, the research on waterfront redevelopment, whether advocative or harshly critical, has focused on spatial and economic aspects, adopting quite a narrow approach to these complex urban transformation. More recent studies (Desfor et al., 2011) have attempted to widen the analytical approach to these phenomena, deploying innovative theoretical and methodological tools – such as assemblages (Brownhill, 2013) – to explore broader social and cultural dimensions of waterfront redevelopment.

2.2 CONTEMPORARY PORT-CITY RELATIONSHIPS

Today, ports and cities display an even more complex relationship (Daamen and Louw, 2016), which is only in part explained by technological developments and structural changes in maritime transportation systems and is becoming context specific (Daamen, 2007). Despite the abovementioned migration processes of port activities, major maritime ports are still urban (Hall and Jacobs, 2012) and, where there is a physical separation between ports and cities, their development trajectories are still closely interconnected (Daamen and

van Gils, 2006). However, while ports have shaped cities' development paths for centuries, the main spatial driving force is now the city (Wiegmans and Louw, 2011). Thus, the search for redevelopment of port areas and waterfronts is fuelling spatial, socio-economic and political tensions (Daamen and Vries, 2013) at the port-city interface (the liminal space between port areas and the city, see Hayuth, 1982; Hoyle, 2000), for instance between new urban uses and still thriving port functions or between new residents and professionals attracted by regenerated urban areas and former working class residents.

The literature on the port-city relationship, in particular from an urban perspective, displays extensive gaps and a clear separation between port and urban studies (Ducruet and Lee, 2006). Even though the classic spatial focus – too narrow to explain recent developments (Daamen, 2007) – has progressively been enriched by behavioural and governance approaches (Oliver and Slack, 2006), further work is needed to understand the social, cultural and political components of contemporary port-city relationships and their regional specificity throughout the world. In this context, event-led and culture-led regeneration at the port-city interface introduce a further perspective that is currently underexplored and suggest the need to investigate the impacts of such interventions on the port-city relationship and the broader trajectories of urban planning in port cities.

3 EUROPEAN (PORT) CITIES OF CULTURE

The literature on waterfront redevelopment recognised the growing relevance of the cultural dimension in waterfront projects. For instance, Meyer (1999, 48) suggested that waterfronts are privileged spaces for promoting a "culturalised urbanism", since they offer attractive locations to companies and institutions, in some way anticipating Florida's discourse of creative urban environments (Florida, 2002).

Culture-led regeneration is indeed closely associated with the redevelopment of former harbour areas and quays, as happened since the 1980s in many port cities such as Bilbao and Barcelona (García 2004), Newcastle (Bailey et al., 2004), Marseilles (Llorente, 2002) and Genoa (Porrello and Tommarchi, 2009).

3.1 CULTURE-LED REGENERATION

A growing body of literature has explored the contribution of culture to urban regeneration and the connection between cultural activity and local development goals (Bianchini et al. 1988; Bianchini and Parkinson 1993; Evans and Shaw 2004; García 2004). The contribution of culture to urban development has been recognised since the nineteenth century (Bassett, 1993), while cultural policies gained political

relevance in the 1970s (Bianchini, 1993b), for instance in the UK, approaching goals of community development (Lees and Melhuish, 2015). The 1980s represented a dramatic point of cultural turn for urban planning (Freestone and Gibson, 2006), characterised by a widespread dominance of economic development and urban regeneration (Bianchini, 1993b).

Classic critiques to culture-led regeneration projects in the 1980s interpret these interventions as a "carnival mask" (Harvey, 1989, 21) to cover social problems or as strategies fostered by a worst-case scenario when no other options are available (Zukin, 1995). Bianchini (1993a) identified three sets of dilemmas raised by such projects, involving spatial tensions between city centres and periphery, economic contrapositions between production- and consumption-oriented strategies, conflicts in funding between permanent and ephemeral events. On more recent projects, similar criticisms suggest that the delivery of cultural projects is easier than any investigation on structural social issues and that gentrification is the most likely output of culture-led regeneration (Miles, 2005), in which economic goals are dominant (García, 2004). For instance, public expenditure for culture-led regeneration has generated disappointment among local communities in port cities suffering high levels of unemployment, such as Bilbao and Marseilles (Llorente, 2002). The focus on flagship projects has been criticised for creating white elephants (García, 2004), disconnected from the context – including the waterfront – they are supposed to regenerate, eventually producing unused or unsafe environments (Evans, 2005). Standardisation represents a major risk, whereas the replication of successful strategies applied elsewhere erodes local identities and specificities. This is particularly evident in many culture-led waterfront redevelopments labelled as 'MacWaterfronts' (Daamen and Gils, 2006), which fuelled disappointment in local communities – sometimes expressed through activism and protests, such as in Hamburg (Desfor and Laidley, 2011) – about redevelopments that are perceived as alien and threatening, as happened in Liverpool (Llorente, 2002).

Past research on culture-led regeneration has been criticised of considering few successful cases as evidence that culture may contribute to solving urban problems (Miles, 2005) and being uncritically positive (Shaw 1999, in Evans and Shaw, 2004). Evans provides an interesting perspective when he observes that such research offers either uncritical case studies or unsupported harsh criticisms, fuelling a "culture of pessimism" (Evans, 2005, p. 7). Other critiques concern the focus on short-term impacts (Evans and Shaw, 2004), the reliance on fuzzy theories and the lack of rigorous evaluation criteria (Markusen and Gadwa, 2010). Despite the growing number of studies on culture-led regeneration, the research on this field appears to be still affected by the same theoretical and methodological issues observed in the last decades (Campbell et al., 2017), as well as by an evident economic focus in evaluation criteria. Future research should take into account tangible and intangible impacts on other urban domains, such as community wellbeing or governance landscapes.

3.2 THE EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE

Since the 1990s, policy makers and urban commentators have increasingly been concerned with the potential of cultural mega-events in terms of urban regeneration and local development. In this context, the European Capital of Culture (European City of Culture before 2001) represents a particularly interesting case. Envisioned in 1983 with the aim of celebrating European diversity and promoting cohesion, it has progressively become a unique chance for cities to promote a new image and profile and to pursue urban regeneration and development. The first awarded cities since the launch of the initiative in 1985 – Athens, Florence, Amsterdam, West Berlin and Paris – were recognised cultural capitals and celebrated their year as ECoC through cultural festivals focused on fine arts. Glasgow, ECoC in 1990, represented a watershed in the history of the programme, as it was the first city to organise a year-round event and to embed its cultural programme into a broader strategy of urban regeneration (Bianchini et al., 2013). Many other port cities have then attempted to capitalise the potential of the ECoC in this sense, such as Rotterdam in 2001, Genoa in 2004 and Liverpool in 2008, while the connection between cultural activity and regeneration has become a common element of the ECoC itself.

In the last 15 years, these experiences have fuelled a growing body of research on the rationale and the impacts of the ECoC. For instance, Richards and Wilson (2004) analysed the impacts of the ECoC 2001 on different components of the image of Rotterdam, highlighting a positive impact in the short term. García (2005) evaluates the long-term impacts of Glasgow 1990 analysing media discourses and personal narratives. Griffiths (2006) uses discourse analysis to unpack the bids of three contenders for the 2008

title, Liverpool, Bristol and Cardiff, emphasising common discourses on identity as port cities, integration, connection between culture and social cohesion and of potential economic benefits of culture. Boland (2010) and Cox and O'Brien (2012) provide a critique of the 'Liverpool model', outlined in the Impact 08 study on the effects of the ECoC 2008 (García et al. 2010). Bianchini et al. (2013) explore the possible strategies of awarded cities for pursuing the symbolic, physical, economic and social dimensions of regeneration and suggest that, despite the difficulty of assessing the regenerative impacts of the ECoC, policy makers are increasingly interested in the initiative. Finally, Gomes and Librero-Cano (2016) compare economic performances of cities awarded the ECoC title with those of unsuccessful bidders, showing that awarded cities experience some extent of economic growth after the event. They also suggest that sociocultural, political and environmental effects are less investigated than economic impacts and that grounded evidence of benefits on the long term is still missing. The literature on event-led regeneration, as well as on culture-led regeneration more in general, is indeed dominated by an economic focus – which reflects the priority of economic goals complained by many critics – and displays little attention to other dimensions and potential impacts. Although the most investigated and cited case studies are indeed port cities, and presumably many others will follow, virtually no studies address event-led regeneration in this specific context and in relation to the interactions between urban and port functions. Furthermore, virtually no studies attempt to contextualise urban regeneration exercises within broader framework of urban planning, confirming a general disconnection – both in research and practices – of these phenomena from the development perspective of the city as a whole.

4 A RESEARCH AGENDA

This disconnection suggests the need to investigate the relationship between the ECoC and urban planning agendas, with a specific focus on port cities. Two key questions arise: firstly, how does the ECoC impact the port-city interface? Secondly, how does the ECoC relate to urban planning in European port cities?

4.1 THE ECOC AT THE PORT-CITY INTERFACE

Firstly, it is important to ask what is the effective role of culture in such processes of event-led regeneration. If the ECoC contributes to encouraging or accelerating processes of urban transformation at the port-city interface, forms of culture-led regeneration may indeed be incidental, with limited connection to broader processes of regeneration. Secondly, event-led regeneration that takes place in this complex geographical space affects a broader set of spatial, socio-economic and cultural phenomena that are seldom investigated or addressed in flagship projects or other redevelopments. New cultural infrastructures and regenerated spaces generate new socio-spatial relationships and conflicts, since they come to be adjacent to working class districts or still active port areas. This raises the question of whether new cultural activities, as well as their users, are welcome in such liminal environments and indicates potential conflicts between new 'sanitised' spaces and existing 'unsanitised' ones, suggesting a further dimension of the spatial dilemmas observed by Bianchini (1993a). This spatial juxtaposition and competition among port, (existing) urban and (new) cultural/leisure uses is perhaps the visible dimension of a more complex set of social, economic and political conflicts among actors with rather different – and sometimes conflicting – stakes (e.g. port authorities, transnational shipping companies, urban governments, local businesses, trade unions, and so forth). This 'urban takeover' on port functions and spaces appears to characterise the most recent phase of port-city relationships in many contexts (Daamen and Vries, 2013). Thirdly, a major issue concerns the kind of culture that is promoted by the ECoC in European port cities. If it is true, as emerged for instance from the analysis provided by Griffiths (2006), that the city's identity as a port is generally emphasised in ECoC discourses, we should ask whether the resulting event-led regeneration succeeds to promote a maritime culture founded on local specificities. The risk is indeed that European port cities import strategies from (supposed) successful ECoCs, pursuing standardised models of culture and regeneration that may generate a loss of specificity and may exacerbate socio-spatial tensions. Culture-led and event-led regeneration, through cultural initiative such as the ECoC, are chances for local governments and communities to frame their cities' profile and development trajectories. In this context, a key issue is the extent to which such processes produce local responses, arising from local specificities and maritime identity, against globalising pressures exacerbated by the evolution of world maritime trade.

4.2 ECOC PROGRAMMES AND URBAN PLANNING

The relationship between event-led regeneration and urban planning raises concerns of process, content of strategies and, finally, planning theory. In general, recent ECoCs adopt a governance model based on a separate delivery vehicle – usually a public company – responsible for the organisation and delivery of the event, which operates in collaboration with the local council (DG for Internal Policies, 2013). In addition, given the extraordinary and usually urgent character of event-related infrastructures, event-led regeneration strategies and actions may be programmed and pursued through ad-hoc plans. From the process perspective, this raises

the question of whether event-led regeneration is part of ordinary planning processes or it takes place outside planning procedures and arenas. In either context, cooperation between event and urban governance structures is a major concern. Considering the content of strategies, a key question is whether event-led regeneration contributes to shaping new development trajectories for European port cities and how these are embedded into urban planning practices. Finally, this call for integration between the ECoC and urban planning suggests a potential theoretical and methodological contribution to the latter. Since the ECoC, even in the case of an unsuccessful bid (ICC, 2012), encourages local communities to discuss the future of their cities, we should ask whether this produces new concepts and discourses that are developed even after the unsuccessful bid. Even though classic critiques of mega-events suggest that their exceptionality and urgent character may produce controversial practices (Hall, 2006; Smith, 2012), it may also be argued that they provide occasions of institutional learning and of experimentation.

5 TOWARDS A METHODOLOGY TO ADRESS EVENT-LED REGENERATION AT THE PORT-CITY INTERFACE

The two key research questions and the related issues mentioned in the previous section offer a different perspective on the ECoC and on event-led regeneration. This investigation requires further reflection on a suitable methodology that allows to go beyond the assessment of the economic impacts of the ECoC and to explore more intangible socio-cultural and political impacts in the complex space of the port-city interface.

5.1 APPROACHING A CASE STUDY ANALYSIS

A comparative case study analysis of the ECoC in a set of European port cities might not portray the whole complexity of this phenomenon. However, a deep analysis of a few case studies, approached using an individualising strategy (Robinson, 2011) and reported through an extensive narrative that gives account of the historical, geographical and political context of each locality, might help to explore the issues mentioned above. Such strategy lets context-specific issues to emerge, providing crucial background information to develop a more grounded understanding of the studied phenomena, and helps to identify those conditions that must be taken into account in order to compare such different contexts. The framework for the selection of case studies is a crucial element and it is based on four geographical and socio-economic criteria. Firstly, the ‘port’ character of cities: port cities could be understood as coastal or riverside cities that are closely connected – functionally and culturally, not necessarily in terms of physical proximity – to a maritime port, where port functions are, or have been, a crucial element of their economic base. Secondly, acknowledged that neither ports nor cities are static entities, trajectories of change are more interesting for the purpose of this study whereas they reflect processes of restructuring or repositioning: selected cities are either struggling to recover from the loss of traditional maritime functions or managing to introduce new strategic elements into their economic base. Thirdly, selected cities should have been awarded the ECoC title in the last twenty years and managed the event as a component of their strategy of urban regeneration and development. This ensures that longer-term legacy could be addressed and that the event has not been hosted as a mere special occasion with no impacts on local development. Finally, a comparable size is a prerequisite for the comparison. Considering these criteria, potential case studies are: Rotterdam, ECoC in 2001; Genoa, where the event took place in 2004 after the 1990 FIFA World Cup and the Expo in 1992; Liverpool, ECoC in 2008.

5.2 A MIXED QUALITATIVE APPROACH

In order to approach the case study analysis, I propose to adopt a mixed qualitative research methodology. A classic ex-post, qualitative and descriptive policy analysis examines local politico-institutional contexts and policy processes and contents. In terms of context, a background narrative encompasses key historical, geographical and political features, giving account of the decades prior to the successful bid for the event. The analysis of policy processes and contents involves the review of policy documents about the ECoC, as well as urban plans and other documents or statements related to urban planning and event-led regeneration, with a focus on the last twenty years. Further information is gathered through semi-structured interviews to key informants: ten to fifteen informants per locality are selected among port officials, policy makers, planners, culture experts and developers. This classic policy analysis, undertaken through content and process analysis, is then coupled by a discourse analysis, from an institutional perspective (Healey, 1997; 1999), which examines spatial concepts, narratives and vocabularies. Discourse analysis may be helpful in unpacking the rhetoric of the ECoC and of event-led regeneration, as shown by Griffiths (2006) and García (2005), as well as identifying the features that local communities and policy communities perceived as key local specificities. Mapping and other spatial representation techniques help to give account of the complex spatial, socio-economic and political tensions that event-led regeneration contributes to generating at the port-city interface.

6 DISCUSSING EVENT-LED REGENERATION AT THE PORT CITY-INTERFACE

This case study analysis may help to address comparisons between the different experiences, in order to highlight the differences displayed in local approaches to the ECoC and its regenerative impacts. This could help to fill one of the most evident gaps in the literature, which lacks any substantial reflection on how different approaches affect outcomes (as suggested with regards to cultural planning by Markusen & Gadwa, 2010). Despite the remarkable differences arising from context specificities and the uniqueness of places, as cities sharing the same specialisation and part of transnational networks of maritime trade, European port cities may also share common structural issues, such as the competition between urban and port uses and the conflict between different stakes, the tensions between global pressures – encouraging standardisation – and local forces that 'resist' through local responses and specificities, the attitude – in the case of Rotterdam – or the need – as happened in Glasgow – of developing the cultural dimension of the city's image alongside the profile of industrial port.

The three potential case studies also present context-specific problematics and unique approaches. For instance, Rotterdam explored the connection between modern architectures and water, which has become a major component of its image, as observed by Richards and Wilson (2004). Genoa addressed event-led regeneration building on its maritime identity, as suggested by the realisation of the Aquarium in occasion of the Expo in 1992 or the Galata maritime museum and the recovery of the lighthouse for the ECoC 2004. Liverpool adopted an opposite approach with regards to maritime heritage, prioritising issues of economic benefits over conservation. This provides relevant recommendations and suggestions for European port cities aiming to host the ECoC, as well as other cultural events. For instance, event-led regeneration in Hull fostered by the UK City of Culture (UKCoC) 2017 raises similar concerns.

The perspective of event-led regeneration in port cities helps to explore from a different point of view the complex port-city relationship, and to fill the traditional gap regarding broader socio-cultural impacts of cultural mega-events displayed by the literature, as well as to overcome the traditional spatial and static view of port-city relationships. It also explores political aspects of planning at the port-city interface, which have only recently been investigated by governance approaches to port studies (e.g. Daamen and Vries, 2013). For instance, the fluctuating port-city interface in Rotterdam offers an interesting perspective on the relationship between culture-led regeneration and strategic decisions on port development and competing urban-port uses.

A crucial feature of this study and the proposed approach is the connection between event-led regeneration and planning, which has seldom been explored in the literature. As mentioned in the previous sections, if there is a recognition that culture- and event-led regeneration are more effective when embedded into broader visions of future development, little knowledge has been produced about how this happens or how this connection ought to take place, both in terms of contents of strategies and of governance processes. In turn, governance episodes emerging from extraordinary practices and

approaches displayed by port cities involved in event-led regeneration might provide interesting insights for planning theory, as well. Such experiences may encourage innovative approaches and creative solutions to recurrent problems and may introduce new discourses and spatial concepts. For instance, in Genoa, the ECoC programme and the strategic plan explored issues of sustainability and legacy of event-led regeneration, introducing the concept of 'durability'. Governance episodes justified by the extraordinary character of a bid for the ECoC or of the event itself may then become part of ordinary governance and planning practices. New planning processes, discourses and strategies are as an interesting legacy of the ECoC as its economic impacts, albeit much less investigated. They may also fuel and enrich general debates on planning theory and practices.

7 CONCLUSION

In this paper, I presented the rationale at the basis of a PhD research – at its early stage – on event-led regeneration in European port-cities. The paper focused on the European Capital of Culture, formulating key research questions and proposing a methodology to address them. The starting point is the lack of any focus on port cities in the literature on event-led regeneration, albeit many port cities have been and will be awarded the ECoC title, as well as its extensive gaps concerning the complex dynamics at the port-city interface, the cultural, socio-economic and political aspects of event-led regeneration and its relationships with other domains of urban policy. Two key research questions emerge, regarding the impact of the ECoC on the port-city interface and its integration to broader urban planning frameworks. The proposed methodology involves a comparative case study analysis of the ECoC in a few European port cities, approached through policy analysis, interviews to key informants, discourse analysis and mapping. Such an approach to event-led regeneration provides recommendations for European port cities that will host either the ECoC or similar cultural mega-events. It also provides an innovative contribution to the debate on the future development trajectories of European port cities, on the evolution of the port-city relationship, on culture- and event-led regeneration and on its connection and integration to urban planning. In a context of growing interest on the cultural dimension of planning, it highlights potential contributions of event-led regeneration to planning theory and practices, arising from the discussion of governance episodes.

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ID 1378 | THE DIRECT AND INDIRECT IMPACTS OF MEGA-EVENTS ON EUROPEAN URBAN HERITAGE

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1 MEGA-EVENTS AS A PLANNING STRATEGY

For the last 150 years, mega-events have been used as instruments to define cities and distinguish them from one another. They have been praised as opportunities for innovation and cursed as overly bloated expenditures, both a blessing or a scourge for the modern and modernizing city. As cities have sought to compete not just nationally, but globally, the hosting of a mega-event has become a sort of qualifier or standard to be achieved. Ongoing discussions debate the professed benefits they bring to host cities and the reality of their legacy. The legacy of the event deals not just with a physical memory, but also a new image or brand for a city that has been projected through the event. Therefore, mega-events have been used as part of cultural and creative strategies to secure much desired global recognition and attract future economic investment (Horne and Manzenreiter 2006; Roche 1994, 2002; Short 2008; Young and Wamsley 2005). The first key aspect of events is the large public spending that accompanies them, introducing a range of physical and social effects on the city, such as new infrastructure projects or facilities (Ponzini and Jones 2015). Secondly, they can also serve as a focusing-event that introduces strict deadlines accompanied by huge expectations, the conditions that can induce actors to put aside differences in order to collaborate (McGillivray and McPherson 2012). These two qualities in particular, mass investments restricted to a hard timetable presents a potential for synergy or friction with the urban heritage of a city.

Generally, urban heritage is one of the more particularly sensitive areas of the city. The introduction of mass tourism, often one of the intended consequences of a mega-event can greatly impact both the physical and the social qualities of these spaces. The decisions made as part of these events can lead also to altering the physical appearance and substance of a place through either conservation or demolition of heritage. These changes can significantly alter or potentially destroy these valued areas of cities. The historic nature of a place can also inversely impact the planning of the event or potentially become a key part of the The direct and indirect impacts of mega-events on European Urban Heritage attraction. While physical changes may be the most immediately visible, the changes to the governance of heritage areas, as well as their definitions, can have the most lasting impact. Whether a city chooses to highlight and promote its built heritage as an integral asset can continue to determine how the city values and protects its heritage even long after the event has ended. The combination of heritage cities and mega-events is therefore one that contains great potential as well as risk and deserves further consideration and study. In the last several years, a number of high profile cities including Boston, Rome and Budapest have cancelled their bids to host the Olympic Games, citing extreme costs and low public support. To broaden the appeal of the Olympics and promote more sustainable practice, Agenda 2020 has established new guidelines.

Specifically, recommendation 2.2 aims to promote the re-use of existing infrastructures (Gold and Gold 2016). This shift could result in the Olympics being more integrated into the existing city fabric. The