

Alternative initiatives, cultural intermediaries and urban regeneration: the case of *La Friche* (Marseille)

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Abstract

This paper discusses the role played by the cultural regeneration of a tobacco factory known as *La Friche* in the urban renaissance of Marseille. It builds an analytical framework to decrypt the extent to which the network and strategy building, the mobilisation capacity, and the project making ability was developed in the two main episodes of governance by the cultural intermediaries *Système Friche Théâtre* (the collective in charge of the cultural initiative). This led to the rise of *La Friche* as one of the key cultural facilities in Marseille within the project Euroméditerranée and in the successful application to the 2013 European Capital of Culture schemes highlighting the sustainable development of this initiative initially supposed to be temporary.

Keywords: Urban regeneration, Cultural regeneration, Marseille, governance, cultural intermediaries

Culture as a part of urban regeneration schemes has played a significant role in urban renewal and planning practices since the 1970's and the 1980's in the United States and from the 1980's and the 1990's in mainland Europe. Boston, San Francisco, Bilbao, Lille, Barcelona or Birmingham for example have undergone and are still undergoing regeneration programmes in which cultural projects are a key component of economic and urban strategies.

On one hand, the relation between cultural activities, projects and policies is no more a unique research case: numerous analyses have underlined the importance of culture as a major output for city renaissance (Aitchison et al. 2007, Aitchison and Evans, 2003; Evans, 2001; Garcia, 2004; Hall, 2000; Miles and Paddison, 2005). The outputs related to cultural projects and policies have led to major and diverse actions in the field of cultural planning (Evans, 2001; Bianchini and Parkinson, 1993; Landry and Bianchini, 1995). Similarly, traditional cultural facilities (museums or concert halls for example) as a component of both cultural and tourism-led regeneration have also often been decrypted as a key

facet of the regeneration of post industrial city (Jones and Evans, 2008; Judd, 1994; Holcomb, 1999; Judd and Fainstein, 1999; Law, 2000, Tallon, 2010).

On the other hand, the way artists and cultural actors have invested in industrial districts thanks to cheap rents and flexible buildings has also been underlined in numerous research. From the work of Zukin (1989, 1995) on loft living in the Soho district of Manhattan (New York), to the work of Ley (1986, 1996, 20003) or that of Cameron and Coaffee (2005) on the arts-led regeneration strategy adopted in Gateshead (Newcastle), the role of artists in urban regeneration and as pioneers of a potential gentrification has been analysed.

The aim of this paper is to combine both fields of research and to examine the trajectory of transformation of “*La Friche*”, a cultural project developed in a derelict tobacco factory in Marseille from 1991. Particular attention is given to derelict spaces and particularly to their “watching” and “redevelopment” stages during which cultural actors (and artists) have a central but substantively transient role. Often cultural uses on brownfields last only a couple of years and are quickly replaced by other activities or projects. Nevertheless the modification of their status and relations with decision makers in the governance process, in other words in the modes and practices of the mobilisation and organisation of collective action (Cars et al., 2002 in Coaffee and Healey, 2003), can lead to the perpetuation and transformation of these initiatives. In this context, this paper seeks to decrypt the role of the cultural actors (*Système Friche Théâtre*) who organically developed this temporary initiative on a brownfield site which quickly became a key part of the overall regeneration strategy of Marseille. Its purpose is therefore to explore the extent to which the network and strategy building, the mobilisation capacity, and the project making ability developed in the different episodes of governance of the cultural initiative led to the rise of *La Friche* as one of the key cultural facility in the city, and a pillar in the success of the application of Marseille to become 2013 European Capital of Culture.

After reviewing the literature on culture and brownfield regeneration, the paper will present the methodology of research and the analytical framework utilized as well as the case studies of Marseille and *La Friche*. The role of *Système Friche Théâtre* within the different episodes of governance will then be assessed in order to analyse the transformation of *La Friche* from a peripheral to a strategic project. Finally the benefits and constraints of mainstreaming alternative culture for urban renaissance will be discussed.

1 - Culture, brownfields and urban regeneration

Culture and urban regeneration has been intrinsically linked since the 1970s. Within mixed use projects gathering office, commercial, leisure and housing developments, cultural facilities have been an economic and symbolic driving force in the transformation of industrial and port cities enabling urban authorities to break their physical decline (Bianchini, 1997, Garcia, 2004). Cultural facilities have been used as a catalyst towards the rise of a new competitive and entrepreneurial city, mainly rebuilt within its central areas. As Miles and Paddison (2005, p.283) noted “*the idea that culture can be employed as a driver for urban economic growth has become part of the new orthodoxy by which cities seek to enhance their competitive position*”.

Cultural regeneration has been a key part of the strategies of “reimageenering” (Paddinson, 1993) which aims to transform the image of many old declining cities to modern and competitive metropolises. As part of these strategies of “reimageenering” and promotion of a leisure and cultural economy, traditional cultural facilities have played a key role: the Guggenheim in Bilbao, the Tate Modern London, the International Maritime Museum as well as the Elbphilharmonie Concert Hall in Hamburg or the Symphony Hall in Birmingham. In addition, the application and organization of specific events, such as annual European Capital of Culture (ECOC) (formally City of Culture) emphasises the prominent role given to culture. For example, since 1985, the ECOC scheme has supported cultural regeneration in a variety of industrial and post-industrial cities (e.g. Glasgow, Lille, Rotterdam, Liverpool) as well as reinforcing the status of prestigious European cultural centres (Florence, Paris, Madrid, Avignon, Geneva for example) (Garcia, 2004, Tallon, 2010).

In addition to these traditional cultural facilities and events, singular cultural uses and spaces, organically developed and taking place on derelict areas, have also participated to cultural regeneration in a medium or more long-term perspective. As disconnected urban spaces they offer strategic opportunities for cultural actors and artists to settle at a very cheap price and develop their activities prior to any regeneration programme. Various definitions have been given to these alternative spaces highlighting their diversity and their capacity to welcome numerous uses and users. For example, in their expression “indeterminate spaces” Groth and Corjin (2005, p. 503) have insisted on their temporal discontinuities

“left out of time and place with regard to their urban surroundings.(...) The unclear and undetermined status of these urban no-man’s-lands may allow for the emergence of a non-planned, spontaneous urbanity”

The term *free zone* (Urban unlimited, 2004) has also been used to describe such derelict spaces highlighting their use for cultural and artistic uses: “*Freezones are associated with a ‘non-*

conformism' which strives to assert its own right to exist as well as contributing to metropolitan life" (p.12). This idea is also used by Haydn and Temel (2006) in their notion of *temporary urban spaces* acknowledging the capacity of these areas to promote interim uses. They note that even if these areas are seen "*as a provisional measure rather than as a permanent solution*" they can be used to demonstrate "*a concept's success in order to convince an investor that the chosen use could also provide a permanent solution*" (p.39). All these authors agree that these spaces welcome mainly cultural actors (artists) and to a lesser extent, economic actors. However they do use different expressions to qualify them: "cultural entrepreneurs" (Leadbeater, 1999), "culturepreneurs" (Lange, 2006), "informal actors" (Growth and Corijn, 2005), "space pioneers" (Overmeyer, 2007) or "temporary users" (Haydn and Temel, 2006).

2- Analytical framework and methodology

One of the arguments of this paper is that these disconnected urban spaces are "permissive" and are submitted to a multi-step process of transformation (Andres, 2008) correlating to three distinct "episodes of governance" (Coaffee and Healey, 2003). The first stage is a crisis-era which progressively leads to the closure of a factory and the second phase is a waiting and/or watching period prior to redevelopment during which derelict lands commonly get marginalized. Sometimes however, during the watching stage, disconnected urban spaces are submitted to singular new uses led by cultural or non-cultural actors; as "temporary urban spaces" they gather alternative, sometimes innovative, artistic experiences. This stage ends when a project of redevelopment begins raising question about the future of these initiatives. The way cultural spaces are going to evolve relies on the relations between decision-makers and cultural actors; the extent to which these actors will acquire some influence and power will impact the sustainable (or non-sustainable) development of the initiative in the process of area redevelopment.

This paper will pay particular attention to the two last stages of the transformation of urban brownfields. It will explore how the network and strategy building, the mobilisation capacity, and the project making ability developed in the related episodes of governance have become key conditions in explaining how cultural actors challenge urban authorities in their strategies of urban regeneration. For this purpose an analytical framework is developed in this paper.

This framework is built on one hand on the work of Coaffee and Healey (1993) on the role of area governance initiatives influencing mainstream governance discourses and practices. According to these two authors, governance transformation needs to be understood within three specific levels, one of which being the governance process highlighting "power relations embedded in organised institutional and deliberately manipulated by strategic actors". This paper adopts the same prospect of

analysis as Coaffee and Healey (2003) in focusing on the level of governance processes and questioning how the alternative experience of *La Friche* has challenged organised institutional practices and changed the mainstream of discourse on alternative culture. In addition it is also going to decrypt how this innovative initiative (never experienced before in France) has sought to sustain its existence through modifying the power relations between key actors, specifically giving cultural intermediaries a major role in the governance process.

On the other hand this framework rests on the work of Williams (2002), who taking into account the various definitions and uses of the notion of “boundary spanners” as “key agents managing within inter-organizational theatres” (Williams, 2002, p.103) offers an in-depth profiling of their key characteristics: their networking skills; their entrepreneur and innovator status; their ability to engage with others and to be trusted; their character and the personality of key persons within these groups/communities; as well as their capacity to engage themselves to others as leaders. These characteristics offer interesting criteria to assess the role of cultural intermediaries such as *Système Friche Théâtre* within wider governance and regeneration in Marseille. In order to assess the role of these cultural intermediaries, figure 1 identifies the criteria used to assess the networks, coalitions and engagement of the cultural intermediaries, their selection process, their personalities, their strategies and discourses and finally their practices.

The main results presented in this paper relate to two stages of research including the collection and analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data (academic papers, reports, planning guidance as well as interviews). From June 2005 to June 2006, a first set of 30 interviews and fieldwork was conducted in Marseille both with representatives from the City Council, the EPAEM (*Etablissement Public d’Aménagement Euroméditerranée*) and cultural actors (including 10 actors of *La Friche*). These first results and data have been updated and completed in a second phase of research from September 2008 to March 2010.

Figure 1: the transformation of governance processes adapted from Coaffee and Healey (2003) and Williams (2002)

Dimensions of governance	Assessment criteria
Network, coalitions and engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connection to mainstream political and cultural local, regional, national networks • Engagement towards the others (users and beneficiaries) including population and medias • Agreement based on win-win interests
Stakeholder selection processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selection of the key players involved in the development of the project • Selection of key players as representatives of key interest

Personality: selection of key players as representatives and leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Character, skills, visibility and renown at different levels
Strategies / Discourses: framing issues, problems, solutions, interests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability of formulating ideas and projects • Strong experience in marketing the place • Knowledge resources • Selective and negotiated issues / conflicts over priorities recognized
Practices: routines and repertoires	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessible, innovative, entrepreneurial, integrative practices

3- Presentation of the case study of Marseille and *La Friche*

Marseille, can be compared to an old industrial crisis city whose traditional local economy was concentrated on port activities and processing industries, in a similar way as Bilbao, Liverpool or Genoa. These activities started to suffer from decline in the 1950s. Simultaneously Marseille was affected by a demographic crisis: its population decreased as middle and upper class families left the city for surrounding suburbs and towns. Peak deindustrialisation in the 1970s reinforced economic recession, unemployment and depopulation which had disastrous consequences on the image of the city: in this era Marseille was perceived as an old industrial declining city that was dangerous, insecure, dirty place with no jobs (Verges and Jacquemoud, 2000). The central core of the city suffered from severe degradation and social impoverishment and thus industrial brownfields and underused derelict areas became part of the urban landscape (Donzel, 1998; Dubois and Olive, 2004).

The consequences of these events were even more severe if the situation of Marseille was compared to the economic and demographic growth experienced by cities located not more than 20 miles north (for example Aix en Provence) (Motte, 2003). Between 1982 and 1990 Marseille lost 6.7 percent of its population (-73 360 inhabitants) (Motte, 2003). Compared to Lyon or Paris, in the 1970s and 1980s Marseille did not manage to overcome its post-industrial transition through tertiary and touristic activities. During this period most developers refused to launch any projects in the city due to an unattractive market in term of housing and office units. Entering the 1990's regenerating the city was thus a key priority in order to promote a new economic and demographic growth.

The regeneration of Marseille became a major project for local and national planning and political actors in the early 1990s. Competitors such as Barcelona and Bilbao had already launched several projects to better balance their major urban, social and economic disequilibrium, it was seen as urgent for Marseille to try to compete with these Mediterranean cities. In 1995, *Euroméditerranée* was launched and a specific public planning agency created: the *Etablissement Public d'Aménagement Euroméditerranée* (EPAEM). The EPAEM relied on a strong partnership and related financial

investments between the French state and local governing authorities (especially the municipality of Marseille even though the Region and the Department, initially sceptical about to the project, got also engaged). Local economic actors and the Port Authorities (*Port Autonome de Marseille*) were two other important partners. *Euroméditerranée*¹ aimed (and still aims) to renew the economy and the image of Marseille in order to strengthen its status as a Mediterranean metropolis. The promotion of better connectivity between the port and the city was one of the key priorities (Rodrigues Malta, 2004). Moreover, heritage has played an important role as refurbished and converted former industrial buildings were used as flagship projects to assist the economic, social and symbolic revival of the city.

The perimeter of *Euroméditerranée* is divided in five specific areas as shown on figure 2:

- “Arenc La Joliette”: a new business district,
- “Cité de la Méditerranée”: a new waterfront including renewed public spaces and new district,
- “Rue de la République”: the renewal of derelict housing and local businesses,
- “Pole de la Belle de Mai”: a centre for cultural and creative industries,
- “Gare Saint Charles”: the refurbishment and extension of the train station.

Insert Figure 2: Perimeter of “Euroméditerranée” and its different areas of intervention (up to 2007)

Source: L. Andres, 2008

The perimeter of this site included an old tobacco factory (*Manufacture de tabacs de la Belle de Mai*). Since 1991, the factory has been re-used by cultural actors to develop a new (alternative) cultural space, *La Friche*, in advance of any kind of formal regeneration policies. The rise of such an alternative initiative was the result of a combination of two factors: a “crisis” context and freely available derelict land on the one hand and a new city major on the other hand. The new mayor chose a well-known poet as the deputy mayor for cultural policies; the latter was a frequent user of alternative venues that had developed on brownfield sites in Europe in the 1960’s and 1970’s (especially the *Paradiso* and the *Melkweg* in Amsterdam). Consequently, as part of his cultural program, he focused on the capacity to revalorise derelict areas and districts through temporary cultural activities (Peraldi, Samson, 2005). The main strategy at this time was to use the numerous derelict areas of the city, moving from one brownfield site to another and developing short-term projects in each of them. Through this principle of “*nomadisme*” the “watching” period – the period

¹ The perimeter of *Euroméditerranée* covered 313 hectares in 1995. It has been extended to 483 hectares in 2007.

prior to redevelopment- of the factory was perceived as a strategic opportunity to develop a cultural and artistic project.

In 1992, thanks to such a financial support from the City Council, cultural actors settled down in the tobacco factory and gathered themselves into an association *Système Friche Théâtre*. The development of the project and its sustainable inscription in the cultural policy and regeneration strategy is exceptional. It led to the insertion of *La Friche* in the project *Euroméditerranée* sealing the end of the watching stage of the brownfield. Clearly, *La Friche* was used as a catalyst facility for *Euroméditerranée*; the EPAEM compared the district as the *Soho* of southern France (Etablissement public *Euroméditerranée*, 1996). *La Friche* became one of the three units (see figure 3) of the cultural pole of La Belle de Mai (the two other units being dedicated to activities related to heritage and conservation and to cultural industries). *La Friche* which in 2007 became a Cooperative Society of Collective Interest (SCIC) is now the legal tenant of the unit for 40 years. *Système Friche Théâtre* is able to rent some plots at different prices and for different activities (cultural, economic for example) and is financially autonomous. Not only cultural activities are and will be developed but also sport and social facilities.

Please insert Figure 3: The three different units of the “Pôle de la Belle de Mai”
Source: L. Andres (2008)

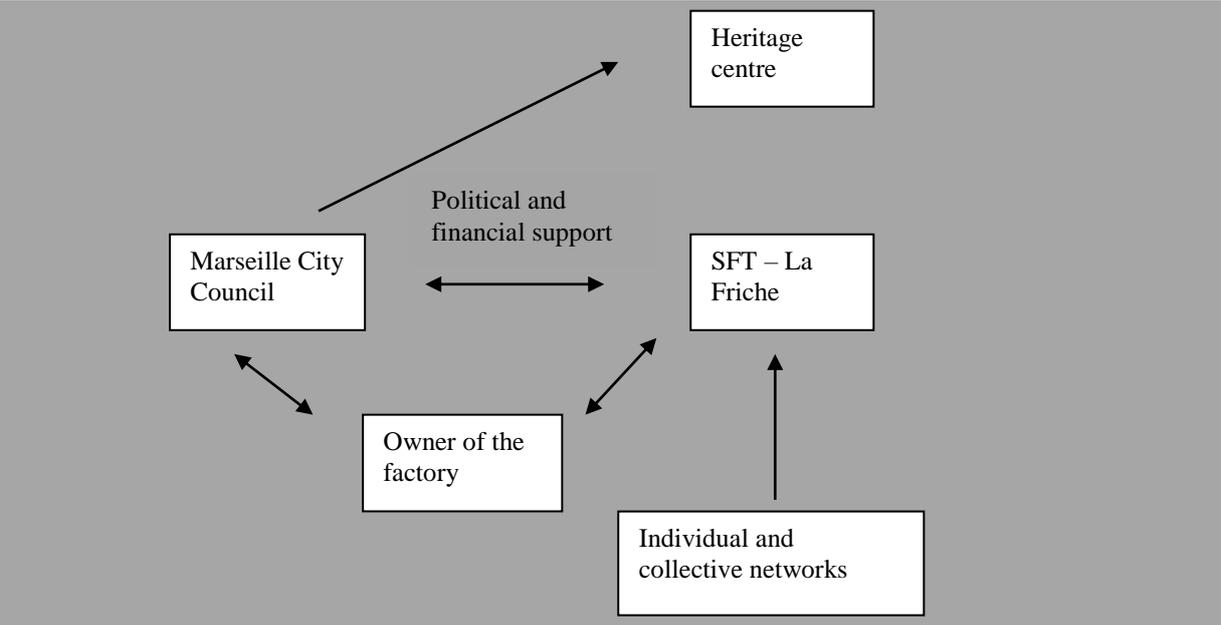
4- The role of *Système Friche Théâtre* in transforming *La Friche* from a temporary initiative to a long term flagship project.

The transition of the brownfield site from a temporary status to a central role within *Euroméditerranée* and the bid for ECOC 2013 (Andres, 2011) raises several questions with regard to the engagement of cultural actors with urban regeneration. Particularly, this transition needs to be related to the role of *Système Friche Théâtre* in the two episodes of the governance before and after the insertion of the cultural space in *Euroméditerranée* in 1995. Despite its insertion, there has been uncertainty regarding the way the project can be managed in a sustainable way. Whereas the conversion of the Unit 2 (in 2004) was simultaneous to the achievement of the Unit 1 (from 2001), *La Friche* is still today the only unit whose reconversion is not yet completely achieved. The analytical framework developed in section 2 enables an analysis of the extent to which the network and strategy building, the mobilisation capacity, and the project making ability of *Système Friche Théâtre* explain the rise of *La Friche*. The two figures below underlines the evolution of the governance processes from a limited number of key actors (1991-1995) to a much more extended and complex system of partnerships.

From the beginning of *La Friche*, *Système Friche Théâtre* was composed of influential members (in particular Philippe Foulquié, Fabrice Lextrait or Ferdinand Richard) who were and have been able to use their existing, individual and collective networks to gather other artists / cultural actors in the project and communicate on the initiative; these networks were both local, regional, national and international and have provided mainstream connections with political and cultural actors who supported and-or joined the project. As the initiative evolved, the number of members grew which increased and diversified the collective and individual networks on which the project was built.

During episode 1 (figure 4) of the governance process (crisis in Marseille – watching period for the factory), while *La Friche* was not part yet of *Euroméditerranée*, above sustaining the support they already had from the City Council, *Système Friche Théâtre* also quickly focused the attention of local and national media (Achmy, 1993; Bedarida, 1996; Buob, 1995; Samson, 1997) thanks to various initiatives. *La Friche* joined an international network of cultural alternative spaces (*TransEuropeHalles*) which fostered their visibility and enlarge their network. Well known artists such as the dance producer Armand Gatti or the rap group IAM developed some activities/events in *La Friche* which indeed increased the recognition of the cultural space towards local and national media.

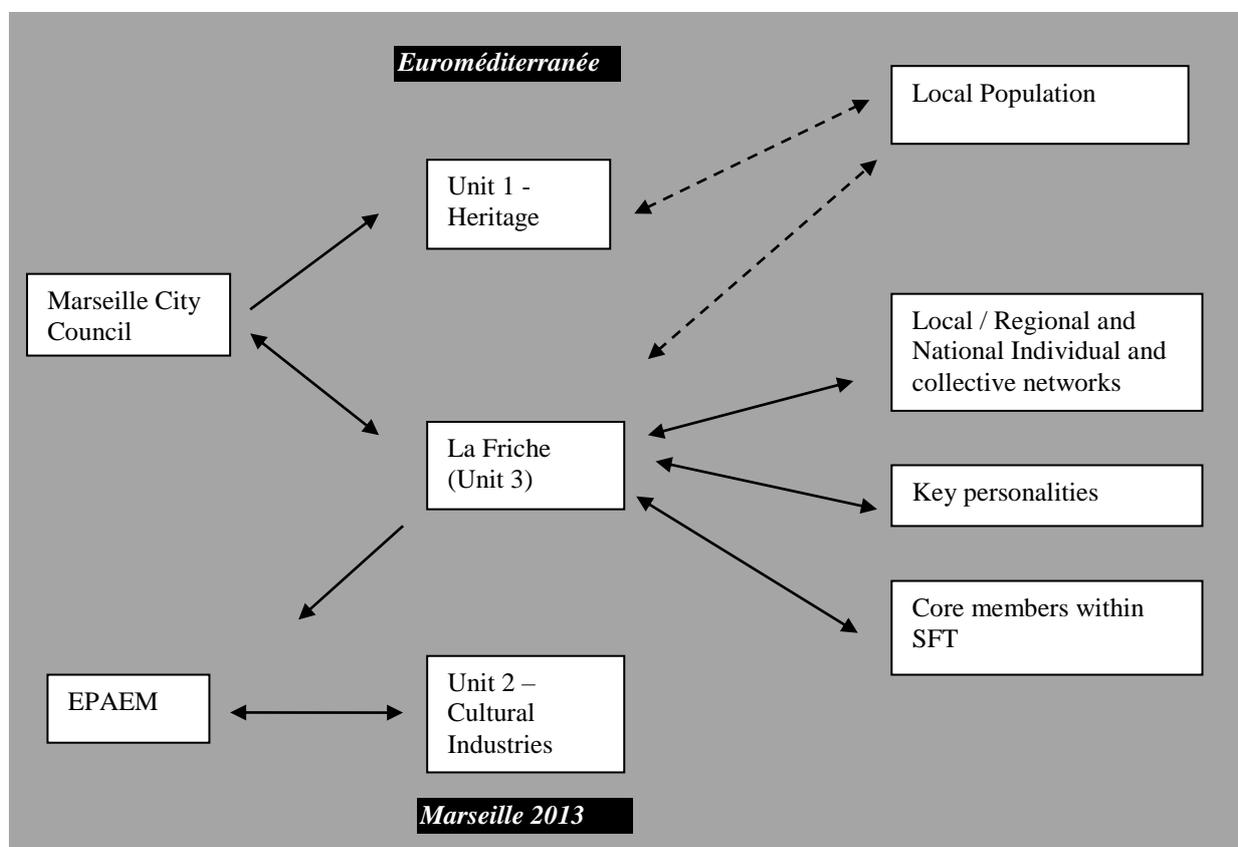
Figure 4: Episode 1 (1991- 1995): *La Friche*, a “temporary initiative”



During episode 2 (redevelopment) (figure 5) as soon as the insertion of *La Friche* in *Euroméditerranée* was confirmed, *Système Friche Théâtre* (in particular P. Foulquié and F. Lextrait) decided to contact and appoint the architect Jean Nouvel as the president of *La Friche* (until 2002). The benefits of having such a personality were immediate as it strengthened the connections of *Système Friche Théâtre* to political, cultural and media spheres at different levels and improved their ability to formulate innovative ideas and projects. In addition to P. Foulquié, J. Nouvel also brought a

strong leadership to the project. In this respect, having currently Patrick Bouchain, (another well-known architect specialized in the transformation of industrial buildings) as the chief architect in charge of the renewal plan of *La Friche*, confirms also the extent to which *Système Friche Théâtre* used key personalities with individual networks, skills to sustain the visibility of the project. The national recognition of *La Friche* led to the appointment of F. Lextrait (key member of *Système Friche Théâtre*) as advisor of the State Secretary of Culture. During his mission (from 2000 to 2002) he was asked to formalize a strategy towards the *New Territories of Art* in France for which *La Friche* was positioned as the leader. The mission of F. Lextrait at the Ministry of Culture obviously strengthened the connection of *Système Friche Théâtre* with mainstream political and cultural networks and confirmed their status of cultural intermediaries.

Figure 5: Episode 2 (1995 – 2010): *La Friche* a core facility within Euroméditerranée and Marseille 2013



The strategic use of these networks and of key personalities occurred alongside the ability of *Système Friche Théâtre* to engage with other stakeholders and build coalitions based on win-win interests with core-members of the governance process in relation to surrounding strategic regeneration and planning issues. During episode 1, this included above the financial and political support of the City Council, the agreement of the owner of the factory. Although the factory ceased production in 1990, the site remained a private property as the market didn't support any sale of the site by the company. Consequently, above its financial interest of having such a project on his property (it was a way to

prevent any kind of illegal uses and secure the plant), the company trusted the capacity of cultural actors to lead it to a more prosperous future: in other words they bet on the fact that the City Council, supporting the project, will probably buy the three units (which they did²). In episode 2 this enlarged coalition gathering both the EPAEM and the City Council clearly took advantage of *La Friche* as one of the key cultural facility and flagship project for *Euroméditerranée* and *Marseille 2013* application. This increased the influence of *La Friche* as it became part of the overall long term regeneration strategy of the city in which not only the City Council was part of. On the other hand, the engagement of *Système Friche Théâtre* with the other units and the local population has been less extensive and led to punctual collaborations³ as it wasn't a key factor to the penetration of *Système Friche Théâtre* within decision-making spheres. This actually has led to a shift between the different units which despite sharing a common cultural function, did not and still do not share common practices. While *Système Friche Théâtre* needed to adjust and negotiate its position in the governance process, key actors from the Units 1 and 2 had only to settle in the new offices made available by the City Council and the EPAEM; this obviously led to very distinct actions and strategies. Nevertheless the juxtaposition of the different projects and the creation of the “cultural pole of La Belle de Mai” indirectly enabled the lasting development of *La Friche* as it reinforced the presence of public actors (and of their funding).

The coalitions and types of engagement of *Système Friche Théâtre* during the two main episodes of governance highlight the very strategic use of key core members of *Système Friche Théâtre* – key personalities for some of them – as well as a clear selection of the actors with whom *Système Friche Théâtre* decided to engage with. In other words not only did the core members of *Système Friche Théâtre* meticulously chose key personalities according to the benefits and outcomes they could bring and decided to engage with such or such members so as to sustain the project, they also built strategies, discourses and implemented a series of actions themselves.

Whereas episode 1 of the governance process was largely built on a strategy of networking and enhanced visibility thanks to specific events, the core of *La Friche*'s strategies and discourses in order to foster an increasingly powerful position within *Euroméditerranée* began in 1995. This was correlated with innovative, pro-active and entrepreneurial practices leading to transformation of the legal status of *La Friche* in a Cooperative Society of Collective Interest in 2007 – the first one in France. In order to face the issues related to the cultural transformation of the factory and its sustainable development (financially and legally speaking) and deal with the various interests of the

² The Unit1 was bought by the City Council in 1994 to implement the heritage centre. The Unit 2 was bought by the EPAEM in 1997. Finally the Unit 3 was bought by the City Council in 1998.

³ Even if SFT clearly insisted on the fact that the role of La Friche was not limited to the scale of the neighbourhood of La Belle de Mai, it managed to initiate collaborations with local communities for example with local schools via the “Réseau d'Education Prioritaire St Mauront - Belle de Mai”

two main urban authorities (City Council and EPAEM) within a broader perspective of urban regeneration, *Système Friche Théâtre* positioned *La Friche* as a catalyst for urban regeneration. They chose not only to focus their practices on a cultural perspective but to broaden their fields of action. Based on a credo of promoting “*alternative economic culture*” they devised a development strategy: “*a cultural project for an urban project*” (*Système Friche Théâtre*, 1996), which was, and still has remained the driving force for the development of the project. Indeed the role given to the architects Nouvel and Bouchain and the use of their knowledge (in addition to the skills of the core members of *Système Friche Théâtre*) is not insignificant in the ability of cultural intermediaries to build an urban and cultural strategy perceived as coherent by local governing authorities. Having such an action plan reinforced the credibility and visibility of *La Friche* at a local, regional, national and even international level, and helped them to engage pro-actively with decision makers and lead innovative practices. Moreover, such activities strengthened their press coverage and their place-marketing strategy. Nowadays this action plan has been transposed in the master plan currently guiding the transformation of *La Friche* (“*L’Air2 de ne pas y toucher*”) which again is implemented internally thanks to the supervision of P. Bouchain as the creation of the specific structure (TAUP) in charge of the management of the project.

In addition, *Système Friche Théâtre* actively took advantage of several opportunities offered by national and European funding: they managed to open the first French cyber café in 1995, built a project of culture and multimedia in partnership with the Ministry of Culture, created, in 1996, the first “*Groupement d’Employeurs pour l’Insertion et la Qualification*”. Nowadays, their fields of action address the concerns of various types of public; they worked closely with the Schools of Art and Architecture and have recently launched monthly reflective seminars on the key concerns of regeneration of Marseille alongside other local representatives (academics from the University of Provence and local community groups). Overall within episode 2, accordingly to the key issues concerns and interests that should be addressed, a selection was made in the priority given to the strategies, discourses and practices of *Système Friche Théâtre*. Obviously a focus was given to the overall question of the sustainable development of the project rather than on more specific and local problems (for example the relation with the local population of La Belle de Mai and with the other units).

The table below (figure 6) summarizes the achievements of *La Friche* across the two episodes of governance and highlights the success of *Système Friche Théâtre* in penetrating the governance process whilst raising also a certain number of observations and questions that will finally be discussed regarding benefits and limits of mainstreaming such an alternative culture for urban renaissance.

Figure 6: Achievements of *La Friche* across the two episodes of governance

Dimensions / Assessment criteria	Achievements of <i>La Friche</i>
<p>Network, coalitions and engagement Connection to mainstream political and cultural local, regional, national networks Engagement towards the others (users and beneficiaries) including population and medias Agreement based on win-win interests</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TransEuropeHalles • Use of individual and collective networks • New Territories of Art • Media coverage (local and national newspapers) • Win-win relation with City Council / EPAEM / Owner of the factory • Progressive and strategic engagements with key stakeholders
<p>Stakeholder selection processes Selection of the key players involved in the development of the project Selection of key players as representatives of key interest</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Core members within SFT (P. Foulquié, F. Lextrait, F. Richard) • Key personalities (J. Nouvel, P. Bouchain) • Selection of engagement with specific key players
<p>Personality: selection of key players as representatives Character, skills, visibility and renown at different levels</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of personalities as the president of <i>La Friche</i>: Jean Nouvel and Robert Guédiguian • Use of personalities as chief architect: P. Bouchain
<p>Strategies / Discourses: framing issues, problems, solutions, interests Ability of formulating ideas and projects Strong experience in marketing the place Knowledge resources Selective and negotiated issues / conflicts over priorities recognized</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Alternative Economic Culture” • A Cultural Project for an Urban Project • Marketing strategy • Use of core members and personalities knowledge • Selective strategies and progressive engagement with key issues/stakeholders
<p>Practices: routines and repertoires for acting Accessible, innovative, entrepreneurial, integrative practices</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SCIC • L’Air2 de ne pas y toucher • Pro-active practices towards various public: Cybercafé, Groupement d’Employeurs pour l’Insertion et la Qualification ...

5- Benefits and constraints of mainstreaming alternative culture for urban renaissance

La Friche: a key to the success of Marseille 2013 and to the promotion of the New Territories of Art in France

Currently *La Friche* is clearly considered as an important temporary cultural facility alongside museums and opera in Marseille (Andres, 2011). The existence of *La Friche* in addition to other projects (such as “*La Cité des Arts de la Rue*”) has been considered as a major asset, a “*privileged pole*”, a “*resource*” for the application to 2013 ECOC (Marseille Provence 2013, 2008). In comparison to its competitors (Lyon, Toulouse or Bordeaux) Marseille wasn’t able to offer a similar set of traditional cultural facilities. On the contrary it benefited from the support and fame of alternative

spaces, in particular *La Friche*, to support the application: the office of the organization committee were actually located at *La Friche*, cultural intermediaries were involved in the application committee, and 2013 ECOC became part of their marketing strategy⁴ to highlight their active participation to this short and long-term cultural strategy. Furthermore the action plan “*a Cultural Project for an Urban Project*” was used as one of the sub-topic of the application. The utilization of such spaces in bidding for the ECOC is not however unique as highlighted by the success of Liverpool in 2008. In addition to their spatial and economic context (port city facing similar issues in term of unemployment, deprivation, re-branding), both cities bet on alternative spaces to win the application (Jones and Wilks-Heegs, 2004).

Such a role given to *La Friche* can also be highlighted at a national scale. Being the head representative of the *New Territories of Art*, other local authorities have tried to reproduce the model of *La Friche* elsewhere in France. In the case of *Les Subsistances* in Lyon, the City Council decided in 1998 to create an alternative cultural space, apparently similar to *La Friche*. However in Lyon in contrast to *La Friche* the entire project has been led by the local authority in a top-down manner. Artists and cultural actors only started to invest the place once the previous site had been converted and were not able to take part and engage themselves in the governance process leading to the development of the initiative. In this sense the governance of *Les Subsistances* is completely different from *La Friche*; it is a “*false brownfield*”, a “*phalastere for artists*” according to P. Foulquié in which no cultural intermediaries emerged. *Les Subsistances* remains a traditional cultural space welcoming artists and exhibitions but clearly not an *alternative cultural space*. Nevertheless this is another example highlighting the influence of *La Friche* as a flagship initiative both on a local and national level. However this doesn't mean that the transformation of *La Friche* and the creation of the cultural pole of La Belle de Mai have answered to all key concerns, especially at a local scale.

La Friche and the district of La Belle de Mai: an anti-model of neighbourhood renewal?

The juxtaposition of the three units within the cultural pole of La Belle de Mai and the absence of real coherence and partnership relies partly on the fact that the addition of the tobacco factory was an opportunist strategy within a broad regeneration perspective rather than a real vision of neighbourhood renewal. This strategy led to a clear scission between the plant and the neighbourhood of la Belle de Mai which wasn't part of the perimeter *Euroméditerranée* neither of any urban policies programmes up to 1999. Now the district belongs to the third arrondissement (Belle de Mai-Saint Mauront), the poorest in Marseille, characterized by a high level of unemployment, poverty and poor housing conditions: 8.1% of unemployed people for 5.3% of the city population live there; the rate of unemployment reaches 37.5% versus 23.2% in Marseille (AGAM, 2003). This means that meanwhile

⁴ This is particular on their website

some investments were made in the factory, no funding was available for la Belle de Mai until 2001 despite the fact that the closure of the factory led to the loss of thousand of employments and more largely to the social and economic impoverishment of the neighbourhood⁵.

The situation after 2001 did not really change. Even if the district belongs for now on to the urban policy perimeter *Grand Projet de Ville*, La Belle de Mai is still not a priority, the issue of fighting against deprived and slum housing in Saint Mauront being more urgent. Consequently the social and economic shift between the cultural policy and the neighbourhood is still salient. The regeneration of the factory clearly has not brought many local economic, urban or social outputs at a local level. The threat of property-driven price rise (Brown et al, 2000) as it has been underlined for example in Dublin's Temple Bar, Manchester's Northern Quarter, Bristol's harbourside area, Sheffield's Creative Industries Quarter, the Quayside development in Newcastle hasn't affected la Belle de Mai which, on the contrary to these district, is not a cultural quarter.

La Belle de Mai: a traditional district but not a cultural quarter

The cultural regeneration of the factory has not led to the creation of a proper cultural quarter, either in a planned or more spontaneously way. No bars, cafes, nightlife scenes have settled down in the neighbourhood since the mid 1990s. Even if the Belle de Mai quarter is typical of these old industrial inner city districts characterized by derelict building with cheap rent, artists or cultural actors haven't settled in these spaces despite the favourable location for studios or exhibition spaces, the provision of raw material for creative activities (Drake, 2003), and for the creation of creative human networks (Montgomery, 1995; Crewe and Beaverstock, 1998).

Several reasons for this can be underlined: First, this quarter has definitively not been the only one to provide available derelict spaces. Artists and cultural actors have been dispatched all over the city which led to the inexistence of any cultural and creative quarter. Second, *La Friche* is and has predominantly been a place of work; these artists that found a workshop at *La Friche* were not looking particularly for a place to live in the quarter (mainly characterized by poor quality housing) especially as most of them were already living in Marseille. Cultural intermediaries of *Système Friche Théâtre* did not pay a lot of attention to the renewal of the district. Third, the Belle de Mai district has kept its strong historical and cultural identity (several theatres such as the *Gyptis* and the *Toursky* can be found in the district) apart from *La Friche* experience. Both cultural spaces have very distinct networks that have barely not been shared. Eventually as underlined by Barber and Porter (2007), true cultural quarters only come out by paying attention to the local scale for example in the recognition of local

⁵ previous workers left the district and have been replaced by new migrants some of them in illegal situation and in a (very) weak economic situation

talent, diversity, history and context (see also Booth and Boyle, 1993; Bianchini, 1993, Miles, 2005a, Brown et al, 2000; Bailey et al 2004) and via participatory democracy. This type of democracy requires a special willingness of policy makers to engage with local cultural communities (which was really not the case in Marseille). The cultural regeneration of the factory has never been inserted in public debate or participation schemes. The local population (its demands and needs) was completely ignored by those formalizing the renewal of the three units not part of the same perimeter of action. The recognition of local talent, diversity, history and context has been made on the scale of Marseille and not on the scale of the Belle de Mai quarter.

As a result, the ambition of the EPAEM of creating a new Soho in Marseille is far from being reached and is no longer acknowledged. Today one can note a few signs of evolution: as new housing developments have been achieved nearby, the price of housing tends to rise. This tendency might carry on with the development of future educational facilities (in the Caserne du Muy and in an idle maternity hospital) and could be a sign of what Wyly and Hammel (2001) relates to a second wave of gentrification. Nevertheless such signs of evolution relies currently more on the evolution of the property market in Marseille rather than on the influence of the “*pole de la Belle de Mai*”.

Conclusion

Without any doubt *La Friche* has participated in the regeneration of Marseille and has given to alternative culture and initially peripheral and temporary initiatives a central role in the long term urban renaissance policy of the city. It has been a first catalyst for the regeneration of the metropolis in a period when there was no developer or investor interest. Now, in comparison to many alternative cultural experiences, *La Friche* has successfully evolved to much more sustainable project recognised, supported and valorised by local authorities within broader regeneration schemes (*Euroméditerranée – 2013 ECOC*). The success of *La Friche* relies on the role of *Système Friche Théâtre* as a cultural intermediary who has managed to evolve, negotiate and strategically position its key core members and personalities in the different episodes of governance.

The analytical framework built in this paper helps to assess such a cultural initiatives allowing an in-depth analysis of a micro-analysis of urban governance dynamics with broader impacts at local and regional governance levels (2013 ECOC in particular). As regards to the action of *Système Friche Théâtre* in building networks, coalitions and engaging with others, mobilizing actors from various backgrounds and with various interests, and building innovative and entrepreneurial strategies and practices, there is no doubt that *La Friche* can be considered as a successful initiative. Its trajectory of transformation has highlighted two main episodes of governance during which cultural intermediaries have acquired a progressive and decisive power of decision and action. Such a framework and its

substantive results highlights the positive impacts of an enlarged form of urban governance which nevertheless remain very singular and unusual in France in a context dominated by traditional participation processes.

However, the use of *La Friche* as a flagship project has almost completely denied its potential impact on the local community and upon neighbourhood rejuvenation. This is actually not unique to La Belle de Mai but is correlated to the way Marseille is trying to raise itself as a major European metropolis. As underlined by Bertonecello and Rodrigues Malta (2001, p.417), “*Euroméditerranée is not a metropolitan project in the sense that it doesn’t seek to re-position Marseille in its regional environment; however it tries to give to the city new assets enabling her to raise as a major European and Mediterranean metropole*”. Local neighbourhood renewal is a secondary concern with priority being given to broader and more strategic regeneration concerns.

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