Mirror Tent in front of the Dortmund U-bahn – Ruhr 2010

The European Capital of Culture

Aims, expectations, outcomes and cooperations
in relation to this high profile mega event

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Preface

Dear Reader,

This report is the final result of the last challenge of my studies Human Geography at the Radboud University of Nijmegen, Nijmegen School of Management. This report forms the graduation thesis of the master Economic Geography. The research described in this report was conducted in 2010: from January until November, based on this research a scientific paper is written. My research has been initiated by ERAC; I really appreciate it very much that they offered me the opportunity to start writing my thesis with them and the opportunity they gave for me to follow the internship. Especially Jos van den Broek offered me great help with my thesis, like other colleagues who made it fun due to several projects during my stay: they really kept me motivated!

The topic of this research is the European Capital of Culture, in particular why cities want to organize this event so badly and what the added value is of bidding in partnerships. This report made a first attempt to see what drives the different actors involved to participate in the ECOC elections. Within this thesis two cases were studied, Brabantstad and Maastricht. It was researched what they expect the benefits will be from this title.

I would very much like to thank everyone who helped me during the writing of this thesis. A special thanks goes to my supervisor dr. Martin van der Velde, who helped me to reach a higher level and finish this thesis successfully. I want to thank him for his patience, by giving me enough room to also achieve my pre-master in Public Administration. I also want to thank prof. dr. Gert-Jan Hospers for sharing his thoughts with me about this research. At last but not least, the people who have checked parts of my thesis, especially on my 'creative' use of the English language, and my friends who ensured that there were enough social activities to relax once in a while!

I worked on this project with great pleasure. I am personally very proud of the final result and I sincerely hope that you as a reader will enjoy reading this thesis!

Nijmegen, August 2011,
Inge van Heck

Executive summary

For a long time, culture and economy have been seen as two completely separate entities. Over the years, however, they tend to be seen complementary to each other, where culture can be of great value in the economy. Richard Florida's books about the creative class have brought an intensified focus on cities and regions in this relationship. Here, culture has become more widely deployed to achieve regional development. The situation raises questions about what caused this shift in thinking about culture and economy and how cities are applying this fresh knowledge in their policies. This research therefore focuses on one single event which cities use for applying culture in their policies, namely, the one-year mega-event of the European Capital of Culture (called ECOC).

Over the last decades, global competition has increased, with the result that place – and city marketing are more and more seen as necessary tools for cities to attract activities and visitors. The title of ECOC is seen as the third most important event which can take place in Europe, after the Olympic Games and the World/European Championship of Soccer. The ECOC was initially designed as an event lasting for a month and was purely based on cultural exchange, promoting cultural diversity and highlighting richness of cultures in Europe. Over the years, the event evolved into a whole-year event that is used for all sorts of development. It is now seen as an opportunity for urban regeneration, improving creativity inside the city and the overall image of the city. As a result, the ECOC is starting to look like an unique opportunity as big city marketing tool. Hence, the event is used as a catalyst in which culture plays an important role. Although the title of ECOC was initially given to a particular city, in most cases the location of the cultural programme has spread beyond city boundaries into suburbs and the surrounding regions. With the prospect of the Netherlands possibly hosting this event in 2018, several cities and regions are working on their bid books. Two of them are further explored in this study: Brabantstad (a cooperation of five Dutch cities in the province of Noord-Brabant) and Maastricht (known as MCH, a cross-border cooperation with partners from the Euregio Meuse-Rhine).

There are many contradictory voices about the effects and impacts of large scale events on organizing cities or regions. On the one hand, mega events do demand large investments, but on the other hand, it is expected that these investments will automatically lead to an enormous impulse for sustainable economic and social progress. The goal of this research is therefore (1) to explore what the different candidates really drives to become ECOC and why they are cooperating with other (foreign) cities and regions, instead of running for the election as individual city. And (2) to explore if expectations of actors involved in the process match with the past outcomes of the event.

What do individual cities think will be the effects for them by participating in the event? This research provides an answer to this question through a comparative study of the two Dutch candidates with previous editions that served as good examples: Glasgow, Lille and Liverpool. Several directors involved in the cases of MCH and Brabantstad are interviewed for this research.

Because of the competition for inhabitants, companies, creative people and visitors, cities want to be attractive in many different ways in order to address them all. The ECOC event is seen as a means to market their city. The big media coverage that the ECOC will provide is expected to be one of the tools to improve the city's identity. The general idea is, partly caused by the influence of Richard Florida, that a city with many cultural amenities attracts (potential) residents;

especially the creative, highly educated population. A city can benefit from an active cultural society both directly and indirectly. Directly, the environment creates more jobs and visitors, which results in an increased spending on hospitalities, hotels and retail businesses. Indirectly, the cultural climate has a positive influence on the composition of the population, the general population and level of education of the inhabitants. Consequently, this has a positive influence on the property market, the attractiveness for businesses and the presence of creative industries.

There are some overlapping reasons why Brabantstad and MCH want to become ECOC in 2018. The overall reason is that both want to become more attractive in different fields. The reason for the partners of MCH to cooperate is Maastricht's ambition of becoming ECOC , but not being able to execute this enormous project on their own. The Dutch partners wanted to participate, because of their strong focus on improving the city's cultural amenities. The foreign partners are participating, because of opportunities in strengthening the cross-border cooperation that already exists, but until now achieved little. Previously, the Euregio was not very concerned about culture and the focus was mainly on population, geography, healthcare, education, employment, mobility, economy, tourism and innovation. But today, the focus has shifted more to the moral side of the partnership, where active participation of the citizens within this cross-border cooperation lies at core. Culture is seen as a tool to formulate a joint program, but also as a means to stimulate and speed up the cooperation between the different partners. One of the main reasons for Brabantstad to bid for the ECOC is rooted in the Province of North-Brabant's ambition to develop the Mosaic Metropolis. The priorities were to establish sustainability by achieving a dynamic balance between socio-economic, ecological and cultural aspects. Simultaneously, the region wanted to maintain its human scale and its opportunities for a pleasant living environment during the transition towards an innovative knowledge economy. The idea is that the road towards the nomination as well as to eventually obtaining the title of the ECOC can give the network a major boost. It can give the cities the opportunity to build together a promising and sustainable cultural agenda inside the Mosaic Metropolis. But most striking in the case of Brabantstad is that the main focus of the cities and the province lies in improving and strengthening their own city, rather than strengthen the regional ties. The whole idea of becoming one large metropolis is not very alive in the minds of the culture brokers. Although the general idea is that of a shared program, with every city having its own theme, not much is said about the cultural cooperation, but more about cooperation in other policy fields.

The overall perception of the ECOC is that outcomes will be positive anyway. These expectations are derived from research on what are called good former examples of the event: Glasgow, Lille and Liverpool. These three cases were able to use the event in a good manner. The cities underwent a revival, they got more attractive, even after the ECOC. The general aims of Brabantstad and MCH are therefore the same as those of Glasgow, Lille and Liverpool: improving the cultural field, creating a higher cultural participation, improving the city's image, attracting media attention and the desire to become a beloved place for businesses, residents, tourists and the creative class.

The ECOC is truly seen as a means to achieve all sorts of development goals. However the focus of the ECOC should be at culture and the cultural program, underlying factors to participate in the project are also present. Especially in the case of MCH, strengthening the cooperation between the different actors and hence deconstructing national borders is an important goal. Both selected cases plan to use the event to establish improvements in the physical infrastructure between the partners and to intensify the regional cooperation. The Dutch partners of MCH are more internal focused: primary aims are concerning the particular city's problems. The foreign partners of this cooperation are more focused on the improved

cooperation. The cities of Brabantstad have a more internal focus; they want to become more attractive as city itself.

This research made clear that it is very difficult to determine what the true impacts are of the ECOC-event. Hard data is not easy to find and even when some facts and figures are found, the question always remains how reliable these are. Because most reports on the impacts of the ECOC find their origins by the EU, neutrality of the authors is at least questionable. Direct effects in the celebration year itself would be measurable, but long-term effects are difficult to describe. All sorts of other developments next to the event can affect the living environment, change the city's image or influence possible visitors as well. If a city truly wants to achieve sustainable improvements, they have to focus on projects which improve the identity of the city and continue these projects even after having been the ECOC. The event certainly can be used as a means for urban development, since the event allows larger budgets than would normally be the case. If budgets are used correctly, this can ensure durable development from which the city or region will experience benefits over a longer period. Perhaps the cooperation between the different partners can also improve over time, because the event allows for consultations on different fields. Therefore, progress can also be made during the organization of the event without actually receiving the title of ECOC.

Contents

1 Introduction

"Moderna, Modern Art Museum - Stockholm"

Chapter 1: Introduction

For a long time, culture and economy have been seen as two completely separate entities, but this has changed over the years. Today they are seen as complementary to each other, where culture can be of great value in the economy. Richard Florida's books about the creative class has brought an intensified focus on cities and regions in this relationship, and culture has become more widely deployed to achieve regional development. This situation raises questions about what caused this shift in thinking about culture and economy and how cities are applying this knowledge in their policies. This research therefore focuses on one single event which cities use by applying culture in their policies, namely the one-year long mega event of the European Capital of Culture (further called ECOC).

1.1 Research framework

We live in an era of globalization in which the pursuit of profit maximization is one of the goals for individuals, companies, cities and even countries. Due to a decline in manufacturing, the global competition is increasing and place– and city marketing are more and more seen as a necessary tool for cities to attract activities and visitors. The ECOC program is used as a catalyst in order to form a generation in which culture is of big importance (Griffiths, 2005). But the correlation between culture and the economy was not always taken for granted, culture and economy used to be seen as separate disciplines for years, as two completely different worlds. But gradually the notion came that both culture and economy could be of great importance for each other and should no longer be seen apart. Richard Florida's 'The rise of the creative class' and international successes of the creative sector, have led to a hype around creative economies. Before two decades, culture was not really recognized as an important factor for the economic development of the city (Marlet & Poort, 2005), but cities nowadays see cultural capital and the creative class as a necessity for urban regeneration and as catalyst for the success of other sectors as well.

The ECOC was founded in the late eighties, early nineties as an intergovernmental initiative with the goal to promote European integration. At present its goal has shifted to promote the great diversity in the European culture[1]. Over the years, the ECOC has become an event of major importance and prestige for the cities hosting this event. The cultural aspects of the event has been used in various kinds of ways by different cities; the cities use the event as a means of promoting the city, but also as a tool of strengthening the city's social and economic regeneration (Pauels, 2009). What is interesting, is the question why governors want to become ECOC so badly and what they think the results will be of bearing this title. What are the underlying goals of becoming ECOC and what do they want to accomplish by hosting this event?

Every year two cities in Europe may call themselves the ECOC, after millions of investments and intense discussions about which cities are going to possess the title. Several years before a country may host the ECOC, the official procedure is started. In the year 2018, a city in the Netherlands may bear the title of ECOC and the competition for this title among several Dutch cities has already started. The current discussion is which Dutch cities, or even regions, want to participate in the election and if these regions are allowed to. Several municipalities are competing for this title, and millions of euro's have been invested already. In 2006, Maastricht said they wanted to be a candidate for the event, which indicates that long before the event takes place it is already being considered in the meeting rooms. (Bockma & Dirks, 2009).

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[1] www.europa.eu, retrieved 14-02-2010.

The title of ECOC is seen as the third most important event which can take place in Europe, after the Olympic Games and the World/European Championships of Soccer. Cities who are considering to become a candidate for the ECOC, assume that the obtained title will lead to an reinforcement of the economic structure and an improvement of their image[2]. In practice, ex ante predictions about improvements not always automatically match with the ex post realities. A quote from Jean Jacobs, Alderman of the department of culture in Maastricht highlights that not only the specific 'celebration year' is important, but that all developments prior to the event are of great importance for the region as well: *"Candidacy is important, but the road towards it is equally important"*[3].

Although the title of ECOC was initially given to a particular city, in most cases the location of the cultural program has been spread beyond city boundaries, into suburbs and the surrounding regions. According to Palmer/Rae Associates (2004a) it seems that regional and cross-border programs and cooperations are becoming a more popular strategy for the ECOC, especially for cities whose geographical position favours this. With the prospect of the Netherlands hosting this event in 2018, several cities and regions are working on their bid books. The number of Dutch wannabe-candidates at this moment is approximately five, spread across the country. Several of them are not bidding as a city alone, but as a whole region that wants to host the event. In order to invest why cities want to become ECOC and what their underlying goals are, a comparative case-study will be conducted between two Dutch regions who are in the race for the title. The cases involved in this research are Brabantstad (c.q. Den Bosch) and MCH (c.q. Maastricht). Both candidates have an unique aspect; Brabantstad is a cooperation between five cities in Brabant: Breda, Eindhoven, Helmond, 's-Hertogenbosch, Tilburg and the province of North-Brabant[4]. Maastricht is going to collaborate internationally with the euregional partners, consisting of the Dutch province of Limburg and the cities Heerlen, Aachen, Liège, Hasselt and Sittard-Geleen, the Belgium provinces of Limburg and Liège, the German speaking community in Belgium and the region of Aachen[5]. Both cases are in an advanced stage with their plans and projects, by which viewpoints from different actors can be examined, to find out what they think the title will offer them.

1.2 Research objective

Based on the framework as described in the previous section, the research question is derived. The next section elaborates on the goal of this research, which will lead to the research question and sub-questions in the section thereafter.

1.2.1 Research goal

There are many contradictory voices about the effects and impacts of large scale - or mega events on the organizing city or region. On the one hand, mega events demand large investments, but on the other hand it is expected that these investments will automatically lead to an enormous impulse which results in economic and social progress over a longer period. Whether this really is the case remains uncertain, since the effect may vary between cities and countries for several reasons. However, there may exist similarities as well, especially in what governments expect from the ECOC-title.

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[2] www.maastricht.nl, retrieved 14-02-2010
[3] Original quote in Dutch: "Kandidatuur is belangrijk, weg er naar toe is minstens zo belangrijk";
http://www.maastricht.nl/web/Home/Home/M_e_d_i_a_i_t_e_m-tonenop/Maastricht-kandidaat-Culturele-Hoofdstad-Europa-2018.htm, retrieved 11-01-2010.
[4] www.brabantstad.nl, retrieved 15-02-2010.
[5] www.vvv-maastricht.eu, retrieved 13-02-2010.

The concept of city marketing is very popular these days. A lot of cities think that it is necessary to promote and distinguish themselves from other cities, as to grow with the city as a whole. This is due to the European unification and the copying behaviour of cities, by which the differences between cities are decreasing. Therefore, the title of ECOC can be seen as a tool for urban regeneration and re-branding of places. By organising cultural events, governors in the first place want to face a significant increase of visitors, but they also want to change the image of the city and hope to attract new investments and residents: in the case of the ECOC specifically the creative class. This concept of the creative class by Richard Florida, suggests that not the highly educated are the engine of the modern economy, but a specific section of the population which he calls the 'creative class'. According to Florida, the presence of a big creative class leads to a growth in employment, because in areas where the creative class live, companies will settle and new companies will revive (Marlet & Van Woerkens, 2004). In this way, the ECOC can be seen as a means of making a transition for a city or region. The concept of urban growth coalitions is applicable to both cases. This theory places emphasis on the common motivation of different cities for urban growth; growth and cooperation is forwarded as a necessity and as a factor that binds cities together in order to develop.

> *The aim of this research is firstly to explore what the drivers are to become ECOC and why cities are cooperating with other (foreign) cities and regions, instead of running for the election as individual city. What do the individual cities think the possible effects will be for them? Secondly, the aim is to explore whether expectations of actors which are involved in the process match with the general picture that prevails about the event, which is composed by examples of ECOC's from the past.*

This research will be both testing and descriptive, because expectations about what kinds of economic and social impacts mega events cause are investigated through desk-research. Besides this, empirical research will be implemented in order to explore what viewpoints different actors of Brabantstad and Maastricht have towards nomination for the ECOC. And also what the motives are for cooperation with other neighbouring cities, and in the case of Maastricht even across the borders, instead of as single city. It will be tested if their expectations about what the title can offer them are grounded, or exaggerated by false hopes on the basis of the empirical framework, based on former experiences.

The reason for choosing these two particular cases is because both candidates are bidding in cooperation with a whole region. They are both in an advanced stage with their preparations and have put some of these preparations into practice already. Because it involves regions instead of cities, an extra dimension is added to this research: investigating the underlying reasons for cooperation. The question raises what the different actors expect of this cooperation and what the benefits are for all the cities involved?

1.2.2 Research questions

In order to reach the research goal, several smaller activities which finally should lead to achieving this goal are identified. The main question and sub-questions are formulated to support these smaller activities. The main question of this research is as follows:

> *What drives Brabantstad and Maastricht, and on which basis are their expectations grounded, to run in cooperation with (foreign) partners for the election of European Capital of Culture in 2018?*

In order to find an answer to the main question, several sub questions have to be answered first. For this reason, several topics will be discussed in succession. As an introduction, first of all, the ECOC event will be discussed to create a general understanding of what this event looks like, what its goals are and how it evolved over the years from both the perspective of the EU as from European cities. Questions like what does the title ECOC contain, why was the ECOC introduced and what the aims are of this event, will be treated. Additionally the procedures which have to be followed in order to become a candidate will be elaborated.

Additionally, it will be looked at former ECOC's which Brabantstad and Maastricht took as an example to explain why they want to become ECOC. It will be explored what aims or reasons these cities had and what kind of outcomes the title had on the city and the surroundings. By looking at this, a summary can be made of corresponding aims and outcomes, which will lead to a general concept and picture about the event and what kind of impulse it can give to a city. In later chapters, this general picture will be compared to the aims and expected outcomes of Brabantstad and Maastricht, to see if there is a certain discourse about what kind of benefits the event will bring. Summarized, this should firstly give more insight into the ECOC, and secondly it will explain how the event is seen by European cities and actors in this research.

Using the general picture that was created, we will zoom in on the two cases: Brabantstad and MCH. It will be investigated what their intentions are and why partners of Brabantstad and Maastricht want to put themselves as a candidate for this event. Qualitative research will be done, to find out their reasons for this candidature and what they think the expected outcomes will be. One important aspect here is the creative class, a group of people that cities and regions would like to attract to give regional development an impulse. It will be examined how this creative class can play a role in regional development and whether this indeed is a factor in wanting to be ECOC for Brabantstad and MCH. Next to their candidature, another aspect will be treated, namely the collaboration with (international) cities. This to find out why Brabantstad and Maastricht are bidding in these partnerships. There will be sought for the advantages which lead to such a cooperation and what the different cities of this cooperation expect of the candidature, to see if they match. This will be mostly investigated through empirical research, because the outcome of this question is dependent on the motives of the different actors involved in this process.

Finally a comparison will be made between the general framework (designed in the first part) and the expectations and aims of the actors from the cases which will be investigated. The question here is whether the expectations and aims of Brabantstad and Maastricht correspond with the framework and if their expectations are grounded or based on false hopes. There will be an overlap, of course, but every city has its own reasons for bidding for the event and different goals which it wants to establish. Does the ECOC still has a function as provider of culture, or has it only evolved into nothing more than a huge city marketing tool? This has to be found out in this section.

In order to summarize the above, the following sub-questions are formulated to provide guidance for this research:
- Sub question 1: *What does the title European Capital of Culture exactly contain for both the European Union and the individual cities?*
- Sub question 2: *For what reasons do Brabantstad and MCH want to become European Capital of Culture in 2018?*
- Sub question 3: *Why are the two cases not bidding as one city alone, and what is the value of this cooperation for the involved cities and regions?*
- Sub question 4: *Does the general picture of the European Capital of Culture correspond with the aims of Brabantstad and Maastricht to run for this election?*

1.3 Societal relevance

This topic has a high societal relevance especially in these times of intense discussions about financial cuts in the cultural sector. Not only a city or the directors of the city are involved by running for the title of ECOC, but the residents and the government are directly or indirectly involved as well. Three reasons can be given why this particular event should be examined in relation to society.

First of all, it is the city that decides whether or not they participate in the process of candidacy. The residents have no power or influence in decision-making at this stage, but meanwhile municipalities are investing a lot of money in projects and re-urbanisation, in order to prepare for the hosting of this mega-event. Nowadays, it seems that almost every city wants to host such a large-scale international event. The attraction of many tourists is seen as a stimulus for the local economy, and thanks to international media-attention the image of the city will improve significantly. At least, this is what is thought in the boardrooms (Rennen, 2007). If these cities would take up a more realistic position, they will find that there is a chance of not being chosen as the ECOC 2018 in the Netherlands, due to the tough competition. All cities running for this title expect that they are the best candidate, with the most opportunities to win. But from the five contestants, only one city will enjoy the benefits from the large investments that were made earlier. The other cities may also benefit from the event, but the expected increase of attention, acquaintance and tourists will be far less. Dutch cities that want to become ECOC in 2018 are spending a lot of money in all sorts of purposes in the process towards the elections to show how serious they are about their candidacy; this money could on the other hand be invested in projects from which the community profits directly (Dienst Maatschappelijke Ontwikkeling Culturele Zaken, 2007).

Secondly, it is interesting to examine what kind of outcomes former ECOC's experienced for their city and its surroundings. What sorts of positive and negative effects did occur for the society, did these outcomes outweigh all the investments and were they similar to the expectations? On the basis of this, conclusions can be drawn on the relevance for the 'normal inhabitants' of cities and regions of hosting such a mega event.

Thirdly, several levels of authorities are involved in the processes of the ECOC. The municipalities of course, but also the province and the central government of the Netherlands are directly and indirectly involved in the whole process. The provinces in the Netherlands already invest in culture in Dutch cities, also in the cities which belong to the consortium of Brabantstad and Maastricht. Effects from the event might be widespread, whereby not only the hosting cities may experience benefits, but the whole region as well. This means that the event may have huge impacts on surrounding areas, with a great influence in local and regional economies.

1.4 Scientific relevance

The introduction indicated that almost every city and governor thinks that attracting a mega event, such as the ECOC, provides several benefits. But although most people agree on this supposition, there is still limited (empirical) proof that indicates benefits and the scale of these benefits.

Scientifically it is relevant to investigate if a mega event such as the ECOC produces net positive outcomes in the first place. Secondly, it is useful to know what kinds of thoughts about the impacts are prevalent around the subject and from where these expectations derive. In the minds of governors, the idea prevails that the event should lead to benefits anyway, but in practice there are hardly evaluation reports of former ECOC's that show what the impact has been exactly and what the outcomes were in economic terms.

In this research, a contribution will be made by applying scientific insights on two new cases. The theories about (1) city marketing (2) the creative class of Richard Florida and (3) urban growth coalitions will be linked together in order to find a relation. The speculations around attracting a mega-event will be examined through the cohesion of these theories, in which city marketing has the main focus. Further details about these different theories will be elucidated in chapter three.

Two cases will be examined; the first case is Brabantstad which is a cooperation between five Dutch cities and the province of North-Brabant[6]. The second case is MCH which operates in close cooperation with the Dutch province of Limburg and foreign partners that are already familiar because of the existence of the Euregio and several smaller partnerships[7]. It is interesting to investigate how events such as the ECOC can contribute to regional cooperation and in case of Maastricht even to cross-border cooperation. How are the cities within the partnership looking at the event and are they using the event to achieve common goals? The Euregio is always more or less seen as a laboratory for European cross-border cooperation, through this research further insight will be gained into how (cross-border) regional cooperation can best be conducted and addressed.

1.5 Structure

The structure of this research is as follows. After having dealt with the methodology in chapter 2, chapter 3 contains the theoretical background including mega events, city marketing, the creative class and urban growth coalitions. After this, chapter 4 will discuss the ECOC itself, where does it come from and with what purposes was it designed? Chapter 5 will then contain the research to former ECOC's: Glasgow, Lille and Liverpool. Investigating what their aims were and which outcomes eventually occurred as a result of this particular event. Chapters 6 and 7 contains qualitative research of respectively MCH2018 and Brabantstad, including the interviews collected by several directors involved with the ECOC. This in order to find out what the goals are of the various cities and why they participate in this project in these cooperation's. And also to find out what kind of effects they expect or aim to achieve by organizing this event together. Hereafter, chapter 8 will give an answer on the question if the general picture formed by former ECOC's corresponds with the aims of both cases to participate in this project. A final conclusion will be drawn in chapter 9.

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[6] www.brabantstad.nl, retrieved 15-02-2010.
[7] www.vvv-maastricht.eu, retrieved 13-02-2010.

2 Methodology

"Germany's largest movie theatre 'The Lichtburg' – Essen"

Chapter 2: Methodology

In this chapter, the methodology used in this research will be discussed. Next to this, it will be explained why these methods are chosen, and how they will be applied in order to formulate an answer to the research questions.

2.1 Deductive research

This research will be mainly descriptive. By using both quantitative and qualitative methods, a strong foundation will be made in order to give a thorough answer to the main research question. Furthermore, the outcome of the research will be based on a comparative case-study.

The research is split up into two phases, through which this research gets a deductive character, because it starts from a general perspective and works towards the more specific cases. First of all, the relevant theories are treated, by which the background of the research will be clarified and whereby literature on this subject will be discussed and compared. Hereafter the research will be restricted into more specific assumptions that can be tested according to a benchmark on earlier editions of the event. A general framework of reasoning, expectations and outcomes will be the result of this part. This eventually will lead to the second part of the research: the testing of what kind of aims and expectations the involved partners within two different cases have, by analysing qualitative data. This qualitative research will be executed in the form of taking interviews with key persons in the cases of Brabantstad and Maastricht. Hereby, it will be invested what the two specific cases of Brabantstad and Maastricht drives to run for the event and how these two cases are acting compared to the formed ECOC's.

The chosen cases of Brabantstad and Maastricht are selected from all candidates for the title, because they consist of more than one single city. Brabantstad is cooperating with other cities in North-Brabant and Maastricht even works together with cities across the Dutch border. This makes the cases even more interesting, because the question raises why they work together with other cities, and what they expect the effects will be in all these different cities in the region.

By combining this desk-research with empirical research, a profound comparison can be made between the research and the literature. The contribution and usefulness of this research is thus increased by this.

2.2 Methods of data collection and analysis

As mentioned above, two sorts of data collection will be used in this research; a literature study and empirical data collection by performing interviews. The literature review will then be compared to the responses obtained from interviews to see if there are similarities or deviations. Both methods require different kinds of data analysis, because of their nature and the goals which should be achieved for both sorts of data.

There are a couple of possibilities and constraints when using these techniques. The first part of this research will be done by performing desk research, but it should be kept in mind that this secondary data should be selected carefully on reliability. With a good selection made, a lot of information can be gathered and a solid foundation can be created for this research. By using desk research a comprehensive exploration can be done and a large amount of information can be processed.

The biggest advantage of taking interviews is that it gives the possibility to go deep into the subject and contradictions can be made clear. Because of the nature of the interview, which is semi-structured, there is room for a conversation which can depart from the guidelines or

themes in the conversation. Space is given to the interviewee to speak freely, so that additional useful information comes up. By doing this, motives, thoughts and ideas which otherwise would have stayed unspoken will be pronounced and can be discussed. Due to this, detailed information is released whereby the real reasons to participate in the project for a city must come clear. The chance of an interviewer's bias is considered very small, because the guideline leaves room enough for one's own interpretation and someone's own answers.

The number of cases for which is chosen, is two because in this way a comparison between the cases and the theoretical framework can be made. This comparison will include between the (1) different cases and their motives to run for the ECOC; and (2) different actors involved and their role in the whole project. Next to this, a comparison will be made between the overall thoughts about the impacts that the event is expected to generate. This comparison is based on the benchmark that will be discussed in chapter 5 and the qualitative data from the interviews. If only one case would be investigated, the research would be weakly substantiated; by selecting two cases the conclusion is grounded on more data and becomes more reliable. The research methods are complementary and not intended to find contradictions.

2.2.1 Literature study

The literature study will look at the different theories that exist about mega-events, city marketing, the creative class and urban growth coalitions and how these theories can be used as complementary to explain the phenomenon of the ECOC. This stage involves gathering data as a background for the interviews and to find out how Brabantstad and Maastricht are dealing with the ECOC already. With the data collected, a frame of reference will be made about the phenomenon ECOC itself, and about what impacts occurred by former ECOC's which are generally seen as good practices and function as an example for candidates. This will ensure comparative material for the interviews that will be taken in a later phase of the research, in order to give an answer on the question if the expectations of the selected cases correspond with the frame of reference.

2.2.2 Interviews

In-depth semi-structured interviews will be used to find out why Maastricht and Brabantstad want to become ECOC and how different actors involved by this process think about the whole situation. This kind of interview technique is most suitable for achieving the research goal. Several different actors of Brabantstad and Maastricht are asked to elaborate on their role and participation in the candidature, as well as to explain what their expectations are and what they think the benefits for the different cities will be.

For this research, a list of involved directors in the MCH2018 project by the Euregio was requested. All these people were invited to participate in this research; eventually five of them wanted to participate. Guido Wevers, artistic director MCH2018, was interviewed on both the aims from the Euregio and the city of Maastricht.

Brabantstad has a different kind of organization towards the ECOC event. The aldermen's of culture of the five municipalities, along with the deputy of culture form the steering committee called 2018Brabant led by Heleen Huisjes. This committee is supported by official project leaders within the five cities and the province. These leaders are titled as 'culture-brokers' to compile the program for each city and search for ways to jointly develop and promote the cultural program[8]. Since every city and the rural area have its own culture-broker, six brokers in total were approached to participate in this research, three of them wanted to cooperate and

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[8] http://www.2018brabant.eu/alles-over/wie-is-wie-bij-2018brabant.aspx, retrieved 29-5-2011

Heleen Huisjes cooperated as well. A list of the respondents and their functions can be found in appendix A, the interview guide can be found in appendix B.

The main reason for choosing a semi-structured interview is that it gives room for additional (personal) contributions of the interviewee. By this, an own 'story' will come into existence, which can be processed in order to find the discourse from which the interviewees speak and different viewpoints can become clear. By interrogating different actors, it is expected that the real motivations for cooperation becomes clear, since it is logical to think that the officials of different cities have their own reasons to join in this project. This could not be accomplished by only interviewing people from the organisation of the ECOC, which would be positive anyhow. By obtaining these interviews, it has to become clear what really drives governors and involved actors (like the province) to run for the election. They can give an explanation and reasons for their participation which might not be found in literature; maybe there is more behind this all, which can be recovered by using in-depth interviews.

The analysing of the empirical data will be done by comparing the outcomes of the different actors with each other. Are their answers similar, or do the aims and expectations of the different actors vary very much? What are their goals? What kind of expectations do the different actors have and for what reasons are they cooperating in this particular project? To make the qualitative data more clear, a scheme will be made, in which the most important answers of the different actors will be displayed. This will be done in the same way for both cases, so that at the end, the aims and expectations of the different cases can be compared with each other. By doing this, it will become clear if both cities/cooperation's have the same ambitions about the ECOC, or whether they have different reasons for becoming a candidate for the title.

3 Theory

"Street Theatre Festival Streeta(rt)nimation – Luxembourg"

Chapter 3: Theory

This chapter contains the theoretical embedding of the research. First of all, an overview of the different theories which are used to explain the speculations around the event will be clarified. After that, these theories will be linked to each other in order to show how culture and economy are nowadays seen as complementary and a way in which urban regeneration can be established. Hereby, the importance of the ECOC as event for a place or city to host will be made clear with a theoretical foundation.

3.1 Research framework

The framework is derived mainly from a couple of different theories, which can be seen as complementary. These theories are as follows:

1. City- and region marketing: cities competing with each other by self-promotion in order to be most 'successful';
2. Creative Class: how the creative class is seen as the driver for economic development;
3. Urban Growth Coalitions: places emphasis on the common motivation of different cities for urban growth, growth is forwarded as a necessity and as a factor that binds the cities together.

These theories give more insight in why this event is of big importance for cities, and it therefore gives an explanation of why Brabantstad, Maastricht and other cities want to become ECOC. The underlying factors for this are to be found in the relation between these theories. By linking these theories to each other, a logical path is created from important topics of today, namely the experience economy and the marketing of a city, city marketing towards the ECOC event within the framework of the cultural turn.

The ECOC is a mega event that requires millions of investments, a considerable amount that the cities cannot afford on their own, which makes cooperation necessary. A mega-event is generally considered to be a large-scale event that gains global publicity and is associated with large-scale impacts[9]. It is mostly used to describe events such as the World Cup in football or the Olympic Games. Though there is not a clear definition of a mega event, there is a distinction between a big event and a mega event, which is not only related to the number of participants. According to Harry Miller from the University of Calgary, the characteristics of a mega event are as follows: short term basis, with a fixed duration (it is not an annual event held at the same place); the event has a high profile, with a worldwide interest; measurable economic outcomes; improves employment; and involves political decision-making[10].

Another definition comes from Brent Richie (1984) which describes mega-events, referred to as 'hallmark' or 'landmark' events, as large-scale events with the intension to renew investment in host cities, aimed at the tourism sector, by projecting a positive image of the city. A distinction between mega-events and smaller events can be made, such as routine conferences or sporting events, by the tremendous amount of resources that go into their implementation and the physical legacies for hosting cities (Roche, 1994). The ECOC matches the criteria of a mega-event: it integrates all of the characteristics mentioned above. The event has evolved from purely stimulating culture, towards a tool that is more used to improve the city and market this improved image.

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[9] http://wps.pearsoned.co.uk/wps/media/objects/1881/1926829/glossary/glossary.html, Glossary, retrieved 13-02-2010.

[10] From www.thepulse2007.org, retrieved 23-07-2011.

3.2 City marketing

City marketing is the use of marketing ideas, concepts and tools by and projected on cities and has gained a reasonable awareness by cities and their officials during the last decade. Since the mid-1980s, when a few Dutch cities claimed to have a city marketing policy, the number of cities which state to have a city marketing policy has grown substantially. And this is not only the case in the Netherlands, but also in other European countries. According to Braun the term city marketing is a 'Dutch invention' because elsewhere this phenomenon is called different, for instance: place marketing, place selling or location marketing. Whatever is the 'correct' term, is not the topic of discussion, but the fact that city marketing and city branding have become an intrinsic part of the vocabulary of a growing group of politicians in Europe which venture in the field of city marketing (Braun, 2008). City marketing is seen as a main tool in order to achieve local economic development and it is seen as a means to be competitive as a city or region as a whole (Metaxas, 2002). It was primarily designed to contribute to the economic growth of a city and was at first used to attract two groups, the companies and visitors. As a reaction on the massive removal of residents from cities to surrounding villages in the 1990's, the residents became of importance to. And with the rise of the knowledge and creative economy since the year 2000, the creative people became the fourth group of interest in the field of city marketing[11]. From this time on, the conception of city branding is used, by which municipalities try to position their city as a brand into the market, complete with slogans and logo's (Hospers, 2009a). It can be said that city marketing originated from simple city promotion to strategically city branding, whereby 'the story' stands central. It has grown to a mixture of three disciplines, namely marketing, management and geography (Buursink, 1991). Just like 'normal' marketing - the selling of products – city marketing tries to convince people in order to choose for their city for several divergent reasons. In practice, municipalities do not properly distinguish and make no clear choice between these different groups, by which they are facing the risk of making a miscalculation. If the choice between these different groups is not made clear, a good marketing campaign that appeals to the right group cannot be made, and therefore making the whole campaign a fail as it not adhere to its original goal.

In spite of that the promotion of the city is an ancient phenomenon, the application of city marketing as used nowadays is still relatively new. Promotion of the city hereby can be seen as a part of city marketing instead of the main goal. City marketing contains a lot more than just advertising (or promote) the city, something what happened for ages and is sometimes seen by many cities as the only tool to sell the city. But city marketing includes more activities and it takes much more effort in order to make it successful (Buursink, 1991). Because city marketing is used as a form of promotion, it is frequently mentioned as one of the reasons for hosting a particular event in a city, because they see events as a vehicle for city marketing. This can be illustrated by the competition between cities for wanting to organize cultural or sports events (Braun, 2008). Another example of this, besides the ECOC, is the Soccer World Cup in 2018 for which Belgium and the Netherlands were bidding to organise together. The outcome of this is already known, Russia has been assigned and not the Netherlands and Belgium.

3.2.1 Background of the contemporary city marketing

There is a story behind city marketing which leads to the competition between cities nowadays and the wish to organize events. First of all, the development of marketing thinking will be discussed. Marketing is originally seen as the promotion, selling and advertising of products with the aim of persuading costumers. But this is not the only thing, because important in marketing is the question of what the needs of these costumers are and where these needs are located. After making this clear, the decision needs to be made about what the price of the product will be and
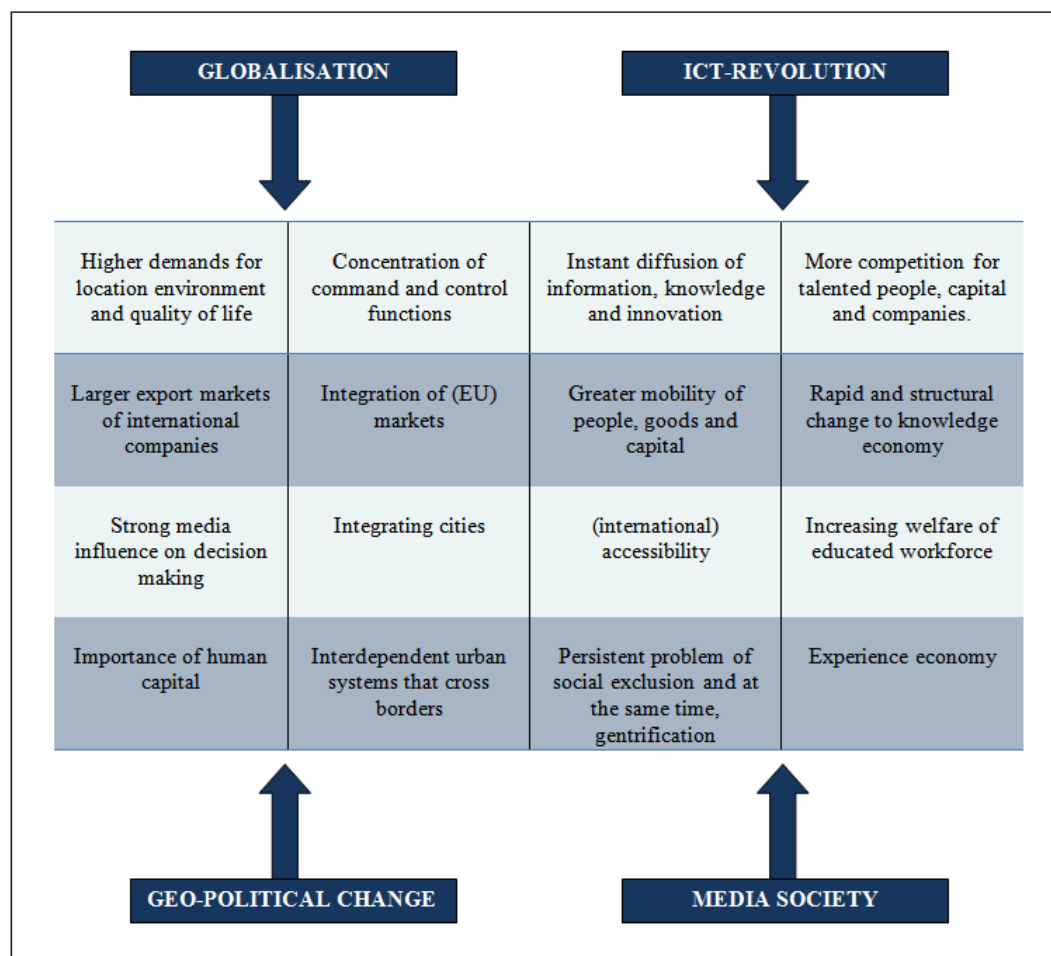
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[11] These are called the 4 B's in Dutch by Hospers (2009): bedrijven, bezoekers, bewoners, bollebozen.

when it will be released. Marketing therefore is about the match between demand and supply, a multidimensional activity in which the product, prize, promotion and place play the key roles (Ashworth & Voogd, 1987). Another development in marketing-thinking took place since the 1980's, when it became clear that we live in an informational age, in which the information sector has a great impact and therefore plays a great role in city marketing. According to Hall (2000) this phenomenon is an important turning point in relation to the development of cities, because ultimately the rise of the information sector has an influence on the behaviour of people.

But how does this process work and how might the information sector influence people's behaviour? With the broad globalization, the spatial behaviour of people is subject to change because everybody is aware of activities and events all over the world. It is difficult to label all the trends that influence the development of contemporary cities, but it is certain that the informational era is a good way to catch all trends that are present. But next to this, there are some other fundamental developments that play a role in the changing behaviour of cities and urban actors. It must be noted that globalisation is not only an economic phenomenon, it has ensured that social, political and cultural exchange across the globe has increased (van den Berg, Braun & Otgaar, 2002).

Mmany trends can be drawn that play a part in city marketing nowadays (figure 3.1). City marketing is located on the one hand somewhere between short- and long-term policy, economic and commercial objectives, and on the other hand between social objectives, private and public organisations and local citizens.

Figure 3.1: Developments and trends of cities

GLOBALISATION		ICT-REVOLUTION	
Higher demands for location environment and quality of life	Concentration of command and control functions	Instant diffusion of information, knowledge and innovation	More competition for talented people, capital and companies.
Larger export markets of international companies	Integration of (EU) markets	Greater mobility of people, goods and capital	Rapid and structural change to knowledge economy
Strong media influence on decision making	Integrating cities	(international) accessibility	Increasing welfare of educated workforce
Importance of human capital	Interdependent urban systems that cross borders	Persistent problem of social exclusion and at the same time, gentrification	Experience economy
GEO-POLITICAL CHANGE		MEDIA SOCIETY	

(Based on: Braun, 2008: p.16)

Illustrated by figure 3.1, city marketing is a complex domain with a great range of interests, whereby a balance needs to be found between all of these (Lombarts, 2008). Globalisation, the ICT-revolution, geo-political change and the media society: all exert pressure on the society as a whole and the strategies of cities. This results in the variables used in the figure, these are the results of the four major external influences and between which cities have to find a balance. Cities also have to deal with internal pressures, needs and demands of today's modern society and its people. The purpose of city marketing therefore is *"to create strategies to promote an area or the entire city for certain activities and in some cases to 'sell' parts of the city for living, consuming and productive activities"* (Smyth, 1994: p.63).

Towns and cities in European countries experience more and more competition amongst each other, because they are following the same trends and tend to develop through several stages of urban development following the same. Two reasons can be given towards this trend. First of all, fundamental changes in demography, economy, politics and technology are reshaping the environment for towns and cities in Europe. Globalisation and the rise of the information era have induced and intensified competition among towns and cities on the regional, national and even international level. This has major consequences for urban management, which has to stand up to heavy competition in order to satisfy the needs of the people in this network economy who may use and visit the city (van den Berg, Braun & Otgaar, 2002; Lombarts, 2008). The higher the competition between cities, the more important it is to attract the attention of different target groups in a positive way. In addition generating publicity, in combination with a good identity and image, is important to this. The media society plays a great role, with information travelling far and fast, making it necessary to be mentioned a lot in the media in a positive way in order to become attractive. Second, geo-political changes and the ongoing European unification have led to copying behaviour among cities, through which the differences between European cities have decreased over the years. "*An important effect of this homogenisation is that apparent details like the first impressions of a city, messages from the media and imaging are gaining importance by choosing a location*" (Hospers, 2009a: p.9). Therefore, a city needs to question itself constantly if it is attractive enough for their residents and newcomers. Because of this, qualitative location factors have become very important. In order to make a city or region qualitative better, investments in their own attractiveness have to be made (van den Berg, Braun & Otgaar, 2002). The quality a city offers can be seen as an interrelated set of experiences (Florida, 2002).

3.2.2 The identity and image of a city in relation with city marketing

Two concepts are of great importance by the process of city marketing: the identity and the image of a city. This with the underlying goal that a good image can act as a catalyst for the development of a city. Before it is explained what the differences between these two concepts are, it must be said that there are two prevailing views in relation to this: namely the essentialist and the constructivist views. From an essentialist view, the underlying thought is that things are static, homogeneous and stable (Hall, 1990). The constructivist view on the other hand sees identity as dynamic and multiple, as a social construction that is constantly in negotiation, which is produced and reproduced (Jenkins, 2004). The identity plays a significant role by the imaging of a city or environment. The identity is what there is, it refers to the authenticity of a place, how a place really is constructed and how it makes a distinction with other places. Said differently, the identity is the unique character of a certain area (Lynch, 1960). The image of a city arises if a bigger group has more or less the same picture in their mind of a city. The image can be defined as the sum of convictions, ideas and impressions of people about a certain place (Havermans, Appel-Meulenbroek & Smeets, 2008). If people think about a certain place, they think of the image they have about it, but this is not always necessary equivalent to the identity. This explanation of identity and image can be placed in the light of the essentialist view, which is seen

as the normal way of thought in marketing, as it is applied to products and services[12]. The constructivism takes in an anti-essentialist position and suggests that many, perhaps all, phenomena in the real world are social constructions. It focuses therefore on the social relations between individuals. *"The social world is not a given. The social world is a world of human consciousness: of thoughts and beliefs, of ideas and concepts, of languages and discourses. Four major types of ideas are: ideologies; normative beliefs; cause–effect beliefs; and policy prescriptions"* (Tannenwald 2005 in Jackson & Sørensen, 2006: p.176). The world does not exist independent of the ideas and thoughts of the people involved in the world. This means that a certain phenomenon is only experienced as something that really exists and is distinguishable from other cases, because an (often implicit) understanding is made about that phenomenon in society. In this thought, knowledge is created when people construct their own meaning from their background, experiences, and attitudes. There is always an ongoing process by which people are building on previous knowledge[13].

Seen from these two views on identity and image, it can be argued that both views have aspects that are applicable to the phenomenon of the ECOC, but the constructivists surely prevail in this debate. The social world is not a given thing that can be characterized using a specific composition, it varies per individual and there is no clear picture to display that counts for everyone. Everyone defines and sees the world in a way they want to, and therefore each person sees and experiences places differently. City marketing focuses on a change of image, albeit often using an improvement of the identity, but hereby one wants to influence the perception of different audiences, which all will assess the space differently. This constructivist approach is reflected with the shift from a manufacture-based economy to a more service-driven economy. Hereby post-industrial economies have become more and more semioticesed, what means that they have become more dependent on imagery, design and symbolism (Lash & Urry, 1994). Because of the importance of having a good image, many cities adopted a city branding policy. The aim of this is to add value to the product, which is called branding, and what has come to the centre of interest since the early 1990s. In the commercial world, the brand is much more than just the product. A brand is about the image of the product, which associations it evokes by consumers in order to stimulate the sales. The idea is that a city or region also invokes certain associations by people. In connection with this branding, a city can be seen as a brand as well, whereby a city can be build and positioned as a brand (Braun, 2008).

To become more competitive and attractive for all sorts of target groups, design and planning need to be complemented by an integrated marketing policy of the city. A key characteristic of such an integrated marketing policy is the use of branding devices with slogans as 'green', 'healthy' or 'creative city'. These slogans are used as mechanisms to reduce the gap between the reality and the 'hyped' city (Landry, 2000). The desire to create a more long-term relationship between cities and their publics by organizing events is to make a shift from transactional to relational marketing. The marketing contains much more than the simple promotion of an event, which asks for much more investments in order to establish and develop new products which are related to the city and the event(s). Also do these events need to be strategic in what kinds of public they will attract, in order to generate the most overall profit. *"The audience should not be seen in terms of numbers, but in terms of the value they can deliver*

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[12] In an essentialist view, any specific kind of entity has a set of characteristics of which all entities of that kind must possess, in order to belong to that specific kind of entity. In this view, all things can be precisely described or defined, because the certain properties belonging to a specific group are seen as universal and independent on context. But what makes thing to belong to a specific kind? It is not about an empirical observation, but a starting point of the theory of biology. To decide whether something or someone belongs to a particular kind, it has to be looked at the natural and unique genetic composition that is the same by all members of the group or species. The best example which can be givin to define this thought, is the statement that all human beings are mortal, a generalization of a characteristic that all human beings possesses (Hirschfeld, 2003).

[13] https://www2.kuleuven.be/tiki/tiki-index.php?page=Theoretische+achtergrond, retrieved 06-03-2011.

to the city in economic, social and cultural terms. This in turn requires a better understanding of event publics and their motivations" (Richards & Palmer: p.34). This relational approach, based upon a community that wants to be connected with others, has established a more integrated approach of marketing, whereas in the past communication with different publics stood central. Nowadays city marketing is developed as one of the many tools to make a city attractive for various different purposes, for instance visiting, living, working or to invest in.

3.2.3 Critique on city marketing

The key characteristics of city marketing are made clear and there is pointed at the use of it to exploit its benefits, but there is also the necessary criticism. As a result two different viewpoints are created. The one side supports city marketing and sees it as the main tool in achieving competitiveness of the city or region and local economic development, because city marketing can operate effectively by promoting the image of the city for all sorts of different target groups. The opposite viewpoint has doubts by the effectiveness of the procedures of city marketing and label these procedures as unnecessary, calling them waste strategies. They think that marketing is a waste of money, that it is indiscrete, manipulative and that it never works alone, because management has to be integrated always to establish a good result[14]. Also is argued that the procedures of city marketing not have any important relationship with a cities competitiveness and local economic development. City marketing has no use in their opinion and is therefore a useless policy (Metaxas, 2002).

Another critique is that a city cannot be seen as a 'product' which can be sold, because it's dynamics and the argument that a city consists of many different entities. Cities exist in an intriguing way in people's minds, with the result that 'the' identity is not identifiable. A city is a historical grown unit that is never finished, and which includes several different scales. These are interpreted in various kinds of ways by different people. Therefore city marketing can be seen as a weak theory, whereby marketing is not correctly used for the promotion of cities (Ashworth, 2009). Hospers mentions that a city is not just a product, because cities create an emotional attachment in relation to the user. The city can be seen as a total sensory experience, in which not only the characteristics of a place or city play a role, but the emotional detachment and connectedness that a person has with this specific place as well. Related to this, Hospers speaks of 'topofilie' and a sense of place (Hospers, 2009a). A city in this sense, is not just a one-sided product that has the same value for everyone and can be sold as such. A city is many cities and differs for everybody, which makes it difficult for marketers to express this in an unilateral external marketing campaign. The promotion of the city is just a part of city marketing, whereby the product needs to be tailored to the needs of the target groups. Promotion leads to a planned significance and representation.

Cities use city marketing as a tool to promote the image of the city, but it is said that when there is a discrepancy between the identity and the image, city marketing is useless and will not work. It has to be used very careful, otherwise it may harm the cities' image and will yield the opposite from what is desired. As explained before, city marketing mostly occurs from an essentialist view by which identity is considered as objective, as what the city is and that this is the same for everybody. But this, of course, is not always the case, because there are a lot different relations and places in a city or region. Because of the great diversity inside complex cities, it is hard to say what the single identity of a city really is. By applying the techniques of 'normal' products- or services marketing, the multiplicity of a city is ignored and not all different target groups can be equally addressed by the campaigns. More attention should be paid to the view of the constructivists. But notwithstanding these different sorts of critiques, in my opinion

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[14] Van Steen, lecture city- and region marketing on September 11, 2009.

city marketing certainly has a right to exist because it takes in a prominent place in the debate nowadays in which cities and regions are competing at all levels with each other.

3.2.4 Sociology in the implementation of city marketing

As city marketing is usually addressed from the perspective of marketing theory, Hospers (2009a) follows an alternative approach by estimating city marketing from the viewpoint of urban planning and the sociology of tourism. Lynch found in his 'The Image of the City' (1960) that people perceive the city and its environment preponderant from the built image, which is made up out of five distinct parts through which a city is recognizable: paths, edges, nodes, districts and landmarks. By this is meant that everybody has certain associations with his or her city or parts of it. These associations are often connected to certain images, which are established in certain memories and meanings. These images are dynamic and often fragmented because they are constantly subject to outside influences, which means that not everyone has the same picture of a particular city. In other words, only the physical identity determines what image people form of a city, because Lynch is limited to the observable physical objects in his analysis. Yet he does also acknowledge several factors which have an influence on the perception of a city, such as the meaning and history of an certain area.

But Lynch does not analyze the influence or the control of conceptualization of people, something that sociologist John Urry does so. Urry argues in his book 'The Tourist Gaze' (2002) that the image of the city is of big importance for us, not in particular the built image like Lynch said, but the graphic image and he speaks in this context about the 'tourist gaze'. He is specifically concerned with the control of the conceptualization of the tourist, in other words the visitor to a specific area. Many municipalities choose to focus on the visitors in their city marketing, like tourists, shoppers and day visitors. This partly because this group seems to be very sensitive for marketing strategies (Hospers, 2009a). Urry (2002) stated that imaging is also important for people who want to visit a city. For example visitors, or tourists, are according to him looking for a visual experience that they cannot find anywhere else. In this context it is referred to as the 'tourist gaze', which is the viewing direction, or differently said the graphic image that is meant by the tourist. Visitors are not just attracted to certain places, they are looking for distinctive characteristics of a particular city or environment that they already know and of which they already have formed an idea. Because people see and know certain places, they are triggered to visit those places, because they want to see and confirm with their own eyes what they already know. It may be concluded that the gaze of the tourist can be influenced and led. In other words, during a visit to the city, visitors are looking to those aspects of a city or area where they already previously have formed an impression of (Hospers, 2009a). As Hospers summaries in his article 'Lynch, Urry and city marketing: Taking advantage of the city as a built and graphic image' (2009b: p.226): *"The work of Lynch, Urry and their colleagues suggests how important it is for city marketers to scan the urban landscape for built objects and (pseudo)authentic attractions that can be photographed well. If a city does not have imaginable and photogenic features, it will be a hard job to communicate it to the outside world ... The theories discussed might have some implications for the practice of city marketing".*

Place marketing has faced much criticism, mainly in terms of being a substitute for planning. Today we are witnessing the phenomenon of the entrepreneurial city, and the importance of the role of place marketing. Like formerly said, city- and place marketing is not new, but today especially in its new approach linked to place development and regeneration, it is seen as a necessity in the global competition between cities all over the world. Kotler, Haider and Reid go as far that they claim that marketing is equivalent to designing the image of a place: *"originally, one of the principal aims of marketing is to attract visitors. The quest for sustainability*

necessitates a strategic basis and the formulation of an integrated tourism policy" (Kotler et al., 1999: p.23).

As a part of the city marketing, the experience economy by Pine and Gilmore plays a role nowadays. According to them, we live in a new economic era, namely the era of the experience economy. In this new economy, the customer wants more than just buying a product, he is willing to pay for an experience. The trick is to create this experience, a memorable event, something that gives the costumer a warm feeling. The value the costumer gives to the experience, determines the price of a specific good or product (Pine and Gilmore, 1998). This phenomenon of the experience economy plays a role in city marketing by events as the ECOC, because this whole event is based upon the creation of value and the experience of the audience. Keeping city marketing with the eye on the theories of marketing cities in mind, the experience economy will be included also. And as Firat and Venkatesh (1993: p.231) are saying: "*the application of place marketing is largely dependent on the construction, communication and management of the city's image, because, at its simplest, encounters between cities and their users take place through perceptions and images. Marketing therefore cannot other than be 'the conscious and planned practice of signification and representation', which in turn is the starting point for examining place branding"*.

3.3 Creative Class

Alongside the amalgamation of culture and economy by the cultural turn, the importance of the creative class became more evident and since Richard Florida's book 'The Rise of the Creative Class' this topic really became under the attention of policy makers. He establishes a relationship between technological developments and the decline in physical restrictions on cities and communities, and creativity as the driving force in the development of cities, regions and countries. Florida argues that not the highly educated are the driver behind the modern economy, but the creative class. This creative class consists of people who not necessarily had a good education, but who are creative and have innovative ideas. This creative class does not only consists of authors, designers, graphic designers, musicians, actors, composers, painters, sculptors, photographers, dancers, directors and artists, but also people from the ICT, architects, engineers, physicians, social scientists and teachers. According to Florida, even managers, financial and commercial experts, jurists and technicians can belong to the creative class. (Florida, 2002).

With his classification of the creative class on professions, a very broad definition remains which covers almost 30% of the labour market in the USA. This definition has been refined for the Dutch labour market by Marlet and Van Woerkens (2004: p.282), who are saying that *"The Dutch creative class is a model for, and is supposed to be a driving force behind the knowledge-intensive economy. It should be about people with innovative, creative ideas and aesthetic products which are operating more than average and which generate more value added, people who contribute to the economy by thinking more and doing less".* This definition is narrower than the one of Florida, but still relates to the creative class and industry in the Netherlands. Creative industries are the result of activities stemming from individual creativity, skills, talent and the ability to create wealth and employment by the exploitation of these intellectual properties. The creative industry is a specific form of activity which produces products and services, as the result of creative entrepreneurship. Content and symbolism are the key elements of these products and services, which are purchased by consumers because of the meaning which it conveys and what causes an experience. In this way the creative industry plays an important role in the development and maintenance of lifestyles and cultural identities in societies (TNO, 2004).

It is said that creativity stimulates economic growth in cities and regions and that it plays a central role in advanced capitalist economies in general. There is no clear direct relation between the number of firms in creative industries to economic growth, but nevertheless innovation is seen as the key mechanism explaining the relationship of creative industries with economic performance (Stam, de Jong & Marlet, 2008). Innovation is needed in order to remain competitive and innovation is seen as the engine of the economy and growth of the economy (Dicken, 2007).

Florida's creative class focuses on the presence of people in creative professions. He proposes three major factors in the relation with the creative class and economic growth. These factors are tolerance, talent and technology, which he calls the 3 T's. 'The presence of a large creative class leads to a social climate with a high acceptance of minorities and minority points of view (*tolerance)*. The presence of the creative class improves the attractiveness of an area as a place for highly educated people to live (*talent)*. Social diversity, creativity and talent make an area attractive as a location for firms and facilitate the innovativeness of organizations in this area (*technology)*' (Florida, 2002; Stam et al., 2008: p.119). Creativity is the decisive source of competitive advantage. There is interplay of technological and economic creativity with artistic and cultural creativity, this is evident in new inventions such as computer graphics (Florida, 2002). It is therefore stimulating for a city to house a lot of people from the creative sector, but it is even better when those people contribute to the success of other sectors. This is what Dany Jacobs calls the 'productive creativity'. It is therefore good to stimulate creative people to work on their business side and to invest in that during their educations (Jacobs, 2009 in Franke & Hospers, 2009: p. 58). Florida states in his article 'Where the brains are' (2006) that the physical proximity of highly educated, talented people has a high effect on the innovation and economic growth in a region. This because the clustering of talented people creates multiplier effects, which is the primary determinant of growth. These multipliers are estimating economic effects of the input, according to the premise that initial effort and expenditure permeates through other parts of the economy with an outcome that is greater than the initial amount spent (United Nations, 2008). Creative clustering in this way, will lead to the stimulation of other sectors also. If there are a lot of entrepreneurs, engineers, financiers, designers, artists and other creative and smart people which are constantly in contact and interacting with each other, new ideas are more likely to arise and executed. The more smart people there are in a certain area, the denser the connections between the creative people, with the result that innovations are likely to come faster (Florida, 2006). The effects that may occur can be direct (initial change in expenditure will create a direct income for those who made the change possible), indirect (the effects on other sectors because of the initial change in a part of the economy) and/or induced (a proportion of the increased income because of the indirect effects will be re-spent in the local economy) (United Nations, 2008). The multiplier of the ECOC has an average of 1,5 (Richards, 2010), which means that an investment of 100 million euro will have an indirect impact on the local economy of 150 million euro. It is now becoming quite understandable why cities are so happy to organize the ECOC, given the high multiplier and the expected positive effects that this event will bring them in the future.

3.3.1 Critique on the creative class

Florida's ideas have been criticized from a variety of political perspectives, both by academics and journalists. His theories have been criticized as being elitist, and his use of data has been questioned (Peck, 2005). Next to this, researchers also criticized Florida's work for its methodology. Other critics have said that the conditions he describes may no longer exist and that his theories may be better suited to politics, rather than economics (Malanga, 2004). According to Malanga (2004: p.1) there is just one problem: *"The basic economics behind his*

ideas don't work. Far from being economic powerhouses, several of the cities identifies as creative-age winners have chronically underperformed the American economy. And, although Florida is fond of saying that today 'place matters' in attracting workers and business, some of his top creative cities don't even do a particularly good job at attracting or keeping residents". But Stam et al. (2008) have examined the significance of creativity as a driver of economic growth in the Netherlands. They investigated whether a concentration of creative industries has a positive effect on the competitiveness of a region, by looking at employment growth. It has been said that rural counterparts are less conductive to creative industries than their urban counterparts (Florida, 2005). Stam et al. (2008) encountered that firms in the urban counterparts were also more innovative. In general, companies in the creative industries are more innovative than companies in other industries. The investments for innovation are much higher in creative business service firms than in other domains. They also claim that *"in general, it seems that a concentration of creative industries is a less important determinant for employment growth in cites than a concentration of creative people/creative class. Creative industries do not seem to act as a catalyst for the effect of knowledge (spill-over's) on urban economic growth in general ... The role is more likely to be taken by the creative class, which was shown to have a much more stronger relation with employment growth than the creative industries"* (p.126)*.* Therefore it could be more effective to create good living conditions for the creative class, rather than creating conditions for stimulating creative industries. Spill-over is created at places where creative people live, and not so much where the firms are located where these people may work. An explanation for this could be, that people in the Netherlands do not live in the city where they work, or that they are used to travel to their work. The spill-over's may occur in forms of starting new businesses by the creative class in the place where they live, or it might be a consumption effect via the residential preferences of the creative class.

So many embrace Florida and his creative class, whilst others are pretty sceptical about his theory and find his foundations very thin. Much of the criticism on Florida's theories focuses on the feeling that the creative city is malleable (Hall, 2004). Meanwhile the emergence of a creative city depends on a multitude of complex factors. There is enough doubt to question the malleability of a creative city, but several studies have shown that certain conditions have a dominant presence in successful creative cities (Hodes, 2005). Because of that, in this research Florida's perception will be followed, as to understand the importance of the ECOC for a city and its surroundings. Culture, space and economy are all interconnected (Deffner & Labrianidis, 2005) and the ECOC is a typical example of this interrelationship of these three components. In my opinion, Florida is correct in mentioning the creative class as a catalyst for development to a certain level. Because the link between city marketing and the creative class is becoming more and more evident in the policies of cities all over the world, his theory is assuredly relevant for this research in order to understand why governors want to use this particular event to put their city (region) on the map.

3.3.2 Mental relationship: creative class in the process of the ECOC
In the context of this research, it is not of utmost importance to show the connection between city marketing and the creative class, but it is more important to find out whether one thinks that this particular group can contribute to the goals that cities and governors want to achieve. It should be obvious that the relationship between culture and economy is seen as very valuable and since Richard Florida wrote several books about this subject, the subject certainly came to life in the minds of directors, city marketers and creative people. All of these groups see opportunities in focusing on culture and the creative class, and all of them see enhanced positions for themselves in the future.

The main objective of the ECOC was to promote and celebrate the cultural diversity inside the European Union, but over the years the event developed into an unique opportunity for regeneration, stimulating creativity and improving the image of the city. In the beginning the event was not specifically designed to conceive long lasting effects, but now it is used for a structural type of investment at local and regional level to achieve sustainable socio-economic development. Because of the development of the event itself, the ECOC is directly involved in the discussion about the function of culture as catalyst for economic regeneration and the development of the city or region. In what kind of way does the ECOC may function as a catalyst and how are these links to be seen? The DG Education and Culture of the European Commission sought for an answer on these questions on the conference over 25 years ECOC in 2010, stating that culture could contribute to the economy through *"for instance promoting tourism, contributing to the emergence of new economic activities, linking creativity to innovation as a tool for social and territorial cohesion and as a tool to enhance the attractiveness of cities and regions as places to live, visit and invest in"* (European Commission, DG Education and Culture, 2010: p.5). Several studies showed the value of culture and *"help underline the value of investing in the cultural and creative sectors and illustrate the links between these investments, specific regional development objectives and the overall EU strategy for growth and jobs"* (European Commission, DG Education and Culture, 2010: p.5). But although the general picture is sketched that culture contributes to development, the ECOC is certainly not the only event or means to achieve culture led improvements.

The ECOC is seen as an event to attract different groups of people with a strong focus on improving the environment for the creative class, since this group is because of their refreshing ideas and entrepreneurial spirit seen as a means to make the area lively and to develop economically. In order to remain competitive with other cities and regions, one must remain attractive and the creative class is seen as the way to accomplish this. The idea is that the range of culture should be increased, both qualitatively and quantitatively, being actually able to address this certain group of people with high cultural standards. But despite all these theories and thoughts about how the creative class should lead to urban regeneration, it is difficult to provide hard evidence for this direct link and what the effects really are. It is more about the feeling one has when being in a city, how everything is experienced and how the senses are stimulated. A vibrant living environment is difficult to translate into facts and figures, but is more about feelings and images. The ECOC therefore can be seen as a way that is intended to needs and feelings, and the desire to become ECOC to achieve all sorts of goals and developments is also a certain gut feeling about what is necessary and a desirable way to achieve these goals.

Next to the demonstration of the relationship between economy and culture it is important to look at how people think that this link exists, and how it can be given substance in the strategy of a city. Furthermore, if this link is actually weaker than thought, or even not exists at all, the point is that people do think that there is a clear link. For this, it is interesting to see how they value and give meaning to this thought relationship and how they want to incorporate this in their long-term city strategies to achieve their goals.

3.4 Urban Growth Coalitions

Many American social scientists use the concept of the 'urban growth coalition' which indicates that 'locally dependent' business elites, local state officials and, sometimes, labour unions form a territorially based coalition in order to revitalize cities in decay or to promote urban growth. Although federal government and the state do play a role in city-development policies, it is fair to say that since the late 1970s urban growth coalitions in the USA have mainly been based on local business firms and local political institutions. There is a tendency to mobilize resources locally

rather than relying on federal and state resources. In the Netherlands, these growth coalitions have other kind of forms. Here urban growth coalitions not only exist inside cities between different groups or actors, but also between cities and between different kinds of institutions and sectors (Terhorst & van der Ven, 1999).

The inhabitants, companies, investors and visitors determine whether a city is attractive or not. These (potential) consumers of cities put high demands on the quality of the business, living and visiting environment. Factors such as the level of cultural services and access to knowledge are prominent in such an environment (van den Berg, Braun & Otgaar, 2002). Because of this, cities want to improve their image by transforming or adopting their own identity, something which is thought to be obtained by attracting the creative class. Urban growth coalitions have a better position from which they can alter the identity of a region, because changes can be made and promoted on a much larger scale than would be the case when the different cities not cooperated. More tourists can be attracted in the region as a whole as well since the cities are not promoting only their own territory. In this way, all cities benefit instead of constantly one city which is best at promoting itself at a certain time. The concept that can be used to illustrate where the benefit of these coalitions is obtained is the prisoner's dilemma, a game theory by means of a non-zero-sum game: *"the two players in the game can choose between two moves, either 'cooperate' or 'defect'. The idea is that each player gains when both cooperate, but if only one of them cooperates, the other one, who defects, will gain more. If both defect, both lose (or gain very little) but not as much as the 'cheated' co-operator whose cooperation is not returned"* (Axelrod, 1984: p.245-252). The prisoner's dilemma got its name from the hypothetical situation of two criminals who are arrested under the suspicion of having committed a crime together. However, the police have not enough proof to convict them. The two are held in isolation from each other, so that mutual communication is impossible and they can choose to confess, or to remain silent. They are both aware of the consequences of these options. So there are two players and three strategies:

1. If one confesses and the other does not, the one who confessed is released as witness à charge and the one who didn't is sentenced to 20 years imprisonment;
2. If they both confess, they are each sentenced to 5 years;
3. If they both remain silent, they are acquitted due to lack of evidence;

From uncertainty about what the other will do, both will opt to confess. Indeed, by remaining their silence, one runs the risk that the other will confess and that he gets a penalty of 20 years imprisonment. So the prisoner's dilemma faces that their self-interest suggests that they should confess, but it they both follow their self-interested individual optimization they will be worse off than if they both had cooperated, negative externalities and suboptimal outcomes could then have been tackled. It points at the fact that when they both had undertaken consultations and made appointments with each other, the outcome would be best for both criminals and they both would be acquitted (Stiglitz, 2000).

Cities and regions behave according this prisoner's dilemma, because of the uncertainty that one has about the other actors and the goals they individually want to achieve. These cities cannot make a good rational decision about policies, because they do not know what the others will do. In such cases, the government intervenes mostly, to enforce socially desirable behaviour. We can place this strategic behaviour and cooperation of cities in the emergence of globalization, which makes that the national boundary means a lot less than thought in classical economist theories. Nations used to be the space in which capital and labour were reallocated, but because of the globalization, there has been a shift to think about the mega-region as new economic unit. They can be described as *"integrated sets of cities and their surrounding suburban hinterlands across which labour and capital can be reallocated"* and they bring together talent, innovation, productive capability and markets which are exposed to a world-wide competition (Florida, Gulden & Mellander, 2007: p.3). The engines of development and economic growth are now

mega-regions, instead of cities. Van der Knaap (2002) explains the existence of the polycentric regions in the Netherlands, because of the development from dormitory towns (the so called Vinex-wijken) into self-sufficient cores with their own citizens, services and job opportunities. Because of this, "*the suburban municipality becomes in potential a new economic centre with its own labour market stretching to far outside the limits of the original agglomeration*" (Braun, 2008: p.13). The core-and-ring agglomeration as drawn by Burgess in the concentric zone model is no longer relevant, as the landscape is changing in a metropolis with several cores and rings. The role of the original, individual cores is not the most important anymore, but the interdependent urban system becomes at the centre of attention. "*In these interdependent urban systems, the relation between communities has changed as complementarities between different centres become more important*", argues Braun (2002: p.13). This can be illustrated with the development of network-cities, which cooperate on a wider spatial scale than the original, individual city, and simultaneously have to cope with the urban systems and its dynamics and competition.

Since cities feel the stronger international competition and they all have the same desires, they are joining forces more often to offer a counterbalance to economic regions that perform well, in the Netherlands for example to the Randstad. The ambitions that most cities have cannot always be achieved alone, and by joining their forces and knowledge they can make themselves overall more attractive. Through the cooperation of many institutions and the sharing of high quality facilities that require a high population can be realized, hereby making a region more interesting for visitors, residents and companies. The need to move away from the old school 'church-tower-politics', where every city wants to have his own facilities and constantly wanting to surpass neighbouring cities, has penetrated by the directors of much cities nowadays.

Brabantstad and Maastricht are following this complementary strategy to attract global capital. The neoliberal state characterized by competition is deemed to be a primary virtue according to Harvey (2006). But this can be replaced by a planning strategy with creative purposes for cities that complement projects developed by previously competing cities. Rather than concerning only itself with competition among the different cities, this complementary strategy can be considered as a regulatory system with local firms and institutions that are the constitutive agents of the growth machine in and between cities. The different cities in both cases, together with interest groups, comprise a growth coalition which hopes to mobilize the powers of the local government in order to create an environment that is conducive to growth[15].

The determination to become ECOC is mainly explained because of development strategies of candidates that are oriented on growth, whereby cities compete with each other for potential investments. The urban growth coalitions are thought to increase the value of the whole cooperation due to mutual coordination of services across the region. In order to integrate this urban growth coalition's perspective into the analysis of why cities and region want to become ECOC, in addition to the critical review of the urban restructuring, this subject is addressed in the interviews and will be further elaborated in the chapters 6 and 7.

3.5 Culture and Economy

During time, the way of thinking in economic geography has changed. For a long time, culture and economy were seen as two self-determining entities which were separate, but they also had an interlinked relationship. Culture and economy both had its own set of institutions, rationalities and conditions of existence, defined by what the other is not. Economy was seen as instrumental, materialistic, vulgar, tangible and without morality. Culture used to be seen as not-instrumental, aesthetic, immanent, normative and intangible. Since the early 1990s, economic geographers

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[15] http://www.regional-studies-assoc.ac.uk/events/2011/april-newcastle/papers/Gork.pdf, retrieved 20-06-2011.

increasingly have embraced a range of more fluid and hybrid conceptions of 'the economic' that emphasizes its mutual constitution by and hence fundamental inseparability from 'the cultural' as a reaction on the separation (James, Martin & Sunley, 2007). This is called the cultural turn and has brought new ideas, widened and enriched theoretical and conceptual debates, contributed to the development of new methods, and broadened the empirical scope of economic geography. This resulted in a vibrant sub-discipline, which is more heterodox and pluralist than ever before (Peck, 2005). It describes a shift in emphasis towards meaning and culture rather than politics or economics (Ray & Sayer, 1999). This created more interaction between culture and economy, through which the conceptions are not treated separately anymore. From a wide variety of viewpoints (scientists, policy makers, the creative sector and trade and industry) many attempts are made to bring the two 'worlds' closer together (Lagendijk, 2004).

Cities who want to become ECOC acknowledge that this link exists; cultural consumption creates employment for a self-conscious critical group of people and lower level service personnel, who in turn create these places by their labour. Cultural consumption further contributes to capital accumulation, by enhancing profits on entrepreneurial investment in the production and distribution of places, artefacts and experiences. Cultural consumption thereby has a positive effect on capital accumulation in real estate development. Cultural goods and services therefore constitute real cultural capital for individuals, groups, investors and developers, so long as they are integrated as commodities in the market based circulation of capital. Through cultural tourism then, cultural capital is integrated into the real urban economy in a host of ways (Johnson, 2009). According to Burns and Mules are hallmark events our 'new image builders', meaning that these constitute an intrinsic part of place marketing. This because they are commonly considered as essential for the creation of employment, opportunities for tourism and for the increase of both national and international prominence of the host community in the global market (Deffner & Labrianidis, 2005). The ECOC-event links culture very directly with the economy and since the shift of the ECOC from a pure cultural event to a strategic tool for urban renewal and re-generation, this link has even become more evident and tangible.

In this research, the cultural turn will not be used as a theory, but more as an overarching theme from which the theories of the creative class and city marketing arose. This concept forms the background of the research and the leading thread running through the thesis.

3.6 Theoretical concepts summarized

The theories about the creative class and city marketing explain why the hosting of mega events is this popular: they generate great expectations. Together with the discourse that has been formed by the theories and former cities which have hosted the event before, this leads to the desire of hosting the ECOC. The mental images of the ECOC and all the benefits it can bring to a city, play a major role in the reasons why they are applying for the title. The expected outcomes of the event are the reasons for running the elections for ECOC, by which the two cases (and others) in their turn influence the buzz around the event and thereby create a certain positive discourse. This, together with the local politics with a strategy that is already implemented in partnerships that already exist, leads to urban growth coalitions. These growth coalitions are formed with the aim of strengthening the whole region, making it able to compete with other regions and decreasing suboptimal outcomes. The goal of these growth coalitions is mainly urban regeneration, because the actors and cities are not able to cope with regional problems on their own. A lack of maintenance in the region is also a reason why they form coalitions. What plays a role in this situation is that both regions which are central in this research, use these growth

coalitions to become the ECOC in 2018 with the aim of urban regeneration and a relative stronger position for the whole region within the European- and world economy.

The ECOC and urban regeneration are thought to go hand in hand and are especially linked to each other around this topic, since the ECOC is seen as a tool for urban regeneration, a way of good city marketing, and may create the ability of attracting the creative class. The coalitions play a great role in this event, since cooperation can be made more solid by organising such a mega event together. In the next chapters, it will be investigated whether the theories are complementary to the ECOC and the desire of hosting this event for cities will be explained: whether the thoughts about the event are reasonable if we look to former ECOC's and whether the discourse which municipalities have around the event is justified, or that the effects are inflated. On the other side, it will be researched how local politics and expectations lead to growth coalitions and how they use the event to establish urban regeneration. This will lead to the motivations of the different cities to participate in this project.

4 ECOC

"Superlambanana at Moel Famau – Liverpool"

Chapter 4: European Capital of Culture

This chapter contains the foundations on which the European Capital of Culture is based. The event exists already for twenty-five years and is established with specific goals and ideas about culture in the European Union. Over the years, the event received a huge status and international awareness, which makes it attractive for cities who are entitled to organize this event. In this chapter will be explained for what purposes this event was designed, and what the title ECOC contains. Second, the procedures which have to be followed to be qualified for the ECOC will be discussed. And third, the relation between the theories that are used in chapter 3 will be set out in relation to the event.

4.1 Culture in Europe: origins of the ECOC

Europe has the disposal of a great cultural diversity, what can be described as an overlap of various cultures. This because of the diversity of the different Member States of the EU, which all have their own characteristics such as language, customs, literature, crafts, religion, sports etc. Europe can be seen as the North or the South, there are Christians, but there are also Muslims, Protestants and Orthodox people[16].

Western-European states established the Council of Europe in 1949 as a reaction on the Second World War, with the aim of preventing such kind of bloodshed for in the future. It was a first step towards cooperation, but six countries wanted to go a step further and made a Treaty[17]. Because of this, the foundations of the EU lay in 1951, when France, Italy, Germany and the Benelux countries together signed the Treaty for pooling the coal and steel production, called the European Coal and Steel Community (ESCS). This happened not only for economic reasons, but also political, to re-establish the peace between the countries after the Second World War[18].

Since the foundation of the ESCS, 21 more countries have joined this cooperation in six steps and form the EU as we know it nowadays with in total 27 Member States. And even more countries want to join the EU, which perhaps is going to happen in the future[19]. So it is not surprising that there are a lot of different cultures mixed up together in the EU and that these differences have grown over the years. But in spite of all these contradictions, the EU is seen as one entity with one common cultural heritage[20]. But the discussion about the common culture or values is more complex than you would say at first sight. The EU's aim is to preserve and encourage these diversities between the different members and wants to make it more accessible to others, it wants to encourage the cultural dialogue between the different countries.

4.1.1 European Capital of Culture

The European Capital of Culture was first organized in 1985, on the initiative of former actress Melina Mercouri, which was Greece's Minister of Culture at that time. She was convinced of the important role that art, culture and creativity fulfil in European integration. Therefore, next to economy, technology and commerce, the cultural aspect should be integrated into the European policy. This led to the idea of an annual event that put cities in Europe, their cultures and their role in developing European cultures at the centre of attention (European Communities, 2009; Pauels, 2009).

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[16] http://europa.eu/pol/cult/index_en.htm, retrieved 30-12-2010.
[17] http://europa.eu/abc/history/1945-1959/index_nl.htm, retrieved 30-12-2010.
[18] http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/institutional_affairs/treaties/treaties_ecsc_en.htm, retrieved 3-12-2010.
[19] http://www.europa-nu.nl/id/vg9pktppo1xz/beleid_uitbreiding_europese_unie, retrieved 31-12-2010.
[20] http://europa.eu/pol/cult/index_en.htm, retrieved 31-12-2010.

Twenty-five years after the founding of the event, the European Capital of Culture is to be thought as Europe's most ambitious collaborative cultural project. Due to this the scale and scope of the event and the budgets spend on activities are far higher than those spend on other cultural events (European Communities, 2009). The cultural cities were firstly launched at an intergovernmental level, with a dual basis between Europe and the city for the launching of the program. Europe had a great involvement in what concerned the variety of cultural activities, but on the other hand there was the isolated city, which in turn had a major role in the diversity and the formation of the European cultures in Europe. Since its beginning, the event became more important and in 1999 the event reached the status of a Community Action, and since 2007 the event is a part of the culture program 2007-2013 of the EU. The support from the EU towards the year 2019 has been guaranteed, because the parliament believes that this event should be given significant funding in the future. A reason for this is the high profile of the event among members of the EU Member States and as its power to help strengthen one common feeling, due to the accent on trans-European cultural cooperation (European Parliament and Council, 2006).

The aim of the ECOC was initially to highlight the diversity of the cities on the European continent, but also to give attention to the shared characteristics of all the different European cultures[21]. The aims nowadays are nearly similar and cherish the unity and linguistic and cultural differences in Europe. By the unity of Europe the EU denotes at the common heritage, roots and values of the European countries. The Culture Program 2007 – 2013 focuses on three main objectives, which are as follows:

- the promotion of cross-border mobility of cultural actors,
- to create transnational circulation of work of arts, artistic and cultural products,
- and to stimulate the intercultural dialogue inside the EU (European Parliament and Council, 2006).

Each city which may host this event is different and they never handle the event in the same manner. The event is always evolving and developing itself and is therefore never the same or a repetition of previous editions. What is meant by culture can be interpreted very differently between countries and cities and the different characteristics of a country or city, for example the size of the city, budgets, history or the cultural scene determine what kind of program the ECOC's will compile (European Communities, 2009).

Since the start of the ECOC, there have been many cultural capitals (see figure 4.1). All Member States of the EU have the opportunity to organize the event of ECOC in turn until the year 2019, because in October 2006 the EU established a Community action for the European Capital of Culture till this year. Funding should be given until this moment according to Decision No 1622/2006/EC (European Parliament and Council, 2006)

After the enlargement of the EU in 2004, Decision 649/2005/EC was made, which enabled the new affiliated Member States to propose candidate cities too. This means that at least two capitals will be designated each year as ECOC, one old Member State, together with a new one. With the exception of 2010, when three cities have hosted the event: Istanbul, Ruhr and Pècs. For a further improvement of the selection process, a new Decision which stresses the European Dimension was adopted in 2006 and came into force. It is aimed to crank up the competition between candidate cities inside the Member States and it should provide more support to the cities which are selected in their preparation phase towards the event[22].

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[21] http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?language=en&type=IM-PRESS&reference=20090123STO46987, retrieved 24-03-2010.
[22] http://www.europarl.europa.eu/parliament/expert/displayFtu.do?id=74&ftuId=FTU_4.17.4.html&language=en, retrieved 13-07-2010.

Figure 4.1 Capitals of Culture 1985 – 2010

European Capitals of Culture			
Year	City	City	Year
2011	Turku (Finland) and Tallinn (Estonia)	Thessaloniki (Greece)	1997
2010	Istanbul (Turkey), Pécs (Hungary) and Essen (Germany)	Copenhagen (Denmark)	1996
2009	Linz (Austria) and Vilnius (Lithuania)	Luxembourg (Luxembourg)	1995
2008	Liverpool (United Kingdom) and Stavanger (Norway)	Lisbon (Portugal)	1994
2007	Luxembourg (Luxembourg) and Sibiu (Romania)	Antwerp (Belgium)	1993
2006	Patras (Greece)	Madrid (Spain)	1992
2005	Cork (Ireland)	Dublin (Ireland)	1991
2004	Genoa (Italy) and Lille (France)	Glasgow (United Kingdom)	1990
2003	Graz (Austria)	Paris (France)	1989
2002	Bruges (Belgium) and Salamanca (Spain)	Berlin (Germany)	1988
2001	Rotterdam (Netherlans) and Porto (Portugal)	Amsterdam (Netherlands)	1987
2000	Avignon (France), Bergen (Norway), Bologna (Italy), Brussels (Belgium), Cracow (Poland), Helsinki (Finland), Prague (Czech Republic), Reykjavik (Iceland), Santiago de Compostela (Spain)	Florence (Italy)	1986
1999	Weimar (Germany)	Athens (Greece)	1985
1998	Stockholm (Sweden)		

Source: European Parliament, 2004[23]

4.2 Procedures and conditions

Becoming a cultural capital is not a natural proces. In order to make a claim to the title, all sorts of criteria have to be satisfied in advance for both the EU and national requirements. In October the 24th in 2006, the European Parliament and the Council decided which two countries may host the event in the years until 2019. The nomination for the event consist of different stages, in which several shifting's of candidates take place (see figure 4.2 for the time path of candidate cities during the selection procedures towards the title ECOC).

The pre-selection phase in a country starts six years before the event. Because of this time path, the pre-selection in the Netherlands takes place at the end of 2011. Each Member State that has serious considerations to participate in the election of this event, must publish a call for submission of applications to cities in that country which might be interested in the event. Every city in the country that wishes to host the event, has ten months from then in which they reply with a presentation of the program that they made for the celebration year. After several cities have handed in their ideas and program, a panel composed of thirteen people consisting of seven experts elected by the European institutions and six experts appointed by the country itself evaluate the applications of the different cities. They look at the program, the goals of the cities and if they meet the criteria which the EU has set out for an ECOC. The outcome of this panel is a

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[23] http://www.europarl.europa.eu/parliament/archive/staticDisplay.do?language=EN&id=1004, retrieved 13-07-2010.

short list of cities which are considered to have a good program and which meet the conditions of the EU. These cities may continue the process of bidding for the title. Furthermore the panel provides them with recommendations, updates on developments and information on the process.

After this pre-selection phase, only few cities are left which proceed to the next stage, the selection phase. The cities which are still in the running, have few months in which they must concretize their program, added information about additional issues must be included. After that, a second meeting with the selection panel of both Member States takes place nine months after the pre-selection meeting, in which the candidates present their program again. The panel chooses a city which it recommends for both countries in the specific year and gives advice on the next stage of preparations.

The next step in the process of becoming ECOC has to be made by the Member States, this is the last hurdle towards the title. The Member States have to submit a city nomination towards the EU on the basis of reports of the selection panel from the previous stage. The Council of Ministers from the EU then makes an official designation on the two cities of both Member States which host the event four years after this decision has been made. When cities for both countries have been chosen, support and supervision of the EU does not stop. A panel of seven people delegated by the European Institutions functions as a monitoring and advisory panel and keep an eye on the whole process towards the year in which the event finally will take place[24].

Figure 4.2 Chronological path towards the final goal: becoming ECOC

Timeline (in years, *n* being the year of the event starting on 1 January)	Stage in the procedure towards the ECOC	Body responsible
n - 6 (for example, end of 2011 for the 2018 title)	Call for applications by Member States	Member State
n - 6 + 10 months	Deadline for cities on responding to the call for applications	Candidate Cities
n - 5	Meeting of the panel for a pre-selection in the Member States concerned (13 experts)	Member State
n - 5 + 9 months	Meeting of the panel for the final selection in the Member States concerned (13 experts)	Member State
n - 4	Notification of the application from a city to the European Institutions	Member State
n - 4 + 3 months	Opinion of the European Parliament on this application	European Parliament
n - 3	Designation of the European Capital of Culture	EU Council of Ministers

Source: European Commission, 2010[25]

Looking at the timelines, cities in the Netherlands aspiring to become ECOC in 2018 have to announce their ambitions before January 1st, 2012. The selection panel has to set up a list after the pre-selection of candidates before the first of January 2013, which has to be approved by the

[24] http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-programs-and-actions/doc467_en.htm, retrieved 25-06-2010.
[25] http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-programs-and-actions/doc738_en.htm, retrieved 25-06-2010.

Dutch government in the beginning of that same year. The cities that are still in the running for the title are given the opportunity of developing more extensively the proposal. In September 2013, the selection panel decides on the final proposals, and recommends one city to the Dutch government. May 2014 the final decision will be made and the official nomination of the ECOC in the Netherlands for 2018 will take place (Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap, 2010).

Next to the procedures, there are some conditions and characteristics of the concept which one must obey. First of all, the title award is given only for one year and there is a option of associating a (euro)regional territory in the program. Second, the title of ECOC is not given to a city solely for what the city does. A city is judged according to their established program and the specific cultural events that are planned to take place during that particular year, which is a special year and needs to be distinguished from other years. The title is not being given to a city because of what it is, or what is has, like for example the UNESCO World Heritage sites, but because of what the city offers and what kind of alterations the city makes because of the event. And last but not least, the program must be exceptional. It is not meant as a staging of already existing cultural events under the name of ECOC, with the aim of emphasizing their cultural heritage. The event must bring something totally new to the region, a whole new refreshing experience to warrant the concept of the ECOC (Directory-general Education and Culture of the European Commission, 2010).

Summarized, candidates for the ECOC have to show what kind of role they play in European culture, what kind of links they provide with Europe and what their place and sense of belonging in Europe is. Besides their own specific characteristics, they have to show how they participate in, and contribute to the artistic and cultural life in Europe. The European dimension can be shown by cities through the cooperation with other cultures all over the world, with the aim of fostering the intercultural dialogue.

4.3 ECOC seen through the lens of the EU - and their link with the creative class

The need for culture and the creative class has become evident in the The Lisbon Strategy, which was aimed to make the EU the most competitive world economy: *"a strategic goal for the next decade: to become the most dynamic and competitive knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion, and respect for the environment"* (High Level Group, 2004: p.8). This can be explained due to the cultural and creative sector having an indirect impact on the overall performance of the economy, by contributing to the development of new technologies and innovation in other sectors of the economy. Second, the creative sector plays a great role in the take-off for ICTs, which is needed to integrate new ICTs in society and by creating new value-added services. And third, the creative sector and culture is of great influence on local development. Following the KEA European Affairs (2006), the characteristic of cultural and creative goods are that they are meant only for local audience because of the cultures and languages in which they arise. Because of this 'rootedness' of cultural goods, it is difficult for these kind of products and services to shift to other parts of the world, something happening frequently in other sectors of the economy by off shoring activities abroad. It can be said that job losses in this sector tend to be the outcome of restructuring, and because of its commitment to a particular territory it is advisable to use this potential to give the economy a boost: keeping in mind that culture and the creative sector play a role in attracting investments, creative people and tourists to a certain region. And despite the present era of globalization and individualization, socialisation and physical location have become more important to the lifestyle and living environment. Culture has become more and more a very important soft location factor to different groups, thereby making a place more attractive.

Last, but not least to mention, is that culture is the main driving force for tourism and has great potential. The tourism-sector is one of the most successful in Europe, representing 5,5% of the EU GDP, and a global market share of 55%[26]. Because of the competition for creative people, more European cities see the need to stimulate the creative industries, because these are getting a more central position in the economy of Europe.

Richard Florida argues that creative firms will follow the talent, or creative class, and not vice versa. The explanation he gives for this line of thought, is that creative people are looking for cultural facilities and creative people and resources are more difficult to replicate. Interactions within a defined area are crucial to bring forth creativity and being able to contribute to the economy. Eventually, grouping of creative people in a certain territory can lead to a perpetual mobile, meaning that more investments will attract more creative people, and thereby creating further creativity within a region (Florida, 2005). Being awarded for the title of ECOC gives cities the chance to stand out and to attract artists and visitors from across the EU, as well as the opportunity to create long-term benefits in attracting people and jobs. But despite the fact that the ECOC can be seen or used as a tool for city marketing, the focus still has to be on the European dimension of the event[27].

One of the fastest growing tourism markets worldwide is the cultural tourism. Cities and regions are using culture and creative industries to make themselves more attractive and able to compete with others. Cultural assets are used as a means of developing comparative advantages over other cities in the global market. There is a clear correlation between tourism and culture, and how these two have converged towards each other and became major drivers of competitiveness and destination attractiveness. Culture, tourism and regional attractiveness are all interconnected and reinforce each other, making them more able to compete on the global market (OECD, 2009).

4.4 Relevance of the theoretical framework in understanding the ECOC

As Deffner and Labrianidis (2005) are putting it, the ECOC implies a two-fold recognition: the first one represents the importance of culture in the process of European unification, and the second a role of cultural activities in urban regeneration and economic development. The thought behind this dual recognition is the imaginary link between cultural development and sustainability. But questions arise about which culture is being promoted, which parts of a city or region benefit from the event and whether *"repetition and homogenization are imposed over the uniqueness of a specific culture"* (Deffner & Labrianidis, 2005: p.245).

Hubbard and Hall have set up a generic entrepreneurial model for city governance with the aim of promoting the city. Through specific policies, cities achieve the goal of re-imaging localities and transforming cities into spectacular cities of consumption. These policies include: advertising and promotion, large scale physical redevelopment, public art and civic statuary, mega events, cultural regeneration, and public-private partnerships (Hubbard & Hall, 1998 in Kavaratzis 2008: p.34). Cities want to improve their image by transforming or adopting their own identity. This could be obtained through attracting the creative class. Urban growth coalitions are better positioned enabling them to change the identity of a region. Changes can be made and promoted on a much larger scale than when different cities would not cooperate. More tourists can be attracted in the region as a whole, if the cities are not promoting only their own territory (prisoner's dilemma) but cooperate. In this way, all cities benefit instead of constantly one city which is the best at promoting itself at a certain time.

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[26] http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-policy-development/doc431_en.htm, retrieved 18-03-2011.
[27] http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+IM-PRESS+ 20051005STO 01 040 +0+DOC+XML+V0//EN, retrieved 18-03-2011.

In the post-modernist thinking, the nature of place making and – marketing is marked by consumption driven cultural production. Much contemporary tourism, and in particular urban cultural tourism, can be seen as the expression and outcome of competition between places. This is indicative for the growing economic power of culture, and the relation between centres and peripheries, with a power dynamic ever-present in their production and consumption. The creative class is seen as important by creating a good image and attracting different target groups. According to Urry (2002), places are chosen to be gazed upon as a result of their construction by non-tourist practices, including movies, magazines, and television in an endless cycle of self-referential image-making.

Culture can be of a great importance for a city in order to create a good image and to compete with other cities for tourists. City marketing is frequently mentioned as one of the reasons for hosting a particular event in a city; cities see events as city marketing vehicles (Braun, 2008). This can be illustrated by the competition among cities bidding for sport or cultural events such as the ECOC. Hallmark events are 'our new image builders', they constitute an intrinsic component of place marketing (Burns & Mules, 1986 in Quinn 2009: p.8). These events, such as the ECOC, are seen as essential for the creation of tourism opportunities and supporting regional development (Hall & Hubbard, 1998). This because of the branded concepts by the cultural planners that are a great trigger for the creative milieu of a city (Landry, 2000). The inhabitants, companies, investors and visitors determine whether a city is attractive or not. These (potential) consumers of cities put high demands on the quality of the business, living and visiting environment. Factors such as the level of cultural services and access to knowledge are prominent in such an environment (van den Berg, Braun & Otgaar, 2002).

Cultural consumption has a positive effect on capital accumulation in the real estate development, and therefore cultural goods and services constitute cultural capital for individuals, investors, groups and developers. Through cultural tourism, cultural capital is integrated into the real urban economy in many ways. The creative arts assume a status not just as an economic driver but as a key way in which urban areas can be redecorated, redesigned and redeveloped (Wiley, Benefield & Johnson, 2009: p.36,56). By benefiting from this creative class, an attempt is made to improve the image of the city, which is essential to city marketing.

In the experience economy, the human being is more than ever before seen as a consumer, in which the emotions of the consumer are more interesting. With the idea that everything is malleable, the experience economy is primarily an appeal to the consumer for being impulsive and emotionally reactive, which results in complete events such as the ECOC. As Suzanne Piët (2003) puts it, we are now entering the experience economy, as a fourth wave of progress, after the agrarian-, industrial- and service economy. How different cities implement their rebranding depends on which sorts of events they organize. *"Arts and culture seem the perfect way to revitalize a city. Not only do they create strong feelings and offer a change in everyday life, they also act as an indicator of the level of civility and culture and represent resources"* (Law, 1993: p.89).

But despite all these theories about how a city can be made attractive to certain target groups and especially the creative class, the creative economy is said to be footloose, which means that people are not bounded to one particular place and will live and work wherever they want to (Florida, 2005). The creative enterprises will arise in, and follow to, places where the creative people are located. The attractiveness of a city for the creative class may therefore be crucial if a city has the ambition to function as a creative centre. Creativity is a mental quality that can take on many forms, but as Arthur Ransome is saying: *"Bohemia is not a place, but a state of mind"*. In other words, a city can have a great attraction because of its physical environment, but what makes a city special is its immaterial 'state of mind', which is as unique as it is vulnerable (Hodes, 2005).

4.4.1 Conceptual model

The theories used in this research in relation to the ECOC lead to the conceptual model which shows the structure of this research and the relationships between the concepts used (figure 4.3). The research question can be divided into two parts, because of this the conceptual model consists of two components that are confronted in the middle.

The first part of the research question is what Brabantstad and Maastricht drives, and on which basis their expectations are grounded, to run for the election of the ECOC? The two theories that are used in relation to mega events to explain why the hosting of mega events is so popular, are city marketing and the creative class. Together with the discourse that has been formed by the theories and former cities which have hosted this event, this leads to the desire of hosting the ECOC psychological. His is very important in relation to the creation of this discourse, because is it not really about the true relation between culture, creative class and the economy, but about what is thought to be the relation between these different concepts. There is no clear evidence for such relation, but one believes that this correlation truly exists. Because the focus of this research, the theories leading to the phenomenon of the ECOC via urban regeneration can be found in the in the middle.

The second part of the research question addresses why both cases are formed out of regional partnerships instead of running for the election alone. This involves expectations of stakeholders in the municipalities and governors about the ECOC-event. Expected benefits are the reasons for running the ECOC elections, by which the two cases (and others) in their turn influence the already high expectations of the event and thereby create a certain positive discourse. This, together with the local politics with a strategy that is already implemented and partnerships which already exists, leads to urban growth coalitions with the desire for urban regeneration by organizing the ECOC. These growth coalitions on their turn influence city marketing and make the regions more attractive for the creative class. The desire to market the city in different ways also affects the formation of growth coalitions. This conceptual model is used to explain why both cases want to become ECOC in the first place and why they have chosen for this joint approach.

Figure 4.3: Conceptual model
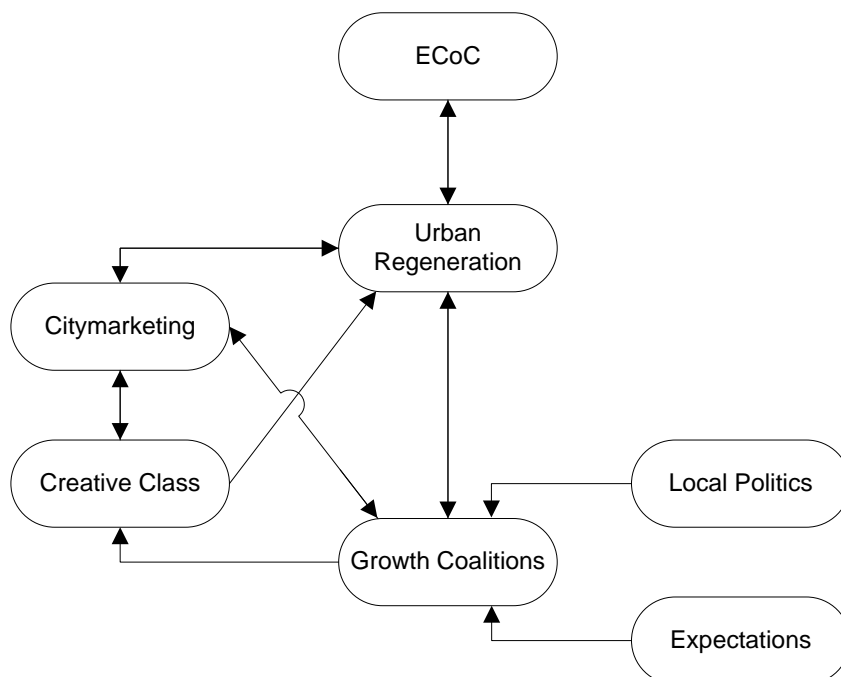
4.5 Summary

The ECOC has been a phenomenon for several decades. It started mainly as a cultural event that focused on cultural months; later on, its duration was extended to one full year. Over the years, the event also developed from a solely cultural event into an event which is seen as an unique opportunity for urban regeneration, strategic city marketing and as an opportunity to attract the creative class. Urban growth coalitions play a great role in the ability to organize such an event. Cooperation can be made more solid by organising such a big event together.

The presence of the creative class is presumed to contribute to the overall performance of the economy, by creating innovation and an attractive and lively living environment. Culture is an important factor in attracting those creative people, and therefore the ECOC is seen as a powerful tool for reaching all sorts of strategic goals. The ECOC event leads to a great media coverage which provides opportunities to improve the city's image, and make its image more visible.

5 Previous editions

"Ortakoy Mosque -Istanbul"
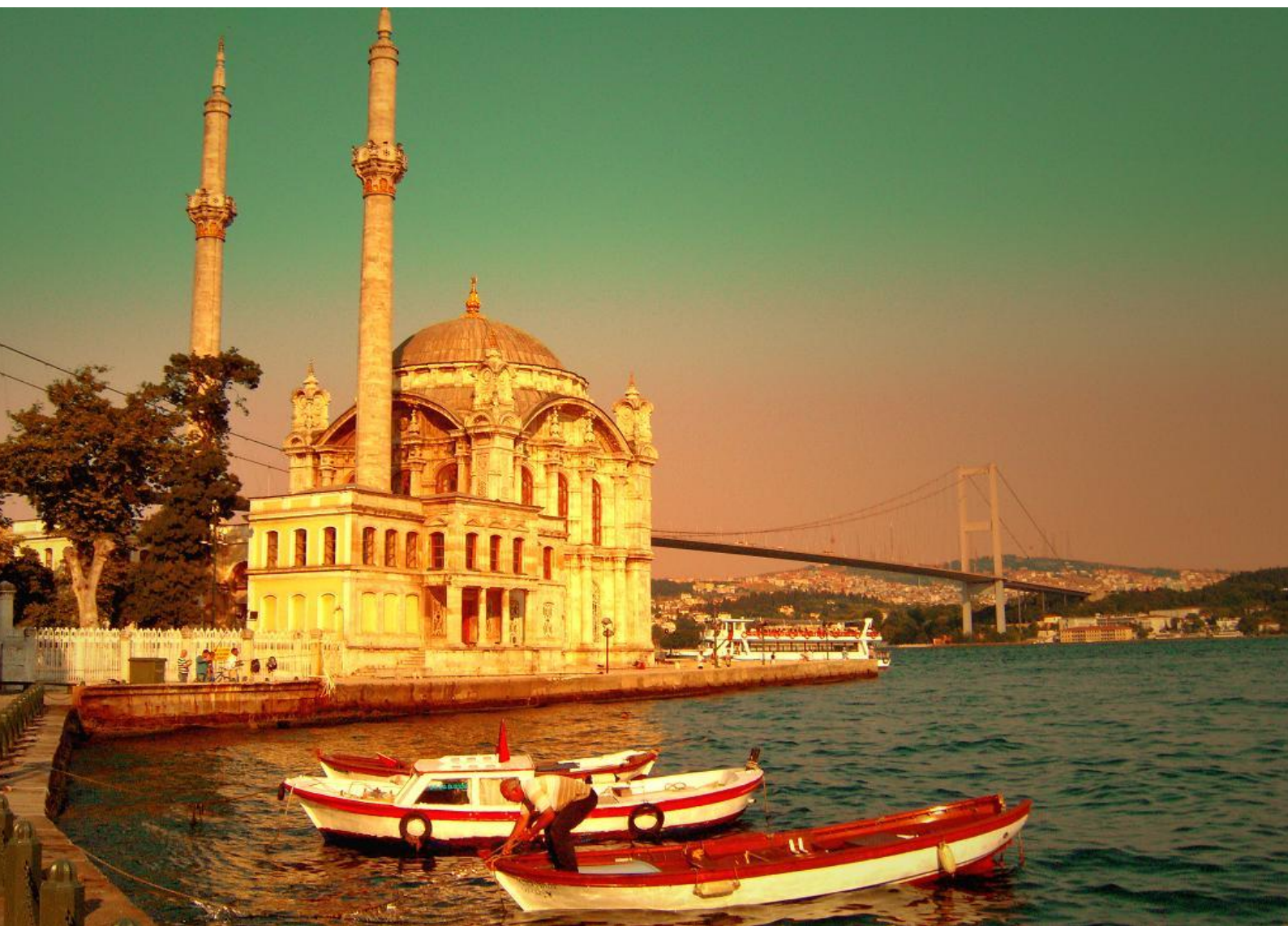
Chapter 5: Previous editions of the ECOC

In this chapter, a number of previous editions of the ECOC will be investigated. While conducting the interviews with directors of Brabantstad and MCH, several cities were constantly mentioned that have served as examples of good practices. In literature and evaluations of the event these examples are also termed as very successful. The aims and described outcomes of these cases made the interviewees eager to become ECOC. They are using these examples to justify their candidacy and the needed investments, the case of Brabantstad even already made a prediction of the impacts which they are using in the media. Because of this general understanding about several good practices, we will look at the investments and what kind of impacts the event generated in the cities of Glasgow, Lille and Liverpool. These examples will be used to embed the general framework concerning the impacts of the event into the practice.

5.1 Overall perceptions and performance

The ECOC is a high profile mega event with international allure, at least this is the way of thought of many involved directors. The event plays a key role in changing the image, attracting tourists and establishing urban regeneration (Balsas, 2004). The challenge of the ECOC, because of its richness, is that there is not one single template making the ECOC a success. Every city has a unique social, historical, political and economic context which cannot be ignored (Palmer/Rae Associates, 2004a: p.15). The most visible and tangible contribution of culture to local development lies in the ability to attract tourists and the positive impact that it brings to the local economy relating on incomes, employment and spending (OECD, 2009: p.51). In relation to urban growth and regeneration, Throsby (2001) states that culture contributes to this in four ways; 1. culture generates a cultural amenity which may serve as a catalyst; 2. cultural industries may act as a vital part of the city's economy; 3. cultural districts may facilitate development in local areas and culture can establish creativity; and 4. social cohesion and form a community identity. This might result in concrete direct economic impacts, such as revenues of activities of whose yields benefit the local economy. Indirect effects might occur in other supplementary businesses or even in other fields of the economy which benefits from externalities.

A study of the European Commission by the KEA European Affairs on the economy of culture in Europe (2006) published some figures about the cultural and creative sector:
- The sector turned over more than €654 billion in 2003;
- The sector contributed to 2,6% of EU GDP in 2003;
- The overall growth of the sector's value added was 19,7% in 1999-2003;
- In 2004, at least 5,8 million people worked in the sector, equivalent to 3,1% of total employed population in Europe[28].

As earlier said and showed by the above figures that are widely accepted, is that culture drives social and economic development. Another characteristic is that the cultural and creative sector is developing at a faster pace than the rest of the economy. As the summary of the report of the KEA European Affairs (2006: p.1) states: *"Indeed this sector provides many different and often highly skilled possibilities, and again the sector's growth in terms of jobs out-performs the rest of the economy. It also drives many other sectors of the European economy, and in particular innovation and ICT sectors"*. The study towards the economy of culture in Europe illustrates "*how culture promotes European integration and is a key tool to integrate the components of European societies in all their diversity, to forge a sense of belonging as well as to spread democratic and social values. Culture can contribute to 'seduce' European citizens to the idea of European*

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[28] Copied from http://ec.europa.eu/culture/key-documents/doc873_en.htm found on 16-5-2011.

integration". The study was conducted by the European Commission itself, indicating that the EU treasures this sector and that they want to highlight the importance of this sector in the European economy. They also point at the fact that culture has other impacts rather than merely economic ones in society as thought previously: culture can contribute to and be used as a tool to address many social problems in society, such as cohesion and social integration. It is generally accepted that the ECOC creates a boost of number of visitors in the year that the event is held, but the ETC Research Report (2005: p.45) on city tourism and culture in Europe claims that *"within two or three years the number of visitors returns to the level before the Cultural Capital period. This is not the opinion of almost half of the respondents of the survey. They believe that being a Cultural Capital contributes to higher numbers of visitors to the city in the period after the Cultural Capital year. This apparent discrepancy between 'objective' visitor statistics and 'subjective' opinions may partly be due to the wider and intangible effects of the European Cultural Capital event, but it is also in large measure due to a lack of data on and evaluation of cultural events".* It has to be noted that, since most reports direct or indirectly come from the initiators itself, caution is desirable concerning their statements. The expectations and the will to organize the event can be stimulated by the EU itself, by glorifying the event and its impacts.

But despite the varying signals about the returns of this event, the different expected impacts of the cultural event offer the most compelling arguments for staging this event. However, the measuring and evaluating of those impacts is very complicated. Despite several reports of the European Union or other researchers, it is very hard to find clear data rather than descriptive and suggestive literature about what the impacts of the ECOC on the long term really are. Statistics are very scarce, existing statistical tools are not available or appropriate to measure the direct and indirect impact (KEA European Affairs, 2006). It is very hard to see what the effects are of the event in the future, due to the fact that many other factors might affect the development of an area during the years after being ECOC. This can be underlined by the statements of Greg Richards[29], professor of Leisure Studies at Tilburg University and expert of the ECOC, which states that the event is assumed to be successful but that it is very hard to say what the impacts and outcomes really are. His explanation is first of all that there is no general picture for the event, because the effects of the ECOC are highly dependent of the city itself, second that it is very complicated to get a clear vision about what effects the ECOC has on a city. According to him, measuring outcomes should be more about the balance to what extent own goals that were set at forehand of the event are reached afterwards.

But despite the lack of statistical data, the impression is still that the event generates impacts. It is more about the perceptions, if people think that it is a good idea, they will undertake action. Nowadays cities are aware of, the premise only to be in the race for the title can add value. It entails thinking and talking about subjects that otherwise would not have taken place within this short timeframe. And according to Richards (2007: p.308), there are signs that cities are starting to try measuring some of the social, cultural and image impacts of events in a more consistent way, and not only focusing on the economic impacts.

5.2 Thoughts of 'imagined' good examples

As mentioned earlier, several cities function as examples of good practices for the interviewees of the various cities. In this part, the goals yields of these cities will be examnined. Because of the

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[29] Personal contact Greg Richards on ..-11-2010. Greg Richards is a professor at the Department of Leisure Studies at the University of Tilburg. He conducted much research into cultural capitals, their organization and effects. He was a member of the team that the Palmer Report (2004) produced for the European Commission and was a member of the international jury for the selection of the European Cultural Capital in Hungary in 2005. He conducted many evaluations of cultural capitals, including Rotterdam 2001, Porto 2001, Salamanca 2002, Sibiu 2007, Luxembourg 2007 and 2008 Stavanger.

difficulties of finding hard data, figures will be given where possible. Alternatively qualitative data will support the considerations.

5.2.1 Glasgow 1990

Glasgow is the largest city in Scotland, with a total of 690,420 inhabitants in 1990[30] (nowadays 588,000). It is the second largest retail centre in the UK after London[31]. The city had the privilege to be the first non-capital city to organize the European City of Culture in 1990 (which became entitled ECOC in 1999). Glasgow was also the first city to organize the event throughout a whole year, by which it could make use of the opportunity to promote the city outwards as a tourist destination[32]. Glasgow was once highly industrialized but like many other cities in the United Kingdom it faced serious problems of urban decline since the Second World War. People moved out of the city, forcing the city to cope with areas of deprivation located in peripheral estates and second a social, economic and physical decay of the city centre. In the 1970s and 1980s the problems in Glasgow were still unresolved despite the combined policies and major investments and renewal. The city really wanted to change and improve its image, and hence creating a good climate for business investments (McCarthy and Pollock, 1997: p.139-143 and Uraz, 2007: p.8). Glasgow saw the need for drastic changes and unlike previous editions, Glasgow was the first city that used the ECOC for applying culture-led urban regeneration purposes (Lavanga, 2006).

Glasgow saw the ECOC as a part of its strategic investment program and wider economic regeneration plan, *"which would ensure the long-term future of the cultural sector and contribute greatly to economic and social regeneration"* (Organization 'Glasgow 1990', 2002: p.3) and they wanted to *"enhance cultural development by setting up a challenging and an integrative process in hand with public".* Next to the main goal, they wanted to increase cultural participation, change the image of the city and increase media attention. Participation and education were central elements in many projects, following the social strategy (Uraz, 2007). The city realized that art was an essential element in social inclusion policies and that it played a vital role in reaching their goals.

Glasgow was the first city that performed an impact-study. Because, according to Richards's[33] argumentation, if you want to talk about success, you need to demonstrate that the event has an impact on the city by means of measurements and results. This subsequently needs to be published, in order to become credible. The media coverage of the event was enormous and many positive comments about the city's transformation were to be found in the press coverage of the bidding process for the ECOC 2008 in the UK. Some examples; *"Glasgow held the title in 1990 and it transformed the city"* (Western Daily Press), *"Glasgow's reign as European City of Culture in 1990 transformed the city"* (The Journal Newcastle), *"Glasgow has successfully and famously managed to transform its image"* (Birmingham Post), *"Glasgow was the last British city to win the title in 1990 - transforming it from a declining area to a vibrant tourist attraction"(*The Mirror)[34].

The investments amounted approximately €45,4 million, and contrary to former editions, the local government was the main financier of the event with 81% of the total funding. 18% of the funding came from sponsorships and only 1% from the central government (Uraz, 2007: p.30).

There was a sense of anticlimax in the early 1990s, when *"Glasgow was perceived to be slipping back as other UK cities took the Cultural High Road. Glasgow suffered from particular*

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[30] http://www.glasgowguide.co.uk/info-facts1.html 20-5-2011.

[31] http://www.glasgow.gov.uk/en/AboutGlasgow/Factsheets/ 23-5-2011.

[32] http://www.theglasgowstory.com/story.php?id=TGSFB 19-5-2011.

[33] Personal communication Greg Richards, 17-11-2011.

[34] http://ECC-doc-athens.eu/attachments/433_Garcia,%20B.%20Glasgow%20as%20European%20City%20of%20 Culture.pdf , retrieved 20-5-2011.

difficulties associated with local government re-organization, including the dissolution of Strathclyde Regional Council and the disaggregation of the city to smaller neighbouring authorities. Employment in the cultural and creative industries grew more slowly in Glasgow during the 1990's than in any other UK City except Birmingham. Through this, Glasgow has developed a range of policies and initiatives designed to continue the renaissance of Culture and keep Glasgow on the map as one of the world's leading cultural cities"[35] (Glasgow City Council, 1991: p.11). But almost immediately this began to alter with other events such as the Visual Arts Festival (1996) and the Year of Architecture and Design (1999). The most visible legacy of the ECOC are buildings, because it established a range of new and refurbished cultural locations (Glasgow City Council, 1991: p.11). According to the City of Glasgow Culture and Leisure Services is *"the city now committed to a long term strategy based on year-round events with strong local roots, improving the quality of the cityscape and renewing existing leisure facilities so that visitors and locals alike get a first rate experience"*[36]. In this way Glasgow could achieve long-term success in the years following 1990. In the celebration year, 3,5 million people came to visit Glasgow. Statistics of Glasgow show that the number of tourists trips from the English population increased with 75% between 1991 and 1997, from 0,8 million to 1,4 million. The total amount of expenditures increased from €123,5 to €186,3 million in this same time span. The net economic contribution of the event on the local economy was €8,1 to €12,7 million in 1990 (Uraz, 2007: p.30-32). Overseas tourists visits increased between 1991 and 1996 with 25%, from 0,4 million to 0,5 million, which was accompanied by increased spending from €108,6 million to €185,2 million.

After being ECOC, Glasgow became better known as a destination for conference and conventions, resulting in the fact *that "Glasgow's hotels are the busiest of any UK city ... due to city's reign as City of Architecture and Design and growing status as an international conference venue".* Increasing attendance by tourists and visitors of conferences has enabled a mini-boom in the retail, leisure, hotel and entertainment industries in Glasgow (Glasgow City Council, 1999: p.36).

The ECOC fitted a broader economic regeneration strategy of Glasgow and established changes in the political climate and a reorganization of the city's government structure. This led to new cultural policies, embracing new initiatives and events on the cultural agenda. The ECOC helped to transform Glasgow's industrial image into a modern one (García, 2004). Many surveys were taken after 1990, which showed that Glasgow was not longer seen as an industrialized city, but as a dynamic and pleasant city. The inhabitants were more confident about their city and image, leading to be a more attractive place for business investors (Uraz, 2007: p.34). The cultural and artistic fields have helped to transform the city into a service driven economy. *"Authorities in Glasgow mainly focused on the sustainability aspect, which is one of the success factors for the ECOC event"* (Kuzgun et al., 2010: p.29).

Glasgow was the first city to use the ECOC and culture this clear as a catalyst for urban regeneration and implemented this successfully in the city's strategy. Because of this, Glasgow is seen as the major example of how to use the event to maximize the advantages.

5.2.2 Lille 2004

Lille, regional capital of Nord-Pas de Calais with a population of approximately 1 million people, was the third city in France that was chosen to organize this event after Paris (1989) and Avignon (2000). Lille is the principal city of the Lille Métropole, an intercommunal structure of Lille together with 84 other communes forming a metropolitan area of 1,2 million inhabitants. The

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[35] http://ECC-doc-athens.eu/attachments/472_Glasgow%201990%20European%20City%20of%20Culture.pdf, retrieved 19-5-2011, p.11.
[36] http://www.theglasgowstory.com/story.php?id=TGSFB, retrieved 20-5-2011.

city had to deal with a post-industrial depression after the closure of the coal mines and textile plants during the '70s and '80s. All sectors were affected, and the unemployment rose from 3% to 13% in 1990, after which Lille began to develop a service industry[37]. During the 15 years before becoming ECOC, Lille had undertaken considerable actions in the field of city- and regional development. In line with this new strategy, they actually wanted to host the Olympic Games in 2004, but when this honour went to Athens, Lille decided to pursue for the ECOC (Palmer-Rae Associates, 2004b: p.346). The city already had a regional development plan to achieve substantial change in its economic profile through cultural regeneration projects before it was awarded the ECOC title. The city was struggling with its history and post-industrial structure (Uraz, 2007).

By organizing the ECOC, Lille focused on long-term urban regeneration presenting 'metamorphosis' as key term and taking into account the multi-cultural aspects of the city's society. The city's image, although well known, was not yet sufficiently attractive enough challenging them to transform the image of the city. The goals were not exclusively meant for Lille, but also the whole of the Nord-Pas de Calais region and parts of Belgium, in total 193 surrounding cities and towns. By involving such a wide area in the project they wanted to establish a new leadership in this area based on culture and creativity to achieve this. (Sacco & Blessi, 2005: Uraz, 2005). Main priorities were social inclusion and community involvement that had to be integrated into the program, that was described as follows: *"We dreamt of Lille as a spaceship changing the fabric of time, a place where everyone can live at their own pace, cross through exotic parallel worlds, stroll through the new frontiers opened up and already dissolved….a process of metamorphosis with the ability and energy to perpetually remodel the world"* (Palmer/Rae Associates, 2004a: p.48). The program focused on *"the implementation of a complex radial structure of differential targeting for cultural policies that aims at creating a new model for a polycentric cultural system"* (Sacco & Blessi, 2007: p.1). The key strategic objectives were 1. a focus on the residential demand to ensure that this would correspond with the cultural activities and to promote creativity; 2. cultural experiences; and 3. social cohesion and self-confidence. Part of the strategy of Lille was to bring art to the streets, by which residents could benefit and learn from culture in many ways (Palmer/Rae Associates, 2004a).

The total expenditure of the event has been €74 million, brought together by the local government (57%), national and European public funding (25%) as well as private sponsorship (18%) (Uraz, 2007: p.30). The cultural program took place in the whole cross-border region of Lille and the 193 surrounding cities. They attracted more visitors than usually. In the first three months of 2004, the number of people who visited the tourist office already reached 2/3 of the total number of visitors that was achieved in the whole year before. Eventually, the annual cultural visits increased with 39% in the celebration year. The total number of visitors of the tourist office during the whole year 2004 has more than doubled the previous year's figure, from 308.000 visitors in 2003 to 822.942 in 2004, of whom more than 300.000 were non-French. Fortunately for Lille, this trend continued after 2004 (Sacco & Blessi, 2007: p.13), corresponding with the objective and desire to increase the number of visitors. This was the result of the efforts that had been made to change the image of the region from a post-industrial into a dynamic and innovative region. Other outcomes included public and artistic events and an increased media attendance (Kuzgun et al., 2010). The total number of visitors in 2004 in the region reached over 9 million people and the attendance of visitors to cultural activities increased with 39,7%, against a regional increment of 0,5% and a national figure of -0,5%.

Lille's most important target group was its own inhabitants. The city achieved its goal of gaining a wide public attention and more involvement of inhabitants. There was a strong focus

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[37] http://www.lilletourism.com/info-1-0-234-nl.html, retrieved 19-5-2011.

on youngsters, for whom more than 900 special events took place. 39% of the events had free entrance in order to maximize participation and improve social cohesion (Uraz, 2007: p.40-42).

Another interesting impact of the ECOC is the amount of corporate sponsoring which increased with 50%, representing a sum of €13 million. This increase in partnering with local businesses is said to be the highest ever in the history of the ECOC (Sacco & Blessi, 2007: p.12; Uraz, 2007: p.40). The tourism sector rewarded a growth in terms of jobs and businesses of 66% between December 2003 and November 2004. Developments in the cultural and non-cultural sector took place to achieve urban regeneration. The creative industries, which formed a key factor in the development of the city, were stimulated (Uraz, 2007).

Lille used the ECOC to change its model of local governance substantially, they experimented with different level of governance, varying from local, regional and trans-national perspective. *"Lille entails a much wider scope in terms of setting out the fundamentals of a culture-driven local development model"* (Sacco & Blessi, 2007: p.14). Lille succeeded in maintaining human capital, because they continued to plan events and projects after the celebration year. Using this strategy, the people who played a role in organizing the ECOC are still working in the cultural field in Lille today. This strategy ensures long-term effects in the aftermath of the event, by referring to Lille3000, this is the idea of looking from 2004 till the far future. Every two years there will be a big event, providing an umbrella for all sorts of other cultural activities, which they bring well under the attention among interested people[38].

Reviewing the outcomes of Lille ECOC 2004, it is no longer a surprise why the interviewees of Brabantstad and Maastricht see this city as an example to position their region in a different, better way. The total number of visitors increased, improvements in the social field took place, local businesses got a boost, more jobs were generated and the development of cooperation between Lille and other levels of governance has accelerated because of the event. Since most numbers are only about developments and spin-offs in the short-term, it is difficult to say what the long-term effects are. It is hard to measure these effects because of the presence of many other influences in the area that might effect the attractiveness. But despite the finding of hard data, it can be said that Lille improved its profile because of organizing this event in 2004.

5.2.3 Liverpool 2008

Liverpool is the fourth largest city in the UK with a population of 441,100 according to a mid-2008 estimate. The city lies in the center of the Liverpool Urban Area which has a total population of 816,216[39]. The city is part of the metropolitan borough of Merseyside, located at the western side of England next to the sea. It is stated in the executive Summary of Liverpool's Bid for European Capital of Culture 2008 that Liverpool *"lives on the edge of Europe, the edge of America, and the edge of Africa, on the fault-lines of culture"* and that with the ECOC of 2008 they want everybody to become invited into the *"world in one city"*[40]. Liverpool has made an enormous development during the 18th and 19th centuries, when the city came to benefit from its location for trans-Atlantic trade and status as a major port. Due to the location of the city and its port, it dealt with exponential urbanization. The city became multi-ethnic and was regarded as cosmopolitan, but it also created tensions between different religions en ethnic groups during the 20th century. Afterwards, a period of social en economic decline started and the city had to deal with high unemployment rates, low levels of income, a depleted business sector, poor

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[38] Personal communication Greg Richards on 17-11-2011.

[39] http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/LeadTableView.do;jsessionid=ac1f930c30d51ed2aca201aa4758b225c21a3898a9f0?a=3&b=276787&c=liverpool&d=13&e=13&g=359393&i=1001x1003x1004&m=0&r=1&s=1306158578275&enc=1&dsFamilyId=1813&nsjs=true&nsck=true&nssvg=false&nswid=1276, retrieved on 12-05-2011.

[40] Executive Summary of Liverpool's Bid for European Capital of Culture 2008.
http://www.liverpool08.com/Images/tcm21-32519_tcm79-56880_tcm146-122188.pdf, retrieved 23-05- 2011.

educational achievement, high levels of crime and a high number of low-skilled workers during the 1970s and 1980s (England's Northwest Research Service and Impacts 08, 2010).

The aims of Liverpool ECOC were fourfold according to its 2008 vision, in which the desire to regenerate and reposition the city was placed at the heart:

1. *"to positively reposition Liverpool to a national and international audience and to encourage more visitors to the city and the North West"*;
2. *"to encourage and increase participation in cultural activity by people from communities across Merseyside and the wider region"*;
3. *"to create a legacy of long-term growth and sustainability in the city's cultural sector"*; and
4. *"to develop greater recognition, nationally and internationally, for the role of arts and culture in making our cities better places to live, work and visit"* (England's Northwest Research Service and Impacts 08, 2010: p.12).

Summarized, Liverpool wanted to get a better image in order to establish all things mentioned above. They focused on building social networks and stimulating cultural entrepreneurship during the process, because they believed that innovative and creative partnerships in the cultural and creative sector could strengthen necessary cultural connections (Uraz, 2007)

The planned financial commitments from 2005 to 2009 had a minimum of €108,5 million according to the Strategic Business Plan (Liverpool Culture Company, 2005: p.29), but the total budget in the end was €148,5 million. These investments were spread over the six themed years from 2003 to Liverpool 2008 itself (England's Northwest Research Service and Impacts 08, 2010). The Liverpool City Council supported the event on a significant level with 54% of the total budget, another 35% came from grant incomes and incomes from commercial sponsorship accounted for 11% of the funding (Liverpool Culture Company, 2005: p.30).

The years preceding the ECOC immediately showed economic change in socio-economic performance both in Liverpool and the UK. It was a period of growth in which the gap between Liverpool and the rest of the UK narrowed. This was accompanied by a renewed political leadership, substantial public and private partnerships and investments and national and European funding to regenerate the city. A key aim of Liverpool was to attract more visitors, because they presumed this to be a condition for economic development through direct spending in the economy. The event would indirectly generate effects of inward investment by changing the image of the city in a way that it would attract future residents and companies (England's Northwest Research Service and Impacts 08, 2010).

The ECOC attracted 9,7 million additional visitors in 2008, which formed 35% of all visits to Liverpool in this specific year. The total number of visitors in 2008 was estimated at 27,7 million, which was an increase of 34% since 2007, the total visits to Merseyside increased with 19% from 2007, which equalled to 75,1 million visits. A number of 2,6 million non-UK visitors were motivated to come to Liverpool because of the ECOC, 97% of these visited the city for the first time. There was also a significant increase in the number of nights that the visitors stayed. It is estimated that in Liverpool itself reached approximately 2,16 million nights of staying visitors, of which 1,14 million are related to hotels and other serviced accommodations. Also an increase in hotel nights was visible in the rest of Merseyside and North West region. The total benefits of these visits are €861,6 million in the total area (England's Northwest Research Service and Impacts 08, 2010: p.28-35).

Liverpool 08 resulted in inhabitants of Liverpool having a higher level of interest in visiting cultural activities than elsewhere in the UK, which sustained across the ECOC. Another effect was the decline in the number of people who claimed that they had absolutely no interest in culture. The media contributed greatly to improving the image of the city as well, 71% more positive stories were told about the city in 2008 compared to 2007. From 2005 until 2008, positive images

of the city went from 53% to 60% among the population in the whole UK, while the negative perceptions of images about Liverpool decreased from 20% to 14%. Among the analysed businesses in the UK, 68% felt that the event had a positive impact on the image of the city (England's Northwest Research Service and Impacts 08, 2010: p.3-4).

The celebration year had an influence on the creative industry, demonstrated by a growth of 8% in the number of enterprises in this sector during the years 2004-2008. In total, Liverpool amounts 1,683 enterprises in the creative industries in 2008, employing 10,978 people and forming roughly 4% of the total workforce (Impacts 08, 2009). Also *"the sector felt that the Liverpool ECOC had improved the 'local morale' of the sector in the city region, as well as helping to increase the credibility of Liverpool city region's creative industries offer"* (England's Northwest Research Service and Impacts 08, 2010: p.41). Some participants in the research stated that their client base increased because of the ECOC and almost three quarters of the businesses had the feeling that the event would create positive long-term impacts (England's Northwest Research Service and Impacts 08, 2010: p.41)[41].

Liverpool 08 documented the outcomes and impact very well in their final report, as was aimed for in its marketing strategy: to *"provide monitoring and longitudinal impact analysis of Liverpool ECOC cultural programs and events, both retrospectively, to cover the impact of the bid itself, and up to 2009/10"*[42]. The figures show that there were many positive impacts because of the ECOC and that the event really worked as a catalyst for urban regeneration. Nowadays, Liverpool is known as a vital and vibrant city and not only well known because of its football and the Beatles.

5.3 Is everything really this beautiful and amazing as described in evaluations?

According to Richards it is very obvious that cities do not spread negative stories into the world about themselves. First of all because otherwise they won't be able to benefit from possible improvements of the city's image. This is a very important aim when organizing the event. Second, there are huge amounts of investments involved in the ECOC and these evaluations create the opportunity to justify these investments. Hence people are very careful about what they mention in evaluations, because it may outweigh positive effects or even cause damage. It is therefore important to talk about success in order to become successful, an effect which is part of the strategy of the ECOC and simultaneously the reason why there are few evaluations which say that the event has failed. The cities that are supposed to have done well are not only the cities which had the best cultural programs, but are the cities which have made the best stories about the event and its impacts[43]. It is therefore not surprising that the results obtained of the mentioned good practices, claiming to be a very positive experience. Questions can thus be put, to what extent real effects are described and if less positive stories are omitted in evaluations. The European Commission itself named all earlier mentioned potential benefits in their 'Guide for cities applying for the title of ECOC', but it also mentions possible problems that may come with the event. It is important to be realistic in terms of the ECOC, since cities may face problems related to disappointments, criticism, financial difficulties and political risks (Directory-general Education and Culture of the European Commission, 2010: p.4).

The findings of the Palmer/Rae Report and above cases demonstrate that the ECOC can function as a powerful tool for cultural development and create opportunities to serve as a turning point, where culture-led strategies should lead to urban regeneration. Despite the

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[41] If you are interested in more in-depth analysis and statistics, I recommend to consult the entire research of Impact08, 2010 by Garcia, Melville and Tox (or other research on www.impacts08.net). For this research it was too extensive to use the whole research.

[42] http://www.liv.ac.uk/impacts08/About/Aimandobjectives.htm, retrieved 24-5-2011.

[43] Personal communication Greg Richards, 17-11-2010.

positive outcomes mentioned in the cases of Glasgow, Lille and Liverpool, the ECOC not always meets the aims set on forehand. This may be due to the fact that vague goals are made in the past, where more recent editions create specific measurable goals (Palmer/Rae Associates, 2004a: p.23). A closer look on the cases above showed that the ECOC actually helped to improve their image internationally, attracted more visitors and became known as cultural destinations. But it is still very difficult to measure success and it is very difficult to make comparisons between cities because of varying goals and characteristics of the cities.

What the cases do show are the expectations in relation with the ECOC and how the event transformed during the years. The Palmer/Rae report points at the fact that *"the cultural dimension of ECOC has been overshadowed by political ambitions and other primarily non-cultural interests and agendas. The European dimension has not been a primary focus, and the potential of ECOC has not been realized as a means of promoting European integration and cooperation"* (Palmer/Rae Associations, 2004a: p.23). This is in line with the shift towards the use of the event as a city marketing tool, by which cities want to improve their image, rather than focusing on arts and culture, ECOC's initial goal a long time ago. The whole event increasingly became an economic story and over time it has incorporated strategic objectives, making it a kind of urban regeneration initiative or regional development strategy. But as Jones and Wilks-Heeg (2004) are stating, culture should not be seen as the only driving force for economic development and regeneration. According to the Palmer/Rae part 1 report *"there is no clear evidence of 1990 being a direct catalyst for other successes in terms of Glasgow's economic development such as the consistent growth in inward investment and job creation, particularly the creative industries and knowledge economy"* (p.186). But despite this, indirectly the event successfully transformed the image of Glasgow, which led to the development of sustainable programs that support cultural industries. It needs to be questioned for whom this event actually is intended and whose culture is celebrated? Because by mainly focusing on the economic side of the event and the selling of places towards outsiders, the celebration of its own culture is increasingly pushed into the background which consequently is making the event less of and for the inhabitants itself (Bakucz, 2007).

Despite all the positive and negative statements about the event, it can really help to work out initiatives faster. All ECOC's cultural initiatives were related to infrastructure projects which already had been in the pipeline for many years. Because of the event, these projects were developed and finished earlier than would have been the case without the prospect of the ECOC (Palmer/Rae, 2004a). Despite the variety among cities, there are several general key factors for success:

- Clarity: the city must have clear objectives related to its needs, its residents and its own identity.
- Involvement: the project needs to be driven by the ambitions of the people in the city and also worn by them. All stakeholders must have a role in the project.
- Vision: the program must show courage, with a strong creative content and artistic autonomy. This will require a strong cultural leadership.
- Planning: the cultural capital should be included in the long term ambitions of the city, related to a clear legacy planning for infrastructure and cultural programs.
- Commitment: political support and adequate financial resources are essential in order to carry out the plans.
- Communication: the message of the ECOC should be transferred clear and powerful at the various audiences (Richards, 2010: p.5-6).

All these elements are important to get a spin-off from the ECOC and need to be evoked in order to make the event a success. It ensures that there will be successful long-term impacts in the city and region because of organizing the event. But once again, these are only key elements, they are no guarantee for success.

5.4 Summarized: is there a noticeable link between the desire to organize the ECOC, the creative class and city marketing?

"If a city succeeds in creating an image with this type of project, than they've really accomplished something"[44]. People are more likely to visit a city where they already have a slight image of, than a city that they do not know yet (Hospers, 2009a). The ECOC can succeed in improving an image, making the city more attractive to visitors and potential residents. The more positive stories are created about a city, the higher the chance of successful city marketing and attracting more people and companies.

But the desire to organize the ECOC is not only rooted in the aim for a better city image, it also sprouts from the desire of attracting investments and ensuring innovation. Something that is perceived as not to occur without creativity. Following KEA European Affairs (2009), culture-based creativity in relation to the economy is "*a form of innovation that essentially helps businesses and institutions to drive marketing, communication, human resources or product/service innovation. Culture-based creativity is that which enables innovation to leave research and development laboratories and create or find its market*" (p.37). Another link with the creative class is that these people *"tend to have a well-developed understanding of the importance of signs, symbols, emotions and aesthetic sensibilities"* (p.44), and therefore the creative class can contribute to the rest of the economy. Promoting social networks and the sharing of ideas are the outcomes of culture as key element in the economy.

Culture-based creativity has a relation with social innovation; it can lead to more confidence and cohesion between different groups in society. Making the city more cohesive and establishing community development is part of the ECOC-programs, aiming at increasing cultural participation among the population. Although that blockbuster events attract many visitors, local initiatives tend to be more sustainable (Palmer/Rae Associates, 2004a). The event was seen as an event in some cities, whereas in other cities it was seen as a process of development. But *"a city should not only say that she is attractive, she should be attractive"[45]*, both to attract the creative class and to manage to keep them at a certain place. So, in order to have positive impacts after the celebration year, internal improvements of the image also play a key role. Because the creative class is more likely to be pulled towards a city because of its facilities and the desire to live in a vibrant place.

As earlier mentioned, and in line with the post-modernist thought, there is no general image for success, given that remarkable impacts of the ECOC are dependent from many different elements like the size of investments, infrastructure, the program and development. Due to all these contextual factors former experiences and tactics can not be replicated from city to city (García, 2004). During future editions of the ECOC it will be exciting whether positive effects are generated. The final level of success dependents on the goals that are set at forehand, the ECOC only can create conditions under which success can be made. To conclude with Uraz's argument that *"today the role of culture cannot be underestimated in strengthening social ties within community … that stimulates new forms to fuse across different creative sectors which all are essential components of the new economy or in other words, the creative economy"* (Uraz, 2007: p.67). Resulting in the fact that the culture and creativity seem to stimulate economic progress and form a basis for successful city marketing.

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[44] Personal communication, Greg Richards, 17-11-2010.
[45] http://www.ru.nl/studereninnijmegen/@762757/hoogleraar_city-_en/, retrieved 25-5-2011.

6 Case 1: MCH2018

"Tourist Information – Turku"

Chapter 6: The case MCH2018

This chapter shifts focus back to MCH2018. It will elaborate on the motives from the partner cities to participate and their expectations of the event. Next to this, the question why they are cooperating in the form of a regional partnership will be discussed. This chapter is structured according to the conceptual model from figure 4.3 and contains the interviews with key persons from the various partners which were willing to participate. The main question to be answered is whether *city marketing* and the *creative class* play a role in the willingness to organize the ECOC, and what kind of *expectations* they have concerning the event. In order to find an answer to the question why both cases are operating in partnerships, we will look especially at the *local politics,* the role of the *growth coalitions* in this process and the desire for *urban regeneration*. As earlier mentioned, the complete list of the respondents and their functions can be found in appendix A, and the interview guide can be found in appendix B.

6.1 Background MCH2018

MCH2018 is a partnership consisting of the Dutch cities of Sittard-Geleen, Heerlen, Maastricht, the province of Limburg (NL), the German city Aachen and the region of Aachen, the province of Limburg (B), province of Liège, German-speaking community in Belgium and the cities of Liège and Hasselt (figure 6.1 and 6.2).

Figure 6.1: Position MCH2018 in Europe   Figure 6.2: Partners MCH2018

Source: http://www.via2018.eu/data/fotos/alg/id449/x0y0w400h300cw400ch300_ft449.jpg   (figure   6.1) and http://www.extension.biz/images/kaart_euroregio2.gif (figure 6.2).

This cooperation is not new, since these partners form the Euregio Meuse-Rhine since 1976 when it was founded as a workgroup; hereby the Euregio is one of the oldest cross-border cooperation's. In 1991, the Euregio got its legal status in the form of a foundation under the Dutch law. Additionally there is a long collaboration between the so called MAHHL-cities, in which the mayors of Maastricht, Aachen, Heerlen, Hasselt and Liège are participating to address several urban issues (Gemeente Maastricht, 2010). The Euregio houses about 3,9 million residents[46]. Its goal was improving quality of life for people and visitors in the region through

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[46] http://www.euregio-Mr.com/nl/euregiomr, retrieved 31-5-2011.

increased information, communication and cooperation between the five regions, regardless of the national borders [47]. The location of the Euregio in Europe is very favourable, situated in the middle of large commercial and industrial centres in Northwest Europe. In the immediate vicinity there are several (international) airports, and large ports are not too far away as well. Moreover, the Euregio is connected to the European transportation network by the rivers and there is an excellent railway infrastructure that connects the region with the rest of Europe. But notwithstanding these features, and the development of many acres for industry over the last couples of years, the region still suffers from vacancy and expectations are not met. Because of the negative image and economic backwardness, the region continues to shrink in terms of population numbers, making action desired.

Previously, the Euregio did not really care about culture. The focus was mainly on population, healthcare, education, employment, mobility, economy, tourism and innovation (Euregional Information Service, 2007). But today it has shifted more the moral side, where an active participation of the citizens of this cross-border cooperation is at the core. This is reflected in common convictions and beliefs, and in the dialogue between neighbouring regions which are separated by borders but having the same problems. This moral focus can contribute to European cooperation and integration[48]. The national borders can be seen as the scars of a long history, resulting in several disadvantages, especially in border regions. Often border areas were a playing field for powerful nations, resulting in partners in the Euregio often unwittingly belonging to the territory of several countries. The historical barriers of borders in Europe are now virtually eliminated; they have become places of transition and exchange. But despite the opening of borders with the introduction the Schengen agreement, certain economic and social disparities still remain visible. The Euregio is looking for solutions to unite and to balance the cross border regions in numerous projects, but it still has not reached a satisfactory level[49]. The Euregio is characterized by its multicultural context and with the ECOC the partners want to promote this euregional cultural identity to strengthen the cultural awareness of the partners at a European level. In order to form a healthy region in the future, the city of Maastricht is dependent on the emergence of new partnerships in the Euregio in culture, economy, transport, education and spatial development.

Acquiring the title of ECOC is seen a opportunity for promoting these new partnerships across national borders and bringing the cooperation to a higher level. Ultimately, improved cultural facilitates in the Euregio will contribute to the economy and improve the attractiveness of the climate of the Euregio for international companies. Next to this, authorities hope that more tourists will visit Maastricht and surrounding regions more often and for a longer duration. One of the most important advantages of this project is the cooperation. There always have been meetings between the regions, but because of this concrete project the region hopes to invoke action. Thanks to the close cooperation and the different perspectives of the partners, everyone is aware of what is going on inside the region and this helps for example to stop duplicating each other. The MCH2018 seems to be an excellent stepping stone for the desire to give Maastricht and Euregio as a whole an economic boost by investing into the cultural sector (Vereniging van Nederlandse Gemeenten, 2011). To create leverage, culture and creativity need to become more dynamic and alive with the inhabitants. The assumption is that once the Euregio becomes known as an economically creative region, a certain dynamism occurs that might reduce the brain drain and gives the creative economy a boost (Euregio Meuse-Rhine, 2010).

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[47] http://www.euregio-Mr.com/nl, retrieved 31-5-2011.
[48] http://www.aachen.de/nl/sb/euregio/index.html, retrieved 31-5-2011.
[49] http://www.euregio-Mr.com/nl/euregiomr/algemeen/geschiedenis, retrieved 31-5-2011.

6.2 Context of the cities from MCH2018 that are included in this research

Since 2001, Sittard-Geleen is an amalgated municipality consisting of the municipalities of Sittard, Geleen and Born that were combined administratively. It is located between the middle of Limburg and the South and consists of approximately 94.805 inhabitants. This makes it the second biggest municipality in the province of Limburg, after Maastricht. However the inhabitants seem to feel much more connected to their own town than with the amalgated community. Despite the necessity for urbanity and an urban identity, Sittard-Geleen is moving very slowly towards a common identity. The image of the city can strongly be affected by culture, with a dynamic and vibrant cultural infrastructure as foundation. The surplus of culture is depending on the quality, by cooperation between different institutions, activities and sectors. In most cases this will be strengthened by clustering and centralization. Sittard-Geleen has relatively much low-skilled workers, about 30% of the population, and only a small proportion of the workforce is represented by the creative class, including only a few artists. Together with Maastricht and Heerlen, Sittard-Geleen also forms the partnership Tripool South-Limburg. This cooperation aims at strengthening the economic structure in the region of South-Limburg (Gemeente Sittard-Geleen, 2009).

Heerlen is a young city with about 90.000 residents[50] and started growing into a city when the mining industry began to flourish decades ago. The city has not developed concentrically outwards from a historical centre like many other cities. Heerlen is a city that consists of several districts, which were built as a network around the various mines and are connected in this way. Heerlen had to deal with high unemployment rates after the closure of the mines. It was mainly low educated people living the city that had to deal with (drug) criminality. Today, many improvements have been made in these areas, but the city still has to deal with a bad image. In the cultural field significant improvements still can be made despite the fact that the 'cultural spring' of the city has been in full bloom for some years (Gemeente Heerlen, 2009). By determining the Multi-annual Executive Program of 2011-2014, the Board decided to provide additional resources for culture. The cultural sector is seen as one of the driving forces for city development, as a catalyst for urban development[51].

The province of Limburg (B) is located in the eastern part of Belgium, next to the province of Limburg in the Netherlands. It is one of ten provinces in Belgium and has about 838.505 inhabitants, living in a total area of 242.214ha[52]. The discovery of the presence of coal marked a turning point at the beginning of the 20th century which led to a rapid economic and social development. Coalmines appeared in the landscape, workers for them were recruited from a number of European and North African countries and the integration of diverse nationalities that lived together went smoothly. In the last quarter of the century the coalmines were closed, but the advent of the Ford plant in Genk created a new economic boost in the province. The population grew, a substantial expansion of the transport infrastructure took place, educational opportunities were broadened, more foreign companies settled in the region and tourism also became a significant factor in the economy[53]. The province is a partner in the Euregio and a cooperation was founded in the cultural field with the province of Limburg (NL) and Liège and the ECOC is expected to speed up these cooperation's.

Hasselt is the capital of the province of Limburg in Belgium with approximately 73.700 inhabitants[54]. After the Second World War the city grew because of the industrialization and the constructions that came with it. Until 2003, Philips had a department in Hasselt which played an

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[50] On the 30th of January 2011, http://home.planet.nl/~pagklein/gemprov.html, retrieved 31-5-2011.

[51] http://www.heerlen.nl/Pub/Home/Home-Nieuwsberichten/Home-Nieuwsberichten-Welzijn/Versterking-cultuur-krijgt-vorm.html, retrieved 31-5-2011.

[52] http://www.limburg.be/eCache/15419/statistieken.html, retrieved 1-6-2011.

[53] http://www.oud-limburg.be/page9.html, retrieved 1-6-2011.

[54] In the year 2010. http://www.hasselt.be/nl/118/press/2693/mobiliteit-in-de-pers.html, retrieved 1-6-2011.

important role in the development of the city. By increasing the purchasing power of the inhabitants of the city and its surroundings, a basis was formed to grow into the third biggest commercial city in Flanders (Stad Hasselt, 2008). But despite the disappearance of this Ford plant and the general recession in the global economy, population growth proves that Hasselt remains attractive. In order to form a counterbalance for the global economic situation, Hasselt wants to focus on improving employment and increase the attractiveness of the city for businesses (Stad Hasselt, 2009).

Aachen is the German city participating in the Euregio. Historically it has been a spa town in North Rhine-Westphalia, located in the most Western part of Germany next to the Province of Limburg (NL) and has almost 260.000 inhabitants[55]. In the recent past, the mining and textile industry left their marks on the city and its surroundings. Nowadays, the predominant economic focus of the city is on science, information, engineering, technology and other related sectors. Aachen is currently ranked 8th among innovative Germany cities. The presence of the RWTH Aachen University, which has a high reputation both in Germany and abroad is the most important reason for this[56]. Next to being one of Europe's leading institutions for science and research, Aachen has more to offer. It has a historical centre whose cathedral dated from the time of Charlemagne and is even on the UNESCO World Heritage Site. In terms of sport activities, Aachen organizes every year the Equestrian World Cup.

6.3 The empirical research

As mentioned earlier in chapter 2, the involved directors for the MCH2018 were approached to participate in this research and five of them have agreed. Besides them Guido Wevers, artistic director of the MCH2018, is interviewed in order to discover the ambitions and expectations of Maastricht. This leads to the following respondents in the case of MCH2018:

MCH2018	City	Function 2010
Guido Wevers	MCH2018	Artistic director MCH2018
Noëlle Kemmerling	Sittard-Geleen	Senior projectmanager, culture, arts and sciences
Greetje van Gemert	Heerlen	Strategic policyadvisor culture
Jean-Pierre Dewael	Province of Limburg (B)	Management human at policy unit culture
Jean-Pierre Swerts	Hasselt	Director culture and tourism
Olaf Müller	Aachen	Director culture

These people were interviewed following the interview guideline which can be found in appendix B. The answers from these interviews are processed using the conceptual model, resulting in a description of motivations and expectations of all participants per concept. The participants and their answers are treated equally, since the goal is to find out what the reasons and thoughts per city or region are.

6.3.1 City marketing

Regarding the aspect of city marketing all respondents had the same line of thought: participating in the event is a manner of creating a better image and visibility of the city through increased media attention. It is important to create a nice living environment to ensure the settling of more highly educated people, resulting that these people in turn attract more employment opportunities. The citizens are going to spend money and they will attract tourists,

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[55] http://www.xfem2009.rwth-aachen.de/MainContents/AboutAachen.php, retrieved 1-6-2011.
[56] http://www.rwth-aachen.de/go/id/xql, retrieved 1-6-2011.

because they are the best ambassadors for tourists. The idea is that if the event is used well, it is going to function as a huge city marketing tool, worth all investments.

For Sittard-Geleen, the main goal to participate in the project is to explore culture, to get a very strong cultural image and to show what they can establish. But next to this, the ECOC is going to be used as a PR-mechanism, to put the whole region in the picture. Aachen, Hasselt and Liège are all not well known internationally and if the event is used properly, they can promote and market the region together in order to become more visible and attractive. In this sense, communication is especially important to establish desired effects related to visitors and tourists. Sittard-Geleen expects that the event ensures that the municipality gets a solid cultural foundation where the gap with surrounding municipalities can be reduced at an accelerated pace. Another aspect that is hoped for is that the people of the former different villages are more likely to feel connected with each other and not just remain focused on their own (former) communities. Together with a higher cultural participation and a bottom-up creativity by more confidence and initiative should ensure that the municipality can start to flourish in order to become a more attractive place.

Heerlen can best be described as a rough diamond, with many empty houses and lots of destroyed heritage. However, the cities also possesses some beautiful squares, monuments and ancient excavations. Elites pulled away in the last few decades because of social problems, making the problems even worse. The city is already starting to improve itself because of recent investments, which is now to pay off. The 'Atlas van de Gemeenten 2010', presented in Heerlen, designates Heerlen as the biggest climber in the Netherlands on the social level. The main focus for Heerlen to participate in the project lies at their own inhabitants and people from the Euregio, because the fact that Heerlen is too small to attract visitors from for example the abroad, this is seen as being more the focus of Maastricht or Aachen. The MCH is seen as tool for change through which Heerlen can find its own character and to intensify the dynamo's that already exist so that acceleration is experienced after 2018. Heerlen is not running for the fireworks in the celebration year, but because of the effects after the fireworks that he must remain visible and palpable in the city. They use the event as a catalyst for the process of development and dynamics already present at the moment.

From the viewpoint of the province of Limburg (B), the MCH is not needed to improve their image or to show what potential they have, but the MCH project is seen as enrichment for the complete Euregio. The province is not concentrated, but has a cultural program that is organized equivalent to the size of the cities. Despite the fact that the focus lies in strengthening the cross-border cooperation, there are also underlying thoughts of attracting potential residents or higher educated people. But these effects need to be generated because of a good cooperation that creates a fine living environment with lots of nature, little congestion, high quality of gastronomy etc. When these aspects are all present this will naturally lead to a better image enabling the city to profile itself. It is therefore thought that it is more important that effects of the MCH are positive in the Euregio, rather than the ability of people to find at Hasselt on a map.

The city of Hasselt sees the ECOC as a means to ensure their future and to be able to remain a very attractive city for both the young creative people as well as for elderly people and even tourists, to be a city where culture is visible and has a tangible presence. The ECOC gives the city the opportunity to formulate their vision about the future more clearly and ensures that the city creates a stable cultural structure which makes it more attractive to the different target groups (creative class, seniors, visitors and companies). Therefore improving the image has in relation to this one of the most wanted priorities.

Aachen states that it is already performing and developing well and that it has many amenities. The cultural program is comprehensive because of the presence of museums, events, services, children's and youth culture, library, music school, city archives and historic landmarks.

By getting more attention through the event, the city eventually will get even more popular, acting in the end as a perpetual mobile for investments, residents and tourists.

6.3.2 Creative class

The ECOC is thought to be an event which attracts both higher educated people and the creative class, which in turn must ensure that the region as a whole gets more attractive for residents, companies and even tourists. All respondents followed the same line of argumentation for attracting the creative class, they only have wrapped it with different expressions. Especially the Province of Limburg in the Netherlands and the Dutch cities have to cope with the aging of the inhabitants, flow of young people and brain drain. For them, it is especially important to counter this emigration by getting attractive in many ways to become and stay attractive in the future for different groups. South-Limburg deals with major social problems. It is unclear and hard to say if the event really can act against the problems of aging for example.

Sittard-Geleen copes with a large group of lower skilled people which form the weakness of the municipality. There are some companies in southern-Limburg demanding high educated people like DSM and SABIC, but these people are still hard to find nearby cities. The emancipation of the city still must occur and therefore Sittard-Geleen is targeting at the autonomous artists. Sittard-Geleen is a fairly large community with almost 100.000 inhabitants, but the inhabitants still have a strong village-mentality with a sense of inferiority. The city wants to create pools where creativity can flourish, resulting in an underground scene where creative people can brainwave. This not only done by focusing on 'culture with a capital C', but also by targeting at different associations, in order to involve the people with culture. The city is most back warded in the Euregio and the ECOC is expected to speed up the developments. Generally Maastricht functions as the magnet of the region for the high skilled workforce. Therefore, the business climate in Sittard-Geleen must become more attractive through the development of urban dynamics, so that people and businesses are going to settle here and that a different sphere can be created because of the presence of high skilled workers.

Heerlen wants to be an attractive economic region, where people consider about visiting and even living. They want to attract people with an improved cultural image, but also higher educated people considering that they are expected to generate new jobs. The ECOC is expected to give cultural institutions a tremendous boost, and that cultural programs can be made in much better cooperation with the different partners. Besides, Heerlen is convinced that the fastest growing sector in terms of employment is the creative sector. Therefore, investments are made to stimulate the creative industries, which mean that they want to offer a balanced cultural program, which is not the case right now. At this time the population is rather one-sided, making the aim of a more balanced composition of all social stratifications desired. People choose to live in places where they feel most attracted to, and consequently search for a job nearby. The people currently feel a bit inferior and a chain of events must emerge a certain feeling of proudness and the awareness that Heerlen is an important region, creating a sort of aha-erlebnis. The result should be a city where everyone feels proud of, and does not feel ashamed because of its economic gap after the closure of mines. The majority of the people has reached a higher level of education and the city should provide more jobs.

Following the argumentation of the Province of Limburg (B) culture plays a crucial role in society today. It is rejuvenating, oxygen reducing, ensuring a nice living environment. The event is not called artistic capital, but cultural capital and the vision on culture is developing as well, just like the effects. The desired effect differs from the result: the result needs to be an intriguing way towards 2018 by making a sustainable cultural program with the effect that more people choose to settle here because of the range of activities and high quality of life.

There is considerably much creative talent at presence in the city of Hasselt. Hasselt has a rock and pop academy, a university and varying range of facilities which attract those young creative people. Although some of this talent stays in the city after graduation, there is also a flight over creative talent towards other regions because of a limited range of studies, little or no professional groups and the absence of a metropolitan vibe. This leads to the intention to become more attractive by strengthening the cultural structure of the city. But at the same time, the city is very popular amongst seniors because of the many amenities. By creating a better image of the city, more creative people are attracted and this will pay off according to several reports.

The participation in the ECOC fits in Aachen's mission to become a city of science. The target groups are therefore young creative people from abroad and the creative class, because these groups are expected to affect the city positively economically. People like to settle in areas which are full of different cultures, making culture an important aspect by creating a nice living environment. Eventually this will make the city even more popular, acting in the end as a perpetual mobile.

6.3.3 Cooperation: local politics and growth coalitions

The initiative for the project derived from Maastricht, which had huge ambitions in all sorts of policy fields. In the beginning, Maastricht was very egocentric and the Dutch cities were only allowed to participate superficial. Maastricht, Heerlen and Sittard-Geleen formed the Tripool and formed a part of the Euregio. When Maastricht realized that it could not organize the event on its own and needed the region and its dynamism, it was a logical step to invite Heerlen and Sittard-Geleen. The Euregio was eventually involved in the story to give it an extra European dimension and to intensify the cooperation inside the region. In 2009, all eleven partners signed the cooperation agreement, which formed the formal basis of the collaboration to support the candidacy of MCH2018 together. This joint approach underlines the will to cooperate, which is a good basis for further cooperation in the future.

The MCH is definitely seen as a vehicle for cultural development and ambitions that are described in the existing cultural policies. There are several cross-border cooperation's like the Schrittmacherfestival in Heerlen and Aachen, but because of different rules in both countries there are still a lot of obstacles. The ECOC would be the crown to this cooperative environment and is hoped to make exchanges in the future easier. The Euregio is still a very abstract concept and the ECOC is an opportunity to make this more concrete. The governors already have achieved a lot in their minds, but in practice not much has happened. Cooperation is now still mostly done among other things and the different formal structures across the borders make cooperation different. But when people are involved full-time in this cross border governance, then the collaboration is seen to become very fertile. Already an effect of the MCH is that the Euregio is thinking more intensive about how to cooperate and make the Euregio more visible. The free movement of artists and their creative products inside the Euregio, and more particularly between the Mahhlsteden, should be stimulated and increased after 2018 according to Heerlen.

A common approach is needed on issues like infrastructure and the removal of all sorts' obstacles that exist because of the national borders. The cooperation with the Euregio is already strengthened in the run-up to the event, especially in the cultural field. The cities can learn from each other and eventually this will lead to a better coordination in cultural programs. All respondents answered that without the ECOC this cooperation would have not experienced such a rapid development as occurred in the past year. The event facilitated easier collaboration and next to the cultural infrastructure it is important to work on the road network, accessibility and

public transport also. The working field of the Euregio is actually very wide and with the ECOC they are creating the foundation for this intensive cooperation.

For the Province of Limburg (B) it is an opportunity that partners are looking beyond their borders, but not a necessity. They believe that they are doing well without the partnership, but it is expected that such a project like the ECOC is going to generate additional resources for the cultural sector with an appearance that goes beyond the cultural sector and cultural development. The investments do not necessarily need to pay off direct financially, but this may occur in many other forms of benefits. The Euregio is an exceptional area; within a one and a half hour drive people can experience different cultures, languages, architecture and gastronomy. Because of these alternations an enormous wealth is created and from a political perspective it should be tried to take more advantage out of these characteristics. Right now, every city is mainly focused on itself, everyone stands with their backs to each other. The people living inside this area should feel themselves as being part of the Euregio after 2018. By then crossing the borders should not feel as a trip or holiday, but as a normal (daily) routine. Together they should have established a higher quality of cultural infrastructure.

Hasselt was glad to be invited to participate in the project together with the other partners of the Euregio and sees the ECOC as a unique opportunity to profile itself in Europe. The added value derives mainly from the fact that together the region can perform much stronger. There may be discussions about where to locate facilities if all partners want to do develop in the same way. Precisely this is seen as a powerful tool, to spread different facilities across the region so that the borders are crossed and eventually will disappear. This is also a statement made by Sittard-Geleen, which has problems with its composition out of three former villages and states that they would be stupid if they would not participate in the project. A boost is needed, to make culture more visible and to break down the mental barriers of the inhabitants. According to Heerlen not only the physical borders of the Euregio need to fade away, but the mental borders as well. The idea must come alive that the inhabitants feel themselves as citizens of the Tripool. The cooperation with the Euregio is not seen as the most important aspect, Heerlen would much rather like to intensify the cooperation with Aachen and Eupen. Organizing such a mega-event like the ECOC jointly is a new challenge for the Euregio and makes it very interesting to be a part of. According to Aachen, it is important to participate in the project in order to show the uniqueness of this region and to profit from the improved collaboration. Cultural differences may cause problems, but that is the interesting part of this partnership and makes it challenging to work in.

The city of Aachen is reasonably satisfied with the overall performance of the city and their modern cultural program. It is therefore not very important to cooperate in the MCH for several impacts that are important to a city as Maastricht of the smaller towns. The expected outcome of the event for Aachen has mostly to do with an improved cooperation between the partners in the Euregio. By instigating the MCH it is hoped that the Euregio will develop into an open minded society.

If MCH2018 would not be chosen to become ECOC, big steps have been made in the partnership anyway. This is very valuable for the region, and a confirmation that much can be achieved within the region. It is just thought as ridiculous that the ambition of the ECOC is needed before this intensive cooperation really starts. The cities do not see each other as competitors, because every city has its own qualities. They only must ensure that they are not 'raking in each other's garden', but that they create a beautiful park from these different small gardens.

6.3.4 Urban regeneration

The financial contributions of the partners at the moment of interviewing are based on population numbers: each city invests €2 per inhabitant and the province of Limburg (NL) contributes with approximately €2.1 million, to create a first draft of the bidbook. After 2014, when it will become clear which city may organize the event, it will be discussed how to move on. But the total investments of the ECOC are currently estimated at €60-80 million and where this huge amount of money has to come from is still unclear at the moment. It is expected that the event will lead to urban regeneration and that a lot of money gets invested in cultural facilities. Next to the cultural and social part of this story, changes in the policy field are related to the ECOC. Because of the event, restrictions in public transport are made visible, so the project acts as an eye-opener to invest in vital parts that can strengthen the region both physically and mentally. The Euregio is going to have a common program, expecting every city levelling with the others being able to form an autonomous program. Together they can make the region more attractive and providing the opportunity for future development.

This ensures that Sittard-Geleen is thinking about how they can improve themselves and to create an urban dynamism which makes the municipality more attractive. Sittard-Geleen hopes that the event can stabilize and strengthen the cultural climate, by which more high skilled employees and knowledge workers will settle in the city. Culture is only one part of this, with housing, cultural facilities (like the 'Dobbelsteen' and a library) and the creation of an urban image being important in relation to this.

A cultural spring has begun in Heerlen and much has been invested in the physical construction of a number of venues where the 'ugly duck is transforming into a beautiful swan'. Decisions were made to invest in culture, believing that it is an instrument to develop this polyvalent city further. The partnership will ensure that more qualitative leaps are made and much will be invested in the structure of the city.

According to the Province of Limburg (B) the aim of the event is to use culture to build on the society, for refreshment, renewal and stimulation of the region. The program itself is a goal, but the effects that the project will realize are experienced as far more important. If they are going to invest in the program, this is going to be in projects that will take place inside the own province in a way that it will be a part of the overall program. The more money and effort is put into culture and the necessary improvements in infrastructure, the bigger their share in the MCH will be.

Hasselt has quickly overtaken its cultural shortfall, parallel with its growth into the centre of the province. In one generation a transformation took place in which the city went from almost nothing into a city with cultural centres, museums, cinema and a complex for mega-events.

The expected effects of Aachen will be a better connection of the partners, resulting in a 'Bilbao-effect', strengthening the cultural profile of the regions. Bilbao was an interesting case that showed how cultural regionalism collides through the planned landscape with entrepreneurialism and economic rescaling. Bilbao showed how to mediate between the global and the local within certain political discourses and is an example of how the Euregio can reshape its relations to form a cohesive region. The MCH can contribute to the quality of life in the city, making the region attractive for students, residents and tourists. The event is aimed at bringing sustainable development into the region and is seen as an engine for this coming at the right time.

6.4 Overview and comparisons MCH2018

It is hoped that by bidding for the ECOC the Euregio can put itself on the map as the centre of Europe. It is already seen as a laboratory for Euregional cooperation and getting the title would be the next step. Cooperation in this partnership is necessary to achieve this goal, because the different actors are not able to organize the event on their own. Maastricht was the initiator, first of all deriving from the fact that only a Dutch city can be designated as ECOC in 2018, and secondly because of the fact that Maastricht is incapable of organizing this event with such high requirements in terms of investments alone. The idea, mainly coming from the Dutch partners, is that it is ridiculous that the cities serve only such a small area because of limitations of the national borders. Physical and mental borders need to be deconstructed. The belief is that better cooperation can bring added value to the economy, society and culture. The ECOC certainly can make a difference in the opening of physical and mental borders, but there are doubts to what extent this affects the inhabitants.

A closer look at the interviews shows that there are both similarities and differences in the aims of partners participating in the project, and their thoughts on the effects. Whereas Sittard-Geleen and Heerlen are hoping that the event will improve their city overall. Sittard-Geleen is lagging behind ten years compared to the development of Heerlen. They both want to develop their cultural program in order to become more vibrant and attractive for mainly residents and companies. They are not focused on tourists, but more on the internal improvements and how they can alter their repelling image. Maastricht on the contrary, is next to the inhabitants more focused on 'grandeur'. They are a larger city known internationally. Therefore they are more focused on showing the rest of Europe what qualities they already have and put themselves on the map again.

The major motive for the foreign partners to be involved in the project is that the cooperation is improving because of the intensive contact concerning cultural programs. This has resulted in better contact than ever before, and hopefully this improvement will lead to development on other policy fields (mainly infrastructure). This improved cooperation on all sorts of levels plays a role for each respondent, but whereas the Dutch respondents focus truly on improving the cultural infrastructure, the foreign partners are mainly concerned with the cooperation aspect.

Every city deals with its own internal issues, resulting in slightly different motives. What they all have in common is the underlying factor that together they can form an attractive habitat in the Euregio. More exchange is going to take place, because they can reinforce each other enormously from their positions located at the fringes of their own countries. But if the different partners really want to form a Euregio where everybody feels as inhabitant of the Euregio, a lot of work has to be done. It is not only a hard task to break down the physical barriers, but the mental ones require even a much wider approach. The question is whether an event like the ECOC really can make a difference in this respect. Regarding the infrastructure and connections between the different cities, improvements will certainly be made if this region is chosen to be ECOC.

7 Case 2: Brabantstad

"La Traviata, National Opera – Vilnius"

Chapter 7: The case Brabantstad

This chapter follows the same structure as previous chapter 6 and contains the qualitative research towards the motives of the different cities participate in the event of the case Brabantstad. What expectations do these participants have about effects and outcomes? Also will be discussed why they are cooperating in the form of a regional partnership. Since this chapter is structured according to the conceptual model from figure 4.3, it will be looked whether *city marketing* and the *creative class* play a role in the willingness to organize the ECOC. What *expectations* have these cities about the event and what are the thought outcomes for the city and region. In order to find an answer on the question why both cases are operating in partnerships, it will be looked on the *local politics* and the role of the *growth coalitions* in this process and the desire for *urban regeneration*.

7.1 Background 2018Brabantstad

Since 2001, Brabantstad is a partnership consisting of the Dutch cities of Breda, Eindhoven, Helmond, 's-Hertogenbosch, Tilburg and the rural areas between them, represented by the province[57] (figure 7.1 and 7.2).

Figure 7.1: Position Brabantstad in Europe   *Figure 7.2: Partners Brabantstad*

Source: http://www.marcovermeulen.nl/projecten/alle/86/brabantstad2040/ (figure 7.1) and http://www.brabantstad.nl/home (figure 7.2).

Nowadays, Brabantstad is still mainly a managerial partnership, but it is a promising network that can grow into a 'Mosaic Metropolis' with the willingness to align policies in various fields. Adapting those to different cities forms a central element. The purpose is to integrate the different cities, of which the core of the area is not formed by the five cities, but by the whole region. Mosaic refers to the diversity of the five major cities of Brabant and their contrast with the rural area. Metropolis stands for the development of the cities into one metropolitan area including high dynamic centres, high-quality urban facilities and cultural attractions. The main

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[57] http://www.2018brabant.eu/media/persberichten/eerste-pers-bericht-brabant2018.aspx, retrieved 29-5-2011.

priorities in the development of the Mosaic Metropolis are sustainability and achieving a dynamic balance between socio-economic, ecological and cultural aspects. In the case of Brabantstad, this means maintaining the human scale and creating a fine living climate, during the transition towards an innovative knowledge economy. The road to the nomination as well as to eventually obtaining the title of the ECOC can give this network a major boost and the opportunity to jointly built on a promising and sustainable cultural agenda inside the Mosaic Metropolis (2018Brabant Samen Culturele Hoofdstad, 2010: p.6 and Stuurgroep BCHE2810, 2008).

The sharing of knowledge and information exchange dominated the cooperation initially. Later on, common opportunities and problems were attacked by Brabantstad because of their common interests. But despite the hard work, Brabantstad is still not alive by the inhabitants of the five cities. The partnership is hardly known to affect live, work, travel and recreation of the 1,4 million inhabitants of the area. Because of this, Brabantstad at this moment functions as nothing more than an administrative entity that lives only by the ambitious policymakers.

Brabant is the second biggest economy in the Netherlands after South-Holland (also called the Randstad), with approximately 120,000 companies, more than one million jobs and a strong export position. Brabant contributes to 15% of the gross national income. But if Brabantstad wants to maintain its economic competiveness, a transition is required into an innovative knowledge-based economy in which the five cities and the county can use their assets well (2018Brabant Samen Culturele Hoofdstad, 2010: p.9-11). Another important consideration derives from the believe that by strengthening the mix of urban styles, knowledge and environment, more highly educated workers and entrepreneurs can be seduced to settle in this area. For companies, the living and housing climate combined with an inflow of higher educated people is increasingly a weighty argument to settle somewhere or not. For higher educated people, good facilities and appealing cultural arts and cultural facilities largely determine the choice to live in a specific city or region (Marlet, 2009).

All summarized, Brabantstad wants to create the Mosaic Metropolis through which culture increases the economic strength of each of the five cities and continues to form the 'centre of excellence': a way to position themselves in Europe as innovative. The origin of the idea to run for the ECOC came from the administrative trajectory. This because of the believe that it can give an impulse to the region, by which developments occur more intensive, are much more focused and reached in a shorter term. The B5 (comprised of the five cities involved in the ECOC) already existed for ten years, especially on the economic field. The event is aimed at giving this trajectory an extra impulse, in order to establish the wanted developments[58]. Other goals are achieving a strong physical and digital infrastructure; a business climate that acts as a magnet for national and international companies, research- and education institutions; creating sports and cultural facilities with a high urban profile and to contribute to national (sports) ambitions. All this has to be achieved with respect to the human scale of the inhabitants (2018Brabant Samen Culturele Hoofdstad, 2010: p.9). The desire is to make Brabantstad stronger, manifesting itself in relationships, but also to gain externally by forging links between sectors, people and cities[59]. But the ambitions are not meant for the inhabitants only, also for visitors[60]. Brabantstad claims that by granting for the title or getting actually this title, the process prior to this in practice acts as a catalyst to realize a stronger cultural supply[61]. Goals related to cultural facilities, social cohesion and economic development would be reached arguably faster than a regular policy period without the event. Being only a candidate is a strong incentive already for projects, identity,

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[58] Personal communication Geert Lenders, deputy of culture, Province of North-Brabant, on ..-06-2011.
[59] Personal communication Heleen Huisjes, program manager 2018Brabant, on 12-04-2011.
[60] http://www.2018brabant.eu/media/persberichten/eerste-pers-bericht-brabant2018.aspx, retrieved 29-5-2011
[61] The idea to run for the ECOC together originated from the province and it was obvious to implement this partnership, given that there were already plans for further economic, social and cultural development in this network. http://www.brabantstad.nl/samenculturelehoofdstad2018, retrieved 29-5-2011.

cooperation and planning. That is why Brabantstad cooperates in the ECOC, to position the region strongly and to become alive in the minds of the inhabitants. The individual cities are not capable of organizing the event on their own, making the choice for the cooperation with Brabantstad an obvious one. The strength of the cooperation is that Brabantstad can generate much more cultural potential. Because they are doing it together, much more investment potential of resources can be combined. Brabantstad would like to serve as 'the new city'. Not necessarily because the geographical location of the area, but because of the fact that the limits of the cities as known noawadys are somewhat outdated and the interactions between them has increased. The cultural capital is really aimed at creating one big cohesive city of this area[2].

7.2 Context of the cities from Brabantstad that are included in this research

Of the five participating cities of Brabantstad, Helmond is the smallest with 88.285 inhabitants[62] (Gemeente Helmond, 2010a) and is likely to grow in the future. Therefore a high quality city centre has to be realized, with facilities that fit in a dynamic environment (Brabantstad, 2007). The economic structure and pattern of urban facilities in different areas of the city are still fragile and not robust enough, leaving much to be done in order to achieve an excellent and safe living- and working environment. This needs to be sustainable, and at the same time must handle a qualitative comparison with the other cities (Gemeente Helmond, 2010b). The ECOC is seen as a means of changing the weak cultural structure of Helmond, that is why participation in the event is included in the coalition program of the municipality of Helmond 2010-2014, which indicates a broad support for the initiative (Gemeente Helmond, 2010c).

Breda is the third city of Brabantstad after Eindhoven and Tilburg with 174.000 inhabitants. Former villages, districts and neighbourhoods form together a connected network[63]. Breda is cooperating in the ECOC because it is one of the bigger partners of Brabantstad, with a large hinterland and a broad cultural spectrum. Breda functions as a logistic gateway to Europe through the shuttle and the connection to the HSL, which emphasizes its international ambitions. Breda has already witnessed some developments in the cultural field (Willems, 2007). In recent years, many new initiatives have developed with a wider cultural offering at a higher level. As outcome, Breda argues that the ECOC contributes to the growth of employment, quality education and social relations in the city. But their ambitions are demanding for higher cultural qualities which can be established and expressed outwards because of this joint approach of the ECOC. Breda also included the ECOC event in their coalition program for the years 2010-2014, because the event is indicative of the cultural ambitions of the city (Gemeente Breda, 2010)

With 'het ommeland', the rural areas between the five cities are indicated, which all together form an area with 1,4 million inhabitants. Nowadays, Brabantstad is more an urban area rather than a rural one: a network of cities, interconnected by infrastructure and its green surroundings (Provincie North-Brabant, 2009). Brabantstad wants to show that cities are nice places to live and work in, something that is important for the quality of life in urban as well in rural areas. On the other hand, Brabantstad wants to maintain the positive aspects of the village life, because Brabant does not know the scale and anonymity such as cities in the Randstad (Rutten, 2006). The province of North-Brabant started with the idea of bidding for the ECOC and is participating in the event because it wants to create support among the population. They are also aiming at achieving cultural objectives in cooperation with the whole region, of which the ommeland forms a vital part. The impact on surrounding areas during recent ECOC's indicates that this also could have broader impacts for Brabantstad, and especially for non-urbanized environments (Richards, 2010).

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[62] According to the census on the 1st of January 2010.
[63] http://www.breda.nl/gemeente/historie, retrieved 30-5-2011.

7.3 The empirical research

To collect the respondents in the case of Brabantstad, the same approach as used by the MCH is used. This has the result that in total four interviews were conducted. This leads to the following respondents in the case of Brabantstad:

Brabantstad	City	Function 2010
Heleen Huisjes	2018Brabant	Director Agency 2018Brabant Together Cultural Capital
Tony Klaasen	Helmond	Culture broker 2018Brabant
Geurt Grosfeld	Breda	Culture broker 2018Brabant
Geert Lenders	Province of Brabant	Culture broker 2018Brabant

These people were interviewed following the interview guideline which can be found in appendix B. The answers from these interviews are processed using the conceptual model, resulting in a description of motivations and expectations of all participants per concept. The participants are treated equal, because the goal is to find out what the reasons and thoughts per city or region are. The results of the interviews are discussed below.

7.3.1 City marketing

Brabantstad can be seen from the viewpoint of Manuel Castells, who states that cities are nodes in a landscape. Brabantstad has one landscape, but with five cities which all form nodes of urban density. This ensures that the shape of the city is different than a traditional one: which increasingly expands because of urban sprawl, absorbing everything in the nearby surroundings leading to the formation of a monotone urban landscape. The aim of Brabantstad is to see the rural areas around and between the cities as a sort of central park and strengthen the connection with the cities. At the same time they would like to strengthen the contrast between urban and rural areas. The province is involved in the whole project, because they should take care of the 'green' component from the vision of the Mosaic Metropolis. The goal of Brabantstad is to create a coherent diversity, by steering on strengthening the interurban network in the cultural field.

The city marketing of Helmond needs to become much stronger. Helmond already improved the image of the city for businesses or residential goals over the last ten to twenty years, but the ECOC gives Helmond more opportunities for a positive impetus to the image-enhancement. The city is lying behind on the other partners and wants to experience a transition from an industrial city towards a city with an urban appearance and a strong cultural, social and economic infrastructure. The city wants a facelift for economic goals, but also for recreation and visitors. At the time, there are several small festivals which focus too much on certain parts of the own population. Helmond sees the ECOC as an opportunity to attract a wider audience to those festivals, in cooperation with European actors. It is expected that the ECOC gives opportunities for companies to rise to an international level and to attract world leading companies, mainly by organizing conferences.

The focus of Breda lies in the fact that the city wants to become a stronger player in the field of visual culture and heritage at an international level. They want to present themselves as a city which focuses on the knowledge economy instead of their former image as manufacturing economy. Here fore, currently much is invested in international networks on a political, business and an educational level.

Brabantstad must take care that the event is not only used as a city marketing tool, because too many marketing thinking tends to stay superficial. The ECOC project is a process which has to intervene inside Brabantstad, and by thinking solely about city marketing the event

is not able to hit the core. Although there are currently still a couple of directors who are thinking this way at the moment.

7.3.2 Creative class

The idea came by Brabantstad, under the influence of Florida, that if the cities want to compete economically stronger and attract certain types of employees, they must operate together in order to profile with an attractive business climate. Therefore other components are needed as well, like quick links or modern equipped business areas. A shift in the cultural program has to create an exciting environment. This because the general expectation of the respondents that if a city is attractive for young people with a high quality of education, this automatically gives an impulse to the intellect of society resulting that people want to stay at a particular place. If the society is formed out of relatively highly educated people, there is a relatively higher chance for new developments; at least much larger than in a working class city would be the case. When cultural richness is combined with security, a city is appealing to families. And if people want to live in a certain town, it thereby becomes an attractive place for businesses, because the broad arsenal of available skilled workers.

Helmond is definitely using culture as a vehicle for economic empowerment. Brabantstad wants to stay strong and also strengthen their position of being the second economic region in the Netherlands by the event. Culture brings people together and has a binding ability, what means that people join forces and generate resilience for development. In the case of Helmond, youth plays a central role to give the society not only a cultural face, but also a social one. They want to attract people from the creative sector in relation to technology, because the city has a strong automotive sector of the city. These two elements play a central role in the research and creative applications of new technologies. Helmond thinks that the city is slowly gaining the image of a city with its own face, but in my opinion there is still much to be improved in order to get a good image. Helmond expects that the event will lead to a higher educated workforce and that the cultural contradictions in the city will reduce, forming a more cohesive city. In the cultural field, much is still to achieve in order to improve the public friendliness, accessibility and attractiveness ,which is needed to attract the creative class.

The focus of Breda on the creative class lies in the ambition that the city really wants to present itself from a former manufacturing economy truly into a knowledge economy, with a strong focus on the intellectuals. Next to this, the city wants to become more attractive to tourists, presenting itself as a comprehensive city for various audiences and purposes.

Brabant is educating a lot of people, but these move out of the region after graduation because of better job opportunities elsewhere. The idea is that an impulse of culture really drives the economic attractiveness of the region. But it is also said that it is first of all very hard to attract the creative class and second difficult to retain them, because they are roaming around and go everywhere they feel like. Creative hotspots may work for a while, but the creative people are forced to move elsewhere after a while due to gentrification. All sorts of companies are sponsoring and committing themselves to the ECOC and other cultural activities already, because they see the importance of participating for their own appearance. There always will remain a floating avant-garde which cannot be attracted or influenced at all in choosing their location, but the idea is that they should not mind this group at all; there is nothing to do to attract those people.

7.3.3 Cooperation: local politics and growth coalitions

There are always two distinct layers in relation to Brabantstad and the ECOC, the first is the general organization of Brabantstad, the second is formed out of the local layers of each individual city. The aim of Brabantstad is to strengthen the economic, social and cultural

structure of the region. This really is the driving force to bid for the event. On the local level, this will be given form in different ways, because of the different cultural identities of the cities which determine the programs. Helmond is putting the accent on cultural heritage; Eindhoven on design; Tilburg focuses on the manufacturing industry; Den Bosch does not use metaphors and uses Hieronymus Bosch as theme; and finally Breda which has a long history in the field of arts and heritage is focusing on visual culture and heritage. Previously the main focus of Brabantstad was cooperation for physical infrastructure, but gradually the notion came that if Brabantstad wants to behave as a real metropolis, the concept must come alive within the inhabitants' minds. Since Brabantstad still only is alive by administrators and a lot of basic amenities and connections are not yet completed, the ECOC can bring great efforts to establish for example a good transportation network. Cooperating is necessary for getting the title and the ECOC has developed also. The ECOC must connect inhabitants of Brabantstad, intensify the partnership and extending the cooperation at all sorts of levels, creating a new attractive region. Because of the expected impacts and the increased cooperation, there is not one city that would not participate in the project, given the fact that in the beginning there is no loss scenario and not participating certainly yields nothing.

There are initiatives right now to develop several projects towards 2018 that would not have gotten off the ground if the perspective of becoming ECOC would not have existed. There is already noticeable a much greater collaboration for projects with a special content, which are accomplished by many cultural institutions throughout Brabant. The way towards the bidbook has an visible effect already, since Brabantstad is brainstorming about questions like how they can attract and keep creative people in the region. What do they find attractive? There should be anticipated on this, otherwise the creative class chooses to live and work elsewhere. Every city has its own profile and shall manifest themselves in a different way in the light of the event, but a couple of things are done together and cannot be associated to a particular city. Every city is visible by their partners, in such a way that they can reinforce each other. The initiator of the project was the Province of North-Brabant, which thought that the ECOC event could have many positive effects on the existing cooperation. The reason why the province itself is cooperating is to ensure a good consistency and variety of the connection between the cities and the rural areas.

Helmond participates in the project because they want to further improve the cooperation between the cities in the network. In such a way that it can add value by the diversity of Brabant, and to form the Mosaic Metropolis that is characterized by its cultural richness. Helmond is lying behind the most of the five cities in terms of social and economic development, and that is why it is expected that they will benefit greatly from their participation. If the whole region becomes more attractive, it is the best for everybody.

With the engine of the ECOC, the willingness to invest is higher. The respondents think that the region misses a lot of opportunities if every city would focus only on its own development. This is demonstrated by the investments of approximately €30 million that been done already, wherein the county would not had contributed without the prospect of the ECOC. The ECOC is a good opportunity to improve the regional cooperation, because municipalities are just like provinces very political and decisions and choices are measured by the support base in the vicinity. This not only to survive, but also from a democratic point of view, because it is easier to commit on something that happens twenty kilometres away, thereby positioning their own city more into perspective. The ECOC should ensure that the cooperation between the different cities gets intensified on all sorts of levels, making the area as a whole more attractive. It is also seen as a means to let the concept of Brabantstad come alive inside the region and its inhabitants, something which is currently certainly not the case.

7.3.4 Urban regeneration

From an economic point of view, it is expected that the ECOC requires a total investment of €100-150 million. But at the same time that this sacrifice will be recovered by 3 or 4 times as much. The recovery of investments is mainly due to an expected increase in visitor numbers with 30-40%, and an increase of stayings overnight by 20%. It is assumed that not every investment will come back directly to the cities, some perhaps might come through municipal taxes. But the idea is that a prosperous city needs to offer a lot in order to serve the community. For example, the catering business will benefit from the increasing number of visitors, like business in general. It is expected that the cities will enhance the attractiveness for higher educated people through the provision of cultural facilities. This argumentation sounds acceptable, but it can be questioned to what extent these five smaller towns can make the event viable, even with large future gains, rather than the larger ECOC's of the past. Additionally, the Province of North-Brabant is little sceptic about the optimistic prospects. The event would certainly generate a boost in the region, development should be better and stronger aligned in this area, but it is very difficult to estimate the revenues exactly.

It is shown in many ways that there is a relationship between economic development and cultural developments. This nourishes the idea by Brabantstad that the balance needs to be put more into culture as an engine for other developments. They all claim that cities that have been ECOC faced a huge spin-off, even after the year in which they were entitled. It is therefore important to see 2018 not as a celebration year, but as a year wherein Brabantstad can show what they have invested in previous years and what they will continue to do.

Investments are even made already, and if these are going to recover in the future depends on which investments are done. Every city invests €10 million and the province contributes with another €50 million. This distribution is not completely fair, considering the different sizes and levels of development of the cities. The ratio behind this distribution is clear, but it is not that easy for every city to invest this amount of money. But by every economic unit fits an appropriate investment which will render, only this needs to be calculated smart. Brabantstad and many other cities are quit used to sell air, so only if the region would stay critical to their aims and identity, the ECOC can ensure a development in the city as well in Brabantstad as a whole.

Urban regeneration in relation to Helmond lies more in the aim to establish a clearer relationship between arts- and cultural activities and education. Because culture can contribute to social cohesion and the creation of an individual's identity. The cultural infrastructure of Helmond has to be strengthened in conjunction with other policy fields.

The urban transformation that Breda wants to achieve, cannot be realized by the city alone, bidding for the event alone was also never an option. If Breda wants to become widely known, they need the rest of Brabantstad, since the city is too small to offer enough diversity. Another aim is therefore to create a better community-belonging with qualitative better cultural facilities, for example an opera building which is missing at this moment. The ECOC event is thus seen as a means by which urban development can take place. The whole process towards 2014 ensures that investments are done which would otherwise not have taken place without the prospect of the event, or maybe at a slower pace. The level of ambition lays higher at this moment, just like the amounts of money involved. Various physical projects are grouped under the umbrella of the ECOC, so that these projects actually will be implemented. But also to ensure that various other peripheral issues are included like infrastructure, railway connections etc.

7.4 Overview and comparisons Brabantstad

Summarized the case of Brabantstad, the event is mainly seen as a tool for urban regeneration. Every city wants to improve their own cultural institutions and has a wish list of all sort of physical improvements, keeping in mind to make the city more attractive for their own inhabitants, visitors and companies. The prospect of the ECOC ensures that an acceleration is noticeable already in the development of all sorts of social en economic projects. The Province of North-Brabant initiated the idea for the ECOC and all cities joined immediately, because the believe that the event only can bring benefits. Hereby, they justify the needed large investments. Another aspect of this cooperation is the concept of Brabantstad itself, which is bad or even not known by its own inhabitants. In order to provide a counterbalance to other economic regions, it is necessary that everybody becomes familiar with the whole concept. The ECOC is seen as a means to actually achieve this, through a shared program. During the time of this research, still very few people are familiar with the phenomenon of the ECOC and certainly not with Brabantstad. To what extent this will happen because of the event is a question that only time can tell us.

The responses of Brabantstad show that the partners have more goals in common than is by the case MCH2018. One explanation for this might be that this research contains little material to compare because of the fewer number of interviews. Another explanation could be because of the fact that the partners of Brabantstad are all Dutch. Helmond is the smallest city in this partnership, thinking that it has much to develop in order to reach the same level as the other cities. It therefore focuses the most on the participation of the public by events and cultural activities, and places great importance on education. Breda is a bigger city with a better image, their ambitions are therefore slightly higher and more international focused. The province of North-Brabant represents the rural surrounding of the cities, to ensure that really the whole area is involved in becoming the Mosaic Metropolis. Every city has its own profile and they want to strengthen this and use this to make connections between them.

The idea of bidding for the event came from the Province of North-Brabant, which asked the B5-cities to make the ambition come true. All respondents mention that they see the ECOC as a catalyst to reach all sorts of different goals, by improving their cultural infrastructure. Their general aim is to attract more visitors, tourists, residents, creative people and companies. But also to form a counterweight to the Randstad, the first economic region of the Netherlands. They answered that even if another city or region is to be chosen for the ECOC in 2018, they will continue with the cultural program. Perhaps with a smaller budget, since the expected effects and media attention of the ECOC will not occur in the region. The economic impact would be less, but the program remains important for Brabantstad in order to become one cohesive region.

In the next chapter, the aims of MCH and Brabantstad will be compared with each other and former ECOC's, to investigate whether their motives match with the overall image that is created of the event.

8 Corresponding aims?

"Huge Tulips for the 'Eurostar Lille Europe' train station – Lille"

Chapter 8: Corresponding aims?

This chapter will elaborate on the question whether the general picture of the ECOC, as sketched in chapter 5, corresponds with the aims of MCH and Brabantstad. First of all, a closer look will be taken on the reasons for both cases to participate in the ECOC event. Hereby, both cases will be compared to see if and where differences are to be discovered. Second, it will be determined if the objectives match with the general idea and expectations that exists about the event.

8.1 A closer look at the motives and answers of both cases

The two different cases both have slightly different underlying motives. All respondents gave the same answers in relation to becoming a more attractive city, namely that by improving the cultural structure a boost can be given to cultural, social and economic development in the whole region. Both cases want to reposition themselves and make them more visible in Europe, attracting tourists, companies and show that they are a very special region with characteristics that are not to be found anywhere else. The goals and effects are remarkably similar to each other, indicating that it is expected that their aims will be achieved and directly will be the outcomes of the event.

The aims of the different actors of Brabantstad are shown schematically below:

Main objectives of Brabantstad
Providing an enormous boost for cultural, social and economic development in the whole region
Developing a sustainable cultural infrastructure, integrated with other sectors such as a important location factor for residents, businesses, visitors and tourists
Strengthening the international image and visibility of Brabantstad

Main objectives of Helmond
Giving the image of the city a strong impulse
Promoting social cohesion and inclusion in the city centre and neighbourhoods
Maintaining and developing the cultural infrastructure and establishing an expansion of the cultural program
Increasing the feelings of pride and self-confidence, stimulating the self-awareness by being excellent
Increased opportunities for youth development (from creativity to identity)
Improving the business climate for residents and companies, by attracting high educated and creative entrepreneurs
Reaching a broader range of audiences for festivals and events
Establish economic development of both the city and the region

Main objectives of Breda
Becoming a stronger player in the international arena by investing in international networks on a political, business and educational level
Using culture as an engine for all sorts of developments
Presenting the city from a former manufacturing economy to a knowledge economy
Focusing on the intellectual capital as target group
Attract more tourists and visitors
Becoming more attractive for tourists, presenting itself as a comprehensive city for various audiences and purposes
Strengthen the social cohesion by the event, by involving citizens and making the event for them

Main objectives Province of North-Brabant
Culture has to become a stronger impetus in the development of the partnership Brabantstad
Creation of an attractive business climate
Creating a better community-belonging with qualitative better cultural facilities
Ensuring that the 'green' component from the vision of the Mosaic Metropolis is involved in the whole
Ensuring a connection between the urban and rural areas, to steer on strengthening the interurban network in the cultural field to create a coherent diversity

What is striking in the case of Brabantstad, is that the desire to become a Mosaic Metropolis is implemented in a top-down manner, what can be emphasized with the following quote: *"In Brabant, we should link together the policies of economy, nature and environment. Only then can we achieve sharp ambitions together, such as the development of Brabantstad. This allows the application of Cultural Capital of Europe to serve as a accelerator in this development"* (Wim van de Donk, Royal Commissioner of North-Brabant). The ECOC is seen as a tool to establish all sorts of developments to improve the connections inside the region, in order to become a strong regional economy. Next to this, the event is expected to function as a city marketing tool to become more attractive, giving the region the desired image and needed attention. All cities want to have a better transportation system and intensify the travel of people towards the other cities. But notwithstanding this, the cities are all thinking how they can benefit the most (which of course is understandable), and hereby have a strong internal focus. They all want to attract the same people, new companies, want to become more visible and create a better living environment. Although they are cooperating because of the aim to strengthen the partnership, the respondents admit that Brabantstad still not exists in the inhabitants minds. The idea of the Mosaic Metropolis has potential, but it will require time, perhaps one whole generation, before it can become reality and people really feel themselves as part of the metropolis.

The aims of the different actors of MCH are shown schematically below:

Main objectives of Maastricht
Improving the production climate to attract companies
Improvement of the image of the city for (future) residents and visitors, hereby making the environment more attractive for high educated people to form a counteract to the shrinkage of the region
Increasing cultural participation to ensure that young people in the future are less likely to leave the city, by establishing cooperation between the cultural and education sectors
Strengthen the physical infrastructure (addressing delays in housing, especially for professional cultural groups)
Showing the heritage, culture should help to strengthen the identity that is rooted in a shared history
Main objectives of Sittard-Geleen
Creating a strong cultural image
Making the existing culture more visible for residents
Increasing the cultural participation, by creating approachable cultural programs
Become more attractive for high skilled and creative people, addressing the idea that the municipality is only a place to live for low skilled workers
Breaking down the mental barriers of the inhabitants: Sittard, Geleen and Born should function as one town in the future

Main objectives of Heerlen
Finding its own character and to reflect this to the outside world
Using the event as a catalyst for the process of development
To become an attractive region for companies and (future) residents, attacking de vacancy and bad image
Creating a balanced cultural program, mainly in cooperation with Aachen and Eupen
Attracting more high skilled employees, which will create an urban dynamism
Taking away the feeling of inferiority of the inhabitants, to ensure that they are proud of their city

Main objectives Province of Limburg (B)
From a political perspective: enrichment for cross border cooperation
Creating a good living environment for the inhabitants of the Province of Limburg (B)
Creating a cultural program together with the Euregional partners, the event is an unique opportunity to show what differences there are and how they are dealing with this.
Taking more advantage of this unique position of the Euregio to present themselves as the cradle of Europe
Achieving progress in other policy fields, e.g. transportation

Main objectives Hasselt
Strengthening the cultural profile in consultation with surrounding municipalities
Becoming a city where culture is a visible and tangible presence
Establishing freedom of movement between artists and their creative products within the Euroregio, and more particularly between the Mahhlsteden
Creating a wide range of events which is appealing for both the inhabitants and visitors
Intensifying the cooperation as a stimulus for other developments such as infrastructure projects

Main objectives Aachen
Creating and remaining a vibrant city which attracts young creative people and the creative class
Ensuring that a good living environment is created, with the aim that students will stay after their graduation, which should attract companies
Creating an 'open minded society' by demolishing the physical and mental borders inside the Euregio
To ensure a sustainable development and cooperation inside the Euregio

The partnership of the Euregio Meuse-Rhine already existed and most of the inhabitants of the area are not familiar with this phenomenon. However, a weak point of this partnership is the fact that it has to deal with national borders, different languages and cultures. The ambition to bid for the ECOC came from Maastricht, which initially had the intention of organizing the event on their own. When it turned out that it would be unfeasible to organize this event alone, they asked the partners of the Euregio to cooperate as well. Because of this, different motives to participate are found in the different cities/regions. Maastricht has a strong internal focus, profiling itself at the international stage. The event is hoped to stop the brain drain with which Maastricht and the province of Limburg are currently dealing. A mental shift should occur because of the involvement of inhabitants with the cultural program. Hereby, the focus really lies in addressing their own problems and not much is focussed on cooperation with the Euregio. Smaller and less developed Dutch cities are participating because they really want to develop themselves, making themselves as city overall more attractive. The foreign partners are mainly joining this initiative, because they want to strengthen the cooperation on all sorts of levels, beginning by improving the Euregio through culture. There is much uncertainty about how this event ultimately will be shaped, and what the role of the different partners shall be. It is doubtful to what extent the

event can help to create a sense of community, it is more plausible that the event mainly will contribute to physical improvements throughout the region.

8.2 Corresponding aims with former ECOC's?

The overall perception of the ECOC is that no matter what, the outcomes will be positive. The event originated from the Cultural Capitals and has developed over the years into the ECOC-event with a high profile. Although clear data about outcomes and revenues is lacking, the overall perception is that culture forms a good means to drive social and economic development.

Glasgow was the first city that used the ECOC clearly as a catalyst for urban regeneration; they argue that this certainly was successful. The city had to cope with social problems because of serious issues of urban decline as a former industrial city. They wanted to ensure a long-term future for the cultural sector, contributing to economic en social regeneration. They also wanted to increase cultural participation and changing the bad image of the city.

Lille wanted a metamorphosis, with respect to the multi-cultural society. The image of the city was not very bad, but they still wanted to improve in this field in order to become more attractive. The number of visitors increased, the business sector got a boost and even cooperation in governance got better. The economy definitely got a spin-off in the year Lille was ECOC.

Liverpool had to cope with social and economic decline: high unemployment rates, high levels of crime, and high numbers of low-skilled workers. You could say that the city was not performing well. The aims therefore were to improve the city, increase cultural participation and to establish growth and sustainability. Liverpool documented their positive outcomes themselves, stating that they performed very well, resulting in the fact that it became a tourist destination.

The aims of Brabantstad and Maastricht correspond to a large extend with the aims that these practices of former ECOC's had. The aims as communicated in the media are politically correct formulated, but underlying motives of both cases are to improve the physical infrastructure between the partners and to intensify regional cooperation. The Dutch partners of MCH are more internally focused on resolving their own problems, whereas the foreign partners are more focused on the improvement of the cooperation. The cities of Brabantstad have an internal focus; they hope to receive the most benefits. This next to the general aims that are present everywhere: improving the cultural field, creating a higher cultural participation, improving the city's image, attracting media attention and the desire to become a beloved place for businesses, residents, tourists and the creative class.

Despite the similarities and some differences, both cases have a high level of ambition. Perhaps the event can ensure that internal targets are achieved more quickly rather than getting the region on the map as a tourist destination. To achieve internal goals or achieving improvements in this field, the cultural program needs to respond well to the needs and level of involvement of residents. It seems that by improving internal problems and the city's identity, the image changes and hereby attracts residents, companies and visitors. In order to become an attractive tourist destination other efforts should be made, such as investing in a landmark as the Atomium in Brussels. The Atomium was designed for the event and still functions as a tourist attraction. But it is doubtful to what extent such a big investment might improve social cohesion and resolve internal problems in an area. It therefore seems a better strategy to focus on the city and its users, and when the internal atmosphere is correct, other developments will follow automatically. Differences between cities and their size should be kept in mind, for instance a city like Brussels has more to offer and was already better known as most cities of both cases. But nevertheless, the good examples showed that if the event is used well, a spin-off can occur.

All in all, it must be considered what investments will generate the most impacts for a city and its specific characteristics. A good focus has to be set, because it is unlikely that all aims can be achieved. The statement of Richards, which suggests that telling positive stories indeed contributes to perform even better, seems plausible. The cases of Glasgow, Lille and Liverpool are known as good practices, popping up in all kinds of literature and always in a positive way. As a result these cities are becoming more and more attractive, because they are always marked as successful. This generates a spiral of positive attention. A good advice for MCH and Brabantstad therefore is to get as much positive media attention as possible, perhaps published by themselves and also after the year of the event. The internal aims might be obtained by using the event, external aims need more time to become sustainable after the ECOC-year. By setting clear goals that are achievable and made measurable, results will be achieved earlier. Summarized, the clearer the goals and the required efforts are, the earlier anticipated outcomes will be achieved. This with a strong focus on internal issues, because a city can promote itself more effectively by others, rather than only by campaigns.

9 Conclusion

"Eventyr i Landscap or Adventure in Nature – Stavanger Theater Group"

Chapter 9: Conclusion

This chapter will reflect upon the research goal which was formulated at the beginning of this report. The aim of this research was to explore what really drives the cases of MCH and Brabantstad to become ECOC and why they are cooperating with other (foreign) cities and regions, instead of running for the election as individual city. Another aim was to explore if expectations of the involved actors in the project of the ECOC match with the general picture that prevails about this event, which is composed by former ECOC's. This chapter will give an answer to the research questions and will evaluate on the research.

9.1 What does the title ECOC exactly contain for both the EU and the individual cities?

The event of the ECOC has transformed considerably over the years. It was initially designed as an event that was purely based on cultural exchange, to promote cultural diversity and to highlight the richness of cultures across Europe. However over the years, the event has been used for all sorts of development and is now seen as an opportunity for urban regeneration, improving creativity in the city and to improve the overall image. As a result the ECOC is started to look more like a big city marketing tool, although the event was initially not designed for achieving long lasting effects on the hosting cities. Yet the event now seems to function as a means for strategic investment in culture at the local and regional level to achieve social and economic developments in hosting cities and their surroundings.

Because of competition between cities for inhabitants, companies, creative people and visitors, cities want to be attractive in many different ways in order to appeal to all these actors. The ECOC event is currently seen by many city-boards as a means to market their city. Communication nowadays plays a great role in reaching many people; because of the prospect of organizing this event the media coverage is considered very big. This leads towards a better focus on improving the city's identity, but at the same time also creates a strong focus on strengthening and marketing the city's image.

Culture is seen as a source of creativity. It strengths the business climate and is essential in the creation of pride and a community feeling. In addition to culture and its primary intrinsic value, even individual, social and economic impacts are important factors in building an attractive city and region. Culture is hereby not only seen as a goal, but as a means to endure all sorts of changes. The general idea is, partly caused by the influence of Florida, that a city with many cultural amenities is a great attraction to (potential) residents, especially the creative and highly educated population. A city can benefit directly from culture because of economic effects: for instance the presence of culture generates more job opportunities, more visitors and increased spending on hospitalities, hotels and retail businesses. Indirectly a good cultural climate has a positive influence on the composition of the population and level of education of the inhabitants. Additionally this has a positive influence on the property market, the attractiveness for businesses and the presence of creative industries. These developments reinforce each other, since more inhabitants require more cultural amenities etc. This is the reason why it is argued that culture can ensure urban regeneration, as well as that the ECOC can act as a catalyst for all sorts of developments. If the event is used well it can certainly contribute to development, because of the dynamics the event can initiate.

9.2 For what reasons do Brabantstad and MCH want to become ECOC?

There are some overlapping reasons why Brabantstad and MCH want to become ECOC in 2018. The main reason is that they want to attract more creative people to their regions, because this group of people is expected to attract more companies. The focus lies with the possibility of getting more attractive on other aspects as well. With the result that residents love to live in the cities or keep living in the cities and more tourists will come to visit the places. The general idea is that by organizing a high profile event such as the ECOC, the region will get a massive boost, leading to various social and economic developments.

Previously, the Euregio was not very concerned with culture and the focus was mainly on population, geography, healthcare, education, employment, mobility, economy, tourism and innovation. But today, the focus has shifted to the moral side of the partnership, wherein an active participation of the citizens of this cross-border cooperation lies at the core. Culture is seen as a tool to formulate a joint program, and as a means to stimulate and speed up the cooperation between the different partners. But there is much uncertainty about how this event is going to be spread across the Euregio and what the role of the different partners shall be. It is therefore doubtful to what extent the event can help to create a sense of community. It is more plausible that the event will mainly contribute to physical improvements throughout the region instead.

In the case of MCH, for the different cities involved, there were slightly different motives notable to cooperate. The Dutch partners put more emphasis on the development of a good cultural infrastructure. A good example hereof is Sittard-Geleen which stated that it has to cope with mental barriers by the inhabitants and a weak cultural sector which could use a stimulus in order to reach the standards like the city of Heerlen. Heerlen already developed their cultural amenities over the last few years, but it still has to deal with a bad image because of its history as a drug city. The citizens of Heerlen are already proud of themselves, but the ECOC is seen as a tool to continue the path that they have chosen to take. They are considering to cooperate with foreign partners in the cultural field, like Aachen, because the catchment area would be much bigger than is the case nowadays and as a consequence projects with a higher quality can be realized. Maastricht is already a big city with international allure and is well known abroad. Therefore the focus of Maastricht lies more on dealing with the aging problem and ensuring that the city will work as a magnet to attract people and to prevent brain drain. The foreign partners of MCH, put more emphasis on the fact that the project could be used to strengthen the cross-border cooperation. Both the province of Belgium (B) and Hasselt stated that they did not need the ECOC for all sorts of developments, but that it is an opportunity to improve the cooperation. Already several meetings have taken place and all sorts of problems are now being discussed which otherwise would not have been considered or would have been discussed over a longer period of time. Aachen stated that the city is doing very well and that it is already attractive. For Maastricht, the reason to operate in this partnership lies mainly in the fact that they were not able to do this on their own, therefore Maastricht asked the partners of the Euregio to participate. Aachen agreed to cooperate because of the prospect of improving their attractiveness even further.

One of the main reasons for Brabantstad to bid for the ECOC lies in the fact that the Province of North-Brabant has the ambition of developing the Mosaic Metropolis. Their priorities were to establish sustainability, by achieving a dynamic balance between socio-economic, ecological and cultural aspects. But the region wants to maintain its human scale and its opportunities of being a healthy environment to live in during the transition towards an innovative knowledge economy as well. The idea is that the road towards the nomination as well as to eventually obtain ECOC-title can give the network a major boost. It may give the cities the opportunity of building together on a promising and sustainable cultural agenda inside the

Mosaic Metropolis. But the most striking thing about the case of Brabantstad, is that the main focus of the bidding cities and the province lies in improving and strengthening their own city. The whole idea of becoming one large metropolis is not really alive in the minds of the culture brokers. Although the general idea is that of a shared program, with every city having its own theme, not much is said about the cultural cooperation, but more about cooperation in other policy areas. Helmond is the smallest city of the cooperation, with the worst image, social problems and a weak cultural infrastructure. It is therefore mainly focused on youth, to reduce the contradictions in their multicultural society and to achieve a higher level of cultural participation. The events that are already being organized are not well known outside of Helmond, therefore the city wants to create a better image. Furthermore, Helmond wants to attract more visitors, residents and businesses. This is supposed to be established through means of their central location and the fact that Helmond already improved its living environment. Due to the problems in their municipality, Helmond is very internally focussed. Breda on the contrary is known as a nice city to visit and to live in and is physically attractive. Their focus lies more on the outside, because they want to focus on acquiring international fame. They also focus on external objectives like visitors, creative people and companies. However their main reasons are to participate are the extra attention generated by the event, and the opportunities that they will get to further develop Breda. The province is participating in the project, because it wants to form a counterbalance to the economically very attractive Randstad. The province really wants to stop the departure of creative people. The region has to become a very attractive place in order to ultimately achieve this. Within this cooperation the reasons for cooperating are more clear than in the case of Brabantstad, because there are already clear shared thoughts about how to distribute the program. But the development of individual cities actually fusing into one great metropolis will not occur by just organizing this event; much more has to be done to reach that goal.

9.3 Why are the two cases not bidding as one city alone, and what is the value of this cooperation for the involved cities and regions?

The main reasons for a combined bid of Brabantstad, were that a cooperation already existed and the fact that the idea was initiated by a province: North-Brabant. For example, a small city as Helmond only sees opportunities to take advantage of the success of the other cities, whereas Breda sees opportunities for further development with a focus on more international (media) attention. Not participating would not be a better option than participating, since the participating cities might witness a spin-off of developments, whereas the cities not included will not experience these developments.

The reason for the partners of MCH to cooperate was that Maastricht had the ambition of becoming ECOC and they found out they were not able to execute this on their own. The Dutch partners really wanted to participate, because they have a strong focus on improving the city's cultural amenities to actually improve their cities. The foreign partners are participating, because they see opportunities in strengthening the cross-border cooperation that already exists, but which are currently only achieved very little. The Euregio must come alive in the minds of the inhabitants, the ECOC can function as a tool to break down the mental borders in this area. The foreign partners were not allowed to organise the ECOC in 2018, since a Dutch city has to carry this title. Additionally all cities indicated that they would not consider organising this event on their own, because of their small scale and the lack of financial resources.

The formal structures are different across the border, which means it takes a lot of effort to really achieve cross border cooperation. The cooperation already existed for a long time but it always remained difficult and required a lot of time to achieve something. It is fascinating that an

event like the ECOC manages to facilitate cooperation more easily between the difficult political structures. The value of jointly organizing this event can already be seen in the fact that there has been more cooperation and there have been more consultations than ever before. Even if both cases are not to be chosen as ECOC, great progress has been made in the cooperation, which should ensure durable future development. The region has become more attractive as a whole, whereby it will be possible to provide cultural facilities with a high quality.

9.4 Does the general picture of the ECOC correspond with the aims of Brabantstad and MCH to run for this election?

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the overall perception of the ECOC is that outcomes will be positive anyway. The event originated from the Cultural Capitals and has developed over the years into the ECOC-event with a high profile. Although clear data about outcomes and revenues is lacking, the overall perception is that culture is a means to drive social and economic development.

The general picture that exists about the ECOC, derived from what are called good examples, corresponds with the aims of both cases. Since Glasgow, Lille and Liverpool used the event well to regenerate the city and got more attractive and stayed attractive after the event, high expectations are set on the outcomes of this event. The general aims of Brabantstad and MCH are the same as those of Glasgow, Lille and Liverpool: improving the cultural field, creating a higher cultural participation, improving the city's image, attracting media attention and the desire to become a beloved place for businesses, residents, tourists and the creative class. The ECOC is truly seen as a means to achieve all sorts of development goals. Although the focus of the ECOC should be at culture and the cultural program, various other underlying factors to participate in the project are present as well. Especially in the case of MCH, they want to strengthen the cooperation between the different actors, with the result that national borders will fade. Both cases use the event to establish improvements in the physical infrastructure between the partners and to intensify the regional cooperation. The Dutch partners of MCH are more internally focused, resolving their own problems is put first. The foreign partners of this cooperation are more focused on the improved cooperation. The cities of Brabantstad have a more internal focus; they want to become more attractive as city itself.

But it must be remembered that each case is unique and that copying of good practices has no use. Cultural programs and investments must match with the goals and circumstances in which the program will take place. It might be that the successes of Glasgow, Lille and Liverpool derived from the fact that they received a great portion of positive media attendance. Cities that supposedly have done well are not only the cities with the best cultural programs, but the cities which wrote the best stories about the impacts. It is therefore not surprising that the results obtained of the mentioned good practices, claim that the event was experienced positive. This has the result that these cities are becoming more and more attractive, because they are always marked as successful cities. This again leads to becoming more and more attractive. Questions can thus be put, to what extent real effects are found if less positive stories might be omitted in evaluations. Both Brabantstad and MCH need to have a strong focus on what they want to achieve by organizing this event, and how to achieve their goals as efficiently as possible. In this way, they can write their own success story, which will only strengthen the impacts.

9.5 Final conclusion

This research has made clear that it is very difficult to determine what the true impacts are of this specific event. Hard data is not easy to find and even when some facts and figures are found, the

question always remains how reliable these are, because most reports on the impacts of the ECOC find their origins with the EU or cities' own publications. Direct effects in the celebration year itself would be measurable, but long-term effects are difficult to describe because all sorts of other developments can affect the living environment, change the image or influence possible visitors. Because of this, it is hard to tell what impacts were purely caused by the event itself, or would have occurred otherwise as well because of other developments over the years. Like Greg Richards said, is it a good strategy to talk positively about the city as much as possible, since this is the best way of attracting attention and enforcing positive effects. Even when the event has completely failed, it is better to say nothing or ignore the negative impacts. When this negative information otherwise becomes public, it will only damage the image of the city.

If a city truly wants to achieve sustainable improvements, they have to focus on projects which improve the identity of the city and continue these projects even after having been the ECOC. The event certainly can be used as a means for urban development, since the event allows larger budgets than would normally be the case. But it seems unlikely that all the goals of the partners of both cases will be achieved, because of the differences and the number of goals. It is therefore advisable to prioritize the goals they want to achieve at minimum, thus allowing them to be labelled as successful. If the event is used well, it can ensure durable development by which the city or region will enjoy progress over a longer period. Perhaps the cooperation between the different partners would have improved over time, because the event allows for consultations on different fields. Therefore progress can be made during the bidding process for the event without receiving the title of ECOC. This can be concluded best with the following statement:*"It is quite remarkable that if culture serves as shared objective, everybody becomes passionate and wants to make the best out of it. That is why culture can serve as a vehicle for all sorts of developments"* (Noëlle Kemmerling, Sittard-Geleen).

Now it is just a matter of time before we will finally know who runs off with the desired and beloved title.

9.6 Reflection and further research

There are some shortcomings with respect to this research. First of all, not every city was prepared to cooperate, resulting that only a selection of directors of both cases were addressed. In the case of MCH more directors were prepared to cooperate, whereas at Brabantstad only four parties were involved. Secondly, the choice has been made to select two cases for this research, out of the five Dutch candidates for the ECOC in 2018. The selection of Glasgow, Lille and Liverpool has resulted in that the general picture of the ECOC is based mainly on these three cases. The reason for further investigating these cases was that many respondents saw these cases as a good example of why they want to become ECOC. For further research, it is advisable to use multiple cases in order to form a broader picture.

Because of these selections, it is difficult to form an all encompassing conclusion about the goals, expectations and reasons to participate in the ECOC. What can be stated here is that the general picture about the event is very positive and that the expectations of both Brabantstad and MCH meet with former ECOC's in this field. In addition, the impacts of the ECOC-event are difficult to measure, and most of the time hard evidence for positive outcomes is even missing. To measure what the outcomes of the event really are, a statistical tool should be developed to be able to objectively examine this event. Perhaps here lies a good opportunity for the Dutch city that will become ECOC in 2018, to evaluate if the event is worth the large investments and see who eventually benefits most from organizing this event.

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Appendix A: List of correspondents

Brabantstad	City	Function 2010	Date
Heleen Huisjes	2018Brabant	Director Agency 2018Brabant Together Cultural Capital	12-04-2010
Tony Klaasen	Helmond	Culture broker 2018Brabant	12-05-2010
Geurt Grosfeld	Breda	Culture broker 2018Brabant	19-05-2010
Geert Lenders	Province of Brabant	Culture broker 2018Brabant	05-0-2010

MCH2018	City	Function 2010	Date
Guido Wevers	MCH2018	Artistic director MCH2018	13-04-2010
Noëlle Kemmerling	Sittard-Geleen	Senior projectmanager, culture, arts and sciences	21-05-2010
Greetje van Gemert	Heerlen	Strategic policyadvisor culture	21-05-2010
Jean-Pierre Dewael	Province of Limburg (B)	Management human at policy unit culture	21-05-2010
Jean-Pierre Swerts	Hasselt	Director culture and tourism	25-05-2010
Olaf Müller	Aachen	Director culture	23-06-2010

Appendix B: Interview guide European Capital of Culture 2018

<u>1) Origin of the idea</u>
- Where did the idea came from to participate for the ECOC title in 2018? Who has initiated it?

- Does the ambition to run for this election came from the province/region, or is it the initiative of city itself?

- What is the main purpose for this city/province to participate in the ECOC program?
  - *citymarketing (if yes, for whom?)*

<u>2) Cooperation</u>
- How did this partnership emerged in relation with the ECOC and to bid for this event together?
  - *Did a city involved the region, or did the region proposed cities to participate?*

- What do you think is de added value of this cooperation for this city/region?

- Why does the city/region participate in this event? What are the interests?

- If this idea of the Euregio bidding together for this event in 2018 would not exist, would this city/region than go for such an event on their own?

<u>3) Administrative</u>
- For which cultural theme would you choose or did you choose if you had the choice?
  - Did this dividing of theme's led to debates and conflicts among the different cities, for example because of different interests?

- How is the program distributed and aligned over the cities and regions?
  - Is the program going to be evenly divided among the cities and how does one take care of a well-balanced distribution of interests?

- What do you think of the name MCH2018/Den Bosch Cultural Capital? Do you think this could have as much affects on the acquaintance of the city/region as it may do for Maastricht/Den Bosch?

- Which audience will be addressed from both the city and the region? What kind of visitors/people would you like to attract?
  - How will be taken care of the support of the inhabitants for this event? Or is here taken no account of at this moment?
  - Attracting of creative class/people? What do you expect that these people can contribute to the city?

4) Effects

- What kind of and how much investment should be done for this event? And were these investments planned before that the idea of the ECOC came, or are these investments made specifically for this event?
  - *Does every city invests as much as the others?*

- What do you expect that the effects of the title will be for the city/region? Which effects do you think that it has on different fields?
  - *image*
  - *social/economic/political*
  - *(to which examples is looked and on what are these expectations based?)*

- What do you expect that a boost in the cultural climate will do for the city and the region? (also after 2018)

5) Remaining questions

- Does the region wants to make itself more attractive with regarding to other regions?

- How big is the opportunity according to you that this partnership is going to be the ECOC in 2018? And does this chance is taken in consideration according to the investments?

- What will happen with the program of the ECOC if another city gets the title?

- In which other candidate do you see as the greatest competition? And why?