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ÁGNES NÉMETH

**MEGA-EVENT GOVERNANCE:
DRIVERS AND POTENTIALS OF THE
EUROPEAN CAPITALS OF CULTURE**

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ABSTRACT

In the field of human geography as well as other social scientific disciplines, there has recently been much theoretical debate among academics concerning the dynamically changing nature of governance. The dissertation takes the European Capital of Culture (ECOC) Programme as an example of the complexity of urban governance, related to mega-events. In order to explain the different powers governing the European Capital of Culture, two case studies are selected (Pécs 2010 in Hungary and Turku 2011 in Finland) for the longitudinal analysis of both general and distinctive patterns of governance. The focus is on the involvement of local societies, the role of participatory governance, and the formation of network capital. The dissertation explores the possible manifestations of good governance processes that may be achieved by a top-down project that potentially calls for multifarious bottom-up responses. The overall aim of the dissertation is to reveal the ways how certain aspects of local governance might limit or contribute to lasting and balanced socio-economic effects in the hosting cities and regions.

The dissertation contains four interrelated articles, each addressing specific research questions and presenting particular theoretical and policy-related discussions about spatial development and governance. The sequence of the individual publications follows the exploratory logic of the research. First, the general spatial trends and policy frames of the ECOC Programme are analysed. This is followed by the comparative assessment of concrete cases in terms of their preparation and implementation phases, performing more in-depth investigation of the peculiarities in their governance processes. To complete the picture, the final article assesses the two-way relationship between local organisational network capital and the success of the ECOC projects.

Keywords: European Capital of Culture, multi-level and relational governance, regional development, mega-events

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TIIVISTELMÄ

Ihmismaantieteessä kuten muissakin yhteiskuntatieteissä on käyty viime vuosina vilkasta teoreettista keskustelua hallinnan muutoksista. Tämä väitöskirja käsittelee Euroopan kulttuuripääkaupunkiohjelman suurtaapahtumia esimerkkeinä kaupunkien hallinnan monimutkaisuudesta. Empiirisen pitkittäisanalyysin kohteina ovat Pécs Unkarissa ja Turku Suomessa; tavoitteena on tunnistaa sekä yhteisiä että erityisiä hallinnan malleja. Analyysin pääkohteina ovat paikallisyhteisöjen osallistuminen, osallistavan hallinnan rooli sekä verkostopääoman muodostuminen. Tutkimus tarkastelee niitä hyvien hallintaprosessien mahdollisia ilmenemismuotoja, joita ylätasoin ohjaama projekti voi saavuttaa hakemalla moninaista vasta-kaikua perustason toimijoilta. Näin väitöskirjan yleinen tavoite on tunnistaa toimintatapoja, joiden vuoksi paikallisen hallinnan muodot saattavat joko rajoittaa tai edistää tavoiteltuja kestäviä ja kattavia sosio-ekonomisia vaikutuksia kohdekaupungeissa ja kohdealueilla.

Väitöskirja koostuu neljästä toisiinsa liittyvästä artikkelista, joista kukin käsittelee erityisiä tutkimuskysymyksiä sekä sisältää niihin liittyviä teoreettisia ja kehittämispolitiikkaa käsitteleviä keskusteluja aluekehityksestä ja -hallinnasta. Nämä artikkelit seuraavat tutkimusprosessin eri vaiheita: Ensiksi analysoidaan Euroopan kulttuuripääkaupunkiohjelman yleisiä kehityslinjoja ja politiikkakehystä. Sen jälkeen esitetään vertaileva arvio tapaustutkimuksen kohteiden valmistelun ja toteuttamisen vaiheista siten, että niiden hallinnan prosessien ominaispiirteisiin kiinnitetään erityistä huomiota. Lopuksi, viimeisessä artikkelissa, arvioidaan paikallisten organisaatioiden verkostopääoman ja kulttuuripääkaupunkiprojektien onnistumisen välistä kaksisuuntaista riippuvuussuhdetta.

Avainsanat: Euroopan kulttuuripääkaupunki, monitasoinen ja koheesiota luova hallinta, aluekehitys, suurtaapahtuma

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I started to plan my doctoral studies already in 2006/2007, when I lived in Hungary and worked at the Tourism Department of Károly Róbert University College, Gyöngyös. It was around that time when the European Capital of Culture (ECOC) came into the news in Hungary, and that the country has the opportunity to participate in the Programme for the first time. Heated professional and public discussions accompanied the national competition and selection, which directed my attention towards the possible social-political processes underlying the Hungarian ECOC project. The more I knew about the complexity of the Hungarian case, the more I felt the need to become acquainted with other ECOC examples. Finland was to host the European Capital of Culture a year later than Hungary, and the competition for which city would be awarded the title was still ongoing. Finally, in the summer of 2007, Turku was nominated for the title. My research had gradually shifted its focus from an initial concern with tourism towards a more holistic approach to urban development, eventually to take on a broader regional development perspective in relation to this particular mega-event. However, the two initial case studies have remained: Pécs (2010) and Turku (2011). In 2008 I moved to Turku in Finland whilst still paying regular visits to Pécs in Hungary.

This dissertation is the result of years of planning, observing, reading, discussing, analysing, re-planning and publishing. All in all, it was an invaluable learning period that would not have been possible without a number of people. I am especially grateful to my supervisor from the Karelian Institute, Professor James Scott. He has guided me, involved me in stimulating projects, and even more importantly, he has shown unwavering confidence in me during the last few years, which was fundamental to the completion of this work. I would also like to express my thanks to my supervisor Paul Fryer from the Department of Geographical and Historical Studies, as well as to Professor Markku Tykkyläinen who organised doctoral seminars to discuss the research at different stages. I have been fortunate to publish my papers with the assistance of competent reviewers, whose comments and observations had an extremely positive influence on the final versions of the articles. Similarly, I would like to thank the pre-examiners of this dissertation, Professor Iwona Sagan and Professor Hans-Joachim Bürkner for their critical reflections and valuable remarks on the manuscript.

I would like to extend my appreciation to my colleagues at the Karelian Institute and all of the former and current PhD students with whom I have had inspiring discussions in and outside the University. Special thanks go to Lea Kervinen from the Karelian Institute who undertook the final editing work of this dissertation.

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ventures both at home in Hungary and abroad. All of the pages of this dissertation would not be enough to express my gratitude to my sister, Sári, who never stops encouraging me. We have always been very close, even while living in different countries, but during the last five years, we have also had the special opportunity to be colleagues at the Karelian Institute. Our continuous discussions on and beyond the themes of this dissertation and her constructive comments were essential for the completion of this work. Finally, I owe a special gratitude to my loving partner, Peter, who has not only moved with me to Finland, but also helped me to feel at home there. Thank you Peti, you have been a constant support throughout these demanding times. *Köszönöm!*

Turku, 22 December 2016

Ágnes Németh

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1 INTRODUCTION

The adverse spatial and societal effects of the recent financial, economic and political crises have underscored a necessity to review and improve regional development strategies in Europe. Declining financial resources available for central state interventions calls for action to be taken by sub-national actors, and this necessitates and encourages regional and local co-funding, and the implementation of self-motivated and more-or-less self-supporting projects which reflect local conditions and resources. Meanwhile, territorial equal opportunities are still regarded as a primary objective of national regional development policies, and this has also been a focus of the (territorial) cohesion policies of the European Union (Faludi 2007). The aim of achieving territorially equal opportunities and ultimately, a more even spatial socio-economic development can be pursued by the revitalisation and a better, 'creative' utilisation of local resources. Strategies that support the emergence of a functioning 'polycentric' European network of small and medium-sized cities follow this logic, and some argue that complementing the web of major metropolises could provide the skeleton for balanced territorial development across the continent (Faludi and Waterhout 2005, Hague and Kirk 2003, Meijers 2007, Meijers et al. 2007).

Besides being acknowledged as having a significant role in supporting collective remembrance and identity (Smith 2009), culture is increasingly regarded as a more direct source of wealth, and as a generator of economic activities: it is an inherent part of 'creative ecosystems' in place-based development strategies, and a major input to the growth of so-called 'creative industries' (INTELI 2011). Consequently, a variety of culture-oriented policies have been locally developed, including the organisation of region- or place-specific cultural events of different dimensions (e.g. Oktoberfest, the Edinburgh International Festival or the Budapest Spring Festival, to mention a few). On the largest of scales, we see so-called mega-events, i.e. those with an international significance and level of participation.

In this light, the European Capital of Culture (ECOC) initiative that this dissertation concentrates on, can in many ways be linked with the multiple levels of governing and promoting local and regional development. It has become a popular tool to reinforce the cultural diversity of regions across Europe, to help local intellectual culture to unfold, and to promote the maintenance and renewal of local cultural and human resources. Increasing numbers of small and medium-sized towns are motivated to participate primarily because they see the Programme as a means for revitalizing their economies and strengthening competitiveness through creative ecosystems, branding, and a strengthened identity. Also, it is equally important in making people feel more strongly related to their own settlement and region, and in strengthening local and regional identities. From the EU point of view, the programme is targeted to underline Europeanness, whether it means the

wealth of European diversity, or the ideal of solidarity and cooperation across Europe, both of which have strong associations with regional growth and global competitiveness (Lähdesmäki 2011). These various implications of the ECOC Programme for local and regional social-economic development are elaborated further, concerning the Programme as a whole, as well as in terms of specific ECOC cases which this dissertation explores in significant detail. Nevertheless, it is essential to underline that the main inquiry concerns the 'good governance' models of mega-events, i.e. those that result in lasting and far-reaching positive impacts, and contribute to a balanced socio-economic development of the hosting cities and their regions. For this reason, the investigations are carried out with a particular focus on societal-organisational aspects and processes, such as participatory governance and network capital formation, and are less focused on the more immediate economic or infrastructural impacts of the mega-event.

The research for this dissertation was implemented in a multiple case study framework, facilitating a certain level of comparison and generalisation. The two cities selected as case studies are located geographically distant from each other: the city of Pécs is situated in Hungary in East-Central Europe (only a few kilometres from the Croatian border that in 2010 formed a border of the European Union), while Turku (in Finland) is a city from the northern periphery of the EU. At the same time, the cities share many similarities. Both are regarded as second-tier cities in their respective national urban hierarchies, have a population of around 150 000 – 200 000 inhabitants, and are situated in border regions of their countries. Also, the two cities held the ECOC title in two subsequent years (2010-11), which enables a relatively easy comparison of their projects (Németh 2011a).

Because of the above mentioned interest in processes, as well as the emergent and temporal nature of mega-events, a longitudinal approach has inevitably been applied in this dissertation. The analyses cover approximately 8-9 years, covering multiple phases from bidding, preparations, implementation and the analysis of impacts. The limits of 'place' in the research can be seen as both relational and temporary, as ECOC projects (as shown in this dissertation) not only transcend existing spatial-administrative hierarchies, but many of the structures they use and create possess a certain progressive, or even ephemeral quality – they are more temporary than permanent. This is important to bear in mind when trying to trace the local/regional development impacts of ECOC events – and mega-events in general – and also when assessing their longer term sustainability.

The dissertation contains four separate papers. The first article deals with the ECOC Programme in general, and introduces its evolution, rules of qualification, and some other crucial aspects related to its potential sustained local/regional impacts. The other three articles apply a comparative case study approach, and limit their scope of analysis to different aspects of two selected European Capital of Culture projects that were tracked from their bidding phases, to the event year, and for a few years after. Besides the publicly available documentation on the Pécs 2010

and the Turku 2011 ECOC projects, regular personal observations, numerous personal interviews, and focussed online surveys were used to reveal and understand their particularities, especially in terms of the social control and organisation of the mega-event and the implications they had on local-regional development. Although detailed analysis is provided for only two of the 52 ECOC mega-events held since 1985, this dissertation also attempts to provide a more general insight into the potential regional development implications of (cultural) mega-events. (For more detail, see the summaries of the four articles presented in Section 7.)

As mentioned above, the main approach taken to the mega-event in this dissertation is the specific study of the forms and processes of social control and organisation. In more concrete terms, the research analyses both the visible and less visible processes of governance, and explains some possible reasons for the particular dynamics of relationships, local and regional cultural resourcing, inclusion and exclusion processes, as well as conflicting interests and approaches to these European Capital of Culture projects. Additionally, the dissertation also touches upon the potential of the cultural event for social (network) capital mobilisation. Governance processes, and the emergence and permanence of new collaborative structures are evaluated through the lens of local and regional development targets and achievements; hence there is an important spatial, human-geographical dimension present in the study.

Finally, in terms of the spatial-analytical perspective taken towards the social control and governance of mega-events, three current and more-or-less distinct conceptual approaches are seen as important issues to consider and assess through concrete ECOC examples: (1) a policy-based approach (applied extensively in EU decision making) of multi-level or multi-scale governance, based on the concept of 'bounded space', (2) that of more recent scholarly ideas about 'relational' or 'unbounded' spatial processes, and (3) the 'phase-spatial' theoretical framework for governance.

2 AIMS AND GENERAL RESEARCH QUESTIONS

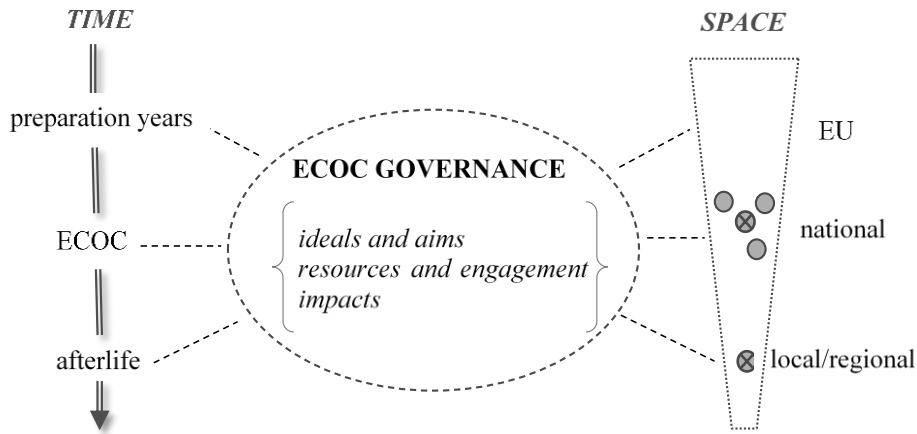


Figure 1. The time and space axes of ECOC governance

On a general level, the dissertation aims to contribute to discussions on the ‘good governance’ models of mega-events, i.e. those that result in longer term positive impacts, and a balanced socio-economic development of the cities and their regions. As indicated in Figure 1, the analysis is framed around the *axes of time and a spatial hierarchy*, and as mentioned in the Introduction, both are rather crucial aspects in the operation of ECOC mega-events. In terms of lasting effects, ECOC projects need to be studied in three different, but strongly related stages: the preparation period (enlisting, recruiting, negotiating and designing the use of resources), the ECOC year itself, and the afterlife of the respective cultural capital projects. Various spatial levels need to be considered in terms of relevance/responsibility (e.g. motives, influence, control, resources and implementation). These include the EU (ECOC co-ordination, various policies), national interests and roles regarding the ECOC, as well as the local/regional initiatives and participation elements which feature in the event.

The dissertation aims to answer four main research questions (these are detailed in the form of more specific inquiries in the four articles: see Table 5, Section 7):

- 1) Which theoretical perspective on governance is most relevant for the study of the ECOC and its legacy? (Section 8.1 ECOC: multi-level, relational or phase-spatial?)

- 2) What room do ECOC hosts have for implementing their mega-events as genuine place-based adaptations of the 'European' guidelines, and what governance processes do they use? (Section 8.2 ECOC: place-based or European?)
- 3) What 'intangible' but durable outcomes may be produced by ECOC mega-events? (Section 8.3 Intangible legacies of ECOC)
- 4) Can ECOC projects include actors beyond the host city, and what are the potential reasons and motivations for their engagement? Where are the 'borders' of ECOC? (Section 8.4 The borders of ECOC)

3 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY FRAMEWORK

Several authors have suggested that case studies allow in-depth investigation of social phenomena, and are most appropriate when the researcher seeks to understand the 'how' and 'why' of the social behaviours inherent to a phenomenon (Eisenhardt 1989, Flyvbjerg 2006, Stake 1995, Yin 2003). The case study approach also proves to be a useful strategy when present-day phenomena and everyday situations are analysed, and the research uses multiple sources of evidence (Yin 2003). Case studies allow the assessment of local-regional specificities, and can give a detail-rich insight into particular situations. They can often provide up-to-date information on certain local-regional processes for regional actors and decision makers, however, without an appropriate level of abstraction of the case study findings, they may not prove suitable for contributing to general theories or to higher-level (e.g. European) policy making (S. Németh et al. 2013).

It can be useful to relate individual case studies, i.e. by applying a comparative approach. For instance, concerning the same topic as that addressed in the present dissertation, Sykes (2011) argues that cross-national comparative research on ECOC events indicates that the differences in the approaches adopted by cities in particular policy domains can be read-off from contextual factors attributable to the different nation-state settings. The prime advantage of a comparative case study approach is that it can produce regional- or case-specific research results, and at the same time it can yield implications for both general theories and policy making. However, in order to serve these aims, comparative research needs to be carefully designed. An abstraction of results is the general aim of comparative research, and this is often realized by the application of standardised data-collection tools and (usually quantitative) analyses to a larger number of cases, in order to reveal some "general rules" (Mayring 2007). At the other extreme of multiple case study research, comparison is carried out via qualitative analysis of cases (often a fewer number) to better identify and explain certain processes. This so-called "interpretive approach" can frequently produce more detailed and reliable research results, however the method does not allow for generalisation (Denzin 1983, Mayring 2007).

Consequently, research with a comparative, multiple-case study design has to find a suitable way to draw general conclusions from a set of contextual data. A possible way to overcome this difficulty is to apply analytical tools in the research design that are derived "from the theoretical starting position and the research questions" (S. Németh et al. 2013:9). Therefore, this research uses analytical concepts such as *engagement (inclusion/participation)*, *cooperation/conflict*, and *network*

capital to explain and compare the contextualised governance processes of the two selected European Capital of Culture projects.

Based on this approach, through case study research and by providing a certain level of detail for the selected examples, I aim to extend from the particular to the general, i.e. to recognize some regularities and more-or-less general governance processes that are common to the examples, and which can also provide useful ideas and guidance for future ECOC cities and hosts of similar mega-events.

3.2 LONGITUDINAL APPROACH

Longitudinal research is about the study of a certain phenomenon over a longer period of time, by way of continuous, repeated data gathering (Menard 2002). With the help of a longitudinal research design, patterns of change can be described and causal relationships can be discovered. These characteristics are useful when a scholarly investigation has a focus not only on current processes, but also on the possible effects of the studied phenomenon.

Hiller (2000) describes mega-events as results and parts of complex relationships that have several backward, parallel and forward linkages. In other words, mega-events are not isolated, independent phenomena, and therefore their analysis calls for a broader time-perspective. Similarly, Roche (2000) argues that mega-events need to be studied as processes, and he therefore distinguishes three distinct time-levels of analysis that he calls so-called “zones” in his work. Besides the event’s actual official time-frame (that he refers to as its “core-zone”), he defines an “intermediate zone” that is the pre-event and post-event process of producing the event, and an “event horizon” that describes the longer-term (pre-event) motivations and (post-event) impacts. This kind of longitudinal approach is essential for the analysis of mega-events, especially if one is focussing on the social processes and structures they work within and generate. This perspective does not only provide for critical contextual analysis but it also allows the consideration of, for instance, the (dis)continuities of the relations of the various actors associated with the event, as well as helping to understand the processes of inclusion and exclusion concerning mega-events.

It is important to emphasize that in the formal evaluation of the European Capital of Culture projects, a longitudinal approach is not widely implemented, and especially not in comparative assessments. The final report of the Luxemburg and Greater Region ECOC, 2007 (2008) was in fact the first to contain a longitudinal enquiry of the mega-event’s impacts. It is also a common problem that any official assessment most often starts only a few months before the ECOC event year, and ends very soon after it has finished. This is mostly due to the fact that the organising body responsible for staging the ECOC is set up only shortly in advance, and it is usually terminated a few months after the event (Richards 2015). However,

the significance of a longitudinal approach in the evaluation of ECOCs is indicated by some recent trends of extensive evaluation, an example of which is the 'Impacts08' programme that has published a number of studies on diverse aspects of the European Capital of Culture (Garcia et al. 2009), and also the Evaluation Programme and Research Project of the Turku 2011 ECOc which ran between 2010 and 2016. In his recent paper 'Evaluating the European Capital of Culture that never was: the case of BrabantStad 2018', Richards also emphasises the importance of longitudinal analysis in order to establish a so-called baseline against which impacts can be measured (Richards 2015).

Consistent with the above reflections, this dissertation uses a longitudinal approach in order to understand causalities, to follow the tides and ebbs of governance processes, as well as to trace – and to a certain extent, measure – the legacies and imprints of the cultural mega-events in focus.

3.3 DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYTICAL METHODS

Roche (2000) suggests that mega-events need to be analysed as structures, processes and social phenomena, while Silk (2011) emphasises that the various forms of social inequalities that usually emerge around mega-events have to be identified and understood. Similarly, Waitt and Furrer (2000) mention that for a comprehension of the possible impacts of such events on host societies, silences and alternative stories need to be explored and analysed. Thus, the multiplicity of issues which emanate from mega-events calls for a variety of methodological approaches, especially when the analysis focusses on the ways that their lasting effects are considered, and possibly realised within different settings. In this respect, when studying the European Capital of Culture projects, one cannot ignore their complexity and multi-dimensionality. Careful consideration of analytical methods and data collection is therefore of particular importance when scales of governance and diverse actor relations are at the centre of the inquiry.

This dissertation applies a mixed method, including quantitative and qualitative data-processing and interpretative methods. The aim of this mixed method design is to benefit from the strengths of both quantitative as well as qualitative data collection and analytical techniques, so as to create an "interpretive framework for generating possible solutions or new understandings of the studied problem" (Labaree 2009). Tashakorri and Creswell (2007) claim that mixed method research is still evolving and that its design involves more than a simple combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. As such, it reflects a new "third way epistemological paradigm" (Ibid:4) that can be positioned between positivism (quantitative purism) and interpretivism/constructivism (qualitative purism). The researcher is thus allowed to mix and match design components that offer a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem, and which offer the best

chance of answering particular research questions. This analytical method becomes necessary especially when a study puts forward questions with interconnected qualitative and quantitative aspects - in other words includes a combination of questions with regard to *what* and *how* or *why*.

Quantitative methods are used in the research, especially in Article 1 and Article 4 of the dissertation. In the former they are used to detect trends developing towards a more polycentric spatial pattern in the Programme, and in the latter they are used to reveal the dynamics of local-regional co-operative networks in the case of the Pécs 2010 and the Turku 2011 projects. However, given the exploratory nature of this research, qualitative methods are also employed to a large extent. As most of the social phenomena are too complex to be recognised and understood by solely positivist methods, employing qualitative research methodologies builds on the experiences of the people affected by an event, and interprets and analyses their reflections – in this case as voiced in interviews and surveys.

The research builds upon both primary and secondary data. The primary data was gathered by means of interviews and surveys in the two case study areas, so as to learn about underlying conflicts, intentions and interests, to understand engagement strategies, as well as to map and interpret the relational spaces that the ECOC projects worked within and created (Table 1).

Table 1. Interviews and surveys carried out in the two case studies

		Pécs 2010	Turku 2011
interviews	city representative	Head of Urban Management Department (August, 2010)	Head of International Affairs (May 2010)
	ECOC management	Pécs 2010 Management Centre (August, 2009)	Turku 2011 Foundation (January and May 2010) Tender writer, Programme Director of Turku 2011 (March 2007)
	participant artists, project leaders	House of Civic Communities (September 2010) Volunteer Centre Pécs (May 2010)	"Flux Aura" project (June 2010) "Counterhistories" project (June 2010)
	other	Baranya County Enterprise Centre (August 2010)	European Capital of Subculture 2011 (October 2010)
survey questionnaires		56 valid responses (October-November 2014)	63 valid responses (January-February 2015)

As regards secondary sources, the research relies on a wide range of published documents and statistics, with the main aim of mapping the development trends of the ECOC Programme, and also to contextualise and triangulate findings drawn from the analysis of primary sources. For this purpose, I used official documents produced by relevant authorities and organisations at the level of the European Union. These included decisions, guidelines for host and applicant cities, proposals for the development of the ECOC initiative, as well as selection and monitoring reports related to the Programme. Official materials of the Pécs 2010 and Turku 2011 ECOC projects, such as their bidding documents and final reports offered substantial information on their official visions, strategic priorities, programming detail, and the envisioned/achieved outcomes for these two cities. Furthermore, the evaluation reports of individual ECOC projects and the ECOC Programme as a whole have been used to learn more about the general strengths and weaknesses of the initiative. These documents have been studied carefully, bearing in mind the fact that they are often not without any bias. Last, but not least, the study draws on recent academic discussions in the fields of spatial theory, urban and regional development, mega-event research, and particularly on scholarly works on the European Capital of Culture Programme, published in refereed journals, as book chapters, or as monographs.

4 CONTEXT OF THE RESEARCH

4.1 MEGA-EVENTS

Mega-events in general are large-scale cultural or sporting events designed to attract tourists and media attention (Apostolopoulos et al. 1996). By hosting such events cities seek to create conditions for enhancing their competitiveness, and also to promote the socio-economic development of their regions or even the countries which encompass them. Notwithstanding its temporal nature (being a one-off event held at a certain location), in the hope of a substantial economic return, cities are willing to put enormous efforts into their preparations for hosting such events (Németh 2009). There is vigorous competition for the prestigious ECOC title that is usually awarded through a demanding bidding process.

Over the last three decades, mega-events have attracted growing attention among researchers from various fields, so producing an increasing body of literature on topics such as event management and tourism (Hall 1992, Marris 1987, Ritchie 1984), economics (Barclay 2009, Owen 2005), socio-politics (Lenskyj 2000, Maddox 2004, Roche 2000) culture (Richards & Palmer 2010), history (Roche 2000), and architecture, urban planning and urban design (Beriatos and Gospodini 2004, Liao and Pitts 2006).

Mega-events “are assumed to play a key role in international, national and regional tourism marketing strategies” (Oliveira 2012:7); therefore, it is not surprising that the appearance of the term ‘mega-event’ in academic discussions is most frequent in tourism and leisure studies. Consequently, most of the definitions of this concept also emerge from case study research and analytical discussions in the fields of tourism management and economics (Mills and Rosentraub 2013, Ritchie 1984, Roche 1994, 2000). What is common in these characterizations is that mega-events are generally considered as unique (with a one-off or limited occurrence at a single place), they are expensive to host, but they attract large number of visitors and media interest as they often leave behind some imprints, so-called ‘legacies’ at the host locality. A succinct definition of this is provided by Roche (1994:1) who identifies mega-events as “short-term events with long-term consequences for the cities that stage them.” Since legacies are most often seen as indicators to judge the validity of hosting a mega-event, a substantial amount of literature can be found concerning this aspect, looking at their immediate, positive and negative long-term impacts on the host cities and regions, including both their people and their physical infrastructures (Müller 2015). Importantly, Preuss (2007:211) defines legacy as “all planned and unplanned, positive and negative, tangible and intangible structures created for and by a sport event that remain longer than the event itself.” Applying this broad and inclusive meaning of legacy

is essential in any assessment of the consequences of a mega-event, in terms of local/regional socio-economic development.

Nevertheless, the majority of the case studies also discuss so-called direct tangible legacies, such as the strategic use of mega-events for the mobilisation of funding opportunities, for creating jobs, developing infrastructure and driving urban renewal, as well as for increasing the tourist appeal of the cities in question (Andranovich et al. 2001, Evans 2003, Hiller 2000, LAgroup and Interarts 2005, Liao and Pitts 2006, Mills and Rosentraub 2013, Smith 2012). The economic, mega-investment aspect of such events is widely discussed, not only because of the actual tangible structures that initiate wide international interest, but also because of the special imprints such projects can have on local-regional decision making practices. Mega-events are highly public and politicised ventures (from bidding to implementation), and that makes them very similar to infrastructural mega-projects. Because the planning of large-scale infrastructural projects (that often accompany mega-events) usually entails strict deadlines, “fast track” decision-making and implementation processes are adopted to ensure the projects are completed on time. This in turn can lead to an infringement of participatory political and administrative decision making, i.e. to a lack of appropriate public consultation and transparency (Varrel and Kennedy 2011), either through a simple ignorance of such issues, or as a result of the explicit rejection of such practices as being obstructive and counterproductive. A lack of participation in the development phase of such projects can give rise to distrust and scepticism, regardless of the actual risks, burdens or benefits of such projects (Flyvbjerg et al. 2003).

By attracting international publicity and receiving distinct public attention, some mega-events can also be important as image-builders for the hosting cities, regions, or even the countries as a whole. A prestigious mega-event such as the World Exposition, the Olympic Games, a World Cup or Grand Prix – and especially when successful – provides the city with an exclusive opportunity to earn a favourable external perception and to effectively advertise itself. In turn, this can contribute to the global marketing of the city’s image not only to tourists, but also to businesses and investors. A city with a mega-event brand not only stands a better chance of becoming a target location for other events in the future, but it also can be seen as more attractive for corporate headquarters and new inward investment.

Relatedly, other intangible legacies concern the hosting place and region. Positive energy generation, increased activism, improved social cohesion and community self-awareness are some of the things which may emerge locally from the enthusiasm and the increased community interaction that are triggered amidst the preparations and implementation of a ‘big project’. These aspects are also seen to be important outcomes of mega-events, but their effects have only recently been given consideration in academic and professional discussions. However, they are gradually gaining more significance in the evaluation of mega-event legacies.

There are various terms which are used to imply intangible legacies in the mega-event literature, such as memories (Cashman 2003, Hiller 2003), communities (Hiller 2003) or professional networking (O'Brien & Gardiner 2006). Preuss (2007) defines these collectively as "soft event-structures" in his paper conceptualizing sport mega-event legacies.

Either way, if any type of legacy is to become relevant for the residents of the host city, and at the same time have the capability of revitalising the local economy, then it needs conscious planning and embeddedness within a long-term strategy (Holmes et al. 2015, Law 2002, Silvestre 2009). This aspect of mega-event planning has managed to extend beyond the academic discussions and ex-post evaluations, and gradually has made its way into the official agendas and schemes of prestigious events. In one of its most important missions, the Olympic Agenda 2020 (unanimously accepted at the 127th International Olympic Committee's session in Monaco, 8-9.12.2014) underlined the significance of the "sustainable and meaningful legacies" of the Games that "comply with basic principles of good governance in mega-event hosting-processes" (IOC 2014). This aim affects most of the planning procedure from the bidding process¹ to the actual implementation² of the Olympic Games to be held from 2022/2024.

4.2 THE POSITION OF THE ECOC PROGRAMME IN THE WIDENING RANGE OF MEGA-EVENTS

As described above, there are a few crucial characteristics that distinguish mega-events from other types of events (such as regular festivals). These include their scale (limited time-scale, high number of participants, large investments and broad international publicity) and their single (or very rare) occurrence at one location. These general features of mega-events also provide a close description of the European Capital of Culture. Existing literature on the European Capital of Culture applies the term mega-event, however it does not delve into the special characteristics of the ECOC Programme that clearly distinguish it from other, well-known mega-events (Table 2).

¹ The bidding process will gradually be shaped to a form of invitation, with an assistance phase when cities considering a bid will be advised by the IOC about the bidding procedures, main requirements, and how previous cities have ensured positive bid and Games legacies. Bidding cities are evaluated by assessing the key opportunities and risks of their proposal.

² Exiting resources need to be used as much as possible (even if it would require the involvement of other locations) in order to avoid unnecessary investments and ensure future viability.

Table 2. General features of mega-events and specialties of the ECOC Programme

	General mega-event features	ECOC characteristics
backgrounds	longer traditions, but low frequency (usually held every four years)	with a shorter history, but held annually
time-frame	two weeks (sporting mega-events) – a few months (World Expo)	usually a whole calendar year
aims	commercial, promotion of sports	strong cultural mission, “Europeanisation”
funding scheme	strong marketing platforms and involvement of sponsorship	local and national public subsidies and EU funds

Firstly, the origins of the European Capital of Culture Programme do not date back as far as the Olympic Games (1896 and 1924), the World Expo (1851), or even the FIFA World Cup (1930). The original scheme of ‘The European City of Culture’ was initiated at an intergovernmental level in 1985. However, in the course of its relatively *short history*, the event has gone through significant changes and developments due to its annual occurrence (which also differentiates it from other prestigious mega-events).

Secondly, the event’s *time frame* clearly distinguishes it from other mega-events. While sporting mega-events last from a couple of weeks (Summer and Winter Olympics) to a month (FIFA World Cup, UEFA European Championship), the ECOC event covers more-or-less a whole calendar year. In terms of its relatively extensive time frame, an ECOC project is probably most similar to World Expositions that last for several months (maximum of 6). The long time frame offers the opportunity to combine various seasonal elements of the cultural programme (e.g. open-air events or the inclusion of various seasonal festivities), but at the same time, it also requires a continuous effort on the part of the organisers to provide sufficient and attractive enough content in order to maintain public interest throughout the whole year.

The third, and probably most important distinctive feature of the ECOC manifests in its *strong cultural mission*, and within that, its distinct ambition to support and showcase the value of ‘Europeanness’. EU-ropean institutions consider European identity as a project, as shown already in 1973 within the EC Declaration of European Identity (CEC 1973). This document, and the later Tindemans Report (1976) both create a connection between European identity and advances in political integration. Among the diverse strategies the European Union has invented to create an idea of a European identity; the initiative of the European Capital of Culture is a special instance of the interface between the EU, the participant city (or even region) and its civil society and visiting tourists (Garcia and Cox 2013). The

European Capital of Culture Programme was initiated by Melina Mercouri (then Minister of Culture in Greece) in the summer of 1985, and was designed to help bring the peoples of Europe closer to each other. The aims were twofold: on the one hand, the Programme looked to make the cultural assets of various cities accessible to a European audience; and on the other hand, it looked to construct a European cultural image. The ECOC Programme has a particular relevance to the EU's intention to strengthen its positive perceptions among the citizens of its member, associated and accession states.

However, whether Europe has a distinct cultural reality or not is a matter of debate. In terms of the cultural policy of the EU, the cultural diversity of Europe is always emphasized, while there is also a constant search for underlying common elements which may produce a possible cultural community of Europe. As termed in one of the well-known mottos of the EU, this is often referred to as a European culture 'united in diversity' (Blokker 2006, 2008, Lähdesmäki 2012, Sassatelli 2002). This challenging objective of the European project is well reflected by the ECOC Programme, where European values are perceived in various ways in different cities. Although all of the cities in the European Capital of Culture Programme give consideration to the European dimension while planning a cultural content for the ECOC, the solutions chosen to meet this criterion vary from case to case. However, there are some approaches that have been replicated throughout the years, such as the hosting of European star-performances, large-scale infrastructural investments with a high symbolic capacity, or cooperation projects with a more narrow interpretation of the European community of the ECOC cities.

Last, but not least the European Capital of Culture Programme is strongly characterized by public subsidies. Mega-events in general have the distinctive ability to mobilise considerable public funding, but most of them can largely rely on the sale of retransmission rights for television and advertising space for sponsors. Although some of the European Capitals of Culture managed to build their budgets partly on ticket sales and sponsorship (for example the Marseille 2013 project raised an exceptional €16.5 million in private sponsorship from companies), the main component of the ECOC projects' budget tends to come from local and national public subsidies, and to a varied extent, from direct and indirect EU funds. Since 1996, the Programme has been funded through the *Kaleidoscope programme* (1996-1999), the *Culture 2000 programme* (2000-2006), and the *Culture Programme* (2007-2013); followed by the currently on-going *Creative Europe Programme*. Since 2010, EU funding is awarded in the form of the Melina Mercouri Prize that offers a maximum sum of €1.5 million (Garcia & Cox 2013). In terms of the general role of direct EU funding³, the ex-post evaluation for the three implemented 2010 ECOC

³ It is important to differentiate the so-called direct and indirect funding of the European Capital of Culture projects. Indirect EU funding is very often involved in the projects to a varying extent mostly through Structural Funds. Consequently, imprints of European and national strategies can generally be detected in the individual cases.

projects claims that the relatively minor share of direct EU funding makes the Programme “very cost-effective compared to other EU policy instruments” (ECORYS 2011: ix). This public-grants-oriented approach of localities seems to be an important driver for intensifying the competition for the title of European Capital of Culture (see Section 4.4).

The European Capital of Culture event can generate similar dynamics to those that other mega-events create for their host cities or regions. However, when it comes to the in-depth analysis of ECOC effects on local and regional development, the above-mentioned distinctive characteristics also need to be considered.

4.3 FORMER RESEARCH ON THE POTENTIALS AND CHALLENGES OF ECOC

Since its launch, the European Capital of Culture Programme has been widely researched from different perspectives, including its impact on urban tourism, urban development, local economy, and its symbolic capacity. Similar to the general trend in mega-event research, economic analysis is still prevalent, and socio-cultural, political or environmental impacts have a somewhat lower representation in the literature (Langen & García 2009).

Research is an important tool for many of the stakeholders in the Programme and the events, consequently, there is a growing number of policy documents published by the European Commission (DG EAC 2009, EC 2010, 2015) and commissioned reports (such as interim and ex-post evaluations) focusing on its possible advantages, mainly concerning cultural and urban development as well as place marketing. However, Ooi et al. (2014:425) argue that the majority of these studies “tend to be celebratory and subtly endorses boosterism of the ECOC scheme”. The latest decision of the European Parliament and the Council (445/2014/EU) makes an attempt to resolve this issue by introducing a new requirement where:

(e)ach city concerned shall be responsible for the evaluation of the results of its year as a European Capital of Culture... The cities concerned shall draw up their evaluation reports and transmit them to the Commission by 31 December of the year following the year of the title (EP/EC 2014).

To date, there are only a few major, systematic reports by Myerscough (1994), Palmer/Rae (2004a, b), Palmer and Richards (2007, 2009) Palmer et al. (2011) and García and Cox (2013) that offer an overall comparative review of the experience of all of the participant cities. The majority of the research published on the theme are single-case or smaller-scale comparative case studies from a particular perspective. Examples of this latter approach are Sassatelli’s (2002) work on the nine ECOC

projects in 2000 discussing the issue of European cultural identity through the European Capital of Culture initiative, and the research of Ooi et al. (2014) that elaborates on the ‘poetics’ (the presentation) and the ‘politics’ (legitimation) of ECOC. The lack of systematic comparative studies is mainly due to the diversity of the host cities, budgets, strategies and existing facilities, but the heterogeneity of available data and research techniques are also significant factors that complicate comparability (Garcia & Cox 2013).

The most recent extensive research report of Garcia and Cox (2013) analysed the common approaches and strategies of former ECOCs, based on 486 published texts such as EU policy documents, host city official bidding materials, evaluation reports and refereed academic publications. The study distinguished the common impact themes of the studied documents. The most frequently discussed areas address economic and cultural impacts, as well as governance and the social dimension. Discussions on image are also noted. (Figure 2.)

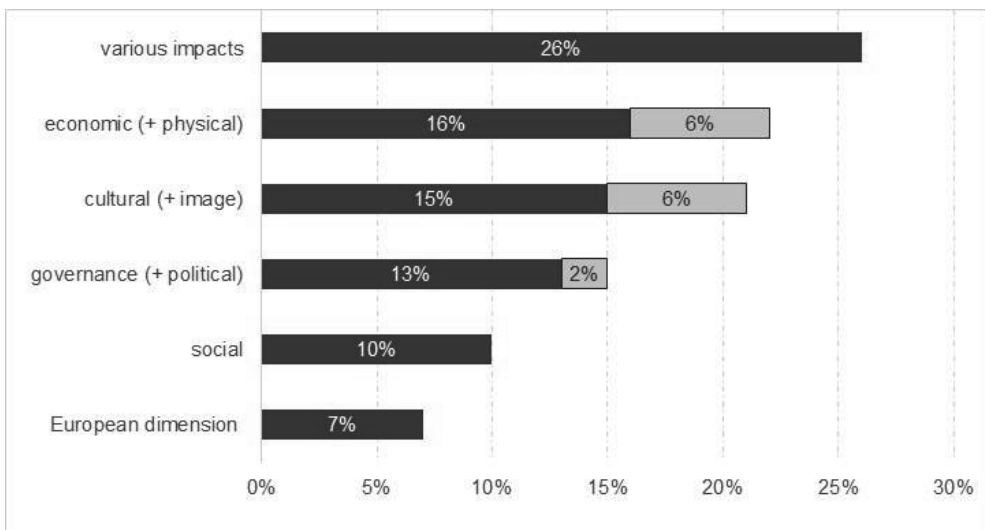


Figure 2. Share of ECOC publications per impact area (based on 486 documents) (Source: Garcia and Cox, 2013:31)

When one looks merely at the academic discussions, the majority of the ECOC literature uses case studies and elaborates on the short-term effects of the European Capital of Culture Programme. These discussions are found predominantly in the field of tourism studies, cultural policy and urban planning journals. Among this literature, the economic impacts on the host cities have long been a focal issue, and can be seen in researches on cultural tourism (Deffner & Labrianidis 2005, Herrero et al. 2006, Hughes et al. 2003, Richards 2000), the role of cultural development in

urban regeneration (Andres 2011, Balsas 2004, Faragó 2012, Paris & Baert 2011, Sacco & Blessi 2009), and the strong brand-status of the ECOC (Bıçakçı 2012, Boland 2013, Richards & Wilson 2004, Sykes 2011). More recent directions of academic discussions deal with issues of Europeanness and identity (Habit 2013, Lähdesmäki 2012, 2013, Sassatelli 2002, 2009), and the politics of the European Capital of Culture initiative (Colomb 2011, O'Callaghan & Linehan 2007, Palonen 2010). The research mapping shows that there are much fewer studies published about the effects of the ECOC Programme on the city's social and cultural life (Knudsen 2011, Steiner et al. 2015), on local resident perceptions (Vareiro et al. 2011) and well-being (West & Scott-Samuel 2010), or on other issues such as community participation and development (Åkerlund & Müller 2012, Boyko 2007, Fitjar et al. 2013). It is also noted that these studies have all been conducted in the last 10 years.

To date, only limited research has been carried out that studies the networked nature of the ECOC projects. Sohn (2009) maps the trans-border cooperation networks of the Luxembourg 2007 project in order to analyse the relations of cooperation between partners in different cities of the Greater Region. An evaluation by Richards (2015) considers how the ECOC affects the networking of different stakeholders. New forms of governance networks surrounding European Capital of Culture projects are also studied, for instance, by O'Brien (2011) in the example of Liverpool 2008, by Hoyng (2012) based on research on the Istanbul 2010 project, by Andres (2011) in the case of Marseille 2013, and by Pierantoni (2015) addressing the significance of regional governance networks in Venice's bid for the ECOC 2019 title. Nevertheless, these represent an emerging new paradigm - one which this dissertation attempts to join.

4.4 THREE DECADES OF ECOC: COMPETITION AND CRITERIA

Over 50 cities have held the ECOC title since the Programme started, the first being Athens in 1985. During its three decades of history, the initiative has gone through a gradual evolution, influenced by the broad set of changes in the European Union as well as by the increasing popularity of the Programme.

During the early years of the Programme, cities were chosen that had already been recognized as artistic and cultural centres: Athens in 1985, Florence in 1986, Amsterdam in 1987, Berlin in 1988, and Paris in 1989. These cities worked with moderate budgets and limited planning for the event, and little if any attention was paid to long-term investments (Richards 2000). In 1990, Glasgow's nomination introduced a different trend (Myerscough 1990, 2011): its experience was perceived as a major success, and it was followed by numerous cities with similar aims to participate in the Programme. Since 1990, several cities that have been awarded the ECOC title also happened to be declining industrial centres (e.g. Antwerp 1993, Rotterdam 2001, Lille 2004, Essen 2010), of a relatively small size, and often as not

peripherally situated cities within their own national contexts (e.g. Graz 2003, Patras 2006, Sibiu 2007, Pécs 2010). The focus on urban revitalisation and regional development has been maintained, although a few exceptions have been the capital cities of some of the countries that joined the EU after 2004 (Vilnius 2009, Tallinn 2011, Riga 2014).⁴

Over the last 15 years, there has been intensified national competition for the title. This is indicated by the fact that already in Great Britain (Liverpool 2008), Germany (Essen 2010) and Hungary (Pécs 2010), more than ten cities applied for the title and the available data of the coming years indicates an ever increasing rivalry for becoming an ECOC host (Figure 3.) (Németh 2010). During the first twenty years, there were no national selection competitions (except for the United Kingdom; preceding Glasgow 1990). Designation was made by the Council of Ministers (without the participation of external experts or prescribed assessment), and designations were based on the assessments and opinions of the national authorities.

The eligibility rules for cities wanting consideration for the title of European Capital of Culture have changed continually over the years, mainly because of the enlargement of the EU and the unprecedented increase in interest and competition between cities and member countries for the title. Two major changes occurred in the selection process: one affected the complexity of the nominations, while the other created wider and more equal accessibility to the Programme.

A designation process was set up in 1999 by the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union (Decision 1419/1999/EC) for ECOC applicants from 2005 onwards, together with the introduction of a formal Monitoring Panel (from the 2007 ECOC bidding). Member States were listed in chronological order, to take turns to host the event, and an international panel was established to evaluate the suitability of the cities proposed by the respective countries. As a result, the selection procedure has become more complicated and time consuming than ever before. Member countries need to organise a national competition for the cities who wish to hold the title, six years before the event. The winner is chosen by a Selection Panel composed of thirteen members - six of whom are cultural experts from that country, and seven of whom are appointed for three years by the European Parliament, the Council, the Commission and the Committee of the Regions, in order "to ensure a balance between local and national interests and the European dimension" (1622/2006/EC)⁵. Nine months after their first meeting, the selection panel examines the programmes of the shortlisted cities and makes its recommendation on the selected ECOC city. No later than four years preceding the year of the actual ECOC event, each Member State, based on the panel's judgement

⁴ See Article 1 (Németh 2010) bound in this dissertation for more detail.

⁵ The composition of the selection and monitoring panel is different for cities running for the title between 2020 and 2033: panels consist of 10 experts appointed by European Union institutions and a maximum of two experts from the Member State.

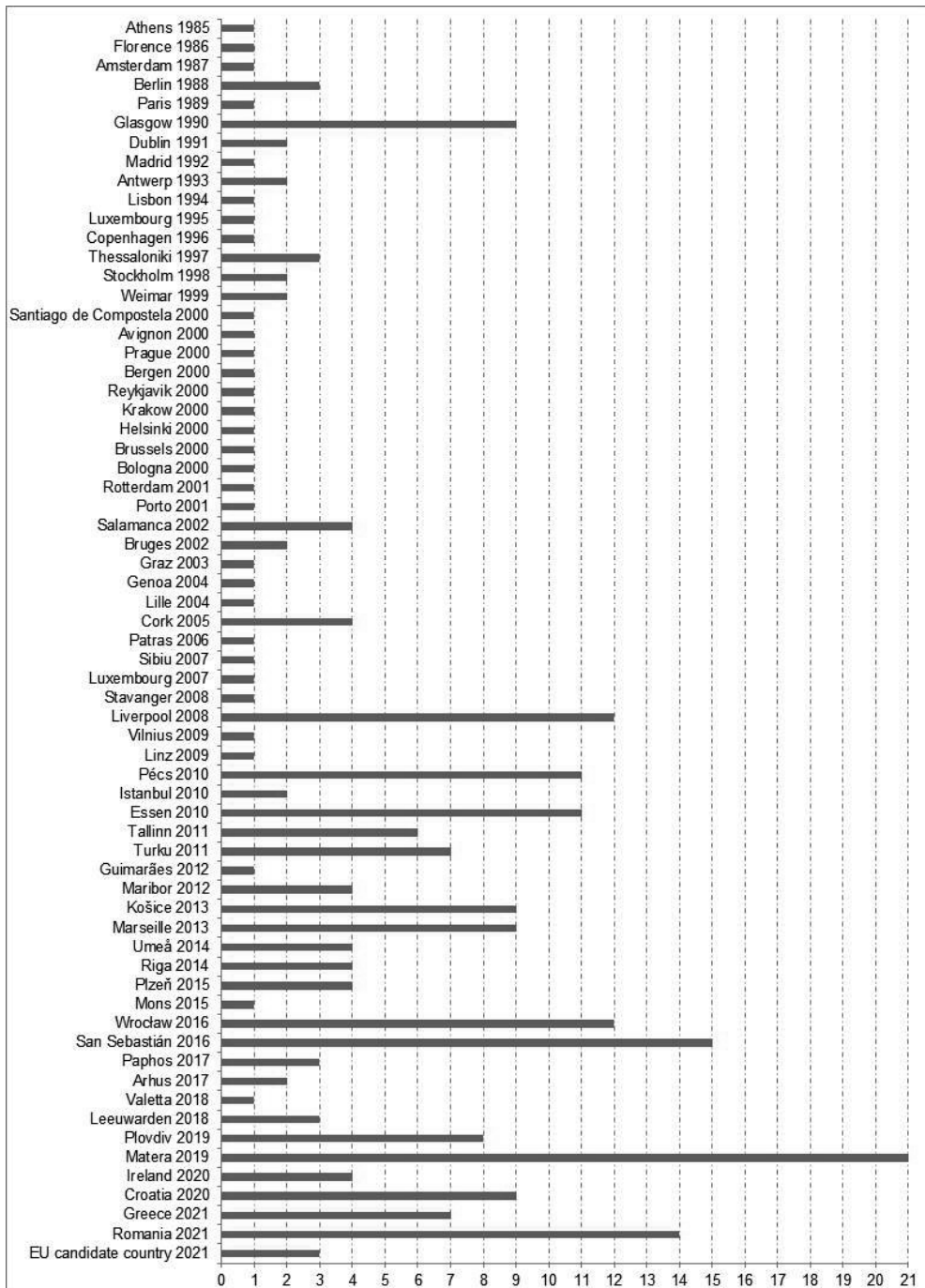


Figure 3. Number of candidate cities running for the European Capital of Culture title, 1985-2021 (Source: based on data gathered from individual ECOC websites and from Gomes & Librero-Cano, 2014)

and instructions, forwards the application of one city to the European institutions. The Council of Ministers⁶, considering the judgement of the European Parliament and the reports from the panel, formally designates the selected city as a European Capital of Culture (Decision 1622/2006/EC).

Concerning the wider accessibility of the Programme, a more recent change was instigated in 2007 as a response to the EU's expansion, whereby the ECOC title is shared equally among the member states in a pre-defined order, with individual states able to suggest one or more Cultural Capitals for a particular year. Also from the same year, two cities may share this status.⁷ This way each EU member nation is given the opportunity to host the ECOC in turn, making it possible for them to join the Programme soon after their entrance to the European Union, and also non-EU countries that are closely affiliated with the EU.

Not only has the competition increased and the selection process become more complicated, but at the same time, the criteria for earning the designation have become more complex. In this dissertation, three of the criteria for receiving the ECOC title need to be especially highlighted – the European dimension, citizen engagement, and sustainable, long-term effects – because they have been incorporated gradually into the guidelines for applicant cities as a proactive response to local interpretations of the ECOC 'mission' that the European Commission could detect via monitoring and evaluation reports.

During the first decade of the ECOC Programme, host cities focussed mostly on the exposition of their distinctive cultural features, rather than trying to find some common European meaning for the event. The Europeanness of the Programme gradually developed from the end of the 1990s, and was first outlined as a recommendation in Decision 1419/1999/EC. From the 2006 Decision of the European Parliament and the Council (1622/2006/EC), the so-called European dimension is a precondition for obtaining the title. However, the clear specification and the guidelines that would help the candidate cities to fulfil this core objective have only started to be developed more recently, following long stakeholder discussions and several evaluations of individual ECOC projects (Garcia & Cox 2013). It was time to clarify the concept, because the broad idea of the European dimension had brought about mixed interpretations (most often related to Europeanness or international image), or even a simple avoidance of the issue in the proposals and implementations, and its absence had often been observed a weakness of ECOC bids. The report by Palmer/Rae (2004a) shows that most of the host cities between 1995 and 2004 regarded the European dimension as a "medium priority". As a consequence, the objective was made more explicit in 2014 by the

⁶ A European level intergovernmental group of representatives from each Member State.

⁷ The latest framework accepted in 2014 (445/2014/EU) allows a city in a candidate country/potential candidate for EU membership to acquire the ECOC title every third year as of 2021. These cities are selected through an open competition, where applicants from several countries compete with each other. The competition is organised directly by the Commission.

latest ECOC action (445/2014/EU), specifying it as encouraging “cooperation between cultural operators, artists and cities from various Member States”, highlighting “the richness of cultural diversity in Europe”, as well as emphasizing the common features of European cultures.

From 2010, citizen engagement has become another significant requirement of the Programme, since first being outlined in Decision 1622/2006/EC, article 4. The so-called “City and Citizens” criterion was the first clear expression of “participation” and a “long-term cultural and social development of the city” as significant aims of the Programme, as well as forming necessary elements of the ECOC projects. The European dimension and citizen engagement are core elements of the Programme, are strongly represented in the guidelines for the applicants, and as reflected in the latest decision of the European Parliament and the Council establishing the European Capital of Culture action from 2020-2033, they continue to be solid objectives of the ECOC for future decades:

The award of the title should continue to be based on a specifically created cultural programme, which should have a strong European dimension. The cultural programme should be part of a long-term strategy having a sustainable impact on local economic, cultural and social development (445/2014/EU).

As the initiative gradually developed and the cities were ready to take more risks in order to participate, the legacy of the ECOC title for host cities has become a main subject of debate. The above mentioned study prepared by Robert Palmer and a group of experts about the 1995-2004 European Capitals of Culture had already indicated that a major share of participants experienced the event to be beneficial for the cities, both in terms of cultural development and for long-term (socio-economic) development (Palmer/Rae 2004).

In 2009, preparing for the 25th anniversary of the ECOC initiative, the European Commission collected survey responses from 23 former ECOC cities about their experiences as hosts and organisers. One of the seven questions in this survey directly asked the organisers about the legacy of their projects. Responses varied from hard infrastructural developments (new cultural institutions, festival office) through cultural leverage (tradition setting city events, expanded vision on culture, new habits in cultural consumption, strengthened local cultural identity), to positive image transformation. It is interesting to note here that besides these more mainstream and predictable gains, there were cities who ECOC in retrospect found collaboration (Lisbon 1994, Brugge 2002) and cross-border cooperation (Luxembourg 2007) as significant legacies of the (Table 3). Consequently, in a report from a European Commission conference ‘Celebrating 25 years of European capitals of Culture’ held in March 2010, it says – “the two central questions which were raised during the conference were, what kind of legacy can the ECOC really strive for, and how can these desired legacies best to be planned and achieved?” (EC 2010:7).

Table 3. Perceived legacies of the ECOC projects by the organisers (Source: Information is based on answers collected from the “European Capitals of Culture: the road to success” (DG EAC, 2009))

year	ECOC	legacy of the project
1985	Athens	starting the ECOC Programme
1986	Florence	new cultural institutions (e.g.: Centre for Exhibitions, Marino Marini Museum)
1990	Glasgow	positive image transformation; new cultural venues; improved public spaces
1993	Antwerp	positive image transformation; raised local pride
1994	Lisbon	new habits in cultural consumption; collaboration of cultural operators; renovations
1997	Thessaloniki	development of cultural infrastructure
1998	Stockholm	new institutions; vibrant cultural atmosphere
1999	Weimar	strengthened local cultural identity
2000	Brussels	tradition-setting city events; restorations
2000	Helsinki	expanded vision of culture
2000	Krakow	new festival office; City Information Network
2000	Santiago de Compostela	strengthened local cultural production and education (music, theatre, exhibitions)
2002	Brugge	collaboration of cultural operators; Brugge Plus cultural event organiser team, Concert Hall
2002	Salamanca	new theatres and art centres
2003	Graz	cultural buildings and landmarks; music and theatre festival (Psalm)
2004	Lille	rediscovered local pride; dynamised cultural life; cultural centres (Maisons Folie)
2005	Cork	reinforced cultural sector
2007	Luxembourg	cross-border cooperation (Espace Culturel Grande Région)
2007	Sibiu	refurbishment, modernizing of public spaces and cultural venues; rediscovered European spirituality
2008	Liverpool	positive image transformation; raised local confidence
2008	Stavanger	new collaborations, partnerships
2009	Linz	renewal and expansion of cultural infrastructure (Ars Electronica Centre, south wing of Castle Museum), increased mobility and flexibility in city administration
2009	Vilnius	renewal and renovations of cultural buildings, tradition-setting city events (Street musicians' day, Culture night, Klezmer festival)

As a response to these discussions, in 2014, the European Commission published guidelines for ECOC cities (2020-2033) to conduct their own evaluations because “there is still a shortage of a coherent evidence-base that would enable to better grasp the benefits of hosting the ECOC action and the title's medium-to-long term cultural, social and economic legacy in host cities” (EC 2014:4). To sum up, some

inquiry and discussion about the importance and about the assessment of ECOC legacies have started to emerge in recent years, however, a few more years seem to be needed for them to crystallise into concrete ways that will impact assessments and the relevant requirements spelled out in the calls.

5 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

5.1 CULTURE AS AN ASSET

Because of its central importance to the European Capital of Culture Programme, it is necessary to explain what the concepts of 'culture' and 'cultural projects' mean from the point of view of this research. Defining these concepts also helps to make more informed and accurate assumptions regarding participation in ECOC projects and the divergent perspectives which relate to them. Culture is often associated with pure art (such as paintings, sculpture, drama, and classical music) exhibited in museums, or performed in concert halls and theatres. However, in social sciences, culture is usually interpreted in a much broader sense. Giddens defines culture as 'ways of life' that integrate the "values that people hold, the norms that they follow and the objects they use" (1989:31).

Cultural policies have a growing significance in urban regeneration strategies. City governments pay special attention to the development of cultural services and amenities, and are increasingly willing to invest in them not only to serve local needs (i.e. for cultural activities with a social and educational aim), but also because they see cultural policies as a tool for the diversification of their local economic base and for improving their international image. Besides, as culture has been increasingly perceived as an urban development asset (as a promising strategy and as a marketable commodity), its definition has been stretched to incorporate not only arts, language, religion or social habits, but also other aspects such as the quality of urban life or the urban milieu (Bianchini & Parkinson 1993).

Based on the classification by Griffiths, there are three ways of using cultural policies and projects for urban regeneration. Firstly, the "integrationist model" characterises culture as the way of life of the community, and consequently, it concentrates on how cultural projects can support public social life and help create a sense of local identity. Secondly, the "cultural industries model" focuses on the production and dissemination of cultural products. Here, the emphasis is on the so-called commercial cultural industries, such as fashion design or the audio-visual industries. Thirdly, the "consumerist model" regards the different arts as a tool for primarily attracting visitors, tourists and businesses. The integrationist model is the closest to the original ideal of the ECOC Programme, having guidelines that primarily highlight the role of culture in increasing the self-esteem and pride of local citizens, and aims at extending social engagement with the cultural offerings of the cities. Also, identity-building is an apparent goal of the Programme by having Europeaness and Europeanisation as focal points from the outset. However, the other two approaches of the "cultural industries model" and the "consumerist model" are also very much visible in the Programme, and have a greater role in the motivation of the applicants. As a consequence, these different

approaches emerge in different combinations, and although they are mainly determined by the cities' actual strategies, they are also likely to change in time, with more emphasis on certain elements at particular phases in the evolution of the projects (Németh 2009).

Cities have to compete for the ECOC title, and to increase their chances of being selected by the Programme, they try to comply with the general ideas and mission of the European initiative. As a consequence, it is expected that there will be some degree of similarity in the way host cities define culture. Probably the most significant connection between the individual ECOC projects is the European dimension. This cultural feature has to be elaborated and presented to the city itself, to its citizens, as well as to possible cultural tourists. However, translating and converting 'European culture' into a local context and as a real local asset is not a straightforward task for the participant cities, and both the interpretations and the solutions vary according to local potentials and interests. There is no concrete definition of culture provided by the European Capital of Culture Programme, and to a certain extent the general guidelines allow for different interpretations. Given that local relevance, feasibility, as well as imaginative and creative solutions are all important elements of a successful bid, there is a wide range of solutions as to how the concept of culture manifests in individual projects. It is because of this diversity in the conceptualisation of culture that the engagement of different groups and the dominance of governing powers of individual ECOC projects can vary to a large extent. The following sections give more explanations as to the possible governance processes that shape the studied cases.

5.2 SCALES OF PLACE-GOVERNANCE

The complexity of the mega-event can be best understood by an analysis of the social controlling powers, and therefore one needs to go way beyond the mere study of "specific inputs and outputs of the localities compared" (Booth 2011:24-25). Hence, this dissertation focuses on governance processes – at and across various levels of authority – operating in the European Capital of Culture Programme and projects.

At its simplest, governance can be explained as the co-production of policies with the participation of governments and non-governmental actors (Bache & Flinders 2004). This co-creation is initiated by mutual interdependencies of the participants, in order to find optimal solutions to a certain problem. Governance does not have to involve a sustained, rigid partnership with a consistent constellation of actors throughout the whole process of implementation, but rather it can flexibly change to serve different purposes and stages of operation. The increasing use of the term governance has resulted in a proliferation of definitions and approaches that diversifies its applicability, but at the same time complicates

its explanation when studying particular cases. In order to analyse the governance processes emerging around the studied projects, both a normative and structural understanding of the term is necessary. The concept of “good governance” emerged at the end of the 1980s and in the early 1990s in World Bank documents (1989, 1992, 1994) as “an essential complement to sound economic policies” and to “promote equitable and sustainable development” (1992:v). Since then, the term has been often cited in academic discussions as well as in policy documents. Several normative explanations have been developed during recent decades, such as the UN’s ‘best practice of governance’ or ‘good governance’ that enhances eight main attributes of the process: participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive and follows the rule of law (UNESCAP 2009). However, not all ways and outcomes of ‘getting together’ may serve everyone’s interest. Consequently, good governance is more of an ideal than a reality, as it emphasizes a combination of standards that very much “reflect the principles of the underlying political system and its public values” (Bannister & Connolly 2011:3).

In reality, governance not only varies with different social-political contexts, but parties such as institutional stakeholders, private actors, local elites (to mention just a few) might have dissimilar, even divergent, interests and objectives concerning a ‘common good’. These aspects need to be critically examined in each case, and in a more structural manner. For this reason, this dissertation also applies a structural approach to understand the various participant stakeholders’ motives, intentions, potentials and limits for participation in governance. Structural analysis aims to explain the how and why of the governance process, concepts which are essential to understand before any evaluation is attempted. A contemporaneous understanding is necessary of, on the one hand, the general social-political contexts involved, and on the other hand, the micro-scale, individual relations. This in turn calls for a detailed analysis of each particular case. For example, as Alcantara et al. (2016) argue in their paper, it is difficult to draw the boundary between governance interpreted as being mere engagement in an issue, and governance that means actual influence on relevant decision-making. In order to examine the actors that have the intentions, means and power to craft policy, one needs to study the visible and less visible processes of governance, as well as to explain the possible reasons for the particular dynamics of their relationships (Article 2 and 3).

The concept of ‘place’ also deserves some elaboration for the purpose of this dissertation. On the one hand, the mega-event is tied to the physical-spatial boundaries of a particular city, e.g. located in a particular region (situated in either a central or peripheral position), and embedded in the cultural, economic and political-administrative context of a specific country. Accordingly, there is no doubt that territorial specificities and place-based resources impress their mark upon the implementation of an ECOC project. On the other hand, looking at ECOC projects as social constructs shows an even more complex picture, with a multitude of

spatially unbounded and transitory interconnections. Consequently, building on the mutual relationships between space and place (Massey 1994), the limits of the ECOC place in the research can be seen as both relational and temporary, as ECOC projects go beyond the existing spatial-administrative hierarchies, and as the structures they create and use can be considered as more temporary than permanent. Richards (2015:123) refers to this by claiming that the ECOC represents a process of “temporal and spatial clustering”.

Three current analytical perspectives are taken into consideration and assessed through the ECOC examples: multi-level or multi-scale governance based on the concept of ‘bounded space’ (a policy approach applied extensively in EU decision making); and more recently introduced ideas of the ‘relational’ (‘unbounded’ spatial) and ‘phase-spatial’ conceptual frameworks for governance. These analytical perspectives are not mutually exclusive explanations of governance, but rather steps taken in a progression towards achieving more refined thought on the issue.

5.2.1 Multi-Level Governance

The term “multi-level governance” was first used by Marks (1993) to explain the changes that occurred in the EU during the late 1980s and early 1990s. Ever since then, European integration has been the main field for studies of so-called multi-level governance, and the concept is often denounced for being rather a depiction of the European policy than a verifiable theory (Alcantara et al. 2016, Faludi 2012, 2015). Multi-scalar control definitely characterises the European spatial relations and institutional dynamics, and in the EU’s context it is usually debated in relation to the division of competencies between levels of government (Conzelmann 2008, Hooghe & Marks 2001, Marks 1993).

However, the multi-level approach goes beyond a simple description of the European context. The intensification of regionalisation trends, the growth of metropolitan centres, together with increased supra-nationalisation have altered the political landscapes of several countries. Alcantara et al. (2016:39) explains multi-level governance as “an instance of policy-making in which government(s) engage with a variety of non-governmental *actors*, organised at different territorial *scales*, in a process of *decision-making* that aims to collaboratively produce some sort of public good”. Multi-level governance may not pass as a proper theory, being more an inductively generated, descriptive concept, however, in this study it is applied next to spatial theories in order to support the conceptual frame to discuss and analyse the different processes controlling the selected ECOC cases.

The European Capital of Culture Programme is an obvious example of multi-level spatial processes being undertaken by a combination of local, national and European sets of actors, under different conditions and with varied interests. Jessop (2004:57-58) argues that “multi-level governance typically involves tangled

hierarchies and complex interdependence". The constellation of power relations between the local-regional-national and European levels is especially important for a programme such as the ECOC, where the criteria of the initiative can be subject to multiple interpretations, and where the learning process is also a significant element (Article 2).

5.2.2 Relational-Spatial Framework of Governance

The conceptualisation of certain phenomena formed around the ECOC projects requires the inclusion of other threads of spatial theories. Already in the 1980s, there were emerging conceptual ideas interpreting regions as '*unbounded*' or '*relational*', where space is investigated as being socially constructed. In his early work, Neil Smith describes geographical space as a "social experience" (1984:76), rather than a fixed, objective structure. This is an important feature of the relational approach, i.e. that place is considered as a social construct, and places are "articulated moments in networks of social relations and understandings" (Massey 1994:154).

The key aspect of the relational approach is that regions are not fixed, but rather discontinuous and diffuse in space. Allen et al. (1998:57) describe space as a doily, where there are holes between the connecting links, without "the necessary inclusion within the definition of a region of everything which lies within a spatially continuous area". Smith (2004:10) continues to emphasize the significance of the relational approach in geographical analysis by saying that "it is helpful to move away from claims regarding the boundedness of European regions towards a consideration of the trans-local connectivities that constitute economic practices in and between particular spaces".

In contrast with the multi-level spatial approach, the relational concept treats territory not as a container, but rather as a combination of nodes and networks, where multiple relations, events and ideals coexist and limit or generate creative synergies (Healey 2007, Smith 2010). Pike (2009) maintains that territorial and relational approaches should be considered as complementary rather than conflicting, however this is a challenging task due to the very different questions they each raise, and the forms of analyses they suggest. Political space can be bounded in administrative territories, but at the same time it is made "porous through people's multiple identities, mobilities", and a relational connectivity which exceeds territorial boundaries (Morgan 2007:1239). Allen and Cochrane (2009:30) also emphasize this by saying that "there is a more diffuse and fragmented form of governance as a 'regional' assemblage, rather than a series of regional institutions that are territorially fixed in some way".

Emerging from this idea of spatiality, a significant share of the governance literature (Allen & Cochrane 2009, 2010, Amin 2004, Swyngedouw et al. 2013)

published over the last decade highlights the importance of society-centric governance, where the network of participants is fluid and increasingly informal. In these so-called governance networks, various actors interact for a common goal and facilitate self-regulated policy making. The network participants are interdependent, but operatively self-sufficient actors. As a result, the network constellations are flexible and fluid, depending on the changing aims and ambitions of the assemblages. Emerging governance networks are informal, as there are no established procedures that define where and how a decision is made (Hajer & Versteeg 2005). Nevertheless, the continued collaboration of the network actors will ultimately result in the formulation of a set of rules, models, principles and ideas. (Sørensen & Torfing 2009).

5.2.3 Phase-Space Framework of Governance

Complicating things further, places are processes and not frozen in time (Massey 1992, 1994). The importance of the time factor in relational space has already been theorised by Doreen Massey in her essay *Politics and Space/Time* (1992). She argues that if space is socially constructed and society is spatially fabricated, then space cannot be separate from time. The relation of time and space remains in the focus of her later works, and the process-nature of space is incorporated in these theoretical discussions (Massey 2004, 2005). Consequently, the *dynamics* of social interrelations and interactions in space also need to be of concern. For this reason, another geographical narrative, the so-called '*phase space*' needs to be considered in the analysis. The concrete concept of 'phase space' was first introduced by Martin Jones (2009) and it focuses mainly on power geometries *in space-time relations*. Accepting the general ideas of relational space, the concept stresses the dynamic character of power geometries and consequently the context- and time-specific nature of space (Jones 2009). In contrast to relational space, which is open, unfinished and void of causality, this geographical narrative explains regional spatiality as a succession of different 'phase space layers' "formed through the passage of events, legacies and practices" (Jones 2009:500). "Constructed and always emergent space matters in shaping future trajectories" (Ibid:498) because of path-dependency, therefore the focus of spatial analysis needs to be turned towards the continuities and discontinuities of relations in time.

5.3 ANALYTICAL TOOLS

In order to facilitate comparison and draw conclusions on a more general level from the two case studies, some key analytical concepts are introduced. These also serve to operationalise the rather abstract governance frameworks discussed above.

These concepts are central to the analyses in the articles included in this dissertation, as they represent processes that are closely studied and compared across the two ECOC projects. Also, these concepts are interlinked with each other, embedded in the multi-level, relational and phase-spatial governance frameworks. The logical steps leading from the basic idea of multi-level governance to a phase-spatial framework represent widening possibilities, diversifying configurations and dynamics of engagement, giving rise to various conflicts and patterns of cooperation. (See Figure 4)

Engagement – meaning both (the willingness) to include other actors from above and (the ability and motivation to) participate from below – is assumed to be an important element in governance in general, but as previously mentioned, it is also included in the criteria (or guidelines) set by the Programme for applicants. It is therefore interesting to examine the dynamics of engagement and the selective nature of it in the particular ECOC projects, as well as in the *conflicts* and creative *cooperative partnerships* that emerge as a consequence.

Diverse definitions of *social conflicts* can be traced back for almost a century in the international scientific literature, and the phenomenon of ‘incompatibility’ is frequently mentioned (Németh 2015). The common idea is that a difference between opinions causes disagreement, which provides the basis for certain conflicts. Nicholson (1992: 11) argues that conflict exists “when two people wish to carry out acts which are mutually inconsistent. They may both want to do the same thing... or they may want to do different things where the different things are mutually incompatible...” Simmel (1950) argues that conflicts primarily affect solidarity and integrity in society by placing borders between groups through strengthened group consciousness and their awareness of a distinction between them and other groups. Coser (1956) develops this idea further saying that surfacing conflict can support the integration of relationships because it resolves the tension between antagonists. Nevertheless, conflict serves not only as a balancing mechanism, but the presence of conflict can also indicate the quality of the relationships in a society. This quality of social and institutional relations can be either an indication of obstacles or malfunction, or oppositely the occurrence of conflict can actually indicate the strength and stability of a relationship as parties are more expected to express their hostile feelings when feeling safe and firm in their basic relations (Coser 1956).

As much as conflicts are part of human society, cooperation also exists in every sphere of life; almost everything constructed by humans (both physical and mental) is produced cooperatively. Yet, cooperation does not evolve easily, and is often undermined by self-interest (Stewart 2000). In reality, however, there are an infinite number of examples when the co-operative behaviour between members of a society has resulted in a successful outcome. Given the right conditions, groups can work towards the common good even if it means forgoing personal gains (Ostrom 1998). Therefore, policies need not only to promote the advantages of cooperation,

but they also have to create conditions where synergism (Queller 1985) and “possible future interactions” (Hamilton 1981, Trivers 1971) give better perspectives for cooperative initiatives. The European Capital of Culture Programme has the potential to reach and mobilise various segments of society, however the drivers, incentives and the constellations of power relations can vary in individual projects (Németh 2015).

It is also assumed that many of the cooperative alliances among various stakeholders have roots in previously existing functioning relations, and are thus mobilised by the ECOC event, and there could also be new collaborations, i.e. those which come into being due to the mega-event. These linkages among a diverse set of actors may continue to exist in the aftermath of the project, so adding to the *network capital* of the relevant organisations, and cumulatively, that of the ‘place’ (locality/region). Building on and increasing network capital (by means of promoting engagement) can be traced only through time, hence the relevance to the phase-spatial framework of governance.

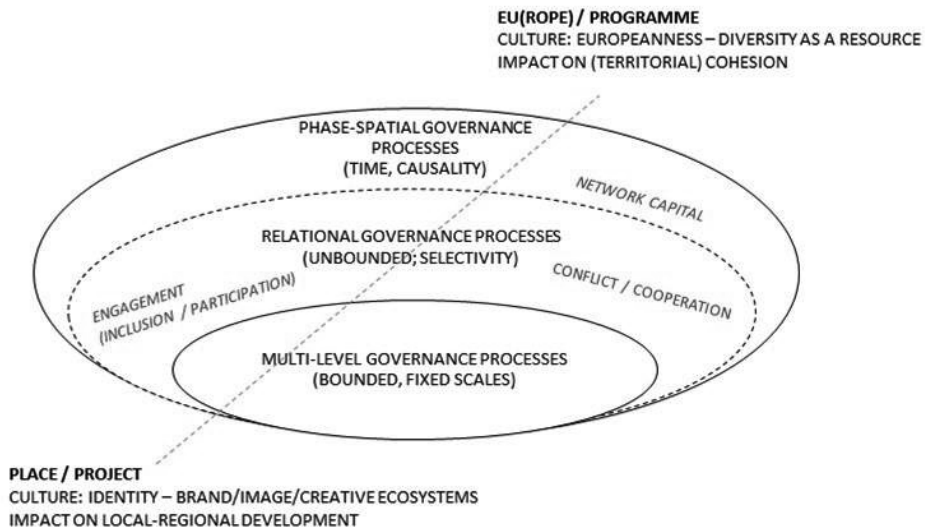


Figure 4. The theoretical framework linking the analytical concepts employed in the articles of the dissertation

Furthermore, it is inherent to the ECOC mega-event that it operates at the interface of ‘the European’ and the ‘local’. So, its governance must at least take place with the involvement of these, and also some intermediary (national) scales. At the one extreme, lies the European Commission, the level of programming of the ECOC:

with its own interests, policy agendas, ('common European') values and definition of culture – and its resulting guidelines. At the 'bottom' are the host cities (regions) and their local social partners with their own specific (economic and other) motivations, conditioning contexts and resources to implement the mega-event projects. The system of interactions between and around these two main actors or stakeholders of the ECOC lies in the focus of the enquiry into the possible reasons for a mega-event to leave a lasting positive impact on local-regional development, and ultimately on territorial development within Europe.

6 PÉCS 2010 AND TURKU 2011

6.1 PÉCS, THE “BORDERLESS CITY”

Pécs has a population of around 149 000 (KSH 2015) inhabitants and is the fifth largest city of Hungary, located in the southwestern part of the country, close to its border with Croatia. It is the administrative and economic centre of Baranya County.

Pécs has always been a prosperous city due to its geographical location and its importance as a regional centre of commerce. The city of Pécs was founded almost 2000 years ago as Sopianae to be the centre of the Pannonia Province of the Roman Empire. Throughout the centuries, Pécs has preserved its important cultural, economic and administrative role, It has become a significant centre of Catholicism, and established the first university⁸ in Central Europe. The city also has a rich heritage of ancient Turkish monuments as it was under Turkish rule during the 16th–17th centuries, when it became an important Turkish prefectural centre.

For a long time, wine-making and manufacturing have been traditional activities in the region. Internationally famous factories (including leather workshops, a glove factory, Zsolnay Porcelain Manufacture, Littke Champagne Factory, Angster Organ Factory) were founded in Pécs in the 18th–19th centuries, and the city was making speedy economic progress for two centuries also due to its coal mining industry. Crisis arrived in the late 1980s with deindustrialisation, job losses and outmigration. In the new millennium, the city tries to build on its other potentials, such as its cultural diversity and the traditionally strong cross-border connections of its region. In addition, another important mission is to create a significant cultural counter-pole for the capital, Budapest, which not only has strong economic and political supremacy in the country, but also has the most significant concentration of cultural life (Németh 2011).

Pécs, as well as its region, is remarkably multicultural. It has always been a multi-ethnic location where various cultural traditions and values have interacted throughout history. Today, the city is the German minority’s primary cultural centre in Hungary. Besides German, there are eight other minority local governments in Pécs alone (Romany, Croatian, Serbian, Bulgarian, Polish, Greek, Ukrainian, Ruthenian). This multicultural character proved to be an important asset during the city’s bid for the ECOC title, and was well utilised in the event year’s programme.

At the beginning of the new Millennium, Hungary was awarded the opportunity to designate a candidate as the European Capital of Culture for 2010,

⁸ Initially founded in 1367, the university has operated continuously in the city from the late 18th century, and currently has 25 000 students.

and in 2005 (following a two-round tender overseen by Hungary's Ministry of Culture and Education together with professional experts) the final selection was made. The selection group drew up its own criteria, which included a strong development orientation. The first-round selection was made by national jury, when of the original 11 applicants, 7 made it through to the second round. In the second round, the jury was expanded to 14 members, including 4 international experts (with organisers from two previous ECOCs in Berlin and Helsinki). In October 2005, Pécs was announced as the Hungarian cultural capital in 2010, sharing the title on the 25th anniversary of the ECOC Programme with Essen in the Ruhr region of Germany (with 53 settlements) and Istanbul in Turkey (Rampton 2011).

The title of the Pécs 2010 project was 'City without Frontiers' joined by the concept of the 'Gateway to the Balkans', which implying the city's historical heritage and geographical position, refers to its geopolitical potentials. As explained by the managing director of *Hungarofest*, the organiser of the Pécs 2010 programmes: "(t)he European Capital of Culture programme is about long-term development and sustainability, about the opportunity to redirect the economic compass of Pécs, transforming it from a traditional industrial base into a cultural industry" (Hamvay 2009). Major physical-infrastructure investments were the main pillars of the Pécs 2010 ECOC project, which could provide new attractive sites for the cultural programmes during the event year and also beyond.

6.2 TURKU RETURNS AS A CULTURAL CAPITAL

Turku is situated at the mouth of the River Aura in the southwestern part of Finland. With a population of approximately 186 000 (Tilastokeskus 2015), it is the fifth most populated city in Finland. The city has three institutions of higher education and high technology, with an approximate total of 35 000 university and polytechnic students (Turku city website 2011).

Emerging in the 12th–13th centuries, Turku is regarded as the oldest city in Finland. It used to be the country's first capital and both the early Catholic Church and Sweden ran the country from Turku, The city was Finland's provincial capital, and at that time was the second largest city in the Swedish Kingdom. However, soon after Finland became part of the Russian Empire (1809), the capital of the Grand Duchy became Helsinki in 1812. Some government offices still remained in the city, but after the Great Fire of Turku (which almost completely destroyed the city in 1827), all of the central functions were finally moved to the new capital. Turku was one of the first industrialized cities in Finland, and for centuries shipbuilding was the dominating industry. Even today, the city's economy is centred around the Port of Turku and other service-oriented industries.

Turku is one of the 49 municipalities of Finland where Finnish is not the only official language (Kuntaliitto 2016). As well as nearby coastal municipalities and communities on the islands of the Archipelago Sea, the city is also characterised by a significant Swedish speaking minority. Turku has around 9000 Swedish-speaking residents (and approximately the same number of Swedish-speaking students). The bilingualism of the city was included in the application, but compared to Pécs, this ethnic feature was not especially emphasized in the implementation of the event (Akkanen 2010).

In the case of Turku, the idea of being part of the ECOC Programme was initiated in 2001 and arrangements for the application commenced in 2004. When realising that for 2011, Finland would host the event, the City of Turku had big hopes, since Helsinki already had held the title in 2000, and Turku seemed to have especially good potential being the former capital and the oldest city in the country (Akkanen 2010). A national decision was made in June 2006, when the Minister of Culture selected Turku from seven Finnish applicant cities. The selection panel nominated by the European Union evaluated Turku's application for the Capital of Culture in June 2007, and the official nomination by the EU Council of Ministers of Culture was given on 16th of November 2007.

Turku was awarded the European Capital of Culture title for 2011 together with the Estonian capital, Tallinn. The theme for Turku's European Capital of Culture was "Turku Palaa" (Turku on Fire), meaning that Turku is hot with creative activity (and with a little irony, also referring to the huge fires which occurred in Turku's history). The slogan is also a word game, as "Turku Palaa" can also mean "Turku returns"⁹, referring to the city's position as Finland's capital before Helsinki (Akkanen 2010, Innilä 2007).

The initial project plans included several construction projects¹⁰, in order to improve the city's cultural infrastructure and support the development of local cultural life and creative industries. However, soon after the inclusion of these major constructions in the bidding document, it was realised that only the completion of the new Main Library building could be a rational (affordable) aim by the time of the event year. Instead of the hard infrastructural investments, the Turku 2011 project turned its focus at a very early stage of preparations towards a more flexible approach to cultural development, giving priority to less costly and more easily mobilised human resources. Also, the project had been formed by a very broad definition of culture, according to which culture meant a "continuity of doing, learning and thinking" (Helander et al. 2006).

⁹ "Palaa" (from the verb "palata") means returns in Finnish.

¹⁰ These infrastructural projects were not included in the Turku 2011 operational budget, but were planned to be realised from a separate budget of public and private funding.

6.3 RESPONSES TO UNEXPECTED CHALLENGES IN THE PÉCS AND TURKU PROJECTS¹¹

Pécs 2010: sticking to plans at all costs

As with most of the applicant cities in Hungary, Pécs saw the unique opportunity for large-scale urban regeneration in the ECOC nomination. This was due to objective and subjective reasons. There is a considerable gap between the capital city and the regional centres of Hungary in terms of their level of infrastructural development. In particular regard to physical infrastructures for culture, there is a greater disparity than could be justified by the fact that the functions and served populations are smaller in the regional centres. In hosting the ECOC, Pécs saw an opportunity for reducing this gap and decided at a very early stage to take advantage of it. This intention was reflected in the high operational budget of the Hungarian ECOC project of over 160 million euros, 80 percent of which was spent on the urban development projects, leaving only 20 percent for actual cultural events. Most of the investments were originally planned to facilitate cultural programmes during the Pécs 2010 event year, but at the same time, they have for some decades formed an organic part of a long-term cultural image-makeover and urban development concept (Magay 2010).

However, this approach can carry a lot of risks, and this is unfortunately able to be detected in the case of Pécs. Financial and administrative difficulties occurred during the preparation years: there were conflicts over land ownership, discontinuities in city leadership (due to the passing of two mayors), discontinuity in the project's management (a replacement of the person who drafted the winning proposal and also the artistic director), and a belated transfer of funds due to state bureaucracy. Because of these unexpected difficulties, there were major delays in the construction works (Egry 2009). Despite this being recognised relatively early (some years before 2010), the physical infrastructural projects (albeit with scale adjustments) remained very strong elements of the Pécs 2010 project, and included the construction of the Zsolnay Cultural Quarter, the Kodály Centre, the South Transdanubian Regional Library and Knowledge Centre, the refurbishment of the city's "Museum Street", and the revitalisation of central squares and parks in different city quarters. None of these major infrastructural developments could be finished in time for the ECOC year, and many of the event-year programme points that were originally connected to these new structures had to be matched with already existing venues and cultural facilities. (See details in Table 4.)

The construction projects mentioned above were eventually completed and successfully introduced with their intended cultural functions. However, this was not without cost. There were conflicts and mutual accusations (e.g. between the city

¹¹ This section relies partly on the contents of the author's Finnish-language publication titled "Towards a holistic interpretation of culture" (Németh, 2011b), which is not among the Articles in this dissertation.

and the state), and tensions with the local and regional civil society due to their late and insufficient inclusion (see Article 3), all of which cast a shadow over the Hungarian ECOC.

Table 4. Comparing the fate of originally planned physical infrastructural developments in the two ECOC cases (Note: alternative solution is indicated in italics)

ECOC	Planned infrastructural development	Realised/<i>alternative solution</i>
Pécs 2010	Zsolnay Cultural Quarter	December 2011 (final form)
	Kodály Conference and Concert Centre	December 2010
	South Transdanubian Regional Library and Knowledge Centre	October 2010
	Museum Street	December 2010 (The eight museum buildings have been gradually renovated with their surrounding yards, gardens and streets.)
	Refurbishment of public spaces (central squares and parks in different city quarters)	Finished by early 2010 or before the event year started.
Turku 2011	Main Library	2007 (renovated old library in 2008)
	Kakola Hill prison district transformation: multiple utilisations of the area, containing a park, different facilities for creative industries, and residential buildings.	Cancelled from the project. (Architectural competition held in 2005. Construction is still in progress in 2016.)
	Cultural Quarters project: intended to connect the two cultural centres on the two sides of River Aura (which already existed but were to be further developed) by a bridge.	Cancelled from the project. Only some 'smaller-scale' refurbishments were accomplished by the event year. The "Library bridge" (<i>Kirjastosilta</i>) was finished by the end of 2013.
	Congress and Music Centre	Cancelled from the project. The city decided to rent <i>Logomo</i> ¹² for the whole event year.

¹² In five years, *Logomo* has grown into a well-known centre of culture, art and creative economy in Turku. It is partly owned by the city of Turku and operates cost-effectively without public financial support. The building offers different kinds of facilities ranging from workshops, offices and smaller meeting rooms, to a hall for public events for 3,500 people. The city plans to further develop the surroundings of the railway yard with creative economy premises, flats and a congress hotel.

Turku 2011: construction plans exchanged for a human-resource approach

Turku also saw an opportunity in the ECOC for upscaling its cultural physical infrastructure, and as a result, its position within Finland. Just as in the case of Pécs, the initial plans for Turku 2011 included several construction projects to improve the city's cultural infrastructure and support the development of local cultural life and creative industries. These infrastructure projects, however, were not included in the Turku 2011 operational budget (as in the case of Pécs 2010), but were planned to be realised from a separate budget of public and private funding (Innilä 2007). Probably the four most spectacular planned projects were the building of a new Congress and Music Centre, a new Main Library, establishing a Cultural Quarter with a new pedestrian bridge connecting the main library quarter with the Old Town Square, and the transformation of the Kakola Hill old prison area located near the city centre (Helander et al. 2006). (Table 4)

Nonetheless, soon after the inclusion of these major constructions into the bidding document, under pressure from the global financial crisis, the plans were revised. Only the completion of the new Main Library building was retained from the original physical infrastructural development plans as a feasible idea, and this was already opened in 2007, alongside the renovated old library building.¹³ In order to provide an adequate venue for the events during the cultural year, the city of Turku decided to rent parts of the renovated Logomo industrial building (from the Finnish Railway company, VR). Logomo subsequently hosted long-running exhibitions and the major productions for the cultural year (Mättänen 2010).

Besides finding creative solutions for venues without building new sites, the Turku ECOC project was given a new orientation. Something was needed which could have an equal 'branding' effect for Turku as the initially proposed (but cancelled) flagship constructions. Turku 2011 therefore decided to commit itself fully to marketing its ECOC project as a dynamic and broad-based movement, with an encouraging and inviting slogan for the event year: "It's OK to play with Culture". At a very early stage, open project calls were published, i.e. with no limitation on participation (beyond Turku, from abroad, by multiple sectors, from different fields, etc.). Inclusiveness was also promoted by means of a 'second round', organised for those applicants who were initially not selected to participate in the programme of 2011, and they were given feedback, advice and ideas to improve their proposed projects, and encouraged to team up with other participants in ingenious and innovative ways (see Article 3). This form of approach could not only provide better transparency and help avoid conflicts, but

¹³ It is interesting to note that even though the location of the new Congress and Music Centre had been discussed and debated for around 10 years (Innilä 2007), the city decided to cancel this project – despite the potentially high symbolic value and attractiveness this building could have had. This potential is shown by some of the earlier ECOC examples, for instance, the Kunsthaus in Graz 2003 and the Concertgebouw in Brugge 2002).

could also increase the potentials of the Turku ECOC to generate creative synergies and new cultural products.

6.4 REGIONAL IMPLICATIONS: RESOURCES, ENGAGEMENT AND IMPACT

A few relatively recent examples can be found in the list of former ECOC hosts where it is not a single city but an entire region that held the mega-event (Lille in 2004, Luxembourg Greater Region in 2007, Essen and the Ruhr conurbation in 2010, Marseille-Provence 2013). There have also been similar cases among recent applications (e.g. the winning proposal of Aarhus 2017, or the application by Maastricht for 2018), which may indicate a tendency to underline the relevance of a wider region to the ECOC 'brand', and vice versa. Nevertheless, either explicitly or implicitly, an ECOC project can claim to have various implications on socio-economic development that go beyond the bounds of a single host city. These implications are various combinations of utilizing regions as a resource, and benefitting regions with positive impacts – both by way of a particular level of 'engagement'¹⁴.

In more concrete terms, there can be investments into 'hard' (physical-infrastructure) developments that are either directly or indirectly connected to the occurrence of a cultural mega-event (e.g. a concert hall or a highway connection), but which obviously serve populations beyond a particular urban centre. Due to their scope, these are sometimes initiated and realized by actors outside the city (e.g. commissioned by the state¹⁵), and therefore have less potential to engage local economic actors (enterprises and labour resources in the host city). The nature of such developments is that they may be part of a national strategy of de-concentration or 'polycentricism', so strengthening the role of regional centres. On the other hand, a spatially more balanced development may also be supported by a 'softer' approach applied in the preparation and realization of ECOC events, i.e. measures that are oriented towards the mobilization and revitalisation of human resources and existing cultural assets across a wider region linked to the host city.

In light of the above, there can be various temporary or lasting ECOC outcomes that can be assessed on a regional level. These may include new physical structures, new jobs and income generated for the local and regional economies by construction projects that utilize inputs by local enterprises, and new employment opportunities and income from increased cultural services and the triggered

¹⁴ This engagement can range from a merely symbolic and passive inclusion, to a genuine co-production of the ECOC entailing the active inclusion and participation of the ECOC 'hinterlands'.

¹⁵ There is a recent example of the Marseille-Provence 2013 European Capital of Culture where the title was used for the continuation of the Euroméditerranée urban development project started in 1995, supported by EU, national, regional and local funds.

growth in tourism. Among less tangible impacts, one may assume a growth in networking and 'relational capital', as well as enhanced potentials for cooperation, synergy, and innovations – e.g. the rise of 'creative ecosystems' (INTELI 2011) – within and beyond the cultural sector, and across the region around the hosting city.

Since it is the societal processes and more 'intangible' impacts of ECOC projects that lie in the focus of this dissertation, the more direct and quantifiable outcomes (e.g. tourism flows, jobs, income) are given only a brief consideration in relation to the regional implications of the Pécs 2010 and Turku 2011 projects. However, more attention is paid to how the regional relevance of the ECOC projects changes from initial visions to actual implementations, what levels of regional engagement actually happen in the production of the ECOC event/brand, and how the mega-event is deployed in terms of regional development concepts and strategies. Nevertheless, in this context the term 'region' is understood in a broad way, i.e. not only as a contiguous territorial entity containing the host city, but also as discontinuous, selectively networked space (also implied in the relational strand of thinking concerning the spatial framework of governance).

The following analysis draws partly from Articles 2, 3 and 4 of this dissertation, complemented by some additional information. Regional implications are assessed in terms of visions and declarations voiced as early as in the proposals put forward by the cities, and with regard to the intended and actually realised instances of engaging a wider region.

Pécs 2010: relying on resources and less on bottom-up initiatives from the surrounding regions

Initially, the regional extension of the Pécs 2010 project was one of the main pillars of the winning proposal. It included the smaller towns of South Transdanubia and the major cities on the edge of the region (see Figure 5). The regionalization of the project's image was backed by the so-called Pole Programme of the National Development Plan (2007–2013), co-financed from Structural Funds that placed a major emphasis on the development of not only the regional centres (seven designated 'poles' in Hungary, Pécs being among them¹⁶). This aimed not only to reduce mono-centricity (i.e. the dominance of Budapest), but also to promote the surrounding regions, thus contributing to achieving a more balanced regional

¹⁶ The seven development poles of the programme are the cities of Budapest, Debrecen, Győr, Miskolc, Pécs, Szeged and the development axis of Veszprém–Székesfehérvár. In this national strategy, Pécs was defined as the "quality of life" development pole (based on the reinforcement of healthcare, environmental and cultural industries) which fits well with the European Capital of Culture project. Consequently, many of the major elements of the Pécs 2010 proposal (such as the Zsolnay Cultural Quarter, the Kodály Centre and the Southern Transdanubian Regional Library and Knowledge Centre) can also be found in national development documents.

development and territorial cohesion (more details in Article 2). The national pole-strategy emphasized that “(i)t is essential to ensure the effective engagement of all actors in the surrounding areas of the pole cities in order to increase their significance within the [Central-Eastern European] region” (Zombori 2008). Also, it highlighted the importance of collaboration among various actors from different sectors, and of developing cooperation networks which function on the basis of mutual interests (Zombori 2008, Józsa 2016).

As regards the *engagement of actors from outside the ECOC host*, Pécs 2010 had a strategy from the beginning. Firstly, the connections of the project to nearby settlements and the wider region around Pécs meant the utilisation of a pool of existing cultural assets in order to enrich the event-year’s programme. There were 40 settlements in the wider region of South Transdanubia (Figure 5) that were listed at the end of the Pécs 2010 programme booklet as “regional partner/featured programmes” (Kardos et al. 2009). Yet, this only means that there was an attempt to display their existing cultural offers, i.e. established folk traditions, regular festivals and fairs (such as the Fish Cooking Festival in Baja, the International Blues and Jazz Festival of Barcs, a red wine festival in Villány, and the World Heritage “Busójárás” held in Mohács, to mention a few). Little if any attempt was made to create something new from these events by combining or re-furbishing them for the purposes of the ECOC. As such, the Pécs 2010 project could not fully exploit the opportunity offered by the mega-event to generate creative synergies by building cooperative relationships across the wider region. Also, very limited resources were reserved from the outset for the active participation of the third sector, but were consequently made available exclusively to local civil actors to assist their participation in Pécs 2010 (see in more details in Article 2 and 3).

Looking further than the more immediate region of Pécs, the ECOC project had connections to other regional centres in Hungary. As early as 2005, all the 11 applicant cities (Budapest, Debrecen, Eger, Győr, Kaposvár, Kecskemét, Miskolc, Pécs, Sopron, Székesfehérvár, Veszprém) in Hungary signed an agreement that confirmed their participation, regardless of whoever won the ECOC title for 2010 (see their locations in Figure 5). In the so-called “One-takes-everybody” framework, some joint projects were implemented during the preparatory phase, and in order to provide visibility through the ECOC brand, 38 programmes of the ten Hungarian applicant cities were included in the Pécs 2010 official programme.

The Pécs ECOC also proved to be successful in the accomplishment of its original aims on an international level, consolidating existing linkages and initiating new relations with cities and regions beyond the borders of Hungary. The Hungarian ECOC project cooperated with the German (Essen 2010) and Turkish (Istanbul 2010) co-hosts of ECOC 2010. Besides these more or less expected connections, Pécs managed to strengthen very important formal cooperation agreements within the South-eastern European regions by including Croatian,

Bosnian, Serbian¹⁷ and Romanian cities in the ECOC event (ECORYS, 2011) (Figure 5). The bilateral agreements with these countries and cities not only brought cultural programmes for the event year, but they also contributed financially to the Pécs 2010 project. Probably the strongest cooperation has been achieved with Croatia, with about 70 programme points conveyed to Pécs in 2010 by the consulate. An analysis of the Pécs 2010 professional networks (Article 4) confirmed these international partnerships, however the results of the analysis cannot validate whether the realised cooperations were actually driven by the careful planning of the ECOC project, or whether they were simply relying on the existing relational capacities. Considering the international relationships that emerged from the Pécs 2010 project, the launch of the University Network of the European Capitals of Culture (UNeECC) needs to be mentioned. The initiative started in 2006 in Pécs, and has so far proved successful in internationally extending and networking local ECOC projects.

The Pécs 2010 project intended to achieve a *direct regional-economic impact*, i.e. to contribute to local-regional growth (in terms of jobs and income – mentioned also in the application documents: Takáts 2005). For example, the project aimed at local and regional job creation and launched the programme “New jobs for success” funded by the National Labour Office in 2009 (BMKMK 2012). The initiative created 150 new jobs in the fields related to event and cultural production in the South Transdanubian region in the period 2009-2011. The evaluation of the programme confirmed the participation of 45 settlements in the South Transdanubian region, and that over 40% of the new jobs were created outside the city of Pécs (BMKMK 2012). Even though this initiative was financed for three years, it has managed to have a sustained impact¹⁸ by supporting the professional training of participants and by promoting their entrance and integration in professional networks (BMKMK 2012, Koltai & Simon 2013, ZsÖK 2012). As for the hard infrastructural investments dominating the Pécs 2010 project (see earlier Section 6.1), the city and the region achieved little particular benefit during the preparation phase. Building companies from Pécs and its surrounding region were little involved (being in charge of only about a third of all constructions carried out in Pécs and Baranya county), and this resulted in only a modest direct impact on the local-regional economy (KSH 2010, Sipos 2010). Finally, considering growth in tourism, the Pécs 2010 project succeeded in generating a visible impact, with a significant 28% increase in overnight stays in the city and a 13.4% tourist growth in Baranya county for the event year (the average growth in Hungary for 2010 was only 4%). However, in neither case was the increase proved to be lasting beyond the event year, and the ECOC had no such influence on tourism flows in South

¹⁷ The Pécs 2010 project initiated a sister-city agreement with Novi Sad.

¹⁸ According to the evaluation published in 2012, many of the people hired as a result of the ECOC project stayed at the same employer after 2011, and most of those who left were offered other job opportunities (BMKMK 2012).

Transdanubia, the wider region around Pécs (KSH 2016, Magyar Turizmus Zrt. 2011).

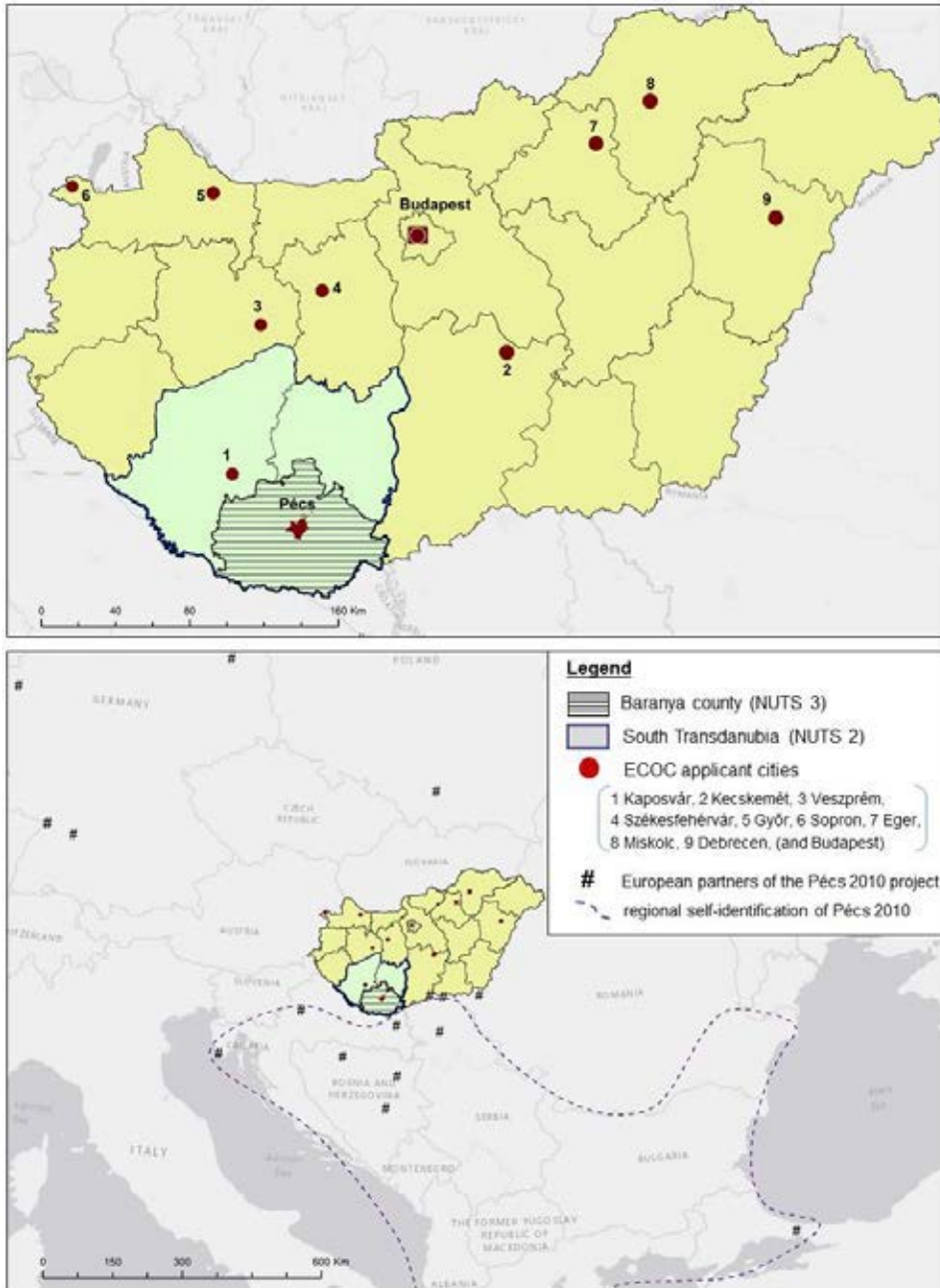


Figure 5. The conceptual and actual regional context of the Pécs 2010 project (Source: based on data gathered from Takáts 2005, Kardos et al. 2009, and ECORYS 2011)

As mentioned above, the mega-event may increase networking (as a softer, indirect impact on socio-economic development) not only between various types of actors within the city, but also in its closer or wider region, and between the city and its surroundings. In the case of Pécs 2010, based on the data gathered from organisations that participated in the event programme (Article 4), 44% of all the collaborative linkages (94 out of 213) registered between organisations engaged actors from outside Pécs (from Baranya county, South Transdanubia, and elsewhere from Hungary and abroad). About 36% of these were new connections formed as a result of the ECOC event, of which only 15% functioned as some sort of cooperation after 2010. What is especially indicative is the fact that these sustained partnerships did not involve the surrounding regions of Pécs but rather actors from Budapest and abroad. This data indicates that despite a more deliberate initial vision of extending the mega-event (participation and impacts) to the region around Pécs, in effect, the Pécs 2010 project linked the city more to Budapest and European city networks than to its regional hinterland.

Turku 2011: no initial regional concept of ECOC but flexible and broad inclusion of the hinterland

The Turku 2011 project had a slightly different approach to the engagement of the surrounding region. In contrast to the Hungarian ECOC, the idea of a regional extension of the 'cultural capital' was not included in any straightforward way in Turku's application documents. This may be attributable to the fact that compared at least to the situation in Hungary, in Finnish national policy making at the time, there was less concern with the issue of unequal development opportunities and living conditions existing within regions, i.e. between urban centres and their surroundings (for more details see Article 2). This could be indicated by the fact that from about the mid-1990s, national regional development programmes and growth strategies regarded major cities as their main foci (Moilainen 2012, Nordregio 2006). The Regional Development Act of 2003 includes an explicit urban-centred articulation of growth dynamics. This approach has been a target of criticism on the basis that investments channelled into a few (mainly Southern Finnish) growth poles are seen as an exclusive means to achieve higher national competitiveness, at the expense of neglecting peripheral areas and semi-peripheries (Moisio 2008).

The bidding proposal of the Turku 2011 project reflected this spatially focussed, host-city dedicated conceptualization of the event year. Based on interviews with representatives of the city government (Akkanen 2010) and the Turku 2011 Foundation (Hätönen 2010), the inclusion of the wider region was not among the priorities of project. On a formal level, the Regional Council of Varsinais-Suomi delegated a representative to the Turku 2011 Foundation's board (Saukkolin 2012),

however, since a major share (55%)¹⁹ of the population of Varsinais-Suomi (the wider region around Turku, see Figure 6) is concentrated in the immediate surroundings of the city, the inclusion of these few neighbouring municipalities under the Turku 2011 label was an easy and logical choice for regional extension. Especially, three years preceding the event, the Turku 2011 Foundation proposed cooperation with the nearby towns of Naantali (19 000) and Raisio (24 000) which not only organised some elements of the Turku 2011 programme, but also provided financial support to the Foundation in the sum of one euro per resident in 2010 and 2011 (Tilastokeskus 2015). The City of Salo however, created a programme for the entire ECOC year (Saukkolin 2012).

Unlike the case of Pécs 2010, the engagement of the wider region around Turku (Southwestern Finland administrative region²⁰) was not made obvious in the bidding proposal. Two cities from Southwestern Finland (situated outside Varsinais-Suomi) actually decided to take on the official Turku 2011 label (Salo and Pori). However, when it came to the implementation of the mega-event, there was a high number of actors from the closer and the wider regions of Turku who actually engaged in the ECOC project (visible in the Turku 2011 programme booklet, and a finding from Article 4). This was mainly due to the fact that there was no limitation set in the call for participants in the event year as to their municipality of origin or type of organization (i.e. anyone could apply for a small grant for participation from either within the country or even abroad). This was provided they cooperated with a local partner and could contribute with interesting content. In more simple terms, regional engagement was not an expressed ‘top-down’ strategy, nor a motto or vision – but through transparent and open arrangements it was possible for potentially interested actors from the wider region of the host city to effectively contribute to the event and also the brand in a bottom-up way.

Initially, the bidding documents of the Turku 2011 project included the idea that Turku as the ECOC host would invite and cooperate with the other six applicant cities from Finland. This was a proposal for a so-called “National Cultural Forum for Finland”, involving Jyväskylä, Lahti, Mänttä, Oulu, Rovaniemi and Tampere (Figure 6) (Helander et al. 2006). However, in terms of cooperation on this national level, only a touring exhibition and a joint conference on urban culture was realized, along with some collaborations with museums and artists’ associations from Helsinki (which had already been an ECOC host in 2000) (Mättänen 2010, Saukkolin 2012).

¹⁹ The rest of the population of Varsinais-Suomi (45%, approximately 200 000 people) live more sparsely in smaller settlements across 93% of the area of the region, which includes an extensive archipelago (Tilastokeskus 2015).

²⁰ The region is covered by the Regional State Administrative Agency (Aluehallintovirasto) for Southwestern Finland, consists of two regions: Satakunta and Varsinais-Suomi. There are six Regional State Administrative Agencies in Finland. Regional State Administrative Agencies (AVIs) are in charge – inter alia – of the regional tasks required by the Ministry of Education and Culture.

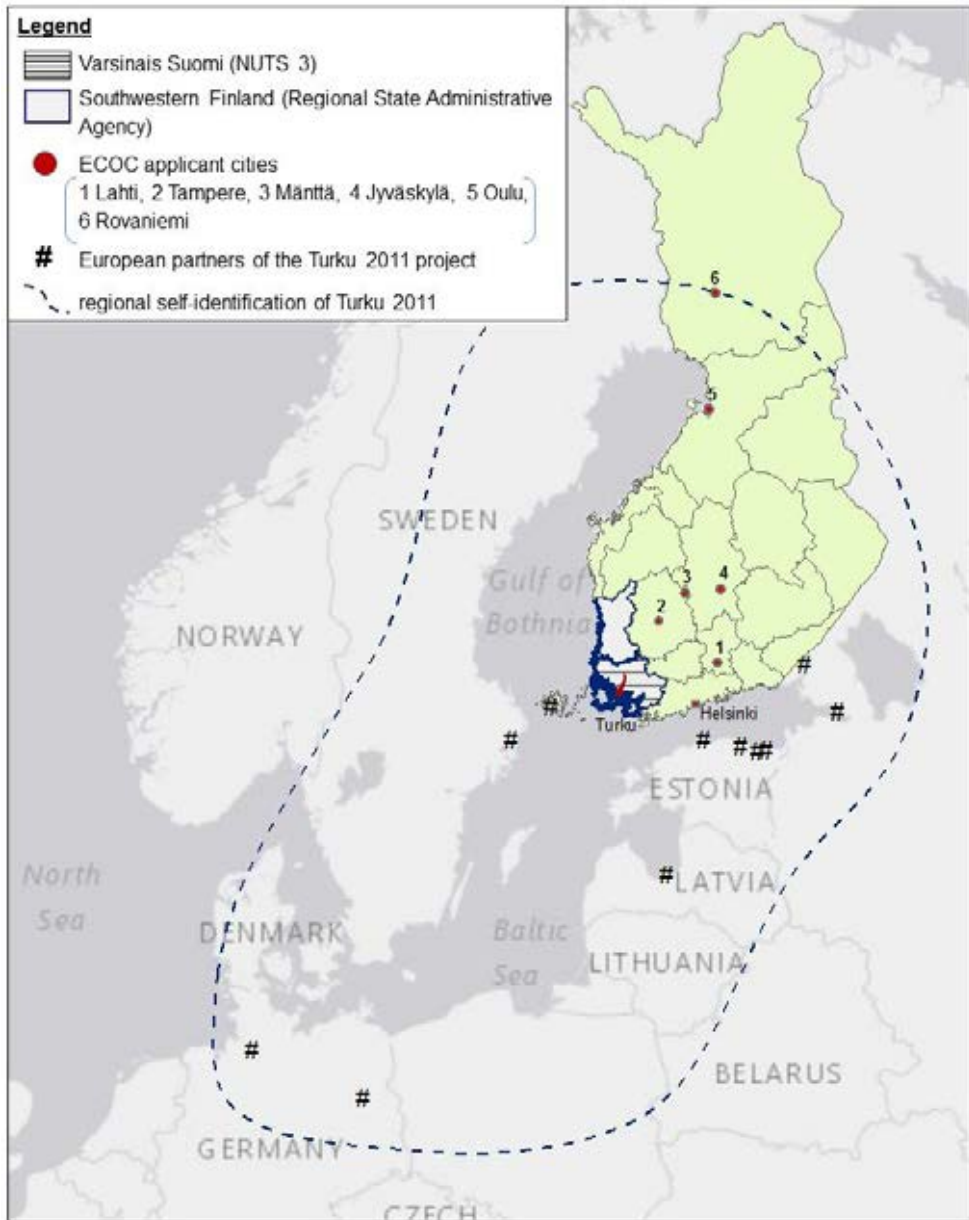


Figure 6. The regional context of the Turku 2011 project (Source: based on data gathered from Helander et al. 2006, Mättänen 2010, and Saukkolin 2012)

Finally, some European-level cooperation could be detected in both the initial plans and the implementation of the Turku 2011 project (Figure 6). This was the most intensive with Tallinn, justified by its location in the Baltic Sea region, as well as

being co-host of the ECOC 2011. Common projects with Tallinn often included other close neighbours in the Baltic Sea region such as Stockholm and St. Petersburg; for instance, the project titled 'Bordering Memories' aiming at strengthening cooperation and presenting the relationship between Estonians, Finns and Russians.

As regards the *impacts* of the ECOC project on the region around Turku; the host city and its closer region (Varsinais-Suomi) had comparable growth rates in tourism flows (in terms of overnight stays, 5.5 and 7% respectively) for the event year (TourMIS 2016, Tilastokeskus 2016). This (moderate) increase was then followed by a drop in tourism flows after the event year in both Turku and in Varsinais-Suomi (a decrease more significant than the national average).

As a final point, in the case of Turku 2011, based on the data gathered from organisations that participated in the event programme (Article 4), 61% of all cooperative links (195 out of 320) found between organisations engaged actors from outside Turku (from Varsinais-Suomi, Southwestern Finland, and elsewhere from Finland, and abroad). About 61% of these were new partnerships generated by the ECOC event, of which over 30% continued to work after the ECOC year. Importantly, two-thirds of these sustained new partnerships involved actors from the closer and wider regions of Turku. So, compared to the Hungarian ECOC case, these figures indicate that the Turku project not only managed to pull in more resources from outside of the host city, but also that a relatively high share of Turku-external collaborations could survive, *and* with a high representation of regional-level actors, thus potentially contributing to future regional development (i.e. by strengthening the functional connections between the urban centre and its hinterland).

7 SUMMARY OF ARTICLES

The dissertation consists of four interrelated articles that are combined to respond to the four main research questions (see Section 2). While contributing to the general findings, each of the published papers has a slightly different focus and poses specific questions, as well as joining particular theoretical and policy-related discussions about spatial development and governance. The key concepts, research questions and main findings are summarised in Table 5. The sequence of the individual publications follows the exploratory logic of the research, starting with the study of the general spatial trends and policy frames of the ECOC Programme, followed by concrete cases of preparation and implementation with a more in-depth investigation of the particularities which feature in their governance processes. To complete the picture, the final article attempts to measure the impact of the two ECOC projects on organisational and local network capital.

Article 1 titled *“Mega-events, their sustainability and potential impact on spatial development: the European Capital of Culture”* gives an introductory summary on the general and changing characteristics of the European Capital of Culture Programme focussing especially on its features affecting European spatial development. More concretely, it investigates the recent trends in the designation of the ECOC title and the participant cities’ aims and achievements in order to reveal the relationships and possible conflicts between the mega-event’s sustainability and its symbolic capacity. Strongly relating to these concerns, the article elaborates on the ECOC Programme’s increasing potential to support a spatially more balanced socio-economic development with the promotion of medium-sized regional centres.

There is an observable recent trend of nominating and assigning the Cultural Capital title to smaller-sized, peripheral or so-called ‘culturally deprived’ cities. The emergence of smaller cities taking on the mega-event is not only due to a growing interest from below (from the growing number of applicants), but it is also a result of a conscious (top-down) selection of smaller cities from among the increased number of applicants (despite the fact that capital cities are still eager to participate). Therefore, the ECOC Programme (even though it is not expressed among its explicit, official aims) is in line with the European policies promoting balanced spatial development and territorial cohesion. Providing that the mega-events are successfully realized with positive and long-term local development impacts in these small and medium-sized cities, it is a logical assumption that the ECOC Programme has a real potential to strengthen territorial cohesion by forming a more balanced network of cities across the European Union.

Table 5. Summary of the four published research articles of the dissertation. The links to the main research questions of the dissertation are indicated as "RQ". (See the four main research questions in Section 2.)

Articles	Main themes and concepts	Research questions
1. Mega-events, Their Sustainability and Potential Impact on Spatial Development: The European Capital of Culture	The evolution and rules of the ECOC Programme, mega events and spatial development.	How can sustainability and symbolic capacity of the ECOC Programme be related? (RQ 2) What elements of polycentric spatial development can be traced in the ECOC Programme? (RQ 2, RQ 4)
2. Multi-level development perspectives and the European Capital of Culture: Pécs 2010 and Turku 2011	Multi-level governance, interests and influence at various levels of stakeholders (local, national, European).	What multi-level governance processes can be detected in the studied ECOC projects and what interests and influences drive these processes? (RQ 1, RQ 2)
3. European Capitals of Culture – Digging Deeper into the Governance of the Mega-Event	relational governance (selective) inclusion/exclusion cooperation/conflict	What are the temporary or permanent collaborative structures and power relations formed in the course of planning, preparation and realization of the two studied ECOC cases? (RQ 1, RQ 3, RQ 4)
4. Mega-events and new patterns of co-operation: The European Capitals of Culture	network capital dynamics and geography of cooperation networks	What is the extent and pattern of networking between participant organisations in the Pécs 2010 and Turku 2011 projects? (RQ 1, RQ 4) Do the new cooperation links that emerge for the ECOC last beyond the mega-event? (RQ 3) How does the intensity of networking affect the experience and opinions regarding the benefits of ECOC from the perspective of the participant organisations? (RQ 3)

Main findings

The optimal scale of individual ECOC projects is an increasingly relevant question as the share of smaller sized among applicants is growing. The recent trend of nominating and assigning the Cultural Capital title to smaller sized, or as it is often called culturally deprived or peripheral cities can contribute towards a balanced spatial development in Europe.

Different spatial-political levels perceive different opportunities in the ECOC title. Cooperation among them is needed to achieve the common aims of lasting positive impact from the event on socio-economic development. Possibilities for this is very context-dependent (historical legacies, political culture) and can vary across Europe.

Network-like, unbounded relations are formed in the planning processes, in interest-lobbying, in decision-making and project implementation. These creative and mixed partnerships that emerge for the ECOC may go beyond spatial-administrative hierarchies. The case studies demonstrate how and why regional governance practices are diversified because of differing relational processes.

There are some particular features to the Pécs 2010 and Turku 2011 projects in terms of the extent and patterns of networking. The ECOC Programme can generate lasting networking relations, and it can potentially contribute to the strengthening of local-regional governance networks. ECOC-facilitated networking is perceived as a valuable asset by the participating organisations.

However, the European Capital of Culture Programme in itself, similar to other mega-events, does not guarantee instant economic benefits or solutions for social challenges in the hosting cities and their regions. There is a growing number of willing participants for the prospects of receiving particularly wide publicity both before and during the year, for the long term favourable effects this may have on their international image, and last but not least, for the impulse that the nomination can give to cultural-infrastructure development in a city and its region. The intensified competition to win the ECOC title has not only resulted in the proliferation of grand plans which are challenging to realise, but it has often overshadowed the realistic considerations of the long-term sustainability of the projects.

After much failure and disappointment, applicants and nominated ECOC cities are starting to learn that it is not only a safer and more feasible choice but in fact, a more rewarding strategy to shift their focus from investments in hard infrastructure, towards the mobilization of human resources in order to revitalize and expand their 'soft infrastructures', social-innovative capacity and creative networks. Thus, being able and willing to harness the skills, enthusiasm and commitment of local communities and those in the wider region, drawing on creative individuals and organisations, together with a realistic consideration of investments during the application phase are also necessary to lower the potential risks of such an undertaking.

Following the initial article of the dissertation, the discussion moves from the general phenomena of the ECOC Programme to the analysis of the Pécs 2010 (Hungary) and the Turku 2011 (Finland) projects in terms of various governance processes. The discussions in Articles 2-4 are driven by the analytical perspectives of place-governance; multi-level, relational and phase-spatial.

Article 2 "*Multi-level development perspectives and the European Capital of Culture: Pécs 2010 and Turku 2011*" focuses on the multi-level governance aspects of the preparation years of the projects. Based on the two case studies, the analysis elaborates on how the ECOC projects receive their orientation in the planning/preparatory phase, in the midst of various expectations coming from different (local, national, European) governance levels. The Pécs and Turku projects are positioned with regard to their respective national development strategies and regional development perspectives, as well as being conditioned by their specific local needs and potentials. A third layer of expectations is present in the European concept of the ECOC Programme, with such ideals as cultural diversity, inter-cultural dialogue, creativity and internationalization.

The task of finding a suitable balance between these interests at the multiple levels of stakeholdership is further complicated by the fact that direct financial support for implementation is marginal from the Programme. In both Pécs and Turku, as a major share of the funding came from the national level, regional development strategies and plans had been given primary consideration, with emphases given to some of the specific aims that were seen to be of key local

interest by local politicians and planners. As a result, the Pécs 2010 project was skewed towards spectacular physical infrastructural investments, while Turku 2011 concentrated on the ideals of promoting well-being and creative industries.

The shape of ECOC projects evolved not only as a result of expectations posed by the various levels of governance, but was also affected by divergent approaches to the ECOC concept by the different types of local stakeholders. The example of Pécs indicates that unless these differences are negotiated, the city itself may lose the control over its own project. Here, the key pillar of the mega-event project comprised of substantial urban infrastructural investments, with the inclusion of several new cultural complexes and the refurbishment of urban public spaces. In focussing too much on supervising these massive physical construction projects, little energy and attention was invested into the genuine engagement of local stakeholders, such as social partners, and in the end, even the most crucial actor involved in the development of the content of the event-year programme was in fact from outside the city (the main national event organizer company was seated in Budapest). Thus, as the local level proved to be weak in managing the project, the originally local initiative of Pécs was gradually taken over by national control, including a growing number of actors in the fields of cultural planning and production elements from outside the city and its region.

The analysis of the two cases indicates that understanding and cooperation between different spatial-administrative interests is necessary for European Capital of Culture projects to be successful. Different spatial-political levels are driven by particular interests, and they might perceive dissimilar opportunities in achieving the title. Besides, cities need to draw on various, complementary resources not only to win the title, but more importantly, to actually realise the mega-event. Finally, and most importantly, a common denominator of the various spatial-administrative interests needs to be found, in order to ensure that the positive impacts gained by the mega-event are sustained on a longer term.

Continuing the argument of the second paper with a focus on local power-relations, Article 3 titled *“European Capitals of Culture – digging deeper into the governance of the mega-event”* analyses the local and regional cultural resources, as well as the inclusion and exclusion processes of certain groups in the event preparations and during the event year. Selective engagement often generates conflict that is hard to overcome, and this study shows some examples from both cases. Also, through the analysis of the Hungarian and Finnish case studies, the article explains the creative, mixed partnerships that emerged, and how they exceeded spatial-administrative hierarchies and initiated cooperation along more horizontal relationships. By digging deeper into the governance processes operating in the two ECOC projects, a relational approach is applied to understand the mechanisms and practices amongst stakeholders, i.e. by looking at the selective nature of engagement and cooperation.

The main conclusion drawn from the close study of open and invisible power relations is that the significance of conscious, well-planned efforts to include willing participants cannot be over-estimated. Active and wide participation in ECOC depends mainly on different concepts and ways of inclusion. Inclusion can be facilitated by promoting volunteering, welcoming representatives of different bodies, fields, age-groups etc. to be part of the decisions on the content of the event-year programme, by providing real incentives and support to local and regional civil organisations, or simply by acknowledging and respecting the suggestions and contributions of social partners. From the two cases examined, the preparation and implementation of the Turku 2011 project showed a greater disposition towards inclusive governance on the local level, yet it is important to note that the societal-cultural traditions in which it was embedded could have made it more easily attainable than the case of Pécs 2010.

Article 4 titled *“Mega-events and new patterns of cooperation: The European Capitals of Culture”* combines the relational aspect with a longitudinal study of evolving collaborations between event-year programme participants, and therefore it assumes a phase-spatial framework for mega-event governance. Applying the basic methodology of social network analysis, the collaborative relations between various participating actors are visualised and assessed to show how the two studied mega-event projects have facilitated and changed inter-organisational networking among cultural and creative producers. Besides quantitatively measuring the expansion of network capital, the changing quality of cooperation patterns is also investigated.

Some interesting particularities can be discovered in this research, related to the networked patterns of cooperation seen in the Pécs 2010 and Turku 2011 projects; one of which concerns the emergence of mixed partnerships in terms of actor types. In Pécs, the majority of new linkages (i.e. those triggered by the mega-event) are between organisations belonging to different sectors (public, business, civic groups and small artistic enterprises). In Turku, a similar diversifying effect could be witnessed in relation to the activity fields of the organisations involved in newly established partnerships. These indicate important qualitative changes in terms of introducing unconventional types of collaboration and interesting synergies, and by facilitating dialogue, give rise to more inclusive governance practices.

Also, the network analysis approach confirms the observation made in Article 3 that stronger traditions of networking can be detected in the case of Turku than that of Pécs. Some of the new cooperative partnerships (i.e. those triggered by the mega-event) have indeed continued years after the events in both Turku and Pécs had finished, although the Turku project shows somewhat better achievements. Regardless of this however, the sustained relations in both contexts are likely to contribute to a better inclusion of social partners in the decision making processes in these cities, and so enrich their local-regional governance networks. Thus, an ECOC project can be seen to support longer term local-regional development via the soft ‘social’ infrastructure of the inter-organisational collaborative networks that it has generated.

8 CONCLUSIONS

8.1 MULTI-LEVEL, RELATIONAL OR PHASE-SPATIAL?

Which theoretical perspective on governance is the most relevant for the study of ECOC and its legacy?

Despite the negligible direct financial incentive from the EU, the ECOC Programme has gradually grown in popularity over its more than 30 year history, and has mobilised interest and resources at various spatial-administrative levels in all Member States. Since its launch in Athens, the initiative has gone through a major transformation, with an expansion of its mission and scope of activities which has resulted in an increased awareness in Europe of this mega-event. Even though it is a politicized and highly public venture, already from the bidding process, the ECOC represents a special type of mega-event, and simply by its nature, it has substantial scope for stimulating a deeper involvement of civil society and a wide variety of interest groups. Culture is a multifaceted and pervasive domain, and includes material and immaterial social constructions ranging from ways of life, the incorporation of values and norms, to pure art which is exhibited or performed. Having such a social domain as its core substance, everyone can find a respective point to identify with – whether it is for self-expression, consumption and as a source of entertainment, an economic asset, source of community, or a tool for policy or politics. As the ECOC mega-event is realised as a one-off opportunity in a particular distinct location (place as defined by Doreen Massey), then choices have to be made about how to fill the brand with the most appropriate meaning – one that suits the expectations of all the relevant stakeholders. Dialogues, consultations and negotiating processes are required to reach this aim, that may be coordinated by a single party, but needs to engage all of those involved. Consequently, ‘good’ governance is vital for the successful realisation of any such mega-event.

Coordinators of the mega-event need to be familiar with both the visible and less obvious processes of governance, including horizontal, selective and temporary interactions and exchanges. Certain aspects of ECOC project planning and implementation, such as the tendering and application procedures are likely to follow fixed, ‘bounded’ scales of co-management, across well-established political-administrative levels, e.g. for the sake of transparency, continuity and consistency. This is reflected in the bureaucratic routines and official documents of the Programme. From the case studies, the process seems to be highly context dependent towards which (local or national) level the control of the project shifts, and not having the host city in an absolute leading position is not necessarily disadvantageous for the sound implementation of the project. This is despite some

resulting compromises, for example in terms of the ideals of citizen participation (see Article 2).

Relational processes become apparent when there is a special need for creativity, novelty, diversity and flexibility, and a potential context for this is the phase of compilation and performance of the cultural programme of the event year (e.g. the promotion of mixed and unconventional partnerships). In the studied cases, these were also the very stages where most of the spatially unbounded, non-hierarchical, cross-sectoral and selective cooperative connections and associated relational governance processes were observed, and where resultant emerging conflicts (both distracting and constructive) arose (Article 3). In relational thinking, localities are often described as being captive of non-spatial relational flows of capital. Even though the ECOC projects are strongly characterised by spatially unbounded partnerships, the Programme cannot be considered as a means of managing a neoliberal, market driven approach to relational governance (Smith 2004). It is more due to the special characteristics of the ECOC Programme compared to other mega-events (funding scheme and aims of ECOC, see earlier Section 4.2), that local actors are not necessarily allowed enough power to determine development trajectories.

Particular ECOC projects are contextualised not only in (socio-economic-human) geographical space, but also in time: they have specific conditions rooted in the past and will leave imprints on incidents and trajectories in the future. It becomes obvious from the studied cases that time is too important a factor to ignore in forming an understanding of the mega-event's governance and legacies. Firstly, it matters when the ECOC project 'comes to' a city, and both cases analysed in this dissertation were affected by the emergent economic crisis – albeit at different stages of their preparatory phases, and leaving a different range of alternatives with which to respond. The power geometries that are central to specific governance processes are also changeable and have a dynamic character. As such, internalised power relations can surface in conflicts, which are then resolved by way of conscious engagement (e.g. the civil group participation in Pécs 2010). Also, causality surfaces as previously accumulated network capital is used as input for the event, and enriched by further partnerships. Finally, the positive experience of mixed partnerships may live on after the mega-event, as permanent alliances to enrich the local governance framework as an ECOC legacy (Article 4).

8.2 PLACE-BASED OR EUROPEAN?

What room do ECOC hosts have for implementing their mega-events as genuine place-based adaptations of the 'European' guidelines, and through what governance processes?

The so-called place-based policy paradigm proposed in the Barca Report (Barca 2009) and developed further in the Territorial Agenda 2020 (TA 2011) is often referred to as a significant promoter of territorial cohesion. This approach emphasizes the territorial diversity of places and their distinctive and different development opportunities, taking into account the characteristics of the territory, territorial resources and institutional capacity.

Place-based adaptation seems to be an important asset of the ECOC Programme. This is firstly because the place-based approach emphasizes the need for experimentation in order to find the most suitable instruments for implementing regional development policy. The European Capital of Culture can also be explained as an experimental programme, where cities are 'local laboratories' (EC 2014), and it is exactly the various expectations, experiences and the considerable room offered for experimentation for individual title holders over the last three decades that have developed the Programme to emerge as a complex and popular European mega-event.

Certainly, the ECOC Programme defines only a few specific criteria, and otherwise there are mainly guidelines and recommendations to orient and instruct applicant cities, thus allowing much flexibility but also causing uncertainty. Since the Programme awards only a small 'prize' as funding to support the implementation, the EU level is not in the position to impose its ideals in a strict way on the local implementation of the project. In the report prepared for the 25th anniversary of the Programme (see Section 4.4), the ECOC was referred to as "a living organism" as it is "forever evolving and developing" (DG EAC 2009). Indeed, during its three decades of history, the ECOC initiative has gone through substantial changes, mostly as a result of different adaptations of the Programme by the participant cities.

In the first 25 years or so, information was gathered and published by the European Commission in the form of ex-post evaluations of individual projects and comparative summary reports (such as the so-called 'Palmer Reports'). These could advise the designers of the Programme about any unclear or lacking definitions, and any unexpected difficulties or disappointments experienced by participant cities which helped to improve and strengthen the ECOC concept. In addition to these evaluative-feedback tools, the European Capitals of Culture became subject to a formal monitoring process by the 2006 Decision of the Parliament and of the Council (1622/2006/EC), linked to the issue of EU co-financing (Melina Mercuri Prize, see earlier in Section 4.2). The actual implementation of the monitoring provisions started with the 2010 ECOC (including the Pécs project). These new monitoring meetings and reports not only have practical significance – i.e. they provide early and prompt feedback for the cities during their preparations leaving sufficient time for adjustments – but they also make the communication between the EU and the nominated cities more fluent about issues concerning the development of the Programme. In light of the above, it can be claimed that the

Programme is controlled and governed from above by the EU, but with the engagement (inclusion and participation) of the participant cities and regions. With the use of these feedback techniques, much of the opportunity for interaction is guaranteed, thus making the Programme more responsive and resilient to internal and external changes.

However, the general guidelines of the ECOC Programme are interpreted in different ways and adopted to local potentials and preferences (Article 3). Culture is an important development asset for cities, but converting European urban culture into a real asset for any city is a rather tricky affair, and highly dependent on contextual factors (see Section 5.1). Participant cities can draw from a wide range of different cultural heritage. But these can rarely be turned into attractive cultural assets in a straightforward way, and often require careful and creative planning and substantial financial investment to convert local-regional 'culture' (especially if understood in a broader sense,) into a tourism product or a component of strengthened local identity and improved living conditions. The ECOC Programme can trigger innovative projects by putting selected cities in a special position for a year, and by providing guidelines and practices to support them in completing a successful event year – but each participant city may choose to use the ECOC title in a different way (see also relevant ideas in 6.4 above and 8.3 below). As a consequence, the valuable brand together with its relatively flexible interpretation generates not only 'local faces' of the ECOC but also – though not always transferable – innovative interpretations and solutions regarding 'good governance models'.

8.3 LONG-TERM LEGACIES OF ECOC

What 'intangible' but durable outcomes may be produced by ECOC mega-events?

A central issue in this dissertation is the potentials of the ECOC mega-event (the Programme and the individual projects) to have a longer-term impact on local, regional socio-economic development in Europe. An important expectation cities have from their ECOC participation is a direct positive impact on their economies, mainly in terms of increased tourism incomes triggered by the cultural attractions and services developed for the ECOC year. Another motivation for participation is an opportunity to carry out urban regeneration and to develop cultural establishments that are missing. As shown in the two cases, not all of the large-scale constructions procured under local ECOC projects necessarily have an explicit tourism function, and some developments partly or entirely serve their and their regions' populations (e.g. refurbished public places, city libraries). Since the growth in tourism flows during the event year is unlikely to pay back the invested

resources on its own, it is very important for these cities to ensure the sustainability and continuity of the intended positive impacts already in the preparation stages.

However, recent ECOC nominations have leaned towards an increasing proportion of small and medium-sized cities, which means that resources are not necessarily in place to achieve as spectacular results under the ECOC brand as the earlier capital cities and long-established cultural centres of Europe had managed to do. Major infrastructural flagship projects are almost as a rule included at least in the plans and proposals forwarded by the participants, as they are seen as having a symbolic value beyond their objective functions of enhancing the ECOC brand. Additionally, increased competition among the applicants tends to push proposals beyond their limits in terms of promised developments and outcome, so increasing the risk of failure by making the wrong strategic choices. (See Article 1.)

Large-scale and spectacular investments – if successful – are more widely regarded as an indicator of success and real accomplishment, compared to smaller, dispersed efforts in the refurbishment and revitalisation of existing structures, whether tangible or intangible. Also, infrastructural developments in themselves can carry an emblematic value which may evoke the ECOC brand of the city more readily, and even on an international level. Nevertheless, it is also widely known that such major infrastructural ventures entail numerous risks: missing deadlines, running out of resources, uncontrolled flows of money, over-dominance of the interest of single stakeholder groups, or over-scaled and underutilised infrastructures are all recognised issues that can emerge. These potential pitfalls may undermine the legitimacy of the whole ECOC project, and especially the institutions involved with it, including the national government and the European Union. In the long run, such a loss of trust in these institutions would be damaging to the prospects of citizen participation in similar projects, and in general, the future of bottom-up initiatives. Therefore, it is in the interests of multiple levels of stakeholders that individual ECOC projects, as well as the Programme as a whole, are planned and prepared with sufficient care and foresight.

Turku's example indicates that emergent uncertainties can make the ECOC candidates reconsider the content of their project – even to the extent of cancelling almost all of their big infrastructural plans and taking on a more flexible approach to cultural development prioritising less costly and easier to mobilise human resources, in order to comply with the ECOC ideals. The outlines of the soft components of the event-year programme already existed in the Turku 2011 proposal (i.e. the theme of citizen well-being and the creative engagement of the local population), but in order to be able to work out this 'plan B' on time (a couple of years before the event year), the project management activated local stakeholders in the fields of culture and beyond, and what is more, deliberately encouraged the formation of innovative and creative mixed partnerships for the event programme (Article 3). This way the Turku 2011 project also managed to avoid any tensions and criticism related to lacking or selective engagement – which, on the other hand,

characterised the Pécs 2010 project, at least in its preparatory stages. Concerning the Hungarian case, when the management of Pécs 2010 finally let local civic groups participate in the programme (in 2009) and made their management decisions more transparent, then resentment was put aside and surprisingly effective citizen involvement was achieved in a short time. This resulted in the creation of a vibrant event-year programme, despite the fact that the big construction projects could not be completed on time. Thanks to the considerable level of flexibility allowed in the ECOG Programme, both cities could fix initial errors, and as a result, important lessons could be learnt concerning the value of creative, soft projects and the advantages of relying on 'place-based' human resources and determination (Section 6.3 and Article 4).

This dissertation calls attention to the fact that ECOG projects are governable spaces, where divergent interests and power relations are often at work. In his recent paper, Ziakas (2015:697 referring to Roche 2000) suggests, that:

(If mega-events are understood as social spatio-temporal hubs that channel, mix and re-route global flows imposing socio-spatial structures, then it is revealed that they discursively produce, promote and establish social control techniques of governance, which have enduring effects on the (re)shaping of social order and contestation of power.

In light of the above, the European Capital of Culture Programme seems to be a suitable test ground for developing engagement and governance practices and routines in places. Relatively limited financial resources still encourage the inclusion of a wide set of stakeholders, whose participation means a more diverse range of interests, which in turn, require more complex and innovative engagement and negotiating processes. The cultural profile of the project also has a particular importance, as at its core lies a concept of (soft) human capital and creativity, and also because the project is broad enough for facilitating creative partnerships and synergies, further motivating cooperation across stakeholder groups and governance levels.

Therefore, a potential significant legacy of the European Capital of Culture mega-event can be seen as its (positive) effects on governance processes. This is an intangible, yet pervasive impact on local and regional development, caused directly by the mega-event projects. Providing that the participating cities accomplish such an impact, and the Programme in its monitoring and feedback processes continues to develop safeguards and guidelines to support this tendency, then this cultural mega-event has the potential to contribute to the diffusion of good governance practices, and ultimately to some level of convergence across different regions of Europe, and across new and old member states in this regard.

8.4 THE BORDERS OF ECOC

Can ECOC projects include actors beyond the host city, and what are the potential reasons and motivations for their engagement? Where are the 'borders' of ECOC?

A striking difference between the general approaches of the studied ECOC projects was that in the case of Pécs the ECOC host was emphatically positioned in a specific geographical context (e.g. by mottos, slogans, metaphors such as 'borderless city' or 'the Gateway to the Balkans, see Articles 2 and 3), while Turku had no such specific regional self-identification. This indicates a difference in starting points, i.e. a strategy pursued by Pécs to connect its brand to its embeddedness into a particular cultural-spatial context. Furthermore, it was only in the Hungarian case that the bidding proposal included a direct reference to an intention of regional engagement and the impacts of the mega-event. Nevertheless, this initial difference was not persistent in the actual project implementations seen in the two cases.

In the Pécs 2010 ECOC project, the idea to form certain city-external linkages came from national concepts and strategies (e.g. cooperating with other applicants from the country or bringing about new employment opportunities in the wider region of Pécs: see Article 3), or the collaborative nature of the ECOC Programme (partnering with co-hosts of the mega-event), and these were included in the design of the project more or less as a consequence. Besides the 'easy' choices of partnership, a more imaginative initiative to collaborate with external actors (i.e. one that was driven more by the particular interests and cultural resources of Pécs itself), was the creation of the 'University Network of European Capitals of Culture'. This endeavour was an ingenious way for Pécs 2010 to contribute to the internationalisation (or Europeanisation) of the project, and perhaps to a more lasting impact on Pécs's integration into a European city network. However, the Pécs 2010 ECOC could not really exceed beyond conservative approaches when relating the ECOC to its own surrounding regions. It is true that through the ECOC event the Hungarian host city managed to showcase the cultural assets of its surrounding area, raising tourism incomes for a year (at least for Baranya county), and in turn could form a more diverse 'tourism package' for visitors to the event. However, the engagement of civil society groups from the settlements in the wider region was something that was missing, as was an early and more deliberate cooperation with stakeholders from the 'hinterland' in defining the event (Article 3). These inclusions would have been needed to integrate the partners who were geographically and culturally closest to Pécs into the ECOC activities in creating more creative and spontaneous partnerships, that could generate for instance, novel cultural products, more relational capital, and as a consequence, new development potentials for the city and its region.

The Turku 2011 ECOC project did not emphasize its regional embeddedness or identity at any spatial-administrative level, nor did it have a strategy to develop a regional impact on these areas. Instead, it opened its call for projects to all actors and initiatives (in Finland and abroad) that matched the intended messages and increase the diversity of the Turku ECOC, in the frame of the event programme (Article 3). As a result, city-external regional actors were mobilised and the implications of the ECOC (levels of engagement and potentials for impacts) concerning Varsinais-Suomi and Southwestern Finland were increased. Turku was not any more active or original in terms of Finnish or international city-networking than Pécs, yet the project utilised many of the city's existing connections and followed some logical directions of cooperation (sister cities, ECOC co-hosts, etc.).

Findings from the analysis of partnerships formed for and during the ECOC mega-events (Article 4) confirmed this major difference between the approaches of the Pécs 2010 and Turku 2011 projects, regarding the external, or more specifically, the regional implications of the mega-event. As described in Section 6.4, Pécs 2010 did not actively engage actors from its surrounding area and generated little relational capital in its closer and wider region, despite offering initial visions of such engagement and its impacts in its bidding proposal. In the planning of Turku 2011, regional implications received no such special emphasis, yet the mega-event could still mobilise its hinterland and contribute to regional network capital. From the gathered data it seems that the actual implementation of the Pécs 2010 project performed a 'scale-jump': on the one hand, it put more emphasis on urban development focussed on the city itself and its functions as a regional centre (which is also reflected by the infrastructural investments), and on the other hand, it produced stronger links between the city and the national level. The Turku 2011 project did not skip the regional-level, yet this was not a result of any special attention: by way of allowing equal opportunities for participation in the event to virtually any interested actors (also beyond the city) the regional engagement and its impacts manifested almost by default, i.e. it was driven by interests and initiatives of the stakeholders themselves. This reflects the natural dynamics and interdependence between a central city and its hinterland, organic relationship can be boosted by the stimulus of the ECOC providing there are no 'artificial' limitations imposed.

In light of the above, the ECOC mega-event can be claimed to have very diffuse and indefinite borders. First of all, regardless of its particular and place-placed concept and implementation design, it generates and operates within a relational space, engaging actors and resources in both inclusive and selective ways, and dynamically responding to (changeable) contexts. Secondly, the borders are also flexible in terms content and the particular local realisations of the mega-event. ECOC projects can take divergent pathways and build themselves around various defining foci, and this is mainly owing to the relatively loose definitions provided by the European Union in 'programming' these events (see for instance Articles 1

and 2). This is an example where the overall (multi-level) governance of the mega-event has a clear consequence for the end product: specifically, the diversity of a range of suitable solutions by which to create a 'European Capital of Culture' (i.e. in determining what is European, the territorial manifestation, and what belongs to 'culture'). Finally, ECOC projects are time-space contextual (see for instance, Sections 5.2 and 5.2.3 and the conclusions of Article 3), in that they grow and evolve from legacies, and they themselves may reinforce or create new legacies.

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ÁGNES NÉMETH

The mega-event European Capital of Culture reaches and mobilises various segments of society and unveils diverse constellations of open and invisible power relations. What are the processes engaging various types of actors, and on what spatial levels? How do they create or limit space for inclusion in the governance of this mega-event? To explain the different governing forces behind the European Capital of Culture project, two case studies are selected (Pécs 2010 in Hungary and Turku 2011 in Finland) for a longitudinal analysis of both general and distinctive patterns of governance.



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