**Decision-Makers' Cultural Influence on the Implementation of the
European Capital of Culture: A Longitudinal Study.**

Konstantinos Tsagkaridis^{a*}, Federico Cavallieri^b, and Katerina Flora^c

^a Theological School of the Church of Cyprus, Open University of Cyprus

^b University of Milano-Bicocca, Milan, Italy

^c University of Western Macedonia, Florina, Greece

*Corresponding author: K.Tsagkaridis@theo.ac.cy

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DECISION-MAKERS' CULTURAL INFLUENCE ON ECO C

Abstract

Motives for nomination as Cultural Capital of Europe (ECOC) vary. Desirable post-ECOC changes include economic growth, touristic increase, job creation, infrastructure updates, cultural development and city rebranding. This research assessed changes in stakeholders' perceptions during the ECOC and their cultural context. Three members of Pafos2017 and a member of another local organization participated in semi-structured interviews at the beginning and end of 2017, which recorded perceptions of the city/citizens, the participants' role in the implementation of the ECOC, their goals and major obstacles, the expected legacy of the ECOC and their perception of European culture. Qualitative content analyses from Psychology and Anthropology were used. Results demonstrate a drive for cultural development, personal commitment and passion as ways to overcome problems, a disbelief in the citizens justifying a top-down approach with minimal community involvement, and traces of post-colonial influences in the definition of the new Pafos and the quality assessment of cultural products. We argue that stakeholders' philosophy and cities' cultural particularities explain the critical decisions affecting the ECOC's implementation, and propose the assessment of cities' goals and philosophy to become part of the bidding process. Based on cultural particularities, EU could appropriately guide and support cities in achieving those goals.

Keywords: ECOC, culture, philosophy, implementation, Pafos2017, cultural development

DECISION-MAKERS' CULTURAL INFLUENCE ON ECOC

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An influential theory for the categorization of cultural policies (Chartrand & Claire, 1989) assesses the role the State plays as Facilitator, Patron, Architect or Engineer (in increasing magnitude of intervention). Differences among countries have been attributed to characteristics such as history, politics, religion and local culture (Dubois, 2105). Nevertheless, great variability also exists among regions and cities within the same country (Ferilli, Sacco & Noda, 2015; O' Brien & Miles, 2010).

The effects of cultural policies can be studied in the context of the European Capital of Culture (ECoC) initiative. Cities seeking nomination expect benefits such as economic growth, tourism increase, job creation and infrastructure updating (Campbell, 2011; García, 2004; Herrero, Sanz, Devesa, Bedate, & del Barrio, 2006; O'Callaghan & Linehan 2007) - also termed as culture-based regeneration (Griffiths, 2007). Less materialistic goals include cultural/audience development and engagement (Tommarchi, Ejgod Hansen & Bianchini, 2018), or even city re-branding (Liu, 2012; Papanikolaou, 2012; Richards & Wilson, 2004). Potential negative outcomes include the lack of actual economic gain (Campbell, 2011), short-term benefits in tourism not necessarily translating to long-term benefits (Falk & Hangsten, 2017), inequality in residents' gains from and participation in the ECoC (Hudson, Sandberg & Smauch, 2014; Liu, 2013; Mooney, 2004), and the distraction from institutional capacity building and civic creativity boosting due to the emphasis on infrastructure update (Balsas, 2014).

In a period of globalization, and following the doctrine of the "creative economy" theory (Florida, 2002, 2005) which highlights the role of the creative sectors (from sport events to design, high cuisine, tourism etc.) on contemporary post-Fordist economies, many cities attempt to develop cultural capital in order to regenerate economy, and compete against other

DECISION-MAKERS' CULTURAL INFLUENCE ON ECO-C

cities in attracting external creative artists, visitors, capital and corporations (Hutton, 2016). Mega events such as the ECO-C can boost economies and promote city brands (Richards & Palmer, 2010). Nevertheless, the ECO-C's implementation varies among cities. Some follow a bottom-up approach of involving the local population, organizations and cultural groups in planning the ECO-C (O'Brien, 2011; Šebová¹, Džupka, Hudec, & Urbančíková, 2014; Žilič-Fišern & Erjavec, 2015), whereas others assign this role to government officials or appointed committees with little involvement of local stakeholders (Lähdesmäki, 2013). Securing funding is often difficult, with minimal economic support from EU (Palonen, 2010). To overcome limited financial resources, small cities such as San-Sebastian (Spain, 2016) resort to the commitment, creativity and passion of the people involved (Oancă, 2017) and try to utilize healthy cultural capital to develop their creative economy (Hutton, 2016).

ECO-C's main goal is to "highlight the richness and diversity of European cultures and the features they share, as well as to promote greater mutual understanding between European citizens" (European Parliament and Council 2006, p. L304/2). This "unity in diversity" motto affirms the inherent variability and coexistence of different ways of living as a core trait of the European Culture, and describes the EU in relation to all the different cultures and countries in it (McDonald 1996). Despite success with ECO-C technocrats and the public opinion, this motto has been criticized as a vague and an empty rhetoric effort to cover the impossibility of identifying anything as "European" (Shore, 2000), which attempts to overcome the difficulty of isolating common traits of the European culture acceptable by the majority of Europeans without challenging any of the national narratives that make the EU (Sassatelli 2005).

The potential to interpret these goals in ways that satisfy local national goals, highlights the role of the cultural context in ECO-C's implementation. External narratives' influences on policymakers' perceptions can considerably affect policy-making. In the Micronesian islands, the dependence of policymakers on outsiders' point of view (the Western "dry-land"

DECISION-MAKERS' CULTURAL INFLUENCE ON ECOC

perspective which divided a large and connected “sea of islands” into a plethora of isolated microstates with poor resources) led to a constant sense of precarity and dependence to external support for policy-making, (Hau’fa, 1994). Western representations describing traditional societies as small groups of people with few exchanges with others, sometimes even hidden in the forest or a remote island (White, 1991), associate isolation and enclosure with stasis, traditionalism and eventually backwardness. The narrative of opening these societies to the world, to the relentless evolution of history and technology, and modernity, justified colonialism (Fabian, 1983).

In short, factors affecting the ECoC’s goals and way of implementation, especially in terms of citizen participation, have not been studied extensively (Ooi, Håkanson, & LaCava, 2014). This research aimed to analyse the perceptions of members of Pafos2017, the organization set up specifically for the purpose of organizing, coordinating and implementing the ECoC, regarding goals, how they are influenced by local cultural particularities and how they evolve during the nominated year. Existing research on the effects of local culture on cultural policies mostly includes central, northern and south-western European countries, with fewer studies in south-eastern European countries (O’Brien & Miles. 2010; Rius-Ulldemolins, Pizzi & Arostegui, 2019). Pafos, a small city in Cyprus of 60.000 residents (Cyprus Statistical Agency, 2015) whose economy is heavily based on tourism and which lacks infrastructure, can easily be categorized among “culturally deprived” cities (Bianchini & Parkinson 1993).

Cyprus, an ex-British colony, with post-colonial (Argyrou, 1996, 2010; Bryant 2004, 2006) and crypto-colonial (Herzfeld, 2002) influences still present, is currently located at the border of Europe with Middle East, far enough to avoid heavy influence by EU culture. Pafos, one of the smallest cities to get the ECoC nomination, implemented the programme on a budget of around 8.5 million Euros – probably the smallest in ECoC’s history (Fox &

DECISION-MAKERS' CULTURAL INFLUENCE ON ECOC

Rampton, 2018). The above make Pafos2017 an interesting case study. Moreover, few studies have used longitudinal data to measure different aspects of the preparation, implementation and impact of the ECoC (García, 2017; Richards & Rotariu, 2011). and, to our knowledge, no study has utilized a longitudinal design to study the effect of the local cultural context on the dynamic change of the mentality and perceptions of decision-makers before and after the nomination year.

For the paper structure, the methodology initially describes the qualitative, interdisciplinary approach used. We interviewed three persons with key positions in Pafos2017 and a person external to the organization in two different time-points, at the beginning and end of 2017. A thematic analysis (from the field of Psychology) was used to describe the personal and institutional views expressed by the participants at the micro-level, and a conversation analysis (from the field of Anthropology) was used on the same data to reveal the general philosophy of the implementation of the ECoC at the macro-level. Both analyses emphasize the longitudinal dimension of the change in the main themes extracted in the two measurement times, to allow for comparison. Results of the micro-level analysis are initially summarized in Table 1, followed by the macro level analysis whose themes are organized in four sections: the changing image of Pafos, goals and legacy of Pafos2017, difficulties which had to be overcome to lead to Pafos2017 success story, and the European dimension of the ECoC. Finally, results are discussed with regard to literature.

Methodology

Participants

DECISION-MAKERS' CULTURAL INFLUENCE ON ECOC

Participants A, B and C¹ (two members of the board and a top administrator of Pafos2017) were selected non-randomly, to reflect the opinions and the philosophy of the organization. Participant (D), the director of another local pre-existing cultural organization, was included to give the “informed outsider’s view”.

Research tools

We used semi-structured interviews with questions on five themes: 1) perception of Pafos, 2) role in the implementation of the ECoC, 3) goals of Pafos2017, 4) legacy of Pafos2017 and 5) the effects of the EcoC on the perceptions of its participants about the European culture. Questions were asked in the same order for all the participants, with clarifying comments or questions intersected when necessary. Questions cover the same themes in both interviews with a different time perspective: In the first interview, themes 2-5 covered the expectations about the change brought about by the ECoC, whereas in the second interview they covered changes that took place and the legacy of the EcoC.

The first interview included 10 sub-questions: 1) description of Pafos and its citizens, 2) their role, personal contribution in the EcoC and the difficulties arising from that role, 3) goals of Pafos2017 and their successful realization, 4) changes in Pafos as a result of the ECoC and 5) their definition of the European culture and their opinion about the effects of the ECoC in the participants’ perception of the European culture.

The second interview included 13 sub-questions: 1) Pafos description and main changes to the city and citizens, 2) their responsibilities in the EcoC and the difference between their expectations and reality of their duties, 3) the main goals of the EcoC (the degree to which they were achieved, their personal contribution, the goals most difficult to achieve and the reasons why, the most difficult obstacle which needed to be overcome to achieve these

¹ Letters are used to protect the participants’ anonymity. No specific demographics and details about their roles and responsibilities are presented, for the same reason.

DECISION-MAKERS' CULTURAL INFLUENCE ON ECOC

goals), 4) the legacy of the EcoC and its most important achievement, and 5) the degree to which the ECoC had a measurable effect in bringing the local culture closer to the European culture and how it was achieved.

Experimental design

Micro-level. Thematic analysis was used to code and summarize participants' verbal reports in exclusive and specified categories extracted from interview data, by quantifying the replicability of words/phrases in the text and analysing them at a conceptual level (Wilkinson, 2003). The coding emerged from predefined categories based on a single theoretical model (a priori coding). Two researchers read the material, collected and identified specified characteristics (codes) based on the initial research questions-categories. Out of these codes a (concept) list was eventually formed addressing the research question. Then, researchers compared their notes and used the differences spotted in the initial material to manageably code the data (categories). Afterwards, they used their final list of common characteristics to conduct a new coding indicative of the research question and finally proceeded with the evaluation of the data reliability (95% of accuracy rate, 0.8 on the Cohen's Kappa scale) (Smith, 2003).

Subcategories were extracted following the same pattern. The unit of analysis in this study emphasized on the content, meaning and main concept of the narrative; participants' chosen words/phrases and their specific way of describing the experiences and arguments developed during the interview were taken into account. The open coding of the overall text corpus followed, from which general categories emerged and the categories were grouped to reduce the categories and give the best possible description and understanding (Cavanagh, 1997).

Macro-level. A conversation analysis was conducted to understand participants' interpretations for their experiences, examined in relation to the cultural context generating

DECISION-MAKERS' CULTURAL INFLUENCE ON ECOC

them, in a similar way that philologists analyse different levels composing a text. We first pinpointed the main images, symbols and metaphors composing interviewees' narratives, to be understood in mutual relationship as part of a consistent discourse. Those discourses were then analysed in light of anthropological bibliography regarding the Cypriot context or other ECoCs, to reveal the web of meanings in which every single narration is moving and arrive at a "thick description" connecting individual interpretations with the collective cultural context (Geertz, 1973).

Procedure

After signing consent forms, the interviews were conducted, in an appropriately structured office at Pafos2017headquarters. Interviews were conducted at the beginning (February/March) and end (November/December) of 2017 in English (except for participant D, who was interviewed in Greek); their duration was 30-40 minutes. A did not participate in the follow-up interview due to lack of time.

Results

Micro level: Personal/institutional view

The results of this analysis are summarized at Table 1. For easy comparison, we present the categories extracted from both interviews per theme.

[Insert Table 1 here]

Macro-level: The philosophy of Pafos2017

The themes from the conversation analysis are organized in four sections: the changing image of Pafos, goals and legacy of Pafos2017, difficulties which had to be overcome to lead to

DECISION-MAKERS' CULTURAL INFLUENCE ON ECoC

Pafos2017 success story, and the European dimension of the ECoC.*Pafos' Image*.

Understanding the interviewees' perceptions about Pafos is important to understand

Pafos2017's mission and actions. All interviewees describe Pafos using the same adjective:

small.

Small, cozy, a bit undeveloped. (B)

Pafos is a small town not a city. (C)

A few years ago, this was a small rural town. (D)

A small society that keeps the human relationships and the traditions. (A)

Pafos, is indeed a small city, but for the interviewees, being small has a broader meaning; it affects all scopes of inhabitants' life, its social and cultural dimension as well as the way the ECoC was implemented.

Pafos is not considered a proper city, its residents seem to not fulfil the interviewees' expectations about "citizens" but are rather deemed as "villagers". Size is indeed a pivotal aspect of differentiation between villages and cities. D claims that the recent economic development of the last decades transformed Pafos to a small city (for Cyprus standards) but this happened so quickly that it couldn't affect the mindset of its inhabitants:

There is bad behaviour, towards Pafos itself and towards other people, because Pafos was a small city. [...] in 1969, Pafos had 11.000 residents [...] wasteland, nobody could culture this area. But after the war in 1974², when tourism needed to be developed, some people they gonna be millioners from a day to the next day, but their mind still remained in the year 1976. I can say, they have millions in the pocket, they drive Mercedes but they didn't change, in culture, it's not theatre or

² D is referring to the Turkish invasion and the subsequent military occupation of the northern part of Cyprus, which created the still unresolved issue between the two communities. It also left the city of Famagusta, then main touristic locality of the Island, isolated from the international community, which paved the way for the touristic development of other areas like Pafos.

DECISION-MAKERS' CULTURAL INFLUENCE ON ECOC

music, culture is how you feel and how you introduce yourself i... to the people and the other things.

D explicitly links the place and conditions of living with the way people think and behave: city-life produces citizens whereas villages produce peasants. A whole set of stereotypes, widely used by all the interviewees to explain Pafians' lifestyle, culture and even feelings, is embedded in this dichotomy. C also speaks about the urban mentality against a mentality of the farmer population almost as two different anthropological types.

The rhetoric of city vs. village parallels the opposition of modernity vs. tradition. In this narrative, modern people are open to innovative ideas and new values, used to an ever-changing environment and able to embrace and welcome changes and individual differences. On the contrary, traditional people seem unable to keep the pace of history, stick to old habits and fear change. Pafians are not proper citizens because they keep a lifestyle belonging in their past, even if this also implies being genuine and authentic. When A positively comments that Pafos has managed to keep certain principles still alive, the idea that time marches in a specific direction remains unchallenged, and the city is placed at an earlier stage of the dynamic process of change towards a situation that elsewhere is *already* different. The smallness' narrative also interacts with the "eventful city" (Richard & Palmer, 2010) idea. Smallness caused Pafos' marginal role in the cultural market of the island. The shortage of potential audience deters private investment from cultural businesses, the city lacks venues (theatres, galleries, museums etc.) which suffocates local cultural expression and eventually forces artists to flee to bigger cities. Smallness leads to a poor cultural market, whilst a proper city should have a vivid cultural scene.

In the second interview, the description of Pafos image is substantially changed, even though Pafos could not have grown much between the two interviews. No one directly mentions the size again, but all interviewees point out that due to Pafos2017, many features previously

DECISION-MAKERS' CULTURAL INFLUENCE ON ECOC

attributed to Pafos' "smallness", have now been changed and/or fixed. In this respect, Pafos has become "bigger". B and C stress the capacity of the ECoC to generate a more fertile environment for art and culture. B, who initially described Pafos as small, cozy, a bit undeveloped, now says that Pafos is now more vibrant, dynamic, fresh and better for citizens (clearly referring to its cultural offer):

They have more options, culture is now present in their life. There is a theatre,
[...] There is a multicultural centre, [...] other galleries with the exhibitions...
the people [...] have a way of enjoyment and a way of going out that hasn't
been present in the past. There was a lack of cultural offer in the past years.

Despite previous small cultural scene, Pafos seems to have adapted to the expectations about city standards. C claims that the improved cultural offer also had an impact on the mindset and the habits of Pafos' citizens. Exposure to new ideas and different traditions transformed Pafos from a small town to a city that has a lot of self-confidence, "much more than when we started a year ago". D claims that Pafos now looks like a beautiful small city, compared to its previous status. D agrees that Pafians' mentality may be gradually changing to a more "urban" way through cultural exposure but stresses that one year is not enough to transform human nature (opposing the enthusiasm of B and C probably because of D's marginal involvement in the organization).

Goals and Legacy. During the first interview, all participants frame the goal of Pafos2017 as stimulating the local society in order to achieve a deep impact in different scopes, to deal with the smallness, backwardness and isolation. There is an overall agreement about the condition of marginality and self-abandonment of the city and the need to transform Pafos into a proper, modern and vivid city. B claims the goal is to change the city and the people, the overall dynamic of the city, while A speaks about nothing less than creating a new city: 2017

DECISION-MAKERS' CULTURAL INFLUENCE ON ECOC

is a year for Pafos to recreate, to reinforce its forces in order to rebuild, to rebrand, to provide a new city for the next generations.

The ECoC is the perceived catalyst for this transformation. It's not only about making a lot of events, it is also about changing the way people see culture and how important it can be in their lives (B). The "catalyst" metaphor is a core component of the Pafos2017 narrative, implying an external intervention capable to initiate and set in motion a local reaction. ECoC's legacy focuses on the future (C: Pafos2017 is about Pafos2018 and the years to follow) and includes the renovation of the city centre and other infrastructure, the change of people's mind-set (to become more "open-minded") and the empowerment of new creative capacities to improve the city's cultural capital.

To achieve this change, it is necessary to broaden Pafos' social and cultural environment. B associates size with extroversion: Pafos, [...] usually [...] a very small city, was a city referring only to itself. The ECoC is perceived as a networking opportunity: an opening of Pafos to the world [...] a window that opened for the Pafos society in general but also in particular to the local cultural persons and institutions (A). It will allow Pafians to escape their routine and learn kinds of art that they didn't know before, [...] other cultural elements like food, arts and crafts, and things like that they were not exposed before (C). This will transform people by educating them to embrace rather than being afraid of pluralism in the world.

All interviewees agree that Pafians will embrace the change as soon as they are exposed to this alternative. Presenting it is considered enough to affect cultural development. Removal of barriers that prevented this change is the only thing that needs to be done for the cultural development and spontaneous transformation, whose value is never questioned. Pafians will become more willing to consume culture, more knowledgeable of their own culture and more open to various types of cultural production. This will make Pafos an attractive market for cultural industries. Citizens' relations with the city and one another will also change: they are

DECISION-MAKERS' CULTURAL INFLUENCE ON ECOC

going to socialize more, use public spaces more and show increased respect for public property (Dova, Sivitanidou & Balasis, 2019). After Pafos2017, Pafians will be more tolerant, self-confident, and able to enjoy life and their own culture, which will finally lead to “society progressus” (C).

No significant change appears in the goals between the two interviews. At the first interview, an input in the cultural milieu of the town is described as the most significant goal of the organization, while at the second interview this goal is claimed to have been achieved. The interviewees hope that the momentum generated by the ECoC will have a lasting effect and that the danger of a sudden stop of events and loss of this momentum will be avoided. Such concerns were already visible in the first interview, but became more prominent in the second interview, with the end of the entitled year approaching. Overall, the interviewees consider the ECoC a success but doubt that the organization, as it is or in another form, will be preserved to reinforce the fragile achievements of Pafos2017. This concern reveals a lack of faith in the capacity of other institutions such as the relevant municipality cultural services to take over the role of Pafos2017 and consolidate its accomplishments.

A site-specific decline in the idea of “social progress” on the long-lasting problem of the Cyprus division is also observed. Even though this target is mentioned in the first interview, most interviewees don't comment on it in the second interview. D only mentioned this goal in the first interview, but failed to comment on it later, either as an achievement or as a failure. On the other hand, C mentioned this in the second interview as one of the biggest failures of Pafos2017 while B recognizes that it was difficult for Pafians to perceive the potential of culture in this respect.

Obstacles and Success Story. The smallness of Pafos2017 (in terms of audience, number of employees and allocated budget) is relevant to both the barriers faced and the solutions it had to adopt. The nature of Pafos as a not-proper city, its culturally uneducated citizens, the lack

DECISION-MAKERS' CULTURAL INFLUENCE ON ECOC

of creative economy and its geographic position and distance from decision-making centres with consequent marginalization, are considered major challenges.

Bigger cities are experienced in organizing mega-events such as the ECoC, already have the necessary cultural infrastructure and can allocate big budgets to employ more people or host famous artists. On the contrary, small Pafos had a shortage of budget, lack of a developed cultural industry and modern venues suitable for hosting the events, and minimal visibility as a cultural hub. For Pafos, size and marginality were barriers during both the bidding procedure and the entitled year; even delivering all activities proposed in the bid book was a challenge.

Still, smallness was also a resource for overcoming difficulties. C and A, the members with the longest experience in the organization, agree that the funding crisis arising soon after Pafos' nomination was one of the greatest challenges. In a seminal moment, Pafos2017 had to face the EU commission and announce the need for a heavy budget cut, which could risk losing the title to Nicosia, the other finalist candidate from Cyprus. But Pafos2017 had the courage and the recklessness to tell the truth to the EU commissioners, without hiding or "sugar-coating" the problem. A describes this with passion:

I remember when I had to attend the first evaluation meeting that was in October 2013, my first decision at that time was [...] "look, I'm gonna go there and tell the truth, present the reality" which reality in October '13 was that Pafos has 20.000 euros to do the ECOC. And everybody was like shocked "what are you talking about?!" So I remembered the motto I used during this first evaluation meeting "when money goes down, creativity goes up".

This issue was resolved before 2017 by an almost 80% cut of the original budget (Fox & Rampton, 2018). The result of this "epic battle" is described as a complete success: Pafos2017 managed to keep the title and was later acknowledged by the EU's allocation of the Melina Merkouri Prize as an example of how a small city can deal with such massive mega-events.

DECISION-MAKERS' CULTURAL INFLUENCE ON ECO C

The difficulties are claimed to have pushed the organization to find solutions in overcoming funding challenges, to enter the exclusive club of the ECOs and implement the program successfully.

The target audience of Pafos2017/ citizens were also one of the main barriers to its mission. All interviewees mentioned citizens' passivity and mistrust in the first interview, attributing this problem to communication faults of Pafos2017 along with structural disadvantages of the city's smallness and marginality (the root of Pafians' sense of abandonment) and scandals in the management of local and national institutions. At that time, high profile cases of negligence and corruption in Pafos were made public, contributing to citizens' mistrust towards Pafos2017. Additional concerns were the weak cultural life of Pafians and their village-like mentality. The interviewees claimed that this attitude started to change when the artistic program and renovation and infrastructure works began and stated their belief that communicating the practical benefits of the ECO could secure Pafians' trust. Still, in the second interview this issue seems partially unresolved. B describes the lack of support by Pafians as one of the main challenges to cope with during 2017 and C pinpoints the community involvement program as the least successful component of the ECO.

The small size of Pafos2017 was also used as a rhetoric tool to exert the efforts of its members. The response to difficulties was often a bigger personal involvement, motivated by the interviewees' passion for the cause. I neglected my work, I neglected my profession and I gave my soul to this project (A). C also claimed to have acted outside of C's role and responsibilities to contribute in any possible way: [...] whenever they [the organization] needed me with practical help from my resources I was always there. Overall, undertaking extra workload was needed to overcome difficulties before and during 2017. In the second interview, B states: I couldn't imagine the workload that came on us, it was an extremely big one because of the situation of Pafos [...] a city that has developed almost everything from scratch.

DECISION-MAKERS' CULTURAL INFLUENCE ON ECOC

D was personally involved too, even though an external stakeholder outside Pafos2017 organization. D vividly describes the effort devoted to the dream and the mission of the ECoC from the beginning of the bidding process, when D's organization hosted events with no fees charged. Such actions represent a sense of service for the community, also evident in D's other cultural activities. D points out the importance of the activities of people like D, who love culture and offered to help the ECoC, which contributed to the very nice thing that took place in Pafos.

Smallness turns into a positive; stressing the condition of minority of Pafos makes the problems it had to face bigger and emphasizes the ability and the capacity of the organization and its members to find solutions. With all these difficulties, all these negatives, all this pessimism that we started with, all this absence of any support from the beginning, what Pafos managed to do is a miracle (A).

Europe. The European dimension of Pafos2017 can be summarized by the “unity in diversity” motto (McDonald, 1996) and the resistance to the “cultural melting pot”. In the first interview A describes European culture as a mosaic of cultures, an explicative metaphor: the unity apparent from distance is in reality created by the juxtaposition of different entities, adjacent to each other without mixing. D points out the dangers of the idea of a unique and comprehensive European culture; mashing individual European cultures could result in a flat amorphous European standard: every country, every person has and should have their own culture, because if we say that we have a European culture, four hundred million people, [...] it's not the same. Europe is a union of different people and most important thing in Europe is to... to find these cultures and preserve them.

In this perspective, people do not need to change to become European, but rather be aware of their uniqueness and value the richness of their own culture. If you really want to be European, then you have to be really local, because the essence of Europe, is communicating

DECISION-MAKERS' CULTURAL INFLUENCE ON ECOC

between cultures. So, if you're rooted in your origin and open in your mind, I think that is the European attitude (C). Identity and self-awareness are strengthened by contact and exchange with others; only not strong enough identities are at risk of oblivion. The motto of Pafos2017 "Linking Continents - Bridging Cultures" is consistent with this goal to bring Pafos closer to Europe through artistic or creative exchanges that connect cultural productions.

The recurring trait of "smallness" corresponds to the opposite of the European vision: closure and irrelevance in the global web of exchange. In the first interview, B considers the ECoC as a way to make the small and forgotten Pafos visible abroad: Pafos is now on an international or European cultural map, it's already the first step. People are looking on this map, people do see events happening by Cypriot artists as well. In the second interview, the interviewees stress the international projects, guests and tourists as main successes of Pafos2017. D highlights the importance of facilitating collaborations between local and international creative industries: A measurable index is the number of events which took place through the collaboration of local Cypriot and Pafian cultural agents with those who came from abroad. Similarly, C suggests that this can "impregnate" local culture, providing ideas and inspiration for improvement. B directly describes the opposition between smallness and Europe by claiming that the international disclosure in artistic, economic and touristic terms was also one of the necessities of Pafos now achieved through this European dimension.

In short, for Pafos2017, to be European means to not be isolated in the small Pafos/Cyprus, but widen one's horizons towards the bigger Europe and the world while preserving its strong and centuries-old local culture. Taking from and giving back to European culture is equally important.

Discussion

DECISION-MAKERS' CULTURAL INFLUENCE ON ECOC

Our micro analysis revealed a significant change in Pafos' image during the ECoC year: initially undeveloped, but later extrovert and alive. Our macro analysis demonstrates how participants view Pafos and highlights the importance of its "smallness" for understanding Pafos' nature, its citizens' perception and the organization's effort, in many aspects perceived to be hindered by the consequences of this size. Size remains central to the vision of a reborn city as opposed to its initial status of a marginal little town. Smallness refers primarily to the perception of Pafos in the interviewees' interpretation and narrations. As in the case of the Micronesian islands (Eveli Hau'fa, 1994), the smallness of Pafos can here be seen as the effect of the post-colonial (Argyrou, 1996, 2010; Bryant 2004, 2006) and crypto-colonial (Herzfeld, 2002) condition of Cyprus. In a form of "European hegemony" (Argyrou, 1996, 2010) the status of being small, and therefore marginal and remote, results in a delay of modernity and a disqualified status of less European. This Western rhetoric of modernity leads to constant need for Cyprus to prove its belonging, since the early colonization period. By accepting this narrative, Cypriots are forced to chase Westerners and Moderns along exogenous routes of development, which grants these "others" the right to judge their belonging to the Western, modern and developed world.

Pafos2017 thrives on this representation; in fact, this rhetoric justifies the need for changing local society and, eventually, the existence of the organization itself. However, by pointing at the creative economy as the solution to problems caused by the city's smallness, Pafos2017 embraces an external discourse that sets the standards of what a proper city should be. Vivid, connected, open and attractive metropolises you can find elsewhere (but not anywhere) in the world are taken as models of development. Pafos2017 seems to have a double nature: in the attempt to break free from this encapsulating cage of smallness, it reinforces the minority complex of Pafians and reproduces an exogenous image of their own identity.

DECISION-MAKERS' CULTURAL INFLUENCE ON ECOC

Regarding common European identity, Pafos2017 follows the “unity in diversity” motto while also being wary of losing the local culture in the “cultural grinder”. This is consistent with the criticism of the “unity in diversity” motto as an empty rhetoric (Shore, 2000) and the claim that the elasticity of this definition allows turning a weakness (the lack of a concrete common basis supporting the European identity) into an advantage, because it permits to even embrace contradictions as a sign of richness (Sassatelli, 2005).

Regarding the goals of Pafos2017 and the changes it will bring, our micro analysis demonstrates that the objectives at the beginning and end of 2017 remain unchanged: the renewal of the city, the boost of citizens' motivation and secondarily, the bridges between the two communities. The goal for infrastructure and cultural upgrading still exists, because infrastructure upgrade was still taking place in Pafos at the end of 2017 due to delays in its implementation, and because the goal of cultural upgrading was perceived as not fully achieved. Pafos2017 adopts the “creative economy” narrative (Florida, 2002, 2005) as a way forward. The importance assigned to the cultural dimension in the perception of what a proper city is resonates with D'Ovidio's (2016) observation of the effects of this narrative on the perceptions and expectations about cities. Metropolises with venues for events are considered the centre of production for cultural and creative products. This narrative retains its popularity in urban policies despite the inefficiency and inequalities stemming from such economic development (Nuccio, 2015; Pratt, 2011; Pratt and Hutton, 2013).

Moreover, there are interesting differences in the goals of Pafos2017 from previous ECoCs (Campbell, 2011; Herrero, Sanz, Devesa, Bedate, & del Barrio, 2006; García, 2004; O'Callaghan & Linehan 2007). Touristic increase is mentioned by none of our interviewees, in contrast with the citizens of Pafos who claim this to be one of the main benefits of the ECoC, after infrastructure upgrades (Tsagkaridis, 2018). A potential explanation is that Pafos is already a popular touristic destination, featured in various media as a cost effective destination

DECISION-MAKERS' CULTURAL INFLUENCE ON ECoC

in Europe. Incidentally, in the years before and after the ECoC, Cyprus has had a record number of tourists, with each year since 2016 breaking the previous year's record. Pafos has been receiving a large percentage of the incoming tourists and tourist services function almost at full capacity. Therefore, touristic increase was never a major goal for Pafos' ECoC. Its top priorities, the cultural cultivation of its citizens and the desire to escape the city's marginalization and neglect, are closer to the concept of culture-based regeneration (Griffiths, 2007). In this respect, Pafos appears similar to former communist countries using the ECoC as an opportunity to renegotiate their place in Europe and rebrand themselves (Tursie, 2015).

Regarding the goal of bridging the two communities (Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots), interviewees either failed to mention it or explicitly named it as one of the biggest failures of Pafos2017. With this goal being an important feature in its bid and a decisive factor for its nomination, Pafos2017 invested important symbolic and real capital in projects to Moutallos area, the former Turkish-Cypriot neighbourhood (e.g. the refurbishment of Ibrahim's Khan, a historic market from the city's multicultural past). Still, this was not enough to involve the Turkish-Cypriot community to organise and/or attend the events and visit the city.

While barriers are more pronounced in the first interview, in the second interview participants focus on what could have gone better. It is not clear if this was due to participants' belief that these barriers were, partly at least, resolved, or because they were, at that time, preoccupied with the legacy of Pafos2017. This was not unreasonable because, even at the time of writing this article, two years after the end of the ECoC, there is no consensus among the local authorities and other stakeholders on how and by whom the legacy of Pafos2017 will be managed. Loss of the momentum and the potential failure to preserve this legacy, one of the biggest fears of our interviewees and Pafos citizens, remains unresolved.

DECISION-MAKERS' CULTURAL INFLUENCE ON ECoC

The discourse on challenges describes a battle to carry out the ECoC plan with limited economic and human capital resources. Success is attributed to the implementation of creative ideas, sacrifice, passion and commitment. The recourse to, at a large extent, free labour, is considered as specific to Pafos2017 and is attributed to the informal organizational structure of the organization and its passionate people. Still, something similar has been reported in San Sebastian 2016. Personal involvement is in fact associated with the pursuit of competitiveness, due to policy-makers working in a state of constant competition among one another (Oancă, 2017). We also notice a contradiction between the difficulties in changing the feeling of the people (whose mentality and initial lack of support for the goals of the ECoC is presented as a major obstacle) and our interviewees' general confidence in their potential positive impact on the local society. The inconsistent interpretations of the reaction of the local community to the efforts of Pafos2017 may originate from interviewees' focusing on difficulties they had to face to claim the accomplishments of Pafos2017 but also expressing their hopes for the future.

Finally, the narrative of Pafians' villager mentality and need to be cultivated with good quality cultural events explains why Pafos2017 followed the centralized decision making model (Lähdesmäki, 2013) and did not involve local communities and organizations in the ECoC's design and implementation (O'Brien, 2011; Šebová1, Džupka, Hudec, & Urbančíková, 2014; Žilič-Fišern & Erjavec, 2015). Apart from the desire to safeguard quality, pre-existing cultural particularities regarding local governance and lack of citizens' participation in the public discourse might also have contributed to this implementation.

The small number of participants and the possibility for biased and/or idealized answers are potential limitations of this research. Still, for this research sample size should not be considered an issue of tantamount importance for concern, due to the methodology followed and the design choices made to safeguard data saturation, an issue highly relevant to the assessment of the adequacy of sample size in qualitative research (Fuss & Ness, 2015). Data

DECISION-MAKERS' CULTURAL INFLUENCE ON ECOC

saturation was achieved using the principle of triangulation, through the interdisciplinary approach of the combined analysis from Psychology and Anthropology (the micro- and macro-point of view) and the inclusion of an external member to Pafos2017 in the interviewees. Dominant narratives also seemed to be quite similar between the three members of Pafos2017, which can be explained by their non-random selection as influential figures of the organization and its centralized organizational structure. Given that the population of interest was small (Pafos2017 was a small organization) a sample of three influential members is a considerable percentage of the target population. Another limitation was that most interviews were done in English and not the native Greek language of the participants. This helped the participants' communication with the interviewer (whose Greek language was not at native levels) but might have created difficulties in participants' narrations. Finally, the distance between the two interviews was not big. Even though interesting findings came out from this analysis, a larger distance between the interviews might have shown bigger differences between measurements..

Nevertheless, this interdisciplinary analysis of the changing narratives of Pafos2017 demonstrated the ways in which the local cultural context affects the implementation of the ECoC. Even though a direct empirical comparison of the way that local culture affects different aspects of the implementation between different ECoCs is not easy, the approach used in this study provides a useful tool for answering such questions. Pafos' case study, with all its unique characteristics in terms of geography, history and culture, allows us to go beyond general claims of the way religion or politics affect the ECoC. Results build on previous theories explaining the effects of culture on the degree of state intervention in cultural policy, the emphasis in democratic decision making, the sometimes opposing goals of modernization and cultural development and contribute to a novel interpretation of the way critical decisions on the model of the ECoC's implementation are affected by the perceptions of the people guiding it. Our suggestion is that this approach could be standardized and added to the bidding process

DECISION-MAKERS' CULTURAL INFLUENCE ON ECOC

for an ECoC. A written report on how the city plans to implement the ECoC can be part of the assessment of the bid but can also be used by the EU commission to foresee the aspects of the implementation that the city might need help with, and provide relevant guidance and support.

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DECISION-MAKERS' CULTURAL INFLUENCE ON ECOC

Table 1: Presentation of the categories extracted for each theme at the two interviews.

Theme	Categories – Interview 1	Number of reported answers	Categories – Interview 2	Number of reported answers
<i>Pafos image</i>	Historical and Archaeological Heritage	4	Extrovert, Vibrant and Dynamic	2
	Small size	3	Improved Infrastructure	2
	Multicultural	2	City ‘with a lot of Self-Confidence’	1
	Beautiful	1	Developed Cultural Value	1
	Cosy	1	Better quality of life	1
	Underdeveloped	1		
<i>Participants' role in Pafos2017</i>	Designing and Planning the Events and Infrastructure Programme	3	Designing the Event and Infrastructure Programme	1
	Carry out Challenging Personal Tasks	1	Managing the Cultural Events	1
	Spending Personal Time and Energy	1	Heavier Workload from the expected	1
	Description of the Role of the External to Pafos2017	1	Workload as expected	1

DECISION-MAKERS' CULTURAL INFLUENCE ON ECOC

	Local Cultural Organization			
<i>Pafos2017 Goals</i>	Boost the Extroverted Dynamic of the City, Motivate People, Create a more Confident and Happy Society	4	Greater Openness & Increased Awareness of Culture by Citizens, Community Involvement, Revitalization of the City	4
	Contribute to Better Events and Achievements for Now and the Future, Leave a Legacy (Infrastructure, Important Projects)	4	Several Achievements, Artistic Excellence, Infrastructure	3
	Promote Artistic Collaborations, Organize Transnational Events and Bring the two Communities (Greek-Turkish) together	3	Networking between Artists and Organizations	1
<i>Difficulties/Barriers in Goal Achievement</i>	Economic Pressure, Lack of Funding/Capital	4	The Organization Should be Treated as a Creative Structure	1
	Passivity of Pafos Citizens	1	The Organization should Facilitate the Citizens'	1

DECISION-MAKERS' CULTURAL INFLUENCE ON ECOC

			Understanding about the Essence and the Legacy of the ECoC	
	Political Obstacles, Change of Negative Thinking, Mistrustful/Negative Audience	1		
	Difficulties in the Support and Promotion of a Program of Such Scale, Cost of upgrading the Infrastructure of the Local Cultural Organization	1		
<i>What could have been done better</i>	-		More Structure in the Organization's Work	1
	-		Development of more Community Involvement Programs	1
<i>Changes from Pafos2017</i>	Infrastructure Update	3	Infrastructure Upgrade	1
	Increase in Citizens' Involvement with and Knowledge about Culture	2	Cultural Awareness and Audience Development	1

DECISION-MAKERS' CULTURAL INFLUENCE ON ECOC

	Enthusiasm Creation through the Volunteering Programme	2	Stimulation of Cultural Extroversion and Citizen Participation	1
	Collaboration and Exchange among Cultural Groups from Several Countries	2	Inspiration for Cultural Production and Widening of the Horizons of Pafos,	1
	Opening of Pafos to the World, Everyone will have an Image of Pafos, Foreign Media Interest	2	Creation of a Considerable Body of Volunteers	1
	Bridges/Network Capacity Building that will last	1		
	City More Attractive for Citizens and Visitors	1		
	Stimulation of Extroversion and Cultural Initiatives	1		
	Fear that the Changes Will Not be Maintained	1		
<i>Perception of the European Culture</i>	European Culture is a Mosaic of Interesting and Important for Each Society Cultural Norms,	3	Openness is one of the Main Characteristics of European Culture	1

DECISION-MAKERS' CULTURAL INFLUENCE ON ECOC

	there is Not a Single European Culture, Europe is a Union of Different People and the Essence of Europe is the Communication between Cultures			
	There is a Common European Culture but in it There is Richness and Diversity	1	Projects Dealing with European Issues	1
	If you Want to be European you Have to be Local	1	If you Want to be European you Have to be Local	1