

Didier Paris and Thierry Baert

Lille 2004 and the role of culture in the regeneration of Lille métropole

When considering the role culture can play in the regeneration of post-industrial cities, the Lille experience can be seen as a major reference, as the success of Lille 2004, European Capital of Culture demonstrates. To better understand the reasons for this success, it is necessary to set it in its historic context; 2004 was indeed a special year for Lille and its metropolitan area, but for decades, cultural factors have played a crucial role in urban development there. Perhaps most interesting is the fact that cultural development was not just about promoting the city's image and developing tourism, but also a matter of increasing local people's self-confidence and civic pride and even of boosting the industrial conversion process. Cultural concerns have been present for more than thirty years in regeneration initiatives, and there exists a large consensus for considering culture as a decisive part of the metropolitan development strategy.

Today in Europe, many cities try to appear on the map. Competition between them has increased a lot since the 1980s. Cities, the most dynamic of them at least, implement strategies to strengthen their competitiveness and attractiveness. In France, these strategies tend to bring together different development projects: major urban schemes, vast transformation programmes of the city's core, and/or urban regeneration of deprived neighbourhoods. This can be seen, for example, in Bordeaux (the tramway, reclamation of the banks of the river Garonne, the new district of 'la Bastide', etc.), in Lyons (the transformation of the banks of the river Rhône, the 'Confluence' scheme, etc.), in Marseilles (the 'Euroméditerranée' scheme), but also in Nantes, Reims, or Metz, and many other French cities have engaged themselves in this large movement for the transformation of cities.

The aim is obviously to attract investors, but it is also a question of accompanying an evolution of the whole society, and of facilitating within each urban society the development of economic as well as cultural creativity (Landry, 2000). The question of the development of cities can no longer be divided between exogenous and endogenous dimensions. Development appears as a whole, resulting from the transformations of a complex system. Two main issues are at stake: first, the actual mobilisation of local resources towards the area's development; second, the image of the city sent to the external world.

In this logic, culture appears to be the keystone of the system. At the same time, it is a lever to act on the internal transformation of a society for more creativity, and

Didier Paris is Professor at Université de Lille Nord de France (Lille 1^o; Laboratoire T.V.E.S., Territoires, Villes, Environnement & Société). Thierry Baert is Head of Department (Directeur d'études), Agence de développement et d'urbanisme de Lille métropole; email: didier.paris@univ-lille1.fr; tbaert@nordnet.fr

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a powerful vector of image, in particular through certain big events. In this respect, and with regard to French cities, we can mention the example of Nantes: the city has based part of its strategy on culture, for example in the urban development of the 'Île de Nantes'. The heart of the project is the site that hosts 'Royal de Luxe', a famous street entertainment company, which develops enormous machines, in particular the mechanical elephant. We should also mention Metz, where the Pompidou centre, Paris' world-famous modern art museum, has opened a 'branch' for the first time: a new museum with symbolic architecture. Nearby, a new urban district is planned, with the aim of ensuring the development of Metz over the next 20 years. In Lens, a city close to Lille where the social and economic crisis is still very strong, the Louvre has decided to open a 'branch', with the hope that this new cultural flagship facility will energise the redevelopment of the area. These last examples explicitly refer to Bilbao and the Guggenheim museum. In Marseilles, within the 'Euroméditerranée' area, the realisation of the 'Belle de Mai', a former tobacco factory turned into audiovisual studios, constitutes another aspect of the cultural sector's mobilisation to promote urban development. In 2013, Marseille will succeed Lille as the French city with the title of European Capital of Culture, the city of the North being clearly a reference for the Mediterranean one.

In hindsight, Lille's experience appears to be an undeniable reference on the subject. Since the early 1980s, politicians and economic decision-makers have worked to design and implement a successful international development strategy for Lille. Major urban development schemes, especially Euralille, and the new transport economy (high-speed trains, the Channel tunnel) have played a crucial role in this redevelopment; however, such achievements were not enough to change the city's image as dramatically as required. Following the bid for the 2004 Olympics, the successful nomination as the European Capital of Culture in 2004 was, in this respect, a major step forward in the recent evolution of Lille (Paris and Stevens, 2000). This article analyses the process of cultural regeneration in Lille as a case study for this issue in Europe. The first section sets out the hierarchy of governance structures covering the city and the region as a necessary context. The second outlines the events of 2004, when Lille was European Capital of Culture, and sends a renewed image of an attractive city to Europe. The third part explores, over the last 30 years, the basis of the city's current cultural momentum, and the fourth brings the elements together to appreciate this momentum after 'Lille 2004'. The fifth and final section presents some conclusions about the impact of cultural development in urban regeneration.

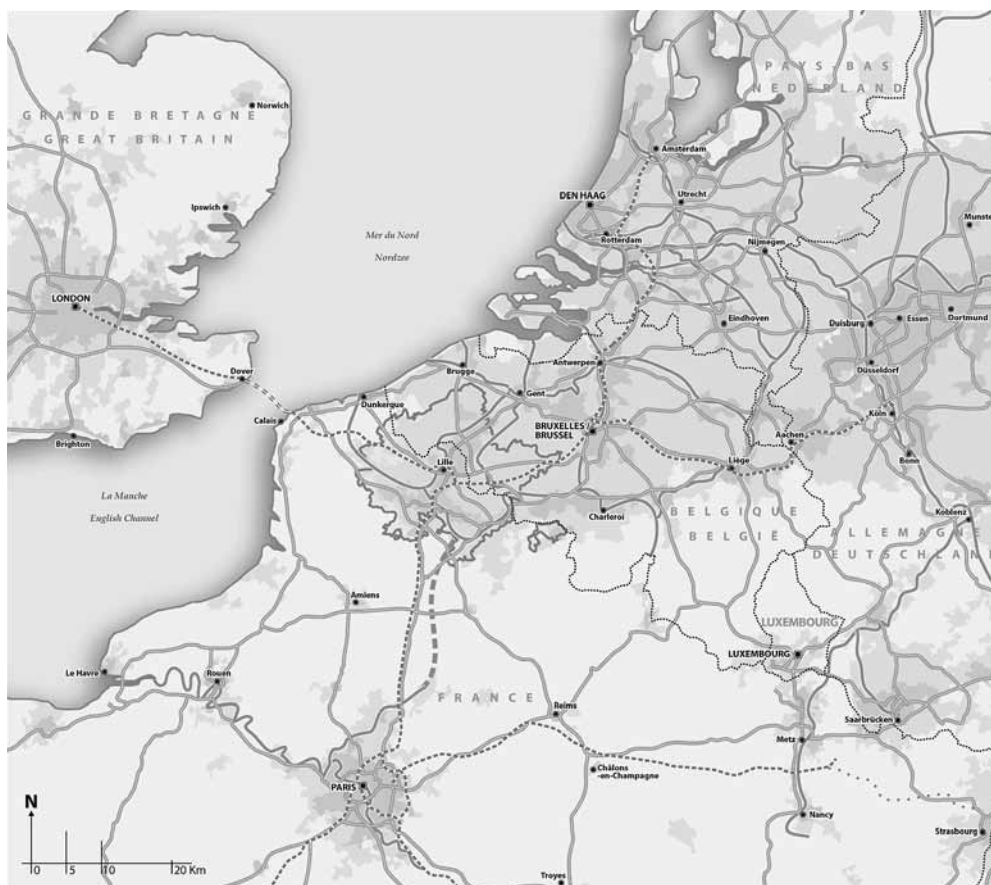


Figure 1 Lille in NW Europe

Source: Agence de développement et d'urbanisme de Lille Métropole

Lille, a metropolis, a network of metropolitan centres

Situated a few kilometres from the Belgian border, Lille (France) is located at the centre of the Paris–London–Brussels triangle and is the meeting point of the high-speed rail lines that link the three capitals. Lille has an urban core of one million inhabitants within a greater metropolitan area of more than three million inhabitants. To the north, cross-border development with Belgium, especially cooperation with the cities of Kortrijk and Tournai, has intensified over recent years. To the south, in France, the old urban coal-mining centres have become more closely tied to the metropolitan area as a result of increased commuter flows, and the inhabitants of these towns have started looking to Lille for services. An authentic metropolitan region is thus operational.

The principal urban centre in an evolving industrial region, the conurbation of Lille holds a unique place in the French metropolitan landscape due both to its multi-polarity and morphology. The conurbation's cross-border dimension (Franco-Belgian), in addition to its metropolitan region straddling two French administrative departments (the Nord and the Pas-de-Calais), raises the question of territorial cohesion given the scale of this zone, with 3.3 million inhabitants living less than 40 km and 30 minutes from their regional capital. A recent study by the University of Barcelona (Institut d'Estudis Regionals I Metropolitans de Barcelona, 2002) used a slightly more limited context when defining the Lille metropolitan area, ranking it 15th in Europe (14 countries being considered) with 2.25 million inhabitants, while a survey commissioned by ESPON and led by the Free University of Brussels¹ defined it as the 18th in Europe (29 countries) with 3.115 million inhabitants in 2006.

This dense urban area is, in reality, a complex urban system in which cities and towns form a network. To better understand this reality, it is necessary to progress by scales of magnitude.

- *The City (municipality) of Lille* has 230,000 inhabitants. The heritage represented by the 'old city' (e.g. the Old Exchange) recalls the history of trade in this historic medieval city. However, many districts were developed with the industrial revolution in the nineteenth century. More recently, Euralille, the new business district situated at the intersection of the high-speed rail lines between Paris, Brussels and London, has been a symbol of economic renewal for the last 15 years.
- *Lille Métropole Communauté Urbaine (LMCU)* is a political institution that was created by the French government in 1968. The LMCU is part of France's local political system. This inter-communal structure gathers 85 municipalities with a total of 1.1 million inhabitants and has gained more and more power and influence during the last 20 years. It is now in charge of all the strategic competences: transport, water supply, sewerage, refuse collection, green and open spaces, planning, economic development, housing, and to some extent culture and major public facilities
- *Eurométropole Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai*. This cross-border district is the result of a common political project from Lille metropole and the Flemish and Walloon neighbouring areas; implemented in 2008, it was the first EGCT (European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation) to be created. Today, the growing intensity of the economic, cultural and political relationships has reinforced the cohesion of this territory, which has attained a population of nearly 2 million inhabitants.
- *The Lille Metropolitan Area*. Lille's zone of influence extends to the south, tracing an arc through the former coal-mining urban centres of Béthune, Lens, Douai and Valenciennes, and beyond to Arras, Cambrai and even Maubeuge. Another

¹ ESPON project 1.4.3, lead partner: IGEAT (Institut de gestion de l'environnement et d'aménagement du territoire), Université Libre de Bruxelles; partners: IGSO, LATTIS, October 2006.

northern arc links the Belgian cities of Tournai, Kortrijk, Ypres and beyond. This territory concentrates more than 3.5 million inhabitants living within approximately 30–45 minutes of Lille. Characterised by a high population density (more than 600 inhabitants/km²) and nearly total urban continuity, this region is the functional operations zone of the Lille metropolitan system, as demonstrated by the number of daily commuters. A cooperation process has been underway for a few years involving the concerned local authorities, and the association 'Aire métropolitaine de Lille' was created in 2007.

- *The Lille City Region.* To the vast urban area around Lille (Paris and Stevens, 2000) must be added the Opal Coast to the west, the entryway to England (e.g. Dunkirk, Calais and Boulogne, as well as Saint Omer located a few kilometres inland) and the regions beyond Cambrai and Maubeuge to the east of the department Nord. This territory constitutes a functional meta-system of nearly 5 million inhabitants

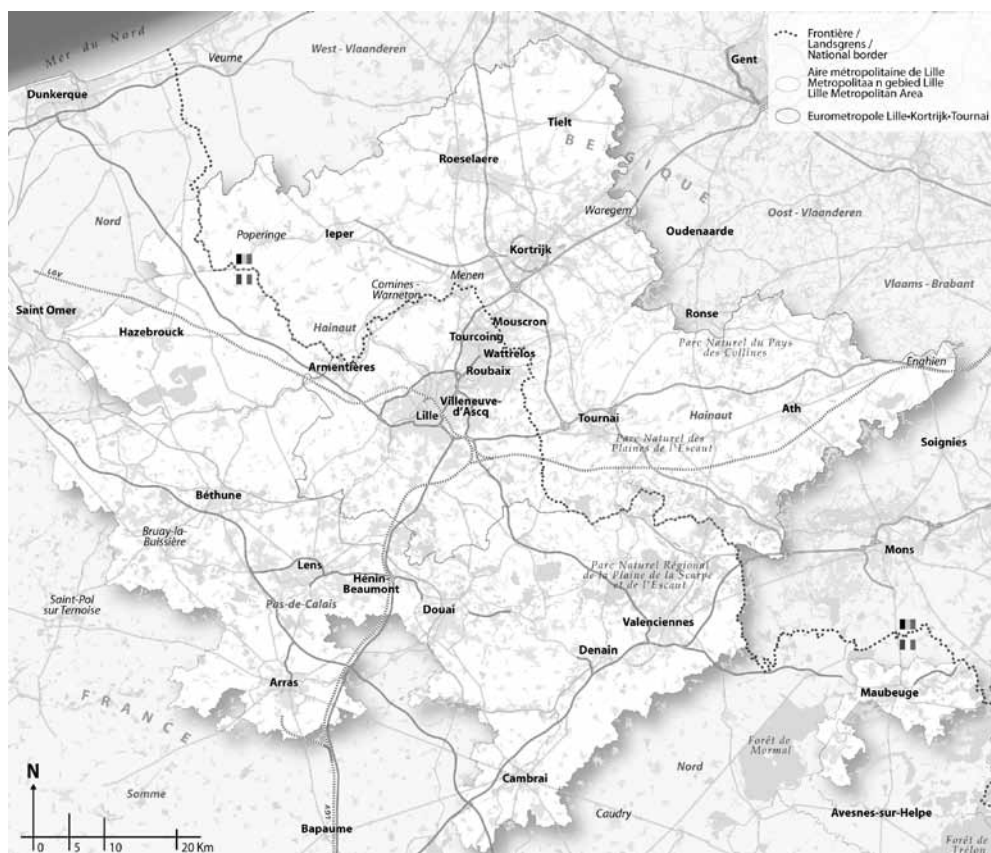


Figure 2 The Lille metropolitan area

Source: Agence de développement et d'urbanisme de Lille Métropole

(more than 300 inhabitants/km²) at around an hour from Lille. As Damette has observed, the telephone exchanges reflect the predominance of Lille over the Nord/Pas-de-Calais region: 'The city region of Lille, in the largest sense, covers the entire Nord/Pas-de-Calais region' (Damette, 1994). However, to this it would be prudent to add the Belgian cross-border district of Metropolitan Lille, extending to Tournai, Mouscron and Kortrijk, at the limits of the influence of Brussels or Ghent.

The success of 'Lille 2004'

Sometimes in cities or regions, a key moment – an event – reflects the whole transformation process impacting this city or region. This moment thus figures strongly in local history. It can be a tragic event, such as the 1996 bomb attack in Manchester, which marked the beginning of a huge transformation of the heart of the city. Or it can be a major sporting event, such as the Winter Olympics of 1968 in Grenoble or the 1992 Summer Olympics in Barcelona.

Without any doubt, 2004 plays this role for Lille. That was when the city was awarded European Capital of Culture. Lille's overwhelming success makes it easy to forget that there were actually two European Capitals of Culture in 2004 (Genoa being the second). At the time of writing (i.e. five years later), Lille still appears as a reference in this field. Marseilles has been awarded European City of Culture for 2013, after a tight competition between several French cities, and they did not stop referring to the Lille experience in their bid.

Regarding Lille, there is now a 'before' and an 'after' Lille 2004. However, the event cannot in itself summarise the complex historic process which has led to the transformation of the city and the conurbation. The image and reputation of this old industrial conurbation have been strongly reappraised. A series of successful initiatives taken over the last two decades has dramatically changed the perception of the city's position within Europe, and contributed to renewing its economic basis and regenerating its urban fabric. However, this success would probably not have been sustainable without a deep cultural shift in the local society, which was conditioned by its glorious industrial past. Lille 2004 has made this change obvious to residents as well as to visitors.

In the nineteenth century, local development was based on industry (mainly textiles) in Lille itself, but also in Roubaix and Tourcoing, the two other important centres in the north-eastern part of the conurbation. Until the 1970s–1980s, the area was known as 'Lille–Roubaix–Tourcoing', a name that was a near-synonym in French for the textile industry. However, for the last 20 years, the name of the main city has been given to the conurbation as a whole, 'Lille Métropole'.

With the crisis in the 1970s–1980s and the closing down of many factories, local decision-makers, from the political sphere as well as from the civil society, faced with

economic and social difficulties, were in search of new frameworks for a local (re) development. It was clear that the area was suffering from the social and environmental consequences of 150 years of rough development by and for heavy industry: deficits in attractiveness, lack of creativity in the whole society, etc. Therefore, cultural regeneration appeared not only as a social necessity, but also as a lever for action, at both the local and the regional levels; since then, the cultural dimension has been an important part of the regeneration policies developed in Lille and the metropolitan area.

The success of 'Lille 2004' as a cultural event is indisputable.² Indeed, 2500 local events, exhibitions and appearances of all kinds were organised, mobilising 17,000 artists. 'Lille 2004' widely exceeded the limits of the city and the conurbation. The event was conceived from the start as a cross-border event, with the Flemish and Walloon neighbours of Kortrijk and Tournai, but also in a regional dimension, at the scale of the whole Nord-Pas-de-Calais.

One hundred and ninety-three municipalities were partners in the programme, and so the metropolitan reality, and the specific role played by Lille for the whole region (which was until then disputed by other parts of the region), began to be widely recognised. A number of other cities and towns developed a cultural programme under the 'Lille 2004' label. The concept of metropolitan area, and that of urban region, then took shape in a concrete way.

During the year, the whole programme (all events included) brought together a total of 9 million participants. The opening event – a street parade and ball – is said to have gathered 730,000 persons in the streets of Lille on an unusually cold winter evening, i.e. more than three times what was expected by the most optimistic decision-makers. Among the indoor events, first mention should go to the Rubens exhibition, with more than 300,000 visitors, but each of the other large art exhibitions – Picasso in Roubaix, Matisse in Le Cateau, Mexique–Europe–Frida Khalo in Villeneuve d'Ascq, Watteau in Valenciennes – attracted between 32,000 and 250,000 visitors. A number of events were organised in the local schools; 17,000 'ambassadors' were mobilised for the occasion among the general public, especially young people. If a high level of participation was the aim for cultural creation and exhibitions of the season, 'Lille 2004' was also a truly popular event.

Lille 2004 mobilised the most important amount of private sponsorship ever gathered for a European Capital of Culture. The project collected 13 million Euros of private funding, in comparison with 6.2 million Euros for Brugge 2002 and 5.5 million Euros for Cork 2005. To date, it is the largest cultural sponsorship ever achieved in France. The event's budget amounted to almost 74 million Euros, which were shared between various contributors: private sponsors (18%), the State (18%), the urban

2 Data from 'Lille 2004, indicateurs', 10 pp., a document published after the event by Lille 2004: data from INSEE, regional and municipal agencies for development of tourism, Chamber of Commerce, IFRESI-CNRS.

community of Lille (18%), the Region (15%), the city of Lille (11%), both departments Nord (9%) and Pas-de-Calais (5%), Europe and others (6%). Of this budget, 80% was devoted to the programme itself, whereas the average for the previous cities and capitals of culture was around 66%.

Besides this programme, it is worth mentioning the many long-term investments which were achieved at this time: reclamation of the public realm (especially *rue Faidherbe*, the street going from the Lille Flandres station to the Opera, and *quai du Wault*, a former river port), refurbishment of the heritage (the old *porte de Roubaix*, a city gate), *Hospice d'Havr * a baroque hospital in Tourcoing, and many churches), the renovation of the Opera House, which reopened in 2004, the creation of new cultural facilities, named *maisons folies*, two in Lille and some in other cities and towns: Tourcoing, Roubaix, Villeneuve d'Ascq, Lambersart, Mons en Baroeul, Kortrijk, Tournai, Arras, etc.

Thus a large impetus was given to the development of the city, the conurbation and the cross-border region, with the creation or renovation of public facilities and restoration of historic monuments. There was a real impact on the local economy. The Lille tourist office reports an explosion of the number of visitors: 200,000 in 2001, 400,000 in 2002 and 2003, and 800,000 in 2004. Seventy tour operators included Lille 2004 in their tour programmes. The shopping, catering and especially hotel businesses (+27% for the overnight stays from 2003 to 2004) made an important profit from the event. However, the most important spin-off concerned the city's fame. With some 4000 invited journalists, 2000 reports were produced by the French and various foreign television stations, including some key prime-time programmes, and 5000 articles were published in the regional press, 1500 in the national press, and 1400 in the foreign press, including outside Europe.

The image of Lille had already begun to change in the 1990s. The opening of the Channel tunnel and the completion of the high-speed rail network between Paris, London and Brussels, with Lille at the centre, returned to the city its historic role of gateway between France and north-west Europe. The development of the biggest and most innovative urban development scheme in France, Euralille, proved that the old industrial centre, often considered moribund, was still full of dynamism and open to innovation. The bid for the Olympics was the first opportunity for the media to report this change. This shift was amplified and gained in quality through this new cultural reputation, representing important added-value for a former industrial city. Besides, in 2004, the European Capital of Culture was not yet as trivialised as it tends to be today, and the 'density' of the Lille 2004 programme marked a clear break with previous ones. This is why, five years later, Lille is still the benchmark for a number of European cities that want to develop their image as a dynamic cultural city.

Lille 2004 also gives evidence of the quality of the metropolitan governance in Lille, which since the end of the 1980s has brought together politicians, business

people and other decision-makers from civil society in a successful attempt to develop a common vision for city development. It was when bidding for the 2004 Olympics, a difficult goal, that the idea progressed, as an alternative, of competing for being the European Capital of Culture. The initiative was first supported by the private sector, as a successful local business leader developed it within the *Comité Grand Lille*, one of the most obvious forms of mobilisation of the civil society, predominantly the economic world.³

However, the leadership was quickly taken over by the public sector. In order to actively participate in Lille 2004, Lille métropole, then chaired by Pierre Mauroy, decided on a new – but limited – cultural competence, which allowed it to become one of the major fund providers. Besides, a process of defining a cultural development strategy was carried out at metropolitan level with the involvement not only of cultural players but also of representatives from the public, private and voluntary sectors.

However, the success of Lille 2004 is mainly due to the strong personal involvement of Martine Aubry, mayor of Lille; it can be said that it is her own success, and that of Lille 2004 general manager, Didier Fusillier, a leading figure from the local and national cultural world. Their chief objectives were changing Lille's image, and using culture for enhancing the social regeneration of deprived neighbourhoods. However, the popular infatuation caused by Lille 2004 has, without a doubt, played a decisive role in Martine Aubry's large victory in the 2008 local elections.

Lille 2004, the outcome of 30 years of cultural policy

To better understand the success of Lille 2004, it is necessary to set it back in its historic context. For many years, culture has been mobilised as a lever for territorial development in the Nord-Pas-de-Calais region, and particularly in Lille métropole.

The intensification of the Lille cultural function matches originality with a pure political decision: the creation in the 1970s of the *Etablissement public régional* (EPR), set up as a regional public institution, before the creation of the current 'region' by the decentralisation act in 1982. Culture was one of the favourite fields of action for the EPR, together with rail transport and the environment.

Of course, in the 1970s, Lille owned a museum, which was created in 1801 and located since 1892 in an imposing neo-classical building, hosting one of the most prestigious collections of the country, but it had hardly evolved since its creation. In the dramatic arts, pioneers – in particular the *Théâtre populaire des Flandres* (TPF) – were ensuring an effective cultural life during the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s.

3 Since 1990, *Comité Grand Lille* has taken an active part in the debate on the future of the Lille metropolitan area; with support from the urban development and planning agency, it was at the origin of the Olympic bid, which had already widely improved the fame of Lille, after the city's victory over Lyons in the national competition.

The Opera of Lille was especially dedicated to gala evenings, whereas other theatres in Lille, Roubaix or Tourcoing produced more popular forms of entertainment. With hindsight, the overall cultural achievements of the 1960s seem rather limited, but no more here than anywhere else in France outside Paris: at this time, a cultural life remained the privilege of the capital city. Later on, as in many other places, the emerging cultural demand led to an increase in the culture on offer. However, other French cities endowed in the 1960s with *maisons de la culture* (community arts centres) by the emblematic minister of culture, André Malraux, experienced a faster cultural development, the culture on offer accompanying the increased demand.

It could be said that the first act of the Lille cultural regeneration was the creation of a Symphonic Orchestra, the *Orchestre National de Lille* (ONL), in 1976; this common initiative of the EPR and the city of Lille (Pierre Mauroy chairing the first while being mayor of the second), which was highly criticised but supported by the national government, appears with hindsight to have not only been a real popular success, but also the starting point for further major cultural developments. For more than 30 years, ONL, conducted from the start by Jean-Claude Casadessus, has taken music everywhere in the region (schools, factories, sports halls, etc.), but at the same time also made the name of Lille known worldwide.

Following on from this, the *Festival de Lille*, created in the second half of the 1970s, played an important role in opening the local community to the world: major international artists performed in Lille, some for the first time in France, and world culture (Nô or Katakali theatre, African music, etc.) was much promoted. The creation of the Theatre of *La Salamandre* (later known as *La Métaphore*, and today, *Le Théâtre du Nord*) illustrates the development of dramatic activity, marked by the emergence of local companies which, like '*Le Prato*' (a subtitled international neighbourhood theatre) quickly found a public. With the construction of the new town, Villeneuve d'Ascq, a new stage, *La Rose des Vents*, opened in response to the demand coming from a new public audience of students, academics and executives. In the same new town, the *Communauté urbaine* decided to build a new museum, the Museum of Modern Art; opened in 1983, it hosts a major collection of twentieth-century paintings, donated by a famous collector and local industrialist, Jean Masurel.

On this basis, a very dense cultural life developed during the 1980s and 1990s. Other facilities and other important cultural players appeared, not only in Lille, but also in Roubaix and Tourcoing. This is particularly true in the sphere of music, which has always been very popular in the region. Among many others, there is the *Atelier lyrique* of Tourcoing (led by conductor Jean Claude Malgloire), which constitutes an international reference for baroque music; the *Ballets du Nord* in Roubaix (directed for some seasons by the Finnish dancer Caroline Carlson); the Tourcoing Jazz festival which stands out as a national event; *L'Aéronef* which has been based in Euralille since the 1990s; or *Le Grand Mix* in Tourcoing, in the field of pop/rock and alternative

music. With *Le Zénith* within Lille Grand Palais (the exhibition and congress centre), Lille has been equipped with an arena able to host the biggest concerts or shows (5000 seats and 7000 standing capacity).

However, music was not the only domain affected by this cultural momentum. In the field of plastic arts, in the 1990s, the city of Lille decided to totally renew its Fine Arts museum, one of the richest in France; this required long years of closure, but the final result, after the reopening of 1997, was so impressive that it was awarded with the Museum prize by the Council of Europe in 1999. In Roubaix, the remarkable transformation of the former art deco swimming pool into the museum of art and industry has strengthened the metropolitan museum potential. The Museum of Modern Art was extended in order to host a major collection of outsider art (*art brut*), and reopened in September 2010.

In Tourcoing, the 1997 transformation of a former complex for popular leisure (ballroom, skating rink, boxing hall, cinema), *Le Fresnoy*, into the Studio for Contemporary Arts has offered a new world-class facility for artistic creation and training. It hosts post-graduate art students from all over the world, with internationally renowned artists as visiting teachers. In Roubaix, the former *Condition publique* (a public facility where textile raw materials (wool), were conditioned, analysed and weighed) has been turned into a brand new cultural centre, the largest of the 2004 *maisons folies*.

A number of private and voluntary initiatives arose in the late 1990s following the initial impetus given by local and regional authorities. Some of those initiatives, such as the *Louche d'or* (soup festival), are now developed in cities such as Berlin or Barcelona on the basis of that created in the Wazemmes neighbourhood in 2001. *Les fenêtres qui parlent* (i.e. speaking windows) is another example of those initiatives; it gives residents the opportunity to transform, every year for a week or so, their street windows into little art galleries exhibiting the work of young local artists.

However, culture is also a matter of economic, and even industrial, development. Cultural industries have been developed in the area for years, especially in links with the mail-order and retailing/distribution companies, which resulted from the conversion of the textile industry. This brought the development of services such as advertising, packaging, photography, printing and more recently design, especially fashion design. Globalisation and the resulting evolution of consumption trends have further increased the awareness among business leaders of the importance of these activities for the competitiveness of local companies.

And so an image cluster was born in the region, some of the main components of which are located in Roubaix and Tourcoing, close to *le Fresnoy*, in and around a former textile factory. Many start-up companies working in TV and web programmes, video and online games, etc., have moved into the area, the most famous being Ankama, which manages the world's second-largest online gaming community, Dofus. The Regional Centre for Audiovisual Resources, CRRAV, created by the regional council

in order to support audio-visual creation and film production, has also been based there for a few years. This policy is starting to bring results, with a high-quality production recognised in national professional circles, such as films by Bruno Dumont or Michel Couvelard.

The important cultural development that has taken place during the last decades in Lille has been accompanied and strengthened by a quite similar dynamics which affected other cities of the region. Performing arts were particularly concerned with *Le manège* theatre and *Les inattendus* festival (both with Didier Fusillier as general manager) in Maubeuge, the *Bateau feu* in Dunkerque, the *Hippodrome* in Douai, the Centre for dramatic art in Béthune, the *Channel* in Calais, or the *Phoenix* in Valenciennes. Most of the existing art museums were renewed and enlarged; among the most remarkable are those of Le Cateau (Matisse Museum), Calais, Valenciennes, and Douai (The Charterhouse). The hugely popular success of the coal-mining museum in Lewarde, near Douai, should also be mentioned. The keystone for the redevelopment of the former mining site of 11–19 in Loos-en-Gohelle, near Lens, has also been a cultural project with *Culture commune* ('national stage of the coal mining area'), playing a decisive role. A very dense cultural network of production, creation, representation and exhibition has thus been established during the last 20 years.

Lille after 'Lille 2004'

2004 was indeed a special year for culture in Lille, but the interest for cultural issues shown by decision-makers and the wider public was certainly not an exception. A large part of the success of Lille 2004 is linked with the local people's appetite for culture and their participation in what they considered *their* programme. It was therefore clear from the first months of 2004 that it would be impossible to stop, which is why Lille 3000 was created by Martine Aubry and Didier Fusillier in order to take over from Lille 2004, safeguarding its 'spirit'. At the same time, the regional council was developing the concept of regional capital of culture, where one of the region's major cities is awarded this title every second year.

However, part of this Lille 2004 spirit relied on the effort made by all the political and cultural players for what was expected to be a common success. At the end of 2004, some were a bit dissatisfied; they thought that the benefits of 2004 have not been as shared as they should have been and that the city of Lille was, by far, the main beneficiary. This dissatisfaction easily found political support in the perspective of a subsequent local election; the political consensus that was presiding for 2004 in the *Communauté urbaine* had then disappeared. This explains why Lille Métropole did not take a full cultural competence as expected, and why the cultural development strategy process was never fully approved.

This is also why the first initiative taken by Lille 3000 – the development in 2006

of an Indian season named *Bombaysers de Lille* – was not fully supported by Lille Métropole, even though a number of events were actually funded through it. In spite of this limited political support, *Bombaysers de Lille* met with real success from the general public. The elements that had made Lille 2004 successful were also present this time: a mix of high-level indoor events, outdoor performances and street parades, involving a large popular participation. This new success seems to have reduced the opposition, and Lille 3000 has no longer been so criticised by local decision-makers since then.

Another important event was organised under the Lille 3000 label at the end of 2007: the *Passage du temps* exhibition. This was the only public exhibition in France of one of the world's most prestigious private collection of contemporary art, collected by French industrialist François Pinault, who had decided to move it to Venice. The fact that such an exhibition was displayed in Lille and not Paris appeared to be very unusual in the French context; this choice confirmed the new recognition of Lille as a major cultural centre in Europe, and was felt to be slightly offensive for the quite conservative French art milieu. For the first time since 2004 we saw negative articles published in national newspapers, criticising not the exhibition itself or even the venue, but the principle of presenting such an exhibition 200 km away from the only audience deemed worthy of it! In a sense, it can be said that Lille starting to alarm the Parisian milieu is a better recognition of its cultural importance than all the positive yet somehow patronising articles published in 2004.

Local amateurs and professionals were thus looking forward to Lille 3000 the following season. With Europe XXL taking place in spring 2009 they were not disappointed. The programme devoted to the thriving culture of the new Europe (the EU's new members and/or potential members) relied on those types of events that had previously guaranteed success. If some jaded observers criticised the lack of renewal in the programme, the wider public supported it and participated with their usual enthusiasm. In particular, a new cultural venue met with popular success and quickly became a fashionable place; it comprised a mix of indoor and outdoor spaces, with bar and restaurant, created by converting a disused part of Lille main goods station, *Gare St Sauveur*.

Lille 3000 represented Lille in Shangaï in 2010, and the next cultural season in Lille is planned for 2012, at a time when London is to host the Olympics.

Lille: culture as a territorial development project

As we can see, even if many decisive initiatives have been taken in other domains, cultural factors have played a crucial role in the redevelopment of Lille during the last decades; but probably the most interesting of Lille's achievements is that it was not just about image promotion and tourism, but also about local people's self-confidence and civic pride, and even about industrial conversion. Even if it was probably not

fully planned from the very beginning, cultural concerns had been present for more than 30 years in the regeneration strategies; moreover, the cultural dimension quickly became an integral part of the local development strategy.

The re-use of industrial building can be a good exemplification of this. As early as the 1970s, a number of redundant textile factories were given new functions as offices or even residential buildings; this was done either by public or private developers, but with support from the local authorities. Obviously the main objective was the preservation of the urban and social fabric, which has, most of the time, been developed by and for the factory. However, the cultural (heritage conservation) dimension was not absent, and saving the factory building was not only a question of preserving the architectural heritage but also the memory of those who had worked in it and dwelled in its shadow. A tradition and know-how was then developed among architects and the building industries which is still alive today, as proved by the number of current examples of the re-use of former industrial sites.

Preserving and enhancing this heritage is particularly important considering the poor image of the area in the rest of France. It is probably difficult for non-French readers to understand the level of prejudices from which the region was – and partly still is – suffering: dirty, poverty, bad weather, bad health, etc., all the usual prejudices against post-industrial working-class regions, but in a country which never really accepted itself as industrial, preferring to consider itself as both rural and intellectual/sophisticated. At the same time, some strong local values are widely recognised at a national level, but they seem to be a bit old-fashioned: solidarity, productivity, simplicity, friendliness, tolerance, etc. In this context, the people in Lille and the Region have a complex relationship with their identity: they are rather proud of the quality of human relations and the effectiveness of business and services, but at the same time also a bit ashamed of being somehow despised by many of their countrymen.

This explains why the cultural development and its recognition is not only a response to a simple lack of attractiveness of the area, but also a matter of self-esteem and civic pride for local people. This is particularly true for (non-)working-class people who are not only socially but also culturally excluded in a country where cultural standards have tended to be fixed by a highly sophisticated elite; there has not been much place for popular culture in the national cultural policies. In contrast, the way culture has been understood in Lille and the Region has always tried to cross the frontiers between 'high' and popular culture, most of the time without any demagoguery. The cultural dimension of regeneration policies has also always been concerned with social integration, trying to give all people a role – even if not an economic one – and a true recognition in local society.

This is linked with the general challenge of turning the value system of a whole local society from productivity to creativity. This huge and quite long-term effort is at the same time cultural, in the wider sense, and strongly linked with cultural activities

as instruments to valorise people's individual aptitudes and develop their independence. More concretely, the development of cultural activities is directly linked with that of the creative industries which are starting to represent a quite competitive part of the local business sector. The emergence of a true creative milieu in Lille appears real but fragile, as the high proximity of major cultural centres – and especially Paris – can be seen as both an opportunity and a threat for attracting talent.

Another important consequence of Lille 2004, already mentioned, lies in the acceleration of the metropolitan cooperation dynamics. The trickle-down effect of Lille 2004's achievements on the region can hardly been measured, but proof can be found in the fact that a process of strategic cooperation with neighbouring local authorities began in 2005 that had never been possible previously. The current building of a new branch of the Louvre Museum in Lens gives a clear cultural dimension to this cooperation process.

Culture appears thus as a relevant indicator of the development of a metropolitan system. After Paris and the Ile-de-France region naturally, and with Marseille, Lyon and a few other French cities, cultural development in Lille reached a qualitative threshold characteristic of real metropolitan dynamics. The status of European Capital of Culture in 2004 was actually an opportunity to reveal this on local, national and international scales.

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