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# The governance model of two French national museums of fine arts relocated in the province: *Centre Pompidou Metz and Louvre-Lens*

*Le modèle de gouvernance de deux musées d'art nationaux décentralisés en province : le Centre Pompidou Metz et le Louvre Lens*

Guy Baudelle and Gerhard Krauss

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## AUTHOR'S NOTE

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## Introduction: theoretical assumptions

- 1 Several examples of previous revitalization policies showed that the strategy of using culture as a means for economic recovering purposes seems relevant. Since traditional approaches to the fight against unemployment and urban decline have lost their legitimacy, nonorthodox strategies have become popular, the idea of a “cultural enhancement of the economy” (Lazzeretti, 2009) obtaining surprisingly much support. Earlier trials started in the 1980s when many old industrialized regions of Europe were faced with the need for a high level of economic restructuring. During this period, important innovations occurred also as a result of internal forces of the cultural sector: new museum start-ups, renovations of existing museums, renewal of the role, the organization and the management of museums in modern society, and new forms of cultural projects. Later on, policy initiatives were undertaken on a European level,

illustrated by the European Capital of Culture Programme. At the end of the 1990s, the British Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) played a pioneering role in stressing the linkages between culture, innovation and economic development (DCMS, 1998; 2001). If not completely, at least in part, can the important upsurge of new museum projects be explained by this new vision of culture as a “magical recipe” for development (Sacco *et al.*, 2013), since it provided new legitimacy to public spending on culture in difficult times. While it seemed to be more difficult to legitimize public expenditures, the lack of available solutions in times of recession contributed to the paradox that cultural projects often appeared as a promising alternative strategy, even if they ended up being rather risky and most of them eventually failed (Rauterberg, 2004).

- 2 This paradoxical configuration even allowed recognizing cultural creativity as a central element of post-industrial and knowledge-based economies (KEA 2009). The cultural economy therefore attracted increased attention from scholars and decision makers due to its supposed spill-over effects on other sectors (Cooke & Lazzeretti, 2008; Towse, 2011). But most of the literature focuses on large, international cities, showing the continuity between previous creative cities and the newly globalized creative cities of today (Andersson *et al.*, 2011). Studies of the relationships between culture and urban regeneration in restructuring areas and more specifically of the possible impact of museums in smaller industrial cities are more recent (Zimmerman, 2008; Lusso, 2009; Breitbart, 2013).
- 3 In the present article, the development of our argument is based on the issue of the decentralization of national museums and the resulting creation of subsidiaries which follows multiple objectives requiring the mobilization of different kinds of resources. According to our hypothesis cultural-related technical know-how or even financial resources are not sufficient to guarantee their success. Indeed, social factors seem to be more decisive for the successful realization of a major cultural project. On the one hand, this represents an outstandingly costly and complex project which requires a relatively high level of cooperation between the various actors, because it cannot be sustained solely or by a selected group. On the other hand, it requires a high level of social support offering a minimum of socially constructed opportunities as well as an important relational campaign towards established actors, which implies somewhat strategic action.
- 4 From a theoretical point of view, we will assemble the concepts of *social embeddedness* and *organizational field* developed in economic and organizational sociology. The problem of embeddedness has been largely discussed by Mark Granovetter (1985), proposing a critical view of the concept firstly used by the economist Karl Polanyi (1944). For our purpose, we take the idea that the intention of creating new museums represents a multidimensional strategy, mixing cultural, social, political and economic goals that intertwine, making it impossible to study them separately from each other. This argument further implies that the success of the project depends largely on the mobilization of different kinds of resources. The neo-institutionalist concept of organizational field (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983) helps us to take into account the need for legitimacy of new practices, the creation of a new museum as an organizational innovation taking place in the context of an organizational field where it has to obtain legitimacy from the other actors.
- 5 We have chosen to focus on the upstream process of the social embeddedness, instead of approaching the immediate effects of the cultural object, which, by the way, would have been difficult in view of the infancy of the projects considered here. We will describe the

genesis of the projects and study the implication of their development at national and local levels, particularly in regard to their location choice and their governance structure. We will also consider the extension of the relationships between the different actors in the economic sector. Our analysis is based on empirical research that has been realized in 2011 and 2012 (see Krauss, 2013; 2014; Baudelle, 2013).

## The case of the Centre Pompidou-Metz<sup>1</sup>

### Genesis of the project and key actors

- 6 The decision in favor of the decentralization of a museum reflects the innovative potential of the cultural sector in France. It represented uniquely an essentially national project, even if the major protagonists were also quite well affiliated to the international scene of great cultural institutions. The idea came from the President of the Centre Pompidou at the time, Jean-Jacques Aillagon, i.e. the initiative was taken autonomously by a major national cultural institution and not the Ministry. The way how the project started up, was decided and then developed, reflects a non-profitable approach to culture in the public sector, typical of France and in direct contrast with the commercial franchising model of the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao. In addition, it also symbolizes a renewal of the characteristically French logic of cooperation between the administrative center (Paris) and the periphery (the region) in cultural affairs.<sup>2</sup>
- 7 The initiative was put into place for three main reasons. Firstly, the excessive concentration of cultural institutions in Paris generated inequalities in the access to culture. Secondly, creating a second Centre Pompidou outside Paris meant making culture available to the population. Furthermore, as a national institution, the Centre Pompidou had the mission to play an active part in decentralization policy. Thirdly, it was inspired by existing examples of the world's leading museums, in the setup of subsidiaries and spin-offs like the Tate Gallery in Liverpool and St. Ives or the Guggenheim Foundation in Venice, Abu Dhabi and Bilbao.
- 8 Lastly, the creation of the Centre Pompidou-Metz was the result of a lucky meeting of two types of actors: the President of the Centre Pompidou and its National Museum of Modern Art searching for possible locations for the creation of a second Centre Pompidou and hoping to expand the museum's public, by the introduction of an exhibition programme for the province and alternatively for local officials interested in the economic and symbolic benefits of a new cultural facility for their locality. A tacit consensus seemed to exist among the outstanding cultural decision makers and the local politicians, such as the Mayor of Metz, that the cultural initiative would generate economic spill-overs effects. Lorraine had been confronted by high unemployment rates in its traditional manufacturing industries and in the military sector. The instigators also hoped to improve social cohesion, identity, reputation and image. Even if their main objective was to bring culture closer to the citizens, this goal could not be separated from the socioeconomic aspects.

### The institutional construction of the Centre

- 9 Originally, the funding capacity of the local authorities was seen as decisive for the realization and long term survival of the new Centre Pompidou. The original objective

was to bring in only know-how and collections for temporary exhibitions, but no financial resources. So the collection for the new Centre would be constituted only of loaned art pieces, being predominantly in the property of the Centre Pompidou Paris. This did not necessarily mean a relationship of dependence. On the contrary, the Centre Pompidou-Metz benefits from a relatively high artistic, conceptual and scientific autonomy, being not simply an antenna of the Parisian Centre. The exhibitions conceived in Metz and shown exclusively there are oriented mainly towards modern art in order to reach a larger public. Instead of being limited to contemporary and experimental art aimed at a selective public of connoisseurs already well covered by other cultural institutions of the region, it poses an alternative to those such as the FRAC (regional fund of contemporary art) or the Synagogue of Delme, a renowned center for contemporary art.

### Governance structure and the center-periphery relationship

- 10 The Centre Pompidou represents a nationally and internationally renowned brand, illustrating the specific center-periphery relationship between the mother institution in Paris and its sister in Metz on one side, and the relationship with local decision makers on the other. The reference to the image of the Centre Pompidou, including its emblematic late 20<sup>th</sup> Century architecture of Renzo Piano and Richard Rogers in the Beaubourg district of Paris, comes irresistibly. It was clear from the beginning that this link had to be conserved in the innovative architecture that would become an emblematic building for Metz.
- 11 On the operational level, the Centre Pompidou brand is used like an appellation of controlled origin, guaranteeing high quality standards. The programming work of the team in Metz is controlled by the Centre Pompidou Paris. Prior to formal submission, however, things generally have already evolved in advance thanks to regular exchanges. The first director of the Centre Pompidou-Metz was, himself, a former museum curator of the Centre Pompidou in Paris residing between Paris and Metz. In fact, the governance structure grants an important power of the Parisian Centre in the control of the brand use, in a deciding minority on the Board of the Centre Pompidou-Metz and in the designation of its president, ex officio president of the Centre Pompidou-Metz, both privileges not easily obtained amongst local officials.
- 12 With regard to the funding, the stakeholders agreed that the Centre Pompidou-Metz could *borrow* the different works for its exhibitions *for free* from the Centre Pompidou in Paris, whereas Bilbao has to pay important fees to the Guggenheim Foundation. The formal division of the tasks originally stipulated that all major resources be provided by the local authorities (region, metro area, municipality). Finally, three quarters of the budget were to be financed by them (the remaining quarter being private funding).
- 13 The asymmetric funding dissimulated ongoing conflict relationships between the local actors and Paris. After the initial success, the number of visitors has declined –500,000 during the first six months in 2010, 550,000 in 2011, 475,000 in 2012 and 335,000 in 2013– while an increasing part has free entrance. This led to first important losses and to a controversial debate about the funding. The local authorities refused to pay any supplementary fees and the regional council even decided in early 2014 to reduce its contribution to the operating budget of the Centre Pompidou Metz from 4 to 3 million euros per year, thus increasing the pressure on the Centre to find alternative sources of private funding. Several criticisms were addressed to the Centre Pompidou-Metz, in

particular its temporary exhibitions. Visitors from outside the region often had been disappointed when they came in a period when no exhibition was in place. A new strategy, extending significantly the period of loans of art pieces, proposed a half way solution between the classical distinction of permanent collections and temporary exhibitions.

## **Networks, spill-over effects and the social embeddedness of the Centre Pompidou-Metz**

- 14 Regardless of this recent crisis, much had been done to favour social embeddedness. Prior to the opening, the cooperation with local actors was sought, to insure that the Centre Pompidou would not be simply dropped into the region from Paris and that it would not threaten the other regional cultural institutions with which collaborative projects were set up in a complementary way. In this way, the cultural networks around the Centre Pompidou-Metz could be strengthened.
- 15 Finally, these networks also involved the business sector. In this regard, the development agency of Metz metro area played a central role for the formation of economic relevant networks around the Centre Pompidou. However, important institutions remained distant. The local economic actors were accustomed to a certain status quo that hindered them from perceiving the new opportunities offered despite important awareness-raising campaigns to attract investors. The effects of special events in the Centre Pompidou-Metz or lease of spaces to companies in order to promote networking and as symbol of local economic support revealed to be selective. It is not clear if culture will become a catalyst for creativity and innovation in the long term. Most of the SMS companies cannot afford renting spaces and do not see an interest in acting as sponsors.

## **The similar case of the Louvre-Lens<sup>3</sup>**

### **Also a project initiated by two main public actors sharing common objectives**

- 16 The Louvre-Lens has opened in Lens at the end of 2012. This subsidiary results from the meeting of two smart leaders sharing the same concern for the need for culture dissemination in new communities: Henri Loyrette, then the head of the Louvre, and Daniel Percheron, the president of the Nord-Pas-de-Calais regional council. These two pioneers were very influential: Loyrette was close to the Minister of Culture and to President Chirac himself and Percheron is a well-established regional politician who has understood for a long time the decisive importance of a culture-based revitalization strategy as proven by the “Lille 2004” European Capital of Culture success (Paris, Baert, 2011) due to its fantastic branding effect. Consequently, he was willing to engage the region’s financial resources while the Parisian Louvre was looking for new sources of funding.
- 17 The starting point was the 2003 statement of the former Minister for Culture, Jean-Jacques Aillagon, in favour of the partial relocation of central cultural institutions outside Paris, especially the overcrowded Louvre for which public pressure acted as a push factor. Bordeaux and Lyon were interested but several arguments made Northern France more

attractive: a less seasonal frequentation, the opportunity to attract visitors from North-Western Europe and the lack of other great regional cultural institution, reducing competition risk. An agreement was concluded between the Louvre and the Nord-Pas-de-Calais regional council. Such a partnership has become usual in the French political system following the 1980s decentralization laws, which saw introduction of normative multiyear covenants between the State and the regions.

- 18 Yet, the hosting city remained to be chosen. A call for tenders was launched by the cities of Nord-Pas-de-Calais. Seven applied. The president Percheron, a native from Lens, prompted its mayor to apply. Finally this anonymous former coal-mining borough of 36 000 inhabitants (part of a conurbation of half million people) was chosen by the Minister for Culture for reasons which were not primarily of economic order: the lack of museum; a location in the heart of a densely populated region of 4 million inhabitants near Paris and within the European megalopolis; the quality of the rail and highway accessibility; an available, central and attractive site already owned by the municipality; the popular support motivated by the want for the so-long expected Nation's gratefulness expression for the mining population's sacrifice to serve the industrial development of the country. Above all the choice of a declining city completely unknown abroad must refer to the main objective of cultural democratization within a broader regional redevelopment policy. In this respect a working city is seen as a proper location. Of course the members of the regional, metropolitan and municipal councils knew the economic and symbolic benefit they may derive from the Louvre, especially after the field-trip organized in Bilbao, but this direct impact remained secondary compared with the initial will to attract new people to museums and the wider long-standing regional strategy of economic reactivation through education and culture.

### **A multidimensional strategy requiring extensive cooperation**

- 19 The extension of the world's most famous museum of fine arts in a completely unexpected and declining city was a huge challenge. Indeed, the most surprising is the host city –and the most famous is the museum–, the riskier is the project implementation. That is the reason why such a project required cooperation between a wide range of actors to make it successful. The determination of the two decisive actors allowed them to involve new stakeholders. The “Grand Lille” strategy that had led since the 1990s to Olympic Games candidacies (that failed) and to European Capital of Culture (that succeeded) and to the location of a new CBD connected to a new HST international railway station have shown how efficient a collective effort aiming at obtaining new equipment and organizing events could be. The Lille model was as powerful as the Bilbao one to such extent that the urban planner Jean-Louis Subileau, who successfully saved Euralille WTC which was threatened in the 1990s real estate crisis, was called to manage Euralens, the urban planning body created to supervise the urban renovation process connected to the Louvre settlement.
- 20 From a theoretical point of view a growth coalition has considerably enlarged the initial circle to stakeholders initially unconnected so that the museum decision-making process has led to an innovation within the organizational field, in accordance with our central hypothesis of the need for embeddedness. Taking advantage of the well-known principle of shared funding and routine contract procedures in France, the regional council mobilized other funding sources (see box).

**Box: The Louvre-Lens subsidiers**

Regional Council of Nord-Pas-de-Calais : 59 %

Other local funders (12 %): *Conseil Général (Pas-de-Calais Département)*, City of Lens, Lens Metropolitan authorities

European regional development fund (ERDF): 20 %

Private sponsors: 5 %

Central State: 4 %

- 21 These initial networks are surprisingly more regional than international even if the call for tenders' procedure opened them up to foreign actors (Baudelle, 2013). This regional embeddedness was the guarantee of a supporting relay. The network progressively widened to other spheres. The technical committee involved various partners such as the *sous-préfet* of Lens and the head of regional cultural affairs (*Direction régionale des affaires artistiques et culturelles* – DRAC). *Euralens* includes, besides the local authorities, the Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Artois University, Lens football club, transport actors, stakeholders involved in culture and tourism and the *Mission Bassin Minier*, the former coal-mining area development agency. The sub-prefect has greatly and unanimously mobilized many players from all sides to seize the unique opportunity of the Louvre arrival in order to spur economic reactivation. Besides the Louvre project team, the cultural sphere is present: the other regional museums, the tourist organizations and various local cultural facilities. The expansion of cooperation dynamics is very likely, sketching a regional network of cultural cities and generating a spin-off effect that led to describe the Louvre-Lens as a “*cultural hub at the service of its region*”. The learning effect from Lille 2004 European Capital of Culture, which has already spread in the form of exhibitions and performances seen in other cities throughout the region as well as in Belgium, is obvious.

### The governance: a balanced center to periphery relationship

- 22 The Louvre and the regional councils have been associated in close partnerships both in the steering committee and in the operational committee. The original *appropriation committee*, another joint structure, demonstrates the high expectations in regards to future regional attendance. The scientific committee is controlled by the Louvre and its curators. The Louvre-Lens shares the same president as the Louvre-Paris but has its own head. While the Louvre initially wanted to make the Lens museum a department of the Parisian Louvre only, the local and regional public authorities assigned the control of the management of the museum. The majority of the Board of directors' seats of the EPCC (Public institution of cultural cooperation) was attributed to them. They elected both the President (Henry Loyrette) and the head (Xavier Dectot). Therefore the level of political autonomy is higher than the Centre Pompidou-Metz, showing a more balanced center-periphery relationship.
- 23 The Louvre-Lens also benefits from a scientific autonomy. The artistic design of the museum results from discussions between the Louvre and the regional council. The Louvre-Lens has no proper collection, only semi-permanent ones. These pieces of art do not come from the Louvre storage rooms but mainly from its currently exhibited Parisian collections. For instance, the Delacroix masterpiece “*Liberty Leading the People*” was



shown in Lens at the opening exhibition. The organization of temporary exhibitions aims at maintaining a constant attractiveness. The level of funding for the Louvre itself is very low, but it brings its collections (that are loaned), its prestige, its know-how and its label as a trade-mark without any financial requirement in contrast to the Abu Dhabi business model.

### A cultural and social success but an unclear economic impact

- 24 The public success is undeniable as instead of the 700,000 expected visitors, attendance reached 900,000 people in the first year, 20 % foreigners from 70 different nationalities. 56 % came from the region, 100,000 people from the former coalfield, indicating "a real ownership both local and regional public" according to the director. The free entry offered the first year has been renewed in 2014, so that one million entries was recorded as of January 2014, only thirteen months after its opening, making the Louvre-Lens the first French museum in the province! 500,000 visitors are expected over the coming years because of the centenary celebrations of World War I and to the 2016 European Football Championship.
- 25 Regarding the spill-over effect, private sponsoring is noticeable (box). Around ten million Euros have been collected. Two firms, Veolia and Crédit Agricole, are "exceptional sponsors", the other "great sponsors" are banks, an international retailer from the region (Auchan), the global leader in cabling systems Nexans (that provided the museum for free) and Orange. The others include a bank, the local semi-public real estate company owner of the housing stock inherited from the former public collieries, an automotive company from a neighbouring city (Française de mécanique) and amazingly the Great Lille Chamber of Commerce and Industry in order to contribute to a geographical balanced development.
- 26 More time is needed at this stage to measure the possible long term impact of the project both on urban regeneration and on local and regional economic restructuring. The perspective of using the museum as a catalyst faces current lack of local creative industries. Many firms are subsidiaries of large foreign companies operating essentially in industries extensive in human capital and technology. Moreover the education level remains as low as the number of students (2,700). The strategic study achieved under the guidance of the *sous-préfet* has identified five potential poles of excellence connected to the museum: logistics, eco-products for building, sport and leisure, crafts and digital skills. But presently the potential is actually very weak.

### Conclusion: a governance model far from Bilbao

- 27 Our case study of national museums recently created in old industrial regions shows a governance model very different from Bilbao Guggenheim. Private donors are weak in these mainly public projects, reflecting the typical French approach to culture conceived in the non-profit sector to be made accessible to a larger audience. In addition, the initiative came from national level, followed by the local authorities who acted as the principal funders, the municipalities being palpably only followers. The close relationship between the State representatives and the local political staff make the museums jointly developed projects that have led to a coalition building process. In view of the institutional construction, a small circle of major actors played a decisive role in the

initial pulse. But cultural projects are more likely to succeed when the initial leaders are relayed by other stakeholders. Thanks to their influential charisma and visionary building capacity, the key actors have been able to generate this further support. Our major hypothesis is therefore confirmed, the case studies showing the necessity for the initiators to be socially embedded in an extensive, enlarging social network to other regional stakeholders but also to partners belonging to various professional and geographical areas, including famous architects and planners of the global circuit thanks to international contests.

- 28 However no real *glocalization* happened: the main public remains more regional – including the neighbouring countries– than global. Far from the Bilbao model, the decentralization process was neither an opportunity to make money nor to increase the international visibility of the involved cultural institutions. The expectations of local politicians are somewhat different, waiting some positive repercussions on the regional economy and image in conformity with the archetypal model. But the economic impact outside the direct touristic benefits is still expected, perhaps due to a dominantly public commitment more focused on the management of the cultural institutions themselves than oriented towards the seek for spill-over effects on territorial development.

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## NOTES

1. For more detailed presentation of our research on this case (methodology, period of empirical enquiry, research sample), see Krauss (2013; 2014).
  2. For a description of the typical features of the French public sector approach to culture, as well as the system of cultural policies in France, see for example, Mollard (1999; 2012), Poirrier (2009), Poirrier/Rizzardo (2009), Urfalino (1996), Négrier/Teillet (2014), Dubois (1999), Dubois *et al.* (2012).
  3. For more detailed presentation of our research on this case see Baudelle (2013).
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## ABSTRACTS

The article analyses recent cases involving the creation of subsidiaries of two internationally renowned museums: the Centre Pompidou in Metz and the Louvre in Lens. At first glance, these projects seem to be attempts to reproduce the prototypical *Bilbao model* defining the mobilization of new cultural equipment for an economic recovery purpose. However the case studies, based on numerous interviews of the main protagonists, show that this original decentralization process of two famous institutions in former industrial cities did not mainly respond to economic goals but to cultural ones. From a theoretical point of view, our assumption is that only the creation of a social network dynamics makes their success possible so that we interpret these cultural projects as triggers for setting in motion previously segregated actors.

L'article analyse deux cas récents d'installation en province de musées de réputation internationale : le Centre Pompidou à Metz et le Louvre à Lens. A première vue, ces exemples apparaissent comme des tentatives de reproduction du *modèle de Bilbao* défini comme la mobilisation d'un nouvel équipement culturel à des fins de redémarrage économique. Ces études de cas, fondées sur de nombreux entretiens avec les principaux protagonistes, montrent toutefois que ce processus original de décentralisation de deux institutions célèbres dans d'anciennes villes industrielles n'a pas obéi à des objectifs principalement économiques mais culturels. Sur le plan théorique, nous faisons l'hypothèse que le succès imposait la formation de réseaux entre acteurs jusque-là séparés, de sorte que ces musées ont servi de déclencheurs.

## INDEX

**Mots-clés:** musées, modèle de gouvernance, réseaux sociaux, décentralisation, Louvre-Lens, Centre Pompidou Metz

**Keywords:** museums, governance model, social networks, decentralization, Louvre Lens, Centre Pompidou-Metz

## AUTHORS

### **GUY BAUELLE**

European University of Brittany (University of Rennes 2), [guy.baudelle@uhb.fr](mailto:guy.baudelle@uhb.fr)

### **GERHARD KRAUSS**

European University of Brittany (University of Rennes 2), [gerhard.krauss@uhb.fr](mailto:gerhard.krauss@uhb.fr)