

# The Role of Storytelling in the Evolution of the Image of the Reconstruction of Cities Destroyed by War: A Case of the Reconstruction of Le Havre

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## Abstract:

After its destruction in World War II, the city centre of Le Havre faced the challenging of reconstruction. With views of grandeur, and modernity, the French government gave the task of rebuilding the city to the world renown Auguste Perret. However, the desired results were nowhere to be seen, and for a long time Le Havre struggled to find its identity, floored by a poor image both locally and nationally. This image is found to be the consequence of the storytelling surrounding this city. The question this research aims to answer is thus ***“How can storytelling be consciously utilized during the reconstruction of cities destroyed by war to produce a positive image?”***. To answer this question a theoretical framework has been set up encompassing of three distinct dimensions of storytelling, institutional storytelling, rationalization storytelling and reactionary storytelling. The interlinkage of these theories in the case of Le Havre concluded that the discrepancies that arose in the realities portrayed by the different dimensions of storytelling, lead to a rejection of the city centre by its inhabitants. The later renewal of a positive image of the city through the acquiring of the UNESCO World-Heritage label was due to the merging of the institutional and rationalization storytelling. However, as is seen using the contemporary case of Le Havre, and the Case of the reconstruction of Hiroshima, the merging of the reactionary storytelling to the aforementioned two other storytelling dimensions would provide much more stability in the creation of a positive image of the city.

Aalborg University

Urban Planning and  
Management 4<sup>th</sup>  
Semester Master Thesis  
(June 2019)

Supervision: Enza  
Lissandrello

Keywords: Storytelling,  
Image, Participation,  
Reconstruction

Pages: 87



## Summary of Thesis

This Master thesis researched the topic of the role of storytelling in the evolution of the image during the reconstruction of cities destroyed by war. The research is conducted on the case of the reconstruction of Le Havre and its lasting impacts, the reconstruction took place between 1944 and 1965, but the consequences of the storytelling surrounding it can still be perceived today. Using the problem-based learning method of research of the university of Aalborg, this thesis will aim at answering the following research question: ***How can storytelling be consciously utilized during the reconstruction of cities destroyed by war to produce a positive image?*** In doing so, first a literature review will be carried out, providing an understanding of what storytelling is and how it has shaped our society through the creation of institutions, through this understanding it will shine light on the role of storytelling on planning, not only by understanding planning as storytelling, but also encompassing both in a deeply political dimension, by being the creator, definer and reactionary instigator of reality. Through this newfound understanding three dimensions of storytelling emerge, institutional storytelling relating to the institution of planning, with storytelling as a method *of* planning; rationalization storytelling, following the political nature of both storytelling and planning, with storytelling as a method *for* planning; and finally, reactionary storytelling as the reactionary force of the public, congregating together to oppose or support planning based on the situated context, with storytelling as a reaction *to* planning.

This framework potentiates an organization of different storytelling perspectives to provide a comprehensive understanding of the complex networks of stories through the case of Le Havre. It is found, that the suffering of the image was due to initially a discrepancy between institutional and reactionary planning, as the context desperately sought for mourning, as well as an ignoring of the higher instances to the power of rationalization storytelling. This image then further depleted itself due to a strong unfavorable context and a lax institutional storytelling towards the reconstructed city centre. However, a newfound communication strategy of the municipality, will bring forth a shift in vision towards the city centre and the premise for a turn of image. While this rationalization storytelling did not rest on a strong institutional storytelling, it provided a basis for change, with a flip of the mentality regarding the city centre. This change was brought forth by a political strategy of heritage-making through the acquiring of labels, strategy that has the specificity of creating a reality through discourse, now with institutional storytelling in line with its rationalization counterpart, the image of the city started to change progressively, notably through the inscription on the UNESCO world-heritage list. While this shift in image is still not enacted entirely today, this merging of the institutional and rationalization storylines brought forth a real change in image. However, its slow

and not entirely satisfying results, notably through a difficult true appropriation of the city by its inhabitants, means storytelling could be further exploited.

The discussion provides the start of an answer, through the comparison of the analysis with the contemporary dynamism surround bottom-up initiatives in contemporary Le Havre and the reconstruction process of the case of Hiroshima after World War II. This comparison exhibits first of all the ability of the citizens to be a part of the planning process, as cooperatives of ISAI blocks took it into their own hands to protect and classify their buildings as well as the appropriation of their inner courtyards through art installations, and second of all the potentiality of merging reactionary storytelling to institutional and rationalization storytelling through an active citizen participation in the planning processes. The Case of Hiroshima shows the true potential, with a city that forged a strong identity around peace and against atomic warfare while not suffering from its image up to becoming today a market-tested city in Japan.

This research concludes by suggesting to the planning world that the incorporation of citizens in the planning processes during the reconstruction of cities destroyed by war is crucial, as it grants the possibility to mourn and create strong communities, but also as it grants a stable and smooth reconstruction process by provide a positive image throughout.

## Acknowledgments

I wish to thank first of all my supervisor for being supportive throughout this semester, providing positive feedback and moral support.

I also wish to thank the interviewees, Vincent Duteurtre and Pascal Denecheau for granting me their time and being crucial assets to the fulfillment of this research paper, and to Jade Maridort, for sharing her work with me, whose data collection proved very helpful.

I also thank Aalborg University, as my masters is coming to an end, and all the wonderful teachers that have shared their passion with me, inspired me and helped me to develop my skillset as an urban planner. The quality of education has been phenomenal, and the kindness of everyone involved appreciated.

I thank my classmates who have always provided support when needed, who opened their arms for me. I valued this time spent together very much, many happy memories.

I then thank my family and friends for putting up with me in tough times and always trying to put a smile back on my face

And finally, I thank myself for staying positive, for not giving up. It has been two years of self-development and I can proudly say I am not the same person now as two years ago.

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## I- Introduction

Many cities around the world face massive destruction as a reality, whether it be by war or natural disasters. Recent examples include Raqqa and Mosul respectively in Syria and Iraq. These cities face an important challenge, that of reconstruction as did, after the second world war, cities such as Le Havre, Dresden, Stalingrad, Warsaw and Hiroshima. This thesis seeks to address a research on the reconstruction of cities destroyed by war taking the scope of storytelling with the aim to assess its role and potential in the post WWII reconstruction of the city of Le Havre.

The role of storytelling in the reconstruction of Le Havre is not evident at first sight, as a large urban development plan was created for the entire city by the famous French architect Auguste Perret. Yet the importance of discourse becomes evident when looking at the image of the city through time. From the end of the works in 1965 to 1970 the city is the incarnation of modernity, from 1970 to the 1990s it is considered a bleak, grey and sad communist city, rebaptized Stalingrad-sur-Mer by its inhabitants and with the city center more or less left abandoned, to the post 1990s where it wins label after label until the culmination in 2006 as being one of the only two cities from the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with Brasilia, to become a world-heritage site of UNESCO. This made Le Havre the representant of modern European Urbanism with the Perret model, as Chandigarh is for Asia (Le Corbusier) or Brasilia is for America (Niemeyer). During this time period, almost no physical alterations had been done to the city center. So how does a city go from being one of France's least renowned city, despised by its inhabitants to being recognized worldwide for its architecture and urbanism while nothing physical has changed? The answer is found looking at the storytelling surrounding the city, and this storytelling is shaped around three main theories of storytelling in planning, storytelling as method *of* planning, relating to the planning process and the physical outcome it provides, storytelling as a method *for* planning looking at the communication surrounding the planning and its outcome, and storytelling as a reaction *to* planning looking at how the population reacts to what is provided to them. The literature review will aim to present the three theories and their interrelations in order to build a framework through which the evolution of the image of Le Havre can be understood. An analysis of storytelling in the different periods marking the reconstruction will help create a larger understanding of the role of storytelling in the reconstruction of cities destroyed by war. A discussion will then explore the potential of citizen participation in storytelling as a way to dampen conflict and provide a positive image. For this the examples of contemporary Le Havre and the case of the reconstruction of Hiroshima will be compared to the storytelling analysis of the reconstruction of Le Havre. Through this structure, the thesis will attempt to answer the following research question ***"How can storytelling be consciously***

***utilized during the reconstruction of cities destroyed by war to produce a positive image?”***. The importance of storytelling in reconstruction processes is not to be neglected as it can be the driver of planning or on the other hand question the reality of planning.

Many cities today face the challenge of reconstruction, if this process is to be successful and limit conflict, a deeper understanding of storytelling is needed. To answer the research question aforementioned the thesis will be structured along the following Research Design.

<b>Empirical problem</b> There are many cities in Syria and Iraq which have incurred a lot of infrastructural and moral damage. The conflicts coming to an end, the challenge of reconstruction is the next problem these cities will face. Not only will the cities need to reconstruct themselves physically, but also on a social, economic and political level. These dimensions are heavily impacted by the image of a city, which in its turn is impacted by the storytelling surrounding the city. This aspect is often overlooked, as the preceding factors are privileged. It is yet of critical importance in the reconstruction process and impacts it even long after the reconstruction works finished. If a reconstruction process is to become successful on an economic, social and politically level, a better image and thus a better understanding of the role of storytelling is necessary. Therefore, for a smooth reconstruction process for the contemporary cities facing this challenge, a deeper understanding of the dynamics of storytelling will be researched.		
<b>Conceptual problem</b> How can we understand the role and functioning of storytelling in Urban Planning during reconstruction processes?	<b>Methodological problem</b> How can we analyse storytelling in the reconstruction of cities destroyed by war on a historical level?	
<b>Main research question</b> <i>“How can storytelling be consciously utilized during the reconstruction of cities destroyed by war to produce a positive image?”</i>		
<b>Sub-questions</b>		
1. How can the role of storytelling be understood during planning processes?	2. What role did storytelling play in the evolution of the image of Le Havre during its reconstruction after WWII?	3. What potential does storytelling have towards providing a positive image during a post-conflict reconstruction process?
<b>Themes</b>		
Understanding the theory and history of the root terms in planning	Analysing the storytelling between the different actors through time to understand its role in the reconstruction of Le Havre.	Explore the potential of storytelling towards providing a positive image in the reconstruction of cities destroyed by war
<b>Methods</b>		
Literature review of theories	Case study Document Analysis Interviews Discourse Analysis	Case study Interviews

## II- Literature Review

### 1) What is Storytelling?

Stories are an inherent part of the social character of the human species. From the dawn of ages to the modern era every human being bathes in a world of fictions and stories that have grown more and more complex over the years. Stories, it seems, have some kind of magical power on the human species, as Gottschall expresses

*“How odd it is, I thought, that a story can sneak up on us on a beautiful autumn day, make us laugh or cry, make us amorous or angry, make our skin shrink around our flesh, alter the way we imagine ourselves and our worlds. How bizarre it is that when we experience a story - whether in a book, a film, or a song – we allow ourselves to be invaded by the teller. The story maker penetrates our skulls and seizes control of our brains.” (Gottschall, 2012, p.xv)*

This chapter will aim at exploring what storytelling is, why it holds such power, what part it holds in our society and how to define it.

The ability to tell stories has been a determining factor to the sudden and exponential development of the human species. Firstly, it has been used as a tool for survival, stories have been able to provide precise and complex information from one to another very easily. While it is true other animals have their own communication tools, sometimes more developed in strength, nuances or perception, the homo sapiens has the unique ability to count stories, which stand out with their complexity and their influence on behaviour (Harari, 2014). To exemplify this let's take a group of monkeys, one member of this groups spots a lion, he runs back to his tribe and calls for danger, some species of monkeys would even have a sign for lion. From this all the monkeys go take refuge until the danger passes. Quite a good system you would say, yet the lion could just hide between the trees until the monkeys come down again thinking the danger has passed and attack. Let's take the perspective of a tribe of homo sapiens, one member of the tribe would spot the lion and he would go back to the group and say, “I saw a lion, a little after lunch, next to the river to the east, about one kilometre away, she was an old female”. The extent of this information is crucial, because not only do they know what direction it is coming from, how long it will take to get there, what state the lion is in, but they will also be able to prepare for its arrival,



produce a plan to defend the tribe, or to attack the lion. They will be able to count stories to their children about the bad lion next to the river, to inflict fear into their minds to stop them from wandering in that area. They can start to venerate this old power of nature and give it food, so it doesn't get hungry. Thus, storytelling has given the homo sapiens a considerable advantage in terms of survival (Harari, 2014), and when the world is regulated by natural selection, this trait has been instrumental in the success of the species.

Secondly, the aptitude of telling stories has brought forth a different way of evolving, an evolution of a different genre. Biological evolution is passing genetic information biologically from one generation to the next. The homo sapiens however, is able to pass on much more information from one generation to the next through stories. This has given the homo sapiens an unprecedented capacity of adaptation and resilience, the global pool of knowledge keeps expanding. Thus, the more social the species is, the more interaction between different groups it forms the more this pool of knowledge grows. This is where stories show their strength, in order for different groups of homo sapiens to encounter and be able to interact they need some common ground, some common story. A homo sapiens can have a broader group of about 150 people he interacts with on a regular basis (Harari, 2014). If this group is to be broader, if there can be trust between two different groups, believing in a common story is essential. This is the start of the creation of modern society and what we now call institution.

Institutions can be defined as fictions that help organise society. These fictions rest on three pillars, the legislative pillar, made up of rules, laws and moral obligations; the normative one made up of norms and values; and finally, the cultural cognitive one made up of personal experience and context. These institutions formed themselves when the population of homo sapiens groups started to grow mainly due to settling. They were necessary to organise a society and gave to the third big advantage stories provide: number. This can be portrayed notably in the meeting between the homo sapiens and Neanderthals, even though the latter had a more developed cranium (more voluminous) and better tools, it is believed the homo sapiens partly conquered, and somewhat mingled with the Neanderthals, making them suddenly disappear (Harari, 2014).

The importance stories have had in the development of the homo sapiens species as a whole has been phenomenal, it rests at the very basis of their social character which has put the homo sapiens at the top of the food chain. This is why Arendt describes storytelling as *“the activities, both conceptual and physical, through which human beings produce and reproduce themselves in the world. Stories and storytelling, she insisted, are shared activities [...]. Stories take us out of ourselves. Stories belong to the in between spaces of intersubjectivity – a domain of “conflicting wills and intentions” (Arendt 1958, 182-84 In: Jackson, 2013, p.246)*

This description of storytelling shows the value stories have in personal development, people “produce” and “reproduce” themselves through counting stories. This is why children while growing up are almost constantly in what Gottschall (2012) calls “Neverland”, a world of fiction and imaginary. Stories also are what makes the human species the only one able to perceive its own as part of a species, and be capable of empathy, they *“are a form of “situated thinking” that brings philosophy down to earth, working within everyday lifeworld of human struggle, encompassing a plurality of perspectives, in order to gain an enlarged view of human experience.” (Jackson, 2013, p.246)*

But what this also shows is that storytelling is political by nature, with storytelling benefiting a certain amount of power on the listeners of the story. Remembering the opening quote of the chapter by Gottschall (2012, p.xv) *“we allow ourselves to be invaded by the teller. The story maker penetrates our skulls and seizes control of our brains.”*, stories behold power and enter in competition with each other. Music is in a continuous power play between artists to renew itself, to find originality, to be the most listened, they use their music to lure people in and play with their emotions to keep them loyal. Not every musician or songwriter can be famous and live of his dream, they are in a constant fight on who will succeed to touch people the most. The same goes for books, jokes etc., they manipulate people’s emotions by telling stories. Another example would be a group of friends talking of what they did over the weekend, there often seems to be a competition on who has the best story, the best experience. However, often the most exciting story is not the one to bring interest to the group, it is rather the best storyteller, he might use metaphors, exaggerations, symbols and other storytelling tools to make his story more vivid and

captivate its audience. A good storyteller could make a great story about a boring family dinner. Which begs to question how much truth this story holds, the depiction does not match the experience, there is thus a contradiction between what really happened and what the listeners believe really happened. The facts can remain the same, but the imagined experience can differ. This competition between stories brings power to the storyteller, but also to the story itself and what it symbolises in the imaginary of the listeners. Indeed, this is how trends develop, stories that touch many people will gain veracity. The universal declaration of human rights is a good example, nothing biologically suggests that all humans are born equal, quite the opposite is true, every human is unique with its own abilities and disabilities, and for much of human history humans were not considered equal, depending on societal status, race, origin, gender or physical properties. Yet this story has been accepted by a majority of earth's citizens now, the story of Rosa Parks has become universally known and Martin Luther King's speech "I Have a Dream" has become a universal symbol for the fight for equality. Very few will claim today humans are not equal, this story has been institutionalised and is veridic now.

This is where storytelling merges with politics, stories have the ability to create truth, where there isn't any or manipulate the truth. While the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is perceived as a positive change for society, other stories can have the opposite effects such as the fascist Nazis believing in a superior race of Aryans. The process of storytelling is heavily interrelated to that of rationalisation. The more power the storyteller holds, this power can come from its position in society, its expertise in the subject or his ability to tell a good story, the more influence he will have on people through his story. Rationality theory by Flyvbjerg (1998) expresses rationalisation as power giving the freedom to define reality, the greater the power, the greater the freedom. This means that storytelling, unlike many think is not a discussion, it is an attempt to affirm a certain view of the world upon others. Nevertheless, stories need to resonate in people's mind to be effective, even though they make the mind wander in Neverland, the basis of the story still lies within our world (Jackson, 2013). Every person might have a different perception of the story in the same way every person has a different perception of reality, a story therefore does not hold an ultimate truth, but rather a range of reactions based upon personal experience. Storytelling

therefore has the potential to reconcile us with diversity, with variousness by emphasizing that truth is relative to where one stands.

“It is in this sense that once upon a time is always the here and now.” (Jackson, 2013 p.247)

But storytelling also permits to make sense of the past and to imagine the future, this future directness is particularly interesting for planning. Indeed, planning has much use of storytelling, as many planning practices are upset by myriads of different interests, often freezing planning processes. As stories are built from events involving actors placed in temporal and spatial settings, a process of emplotting the past takes place, as there is not just a plain listing of events. Furthermore, the directedness towards the future permits an openness and an acceptance of diversity of opinions

*“For in telling stories we testify to the very diversity, ambiguity, and interconnectedness of experiences that abstract thought seeks to reduce, tease apart, regulate, and contain in the name of administrative order and control.” (Jackson, 2013, p.247)*

Therefore, stories have a normative approach to planning, they do not just talk of what is but also of what ought to be (Rein and Schön, 1977).

*“In the constitutional state lies the basis for an endurable society. This asks for more than regulations considering government and decision-making. It is mostly about attention to each other’s desires and opinions, and orientation to common interest.” (Former Dutch Queen Beatrix, Christmas Speech 2012 In: Bulkens et al., 2015).*

## 2) Storytelling in Planning

This Chapter aims at relating how storytelling is viewed within the planning world and how it is incorporated in the planning practice. Storytelling and planning are closely linked to each other as planning is heavily influenced by politics. Indeed, planning is subject to policymaking and as seen in the previous chapter follows the current political movements with the vast majority of planning appertaining to a top-down approach. The role of storytelling in policymaking and planning will thus be examined to have a better idea of its practical use and influence.

First of all, planning and policymaking in general focus on problem definition and problem solving. Planning in a way is a reflection of society as the planner is subservient to the popular mandate its role is to plan for the people, to enhance the quality of life of the population.

*“The way to get at what goes on in the seemingly mysterious and perverse behaviour of cities is, I think, to look closely, and with as little previous expectation as is possible, at the most ordinary scenes and events, and attempt to see what they mean and whether any threads of principle emerge among them.”* (Jacobs, 2016)

The problems encountered in Planning are therefore wicked problems, problems with no obvious solution, problems that are so complex in nature that defining them, finding their origin or solution is not straightforward. Planning is therefore an activity aiming at understanding the past and present in order to shape the future. There is thus a real future directness to planning. And as Rein & Schön (1977, p.236) claimed *“the questions we ask shape the answers we get”*, therefore a real work of framing is done in planning. Framing is done through naming, selecting and storytelling (Rein & Schön, 1977; 1996; Schön 1979; 1993), naming coincides with the understanding one has of a particular situation, it therefore often uses stylistic devices in its language, such as metaphors (Schön, 1979; 1993), it is the face we put on a situation to portray it. However, just like a portrait, language is carefully selected in order to depict a certain version of reality, accentuating some features and diverting attention from others. Storytelling is the binding that gives purpose, coherence to the naming, its links the different elements together. In this way Storytelling is

essential for the definition of the problem, it *“is at once a medium for problem setting and a way of discovering the tacit frames that underlie our problem settings”* (Rein & Schön, 1977, p. 243).

Indeed, storytelling achieves this by working with “narrative frames” (Rein & Schön, 1996; van Hulst, Siesling, van Lieshout, & Dewulf, 2014) and plot lines in order to attribute sense to a situation by explaining ‘what was’, ‘what is’ and ‘what ought to be’ (Van Hulst & Yanow, 2014). This is a deeply political work, as ‘what ought to be’ is subjective, and is the guiding line of policy action. Therefore, the plot line aims at arriving at the conclusion for a potential future, and as this plot line needs to create coherence and sense, the ‘what was’ and ‘what is’ needs to lead towards this subjective view of the future. There will thus be a subjective interpretation of the past and present, by focusing on certain elements while disregarding others. Any political process will bring forth a competition of ideas of ‘what ought to be’ and thus a competition of storylines. This competition, much like natural selection will bring forward some stories while making others disappear. As seen in the subchapter ‘What is Storytelling?’ good stories tend to romanticise plot lines and play on the emotions of people, taking the story away from a causal, rational and purely scientific paradigm to one of fiction and emotions, one to which a majority of the population can relate to. Through this process of persuasion, storytelling moves beyond the mere problem definition (Forester, 1999, 2009).

Nevertheless, storytelling, to be effective when depicting the world and what the world ought to look like needs to be credible and realistic, as this is what enables actors to engage in action (Van Hulst & Yanow, 2014). This means that storytelling also has the ability to be a vehicle for different actors to listen to others and their views, and thus to reflect and reframe (Forester, 1999; 2009). Indeed, it is *“more difficult to hurt each other once we know one another’s stories”* (Forester, 2009, p.187). Therefore, storytelling not only has the potential to bring together a large number of people under a common objective, but also to create a healthy discussion between different actors. A good story is thus one that is coherent, relatable, cathartic, plausible but also that *“holds disparate elements together long enough to energize and guide action”* (Weick, 1995, p. 61).

From this it can be seen that there are two coinciding and contradicting realities of what storytelling is in relation to planning. On one side, if storytelling is everyday activities that

take place in different, formal or informal, social interactions (Van Hulst, 2012), then planning is storytelling. On the other side, by acknowledging that storytelling has potential in planning, opens possibilities, then storytelling is a tool that can be utilised in planning. This dual nature of storytelling is at the basis of theorizing storytelling in planning. Following the theory of Geertz (1993) on the system of symbols that make culture, there are models of action and models for action. These models not only shape how people behave but is also used as a model on how to behave. In this way there is Storytelling as a model *of* planning and storytelling as a model *for* planning.

First looking at storytelling as a model *of* planning, this theory popularised by Throgmorton (1992; 1996) and Sandercock (2003) suggests that planning practice is storytelling. The different stages of planning, from problem definition, to initial designs, to the collaboration between different actors, the decision-making, the plans, the implementation and the results thereafter are all stories in themselves (Van Hulst, 2012). Indeed, the entire process of planning produces and reproduces everyday activities. *“Planning is performed through storytelling, in a myriad of ways. [...] in process, as a catalyst for change, as a foundation, in policy, in pedagogy, in explanation and critique as well as justification of the status quo, and as moral exemplars”* Sandercock (2003, p.12).

The second model is storytelling as a model *for* planning put forward by Sandercock (2003), Forester (1993) and Throgmorton (2003), this model argues that storytelling should be used as a tool in order to improve planning practice, using its full potential. Banking on what makes a good story, planners will reduce conflict by gathering a larger majority to the cause and by bringing different actors and views together for collaboration and a more democratised planning practice. In this way stories are used *“in the service of change, as shapers of a new imagination of alternatives”* (Sandercock, 2003, p.9).

Bulkens et al. (2015) defends a third model, where storytelling is neither a model *of* nor *for* planning, but as a strategic activity of those affected by planning to co-construct stories together. Indeed, Jensen (2007, p. 216) claims that *“[the] linkage between place and narrative is an under-developed theme in the conceptualisation of narratives”*. Planning acts upon a particular space and deforms that space using narrative to do so, however, the space itself has its own narrative through the population utilising it, its history, its identity. While the planning process tells a story, and stories are used for planning to for example take into

consideration the points of view of the residents, planning still uses a top-down paradigm that affects not just the physical space, but also how it is used and the people using it. Furthermore, when using storytelling as a model for planning, using processes such as participation, *"it is not always clear . . . how these collective stories will be used in the subsequent process"* (Sandercock, 2010, p. 20). A reactionary story between the users and the place creates itself, this can take the form of critique or agreement. Language plays a crucial role in the creation of place (Tuan, 1991), storytelling can thus be understood as an act of resistance of the local population to assert their own vested interests and their own visions of what the future 'ought to be' (Bulken et al., 2015). Protest can then take the shape of conflict, voicing of concerns, boycotting of place, change in political affiliation etc.

These three models of storytelling in planning highlight that storytelling is firstly part of a political process with various stories competing between each other for attention, but also that stories relate to other activities that do political work (Van Hulst, 2012), such as place itself. It is therefore important for planners *"to understand the mechanisms of story, both in order to tell good stories ourselves, and to be more critical of the stories we have to listen to."* (Sandercock, 2003, p.22). It is therefore not enough to solely tell good stories, but also to understand and anticipate the way others will interpret the said stories. Every story has a set of unheard and hidden stories to account for. Throgmorton (1992; 1996) advocates for planners to become better storytellers. If this is to be achieved, planners need to be aware of all three models of storytelling. Planners to be able to utilise stories as tools for improved planning need to be aware that planning is storytelling in order to shape their planning accordingly, but they also need to be aware of the different interpretations of their stories and the way these influence 'place' at the risk of seeing a resisting story emerge by the ones affected by the planning.

While planning is constitutive and persuasive about the future (Throgmorton, 1992; 1996; 2003; 2007) and that often communities are in need of a strong leader with a strong story to be able to deal with conflicts, build up hope, belief or recover from trauma (Van Hulst, 2012). It is also necessary to use storytelling as a way to bring together different actors and conflicting stories to build consensus. This consensus-building needs to be done at a deeper level, not only taking into account the stories of the landscape planned for but co-creating the story with the 'place' itself. This can be achieved by building stories onto already existing



ones, reinforcing them, or through a more participatory planning process. Only then when the stories between all the actors and the 'place' are in harmony will the plans function at their fullest potential.

However, storytelling can be seen *"as a politically relevant planning activity only when the institutional design is flexible enough to really accommodate it."* (Van Hulst, 2012, p.313).

This means that local residents cannot and should not be present at all the stages in planning, in the same way as using storytelling as a planning tool only truly makes sense during certain phases of the planning process. Indeed, participation in planning can ensue empowerment for the citizens but also powerlessness depending on different scales and times. Bureaucracy, lack of expertise or technical jargon can limit the interaction between the planners and the citizens in the co-creation of stories (Van Hulst, 2012). Furthermore, while planning is subservient to the popular mandate, it also follows political ideologies, and planning practice can therefore be seen by some as emancipatory and others tyrannical based on political affiliation (Van Hulst, 2012). Great care should be taken when to pursue storytelling, and when not to. In the end storytelling works best to create meaning, to aid different actors to formulate what is important and what is not, to build one's agenda and how to get there.

### 3) Power and Storytelling

The last subchapter brought forward the different theories of storytelling in relation to planning, three main theories emerged, storytelling as a method *of* planning, as a method *for* planning and as reactionary force *to* planning. Nevertheless, as stated previously, storytelling should not be present at all stages of planning, it is best used to create meaning to formulate what is and what ought to be, thus to build an agenda and present the steps necessary to achieve this agenda. Storytelling is therefore used for the political side of planning, which means it is heavily embedded in the power plays of politics in planning. This subchapter will therefore review how storytelling situates itself in these powerplays and how the different theories of storytelling relate between each other.

The theory of planning as a method *of* storytelling is very much englobed in institutional design, it is what composes the rules, norms and cognitive cultural values of planning. Storytelling itself is at the core of what constitutes institutions as was seen in the subchapter of 'What is Storytelling?', as institutions are fictions that give meaning to social life, that organise society (Scott, 2001). Institutions are thus stories that are believed by a certain amount of people and that rest upon three pillars, the legislative pillar, the normative pillar and the cultural-cognitive pillar. These pillars give institutions their stability and durability. The legislative pillar is composed of all the rules, the laws and the enforcement thereof (Scott, 2001); the normative pillar is composed of norms, norms adhere to ethos, morale, they are actions that are required to be undertaken in order to achieve certain values (Rotich, 2014), norms can therefore be described as the typical or desired behaviour of a social, as a general consensus on what the best approach is (Scott, 2001); the cultural cognitive pillar consists of the personal experience of the individuals, such as cultural background and life experiences (Scott, 2001). This makes institutions very resistant to change (Jepperson, 1991), as they are transmitted from one generation to the next and reproduced (Zucker, 1977). The pillars composing institutions transform the stories which are commonly believed into an active reality, for example the country of France does not physically exist, its borders are not visible, yet if you are born on one side of the border you are French and have to adhere to French law, you will speak the French language, learn about French history and most likely eat baguette and on the other you are German, adhere

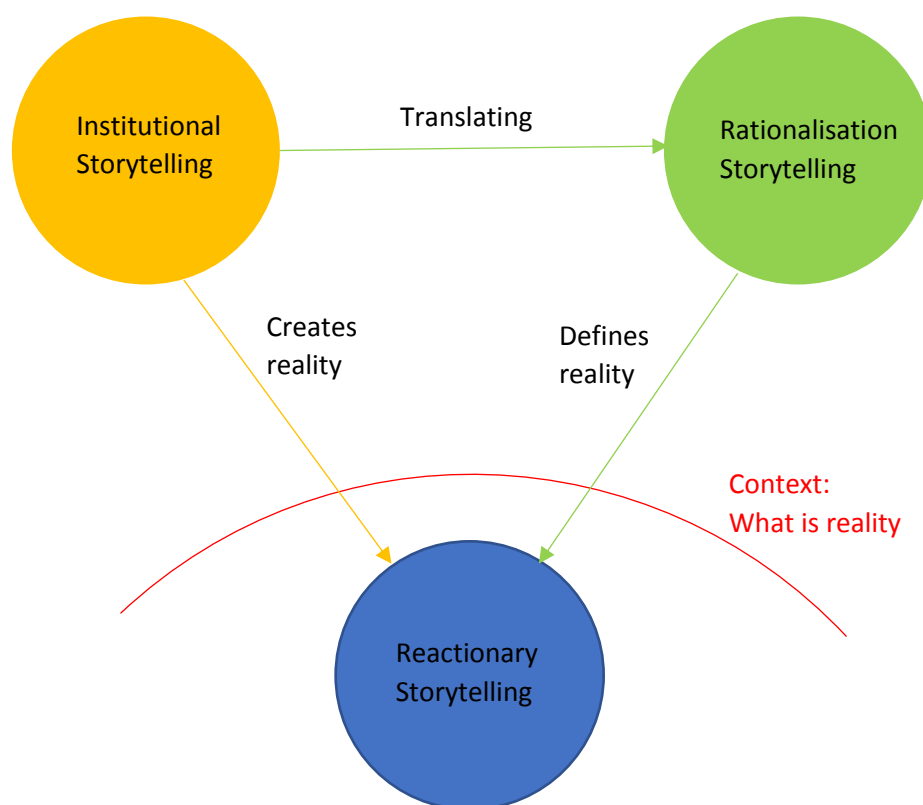
to German laws, speak German, learn German history and most likely be a fan of würost. Institutions therefore, while being fictions that are agreed by most of the populations, also physically impact this population in a very real way. A good example of this would be the Burmese demonetisation of the 50- and 100-kyat bills, money can be considered as an institution, the pieces of paper in your wallet saying 20 euros are only worth something because everyone agrees they are worth something, in reality they are a valueless piece of paper, like a receipt of the wealth you own. In Burma, the Demonetisation Act of 1964 made the 50- and 100-kyat bills no longer legal and lose all their value overnight, making millions of Burmese inhabitants have a large amount of wealth just disappear (Karthikeyan, 2017). This was due to a sudden change in the legislative pillar, although a very rare occurrence, this exposes the implications of a change in institutions, in stories. It is because of these implications that institutions constitute the reality of our world and are very resistant to change. Storytelling as a method *of* planning includes all the planning process, its procedures, its norms concerning the role of the planner and the personal experiences of each planner, it is thus the institution of planning. Storytelling as a method *of* planning is thus what constitutes the reality *of* planning.

Institutions are what create our reality, but not only, they are what helps organise the society by dividing the tasks of each citizen. Let's take the analogy of society being a human body and citizens all the cells composing this body, each cell has a different function, and none have the conscious ability to know what the cells around them are doing, they have to trust that the other cells are doing their jobs otherwise the entire body collapses. The same holds true with society, only the trust in the functioning of society holds it together. But it also means that some citizens are trusted to hold power and make decisions for other citizens. Planning itself is a very elitist institution as few people are involved, few people are aware, and few people are capable of understanding, yet it impacts everyone. While the institution of planning is evolving, it is still predominantly top-down, coming from higher instances and imposed upon people. While public participation is in most countries to a certain extent obligatory (depending on the project), it still mostly takes the form of tokenism (Arnstein, 1969). There is thus an entire institution that does not incorporate the public and yet affects it directly.

This brings forth the second theory of storytelling as a method *for* planning, where storytelling becomes a tool of planning. This tool is used to translate the planning institution to the general population. Thus, while storytelling as a method *of* planning is reality, storytelling as a method *for* planning defines reality, past, present and future. It shifts planning from a rational and technical story, to an emotional one, one that holds power and competes with other stories for attention. And as Flyvbjerg (1998, p.227-229) says “*Power concerns itself with defining reality rather than with discovering what reality “really” is*”, and “*the greater the power, the greater the freedom in this respect*”. In this way power decides what is rational, what counts as knowledge and thus what is reality (Flyvbjerg, 1998), this process is called rationalisation. Nietzsche (1872) claims that rationalisation is necessary for survival, and thus everyone performs it, whether he holds power or not. Indeed, reality is such a complex entanglement of institutions, of stories, that sometimes stories contradict each other. Let’s take for example to French motto “liberté, égalité, fraternité” (liberty, equality, fraternity), liberty and equality are by definition contradictory because to arrive at equality you have to give up some parts of your freedom, the same could be said between religion and science, yet many people believe in both. To be able to rationalise these contradicting truths rationalisation is utilised very often to give meaning to the world. Furthermore, as Nietzsche (1872) claimed “*knowledge kills action; action requires the veils of illusion*”, a rationalisation process is therefore used very often in politics and planning, two institutions that have action at the core of their discipline. Therefore, when translating the institution of planning and the creation of reality it ensues to the general population, planners resort to rationalisation to reduce conflict and spike action, also called the “noble lie” recommended by even Plato himself (Flyvbjerg, 1998). All in all, antagonistic confrontation and naked power displays are actively avoided as power-power relations take the upper hand over knowledge-power or rationality-power relations thus giving way to naked power displays (Flyvbjerg, 1998).

There are thus already two types of storytelling at play, the institutional storytelling, which relates to the processes, norms and ideals of planners and the creation of reality it ensues, and the rationalisation storytelling, which aims at translating the latter to the general population to avoid conflict and spark action. It is at this moment a third type of storytelling emerges the reactionary storytelling, being the reaction of the population to the planning

that affects them. There is thus a creation of a reality by the actions of planning and the results that follow, a definition of that reality through communication in order to sell the idea, and all this takes place in the daily life reality this population experiences, their fears and hopes: the context. Three realities collide at this point, three stories intersect. As seen before in the subchapter 'What is Storytelling?', stories have a role to unite people under an idea of *what is* and *what ought to be*, and the role of planning is to serve the popular mandate, therefore to have a similar idea of *what ought to be*. This unity under planning can only happen when the three realities presented to the population are not too divergent, the stories need to link the three elements together as a coherent whole. Flyvbjerg stated (1998, p.227) "*Rationality is context dependent, the context often being power*", it is therefore the role of the ones in power to bring the stories together.



### III- Methodology

#### 1) *Theory of Science*

This paper claims that storytelling produces reality through the beliefs held in the story, but also that storytelling is an activity in which human beings produce and reproduce themselves. This means that storytelling is a shared activity through which humans create their nature of reality, their ontology. The ontology of this paper therefore lays within the view that social structures determine an individual's behaviour and tend towards the structure side in the structure vs agency debate (Archer, 1995). Indeed, storytelling is based upon the idea that powerful stories unite humanity through institutions and power plays, two characteristics that create reality through social interaction. Institutions create reality as they create the very structure of society and power plays create reality as power has the ability to define reality. Storytelling therefore also finds itself in a social constructivist ontology, knowledge and reality are created through human interactions which are expressed through storytelling (Vygotsky, 1978; McKinley, 2015).

As this research itself is also a story who finds a public, the epistemology of the research lies also in social constructivism. Through this research, the researcher seeks not only to bring attention to the power of storytelling and its impact on society but also aims at bringing change to the institution of planning, so it would take be more aware of the power and potential of storytelling. In this way the research is aiming through the counting of a story to bring to attention the need of including the population in institutional storytelling. The research effectuated is thus not disinterested, whether it is through the framing of the research, or through the values and stance transmitted by the researcher. Indeed Farthing (2016) argues how dispassionate research does not exist and how the majority of planning is made with a wish to change. This is a natural phenomenon as planning is future oriented and thus aims at creating a reality that does not yet exist, it is thus inherently political, this follows the theory on storytelling as a method *of* planning.

Furthermore, storytelling also has an instrumentalist stance, as ideas, and thus stories are viewed as useful instruments, with the worth of a story being its success at predicting a phenomenon. If a story is successful as seen through the social constructivist stance it creates its reality (Maconis & Gerber, 2011), this is thus in line with the instrumentalism

epistemology as the creation of reality equivalent to the prediction of a phenomenon.

Therefore, the truth of a story is determined by its success, this is in our theory storytelling as a method *for* planning.

Finally, the globing of the three theories and the interrelations between its different components pertains to structural functionalism viewing society as a complex system whose parts function together to provide stability and meaning (Van Fraassen, 1980). Storytelling is the constituent that shaped our complex modern societies and each story plays its part in the complex system to provide it stability, looking both at its social structure and social functions. Indeed, storytelling shapes norms, customs, traditions and institutions alike. This also means however, that because of this complexity and interlinkage, the knowledge produced will never be comprehensive, understanding the entire system and network of stories is virtually impossible, but acknowledging this complexity is the first step towards being able to understand it. The theoretical framework produced is thus only a simplified understanding of a particular setting of a complex whole, it however gives a good framework to organise stories and understand the dynamic behind them.

## 2) Case Study

Based on the epistemological stance on structural functionalism, viewing the world as a complex network, to be able to develop an understanding of storytelling, it is necessary to reduce the scope of the research by looking at the interlinkages of storytelling in a particular setting, a Case Study. Understanding the dynamics of storytelling as a whole equates to understanding society as a whole. Furthermore, the social constructivist ontology of storytelling creates a necessity to study it in a concrete environment. Indeed, as storytelling is *“the activities, both conceptual and physical, through which human beings produce and reproduce themselves in the world. Stories and storytelling, she insisted, are shared activities [...]”* (Arendt 1958, 182-84, In: Jackson, 2013, p.246), this means that the understanding of storytelling can only take place in a concrete setting where these shared activities take place. While it is possible on a theoretical level to conceptualise storytelling, to gain real knowledge these concepts must be examined in a Case. This research will therefore be based around a case study, which will examine both the process and the outcome as the goal is not only to instil a deeper understanding of storytelling in the reconstruction of cities

destroyed by war but also to analyse its potential as a planning tool. This means the research will produce both practical and theoretical knowledge (Flyvbjerg, 2006), the practical knowledge being the potential of storytelling as a method *for* planning and the theoretical providing a better understanding of storytelling as a method *of* planning. In order to be able to focus on the process while keeping in mind the outcome, an overview of the Case will be performed counting the story of Le Havre before analysing the content of this story, its storytelling.

Analysing storytelling in a case of cities reconstructed by war is unique in the way it is neither a least-likely, a most-likely or a typical case, and it doesn't matter. The framework designed in the literature review can be applied to any case and each case will give a unique version of storytelling, what is provided is a way of organising this storytelling to be able to understand its specificities. But the complexity of storytelling makes it unique in every case it manifests itself due to the particular context, the multitude of different actors and its temporal characteristic. The goal is to analyse a particular case using the framework to understand where the contradictions lie between the three dimensions of storytelling. This also means this framework will be able to be replicable in every case it is presented with. The findings of the research provide one way of understanding storytelling through the interlinkage of its three dimensions, these findings are replicable and can be generalised, however it only provides one way of viewing storytelling, many other ways of understanding storytelling are possible.

### *3) Research methods*

The research methods used for this research will be discussed in the following section, the research took a deductive approach at first, using the theories extracted from the literature review to analyse the case and then an inductive approach, using the findings of the case to produce a suggestion on how to utilise storytelling in future reconstruction projects. Not only does this mean the research needs a strong theoretical base, but also a diversity of sources to confirm this base and make the suggestion reliable, the sources used will be qualitative as the topic of research is storytelling.



#### a. Literature review

The literature review is performed to first give an understanding of what storytelling is on a broader scale and what role it plays in our current society, this is a crucial step to raise awareness on first of all its complexity, second of all its impact and thus third of all its potential. It therefore not only provides knowledge to the reader by introducing the main topic, but also shapes the research and the advancement of the project as the researcher himself uses these sources as learning material and inspiration. Following, this storytelling needs to be connected to planning, as the research will be performed around the scope of urban planning, this connection is established using and analysing the different theories on storytelling in planning. The goal of this is to create a framework through which storytelling can be viewed, understood and analysed, it therefore procures knowledge that can be directly used further on in the project. The research conducted during the literature review also aims at combining different research to fill a gap of scientific knowledge. While there has been research on storytelling in planning, this research is mainly directed at conflict resolution, and while there has been research conducted on the evolution of the image of Le Havre, no research encompassed this evolution into storytelling. The research therefore will bring new knowledge to the scientific pool of knowledge. For this to be true however, the research produced needs to be reliable. For this instance, the sources in the literature review have been extracted from renowned journals and authors, were peer reviewed articles and official documents to secure the authority and validity. However, the topic of research being storytelling with a socially constructed ontology, some references also include books from authors directed for the general public, as who better to explain storytelling as those who use it on a daily bases as their job.

#### b. Document Analysis

Document analysis is highly relevant when researching a historical case, with the events of the reconstruction of Le Havre beginning over 70 years ago, the only sources available are documents, whether archives from the municipality of Le Havre, old newspapers or official documents, these are the best way of finding reliable and accurate historical information. While the official documents and archives are likely to be biased towards the institutional storytelling, the newspapers will provide the rationalisation storytelling, which are more likely to relate to what the population feels, and thus the reactionary storytelling. It is thus crucial to have this diversity of sources to create the most accurate portrayal possible of the

storytelling at the time, as often the 'victors' write history. Furthermore, as the research on the role of storytelling in the reconstruction of cities destroyed by war is a new and unresearched topic, it is possible to use the documents and data of other researchers, as was the case here with the thesis on 'The mechanic of the image' of Le Havre by Jade Maridort (2017).

### c. Interviews

To add to the research, document analysis is not enough, especially as it does not always present the intentions, the agendas and is thus subject to interpretation. To remedy to this, interviews will be used. These interviews have the aim to take into consideration different stances, therefore one interview was conducted with a representative of the municipality born in Le Havre, and one with a current inhabitant of Le Havre but who did not originate from there.

The first interview was with Vincent Duteurtre, the director of the department of Buildings of the municipality of Le Havre, born in the city, he has a very positive image of it and he looks at the city mainly from an architectural perspective due to his architectural background.

The second interview was with Pascal Denecheau, the president of the co-ownership board of the ISAI blocks V40 and V41. He originates from outside of Le Havre and moved there in 2009, he too appreciates the city and the lifestyle it provides.

The interviews therefore take one expert and one active and knowledgeable citizen, one who is emotionally attached to the city as it is the one he originated from, and one that is not originally from there. This aims at providing the different stances of storytelling.

The interviews were semi-structured to motivate the interviewees to tell stories and not just answer to rigid questions. It was chosen to still have some sort of structure to the interview, firstly to guide the interviewee towards the topics wished to be addressed and secondly to bring up certain words, or questions that will make them question their story and its motivations.

The first interview was conducted on the 10<sup>th</sup> of April with Vincent Duteurtre by phone, as technical considerations did not permit a face to face or skype interview. Vincent Duteurtre as said earlier is the director of the Buildings department of the municipality of Le Havre, as

well as having an architectural education. He was also heavily involved in the pedagogy strategy of the municipality after the installation of the ZPPAUP. Finally, he was actively involved in piloting the project for the inscription of Le Havre to UNESCO World-Heritage. He therefore had a strong knowledge of the history of the city and the evolution of its image. He sided with the municipality storytelling viewing the reconstructed city centre a worthy proponent to the world-heritage and explaining the rejection of the citizens by the non-understanding of this complex architectural masterpiece.

The second interview took place on the 20<sup>th</sup> of May with Pascal Denecheau by phone interview as technical considerations did not permit a face to face or skype interview. Pascal Denecheau is an inhabitant from Le Havre, without originating from there, he has an education in musicology and moved to the city in 2009, where quickly he became involved in the protection and classification of the building blocks he lived in, the ISAI V40 and V41. He became the president of the co-ownership board and succeeded in making the buildings gain first the historic monument protection and then the classification, he is also invested in a number of bottom-up projects to reclaim the unused space in the inner-courtyard of his buildings. Due to his work towards the protection and classification of the buildings, he has a strong knowledge of the history of the city, the architectural properties of the reconstructed city centre and the evolution of its image. He portrayed the city as attractive and very enjoyable to live in. He is therefore part of the new generation of inhabitants of Le Havre, which have accepted and understood the city, and are actively working to make it their own once again.

#### d. Limitations of research methods

The first limitation which has been acknowledged by the structural functionalism epistemology, is there are many ways of understanding storytelling as our society is a complex myriad of stories interwoven between each other that together form a whole. The framework this research provides is just one way of understanding storytelling, many others exist.

Concerning the case study, it would have been more comprehensive to compare multiple cases to each other in order to fully confirm the findings of this research and find more subtleties providing more comprehensive results.

The gathering of data also is subject to limitations, much of the data coming from 70 years ago, it cannot be proven an accurate description of the events, while the image of Le Havre did suffer during this times, often the media can amplify the feelings of the population, and on the other hand the municipality dampen them, to find the accurate reactionary storytelling is therefore almost impossible and needs to be interpreted. The research has however done the maximum to reduce this uncertainty.

Furthermore, the data collected was lacking concerning the interviews, an interview with a historian, a journalist and an old inhabitant of Le Havre would have made the research more comprehensive, however time limitations and technical difficulties such as travelling to Le Havre from Aalborg, and the lack of responsiveness of certain potential interviewees made this impossible. Also, the translation from French to English during the interviewees, even though done to mimic the meaning and intentions of the interviewee, might take some of the true meaning away.

## IV- Case Study: Le Havre

This chapter will present the main lines of the history of the post WWII Le Havre, while focusing on the reconstruction process and the heritage-making. The evolution of the image of the city will be at the core of the chapter, it is therefore necessary for further analysis to start with a quick overview of the pre-WWII history of Le Havre to understand the identity of the city and its population. Then a report of the damages suffered by city whether infrastructural or human will be performed. An overview of the decision-making to appoint Auguste Perret and the plan presented by the Perret workshop will be presented as well as the changes made due to public opposition. Then will be overviewed the evolution of the image after the reconstruction period, from the grey years until the heritage-making process starting with the ZPPAUP, the city of Art and History and finishing with the acquisition of the UNESCO world-heritage label. Finally, the consequences of this label attribution in contemporary Le Havre will be reviewed.

### 1) *Pre-history: The City three times new (1517-1940)*

Le Havre in history can be said to have three births, its history is contrasted and non-linear, but yet has held an important role in France laying at the mouth of the Seine river, and thus being the main port for trade between Paris and the rest of the world. Le Havre was founded in 1517 by François 1er in order to stop English attacks during the hundred years war, a military port was thus founded followed by a city. However, this newly founded city did not attract inhabitants as it was laid in a swamp area. So much so that the king had to grant multiple privileges in order to attract inhabitants (Jacono & Arnould, 2000). This is the first birth of the city, without any medieval ties, Le Havre appears as an artificial city with an artificial population lacking history and identity (Jacono & Arnould, 2000). In 1541, the city got extended following a rational checkboard grid pattern of the Sienese architect Bellarmato, this created the neighbourhood of St-François (Abram, 2007). This urbanism plan was the first of the genre in France and was thus a very modern addition to the city (Jacono & Arnould, 2000). This modernity is one of the trademarks of the city, led by its port facilitating exchanges between Europe, Africa and America, having a strong implication in the slave trade, but also developing the fields of armament, metallurgy and cotton (Abram,

2007). This industrial background created a vast expansion during the industrial revolution, growing by five times its initial size. This rapid expansion brought the need for a new urban plan, and the creation of a new section of the city called Neuve-Ville translated as the new city. The engineer François Lamandé is at the origin of the plan (1787) considered very strict (Abram, 2007). It moved all the public institutions away from the traditional neighbourhoods of the old city, considered as insalubrious and thus despised in the light of the modernity of the new city, it was thus left untouched for a more radical renovation later on (Jacono & Arnould, 2000). The new city is considered as the second birth, and once again it stands out by its modernity with its unprecedented urbanisation, its commercial and harbour development and the electrification of the city. This second birth, has once again created a city artificially, abandoning the historic part of the city.

The third birth the city experienced was the reconstruction of the city after its destruction during WWII, but not so much because of the complete destruction of the city, but more by the fact that once again a “horsain”, name given to people from outside Normandie, was imposed upon the city to reconstruct itself making it become an urbanistic laboratory based upon modernity, independent from the environment (Jacono & Arnould, 2000). Once again history has come to a stop to start over again.

## *2) The Atlantic Wall (1940-1944)*

The circumstances of the destruction of Le Havre are important to understand in order to analyse the atmosphere in which the reconstruction took place. Le Havre had a crucial role from the start of the war, as it was a military base for the British and used for the provisioning of troops. It however fell in 1940 to the Germans after it was bombed a first time, causing the British to flee as well as a big part of the population (Maridort, 2017). However French resistance was still heavily active in the area and the 9<sup>th</sup> of June they sabotaged the oil refineries, making 500 000 tonnes of petrol burn, thus creating a huge fire of which the smoke was visible from Paris (Abram, 2007). The armistice of the 22<sup>nd</sup> of June was favourable for a part of the population to return to the city. Nevertheless, the British continue to bomb Le Havre regularly increasing the death toll, forcing the Germans to transform le Havre into a fortress, as the pivotal point of the Atlantic wall (Maridort, 2017;

Abram, 2007). On the 6<sup>th</sup> of June 1944, the Normandy landings took place at 57km from Le Havre, and operation Astonia had as objective to retake 4 ports for provisioning and resupplying the army marching towards Paris. However, the force of Le Havre made the Allied forces prefer to bypass the city and bomb it instead, to cut off the Germans by destroying their installations, especially the port was hit, yet 700 civilian buildings were destroyed making 2600 inhabitants homeless (Maridort, 2017). The 2<sup>nd</sup> of September, the German colonel Wildermuth suggests to the mayor the evacuation of the 60 000 Havrais still in the city as an allied attack is imminent (Maridort, 2017). Many refused as they thought the liberation would soon arrive. Indeed, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of September the British plan an attack as they need to resupply the front with petrol and other goods. They threw an ultimatum to Wildermuth, who asked for the evacuation of civilians, request refused by the British, and surrender refused by the Germans (Maridort, 2017). Follows the disastrous bombing of Le Havre over two days, with over 3000 tonnes of explosives (from which 85 tonnes were incendiary) were dropped on the city, flattening the city centre. The balance-sheet gives 12 500 buildings destroyed, 150 hectares reduced to dust, 5000 civilian deaths and 80 000 homeless, the harbour completely destroyed (Maridort, 2017; Abram, 2007). Not only did the force of the attack seem completely unnecessary as the Germans were depleted and the installations destroyed already, furthermore the petrol installations and the harbour were already destroyed and did not benefit the allied, but the part of the city destroyed was the city centre where the locals lived, while the German officials lived in the suburbs (Maridort, 2017). This complete destruction left a big trauma in the hearts of the Havrais, especially as it took place in conspicuous circumstances. Yet in war the victors are triumphed as the heroes, while the losers remembered as the villains. This means no one took accountability for the disaster taking place in Le Havre, and the wounds are still wide open and will take time to heal.

The bombing of the city therefore not only destroyed the city itself, but also the cultural identity of its inhabitants. Following this trauma, a second trauma prepared, that of the reconstruction.

### *3) The Face of Paris on the Ocean (1944-1946)*

At the dawn of the destruction, the process of reconstructing the city took place. While local architects Félix Brunau, Henri Colboc and Henri Daigue were already working towards the reconstruction of the city, the French government nominated Auguste Perret as its chief architect, with the responsibility to produce a plan for the city centre (Duteurtre, 2007). The ministry of construction opted for a radically modern plan, as the city centre was one of the most insanitary and overpopulated in France (Gravari-Barbas & Renard, 2010; Abram, 1997-1998). The idea was to transform the city into one that could compete with Paris and would be its door on the ocean. Furthermore, the complete destruction of the built infrastructure meant that the inhabitants had to be relocated in temporary wooden houses in a nearby forest, a rapid and economical method of construction was necessary to produce housing on massive scale (Pantet et al., 2018).

The nomination of Auguste Perret became an evidence for the ministry of reconstruction as he was the only French architect with an organised workshop and was nationally and internationally renown. Some of his works include the theatre of the Champs-Élysées, the Church of Raincy, the Soviets Palace in Moscow or the Porte Maillot in Paris, he also took under his wing Le Corbusier during a time (Abram, 2007; Jacono & Arnould, 2000). He has affirmed himself as the representant of structural classicism and the 'Master' of a generation of architect students. He is both modern, through his active use of concrete and a classicist perpetuating the French Renaissance architecture by positioning himself in monumentalism (Jacono & Arnould, 2000). He is thus considered a 'moderate modernist' with enough recognition to put him free of critique. This made him an ideal candidate for the vision the French government had for Le Havre as the face of Paris on the ocean. His building techniques based on prefabrication of concrete meant an economical and fast reconstruction process to relocate the disaster-stricken, and his monumentalism trait meant France could reaffirm themselves as one of the global powers after the war (Jacono & Arnould, 2000).

At the start he had supposedly, as the chief architect the aesthetic responsibility of the reconstruction, while Félix Bruneau was the chief urbanist (Gravari-Barbas, 2004).

Nevertheless, an active lobbying by the Perret workshop made the plan of Perret take over that of the urbanist in chief Bruneau. And the entire reconstruction plan was to be fulfilled



by a team entirely in line with the Perret architecture, thus having a uniform architectural ideal, that put in practice the ideas of their master (Jacono & Arnould, 2000).

This nomination however was not well taken by the municipality, who did not see with a good eye a 'horsain' deciding over the reconstruction of their city. While they were impressed by the new plan, they were reluctant to diverge from the old town in such an extreme fashion, however backed by the central power, the municipality had no say in the matters, the reconstruction would not be consensual (Jacono & Arnould, 2000). Perret became a *persona non grata* (Tournant, 1998), and the lack of support of the municipality towards the Perret workshop deprived the local population of the mediation work needed (Gravari-Barbas, 2004). The Havrais perceive the reconstruction process from a distance and feel the reconstruction of their city is out of their hands (Duteurtre, 2007).

#### 4) *The past is destroyed, we cannot remake it (1946-1965)*

The Perret workshop had as responsibility to elaborate a plan for 150 hectares of the city centre as well as the rehabilitation of historic monuments such as the City Hall and the Saint-Joseph church (Gravari-Barbas, 2004). The plan of Perret was to rebuild an entirely new city by claiming "the past is destroyed, we cannot remake it" (Perret In: Gravari-Barbas, 2004, p.592). He thus presented a plan at the antipodes of what was previously present, large streets, aerated, bathing in light, vast open spaces, new cultural and sportive equipment, large, comfortable and modern apartments. Le Havre was supposed to be the prototype of the modern city, projected towards a future that could only be better (Gravari-Barbas, 2004). The urbanistic plan follows the movement of the Radiant City of which Perret was one of the precursors and including some remnants of the City Beautiful of Sitte, such as the monumentality and grandeur. To create this plan, an internal competition was organised in the team composed of the Perret workshop. And what came out was the idea to raise the city by 3.5m by making it rest on a giant slab, this would countereffect the swampy soil and the heaps of gravel from the destroyed city. It would also permit a high level of functionality by using this space for sewage, caves, parking, electricity, plumbing etc... (Abram, 2007). To make this work, a weft of 6.24m by 6.24m serves as grid, making the connection points of the squares align with the support pillars of the slab (Jacono & Arnould, 2000). This weft is particularly useful for prefabrication, as it is the maximum

length of a concrete beam and is dividable by two or three. He also promotes the use of the right angle, easier to work during construction. Some might say this weft brings unity and harmony (Abram, 2007), others that this massive prefabrication brings redundancy between the buildings (Jacono & Arnould, 2000). The plan is then arranged following a triangle englobing the three main avenues of the city (Avenue Foch, Boulevard François 1er and Rue de Paris) following the initial outline of the city but changing its geometry (Abram, 2007).

The plan followed four main principles, a new average density throughout the city to avoid the overpopulation problems of the old city, the generalisation of the right angle to make economies and better apartment plans, the use of the relatively new concept of zoning, with commercial uses along the main arteries and away from habitations and finally the reconstitution of the shops as close to their pre-war positions (Abram, 2007; Pantet et al., 2018).

This new plan was very modern for the time and far away from the Normand traditional style of housing, but it was not only modern through its built environment, but also through the promotion of a new more modern lifestyle. Indeed, Perret wanted to induce a more comfortable bourgeois lifestyle through its apartments (Abram, 2007). But also, with a principle of co-ownership, the disaster stricken were allocated funds by the governments and they had to put these funds together to reconstruct the buildings collectively (Interview of Duteurtre, 2019).

While the architectural qualities are praised, the urbanistic traits are critiqued, with the urban landscape looking more like an architectural exposition in which buildings are disposed rather than a city with an urban life and identity.

- **Opposition to plan and changes**

And the plan faced a deal of setbacks, due to conflicts or funding. The first point of conflict is the raising of the city on the slab by 3.5m, the municipality and the inhabitants did not wish to lose the contact to the ground where their old city laid (Interview of Duteurtre, 2019; Jacono & Arnould, 2000). The ministry of reconstruction granted the wish of the inhabitants, mainly due to funding reasons as this concept was deemed too expensive, this part of the plan had to be abandoned by Perret. The second point of conflict touched upon the Saint-François neighbourhood as well as the boulevard François 1er, the historic part of the city,

the municipality wanted to keep a regional style, and once again won this battle. And the final change in the plan experienced due to local pressure was to pivot the weft 60° in the Perrey neighbourhood, which was a big setback to the initial plan of Perret, as it made large parts of the plan obsolete.

### *5) Le Havre, the largest communist city in France (1965-1982)*

The reconstruction of Le Havre, until about the 1970s, projected an image of modernity nation-wide (Gravari-Barbas, 2004), this appraisal, however, came mainly from the elites (Jacono & Arnould, 2000). The crisis that hit in the 1970s, changed this image drastically, the end of golden years following the war brought forth a period of decolonisation, deindustrialisation and a general crisis of modernity (Gravari-Barbas, 2004). Le Havre was especially hit by this crisis as their economy was mainly built around industry and colonial trade (cotton, coffee, shipbuilding), this meant the harbour could not compete with the likes of Anvers, Rotterdam or Hamburg. The large metallurgic sites closed down, such as Alstom, and other industries had to adapt such as Renault, while the 'Ateliers et Chantiers du Havre' closed in 1999 stopping a 400-year practice and 2500 jobs with it. This recession brought a high level of unemployment and a social crisis deeply branding the identity of the city for so long in symbiosis with its port (Frémond, 1997). This crisis meant the way the French viewed their future became problematic, and a general nostalgic environment surrounded the country. Consequently, it was in the 70s and 80s that a large heritage-making trend appeared in many historic cities, the population with no apparent future in front of them took refuge in their past (Gravari-Barbas, 2004), *"Nostalgia seems to reign supreme and spread everywhere: in the retro headings cultivated with complacency in any periodical, on the walls of the shops, on the displays of the postcards"* (Barot, 1994, p.110/translated). However, in Le Havre this past was replaced with a highly modern city which promoted a bourgeois lifestyle. There was thus a contrast between the reality of the situation and the urban landscape available to the population. This was exacerbated by the, social reality the reconstruction brought, a stratified city around a socio-spatial segregation. Indeed, the changes in density meant some, mostly the poorer population, needed to relocate away from the city centre in the Ville-Haute (high city) (Damais, 1972), where most of the social housing was present after the massive arrival of populations desperately looking for jobs

(Gravari-Barbas, 2004). The lower density also meant large empty spaces which consequently had negative impacts on commerce, animation and urban life in general (Damais, 1972; Jacono, 1996), indeed commercial activity in the city centre was divided by four since the 1970s, while it gained almost 43 000m<sup>2</sup> (Jacono, 1996). The political context of the city also added to this negative image of the reconstructed city centre of Le Havre, as the municipality was under communist rule until 1995 (Barzman et al., 1996). This political colour impregnated the identity of Le Havre as “Le Havre, the largest communist city of France” (Barzman et al., 1996, p.14), as the city was rebaptised ‘Stalingrad-sur-Mer’ and boulevard Foch ‘Staline-allée’ (Gravari-Barbas, 2004). The concrete focused architecture of Perret coupled with the political affiliation of the city brought forth the image of a grey, sad city resembling those of the communist bloc. It got chosen as film locations representing soviet cities (Gravari-Barbas & Renard, 2010).

This social and economic crisis created an amalgam between the city, its setting and its economy, leading to a strong depreciation of its architecture, as it was the face of decline of the city (Gravari-Barbas & Renard, 2010). This induced at best a lack of upkeeping the city and at worst degradations of the Perret buildings, by painting over the buildings, changing the windows, hiding the façades, etc...

## *6) Vision Shift (1995-2001)*

It is in this context that the first protective measures are taken by the municipality to protect the heritage of the reconstruction. This started with the municipality adhering to DoCoMoMo in 1992 (Gravari-Barbas & Renard, 2010), an international NGO working for the protection, recognition and documentation of the modernism movement (Interview of Duteurtre, 2019). Following this the municipality of Le Havre created a ZPPAUP in 1995, which is a zone protecting different buildings to different degrees. Before this date only the Saint-Joseph church was protected (Gravari-Barbas, 2004), it therefore starts the beginning of viewing the reconstructed city-centre as a heritage to be proud of. This shift in vision became clear in different conferences of the reconstructed cities, from gloomy and dull cities, to a heritage that needs to be respected because it represents a unique historic moment (Jacono & Arnould, 2000). However important, this protective zone was a forerunner of things to come with the re-branding of the city centre as a place of ‘action’

(Gravari-Barbas, 2004), it did not however solve the problem of the appropriation of the city by the inhabitants (Duteurtre, 2007). A large politic of sensibilisation of the population took place, this started with the 50th anniversary of the liberation in 1994, where the reconstruction replaced the trauma using a big 12 act theatre piece. Furthermore, an enterprise of mediation between the population and the municipality took place with the help of a fieldworker, this reduced the unauthorized works in the ZPPAUP by 45% to 10% between 1999 and 2003 (Duteurtre, 2007). The regional council, the DRAC also was implicated in this dynamic by publishing successively inventory collections around the reconstructed city (Duteurtre, 2007), as well as the local newspapers publishing an article solely focused on defending the work of Perret (Jacono & Arnould, 2000). The reconstructed city centre thus becomes more and more the turntable and the focus of urban projects, gaining once more a central position in the city, with many refurbishment projects taking place.

### *7) Le Havre, Reinvented City (2001-2005)*

When the municipality changed in 1995 to the right wing, historically against the Perret architecture, there was a realisation of the potential the heritage had for the city, the new Mayor Rufenacht went on a mission to acquire as many labels as possible. By 2001, Le Havre was designated, by the ministry of Culture, City of Art and History, a prestigious label only 130 cities in France hold, this nomination was all the more symbolic as it was nominated at the same time as important French historic cities such as Roubaix, Saint-Etienne or Noisiel (Gravari-Barbas, 2004). And in 2002, a number of appropriation processes took place, including many expositions under a slogan “Le Havre, Reinvented City”, this year is called by many ‘the Perret Year’ (Duteurtre, 2007).

This followed the acceptance in 2001, of Le Havre, to the French indicative list presented to UNESCO. Once the city was on this list, it was backed by the state and received support from the French president and ministers of the Culture department as well as the French Ambassador at UNESCO (Gravari-Barbas & Renard, 2010). The image of the City was changing nationwide. An exposition in 2002, related the cases of Le Havre of Perret, Brasilia of Niemeyer and Chandigarh of Le Corbusier as the three representatives of modern 20th century architecture (Gravari-Barbas, 2004). The project piloted by Joseph Abram in

collaboration with Vincent Duteurtre and the department of Urbanism of the city received confirmation of Le Havre as one of the only two cities of the 20<sup>th</sup> century with Brasilia to gain the World-Heritage label of UNESCO in 2004 (Duteurtre, 2007). This achievement became the publicity of the city and was at the forefront of numerous urban projects. The impact of such a label was felt very quickly, whether in the media, with over 200 articles written in the international press, a dozen television coverages, and more than 50 radio coverages, but it was also felt within the inhabitants. Indeed, the fund created for helping proximity commerce, the FISAC 18, was used much more heavily to subvention renovation works and the regulation of the ZPPAUP was more accepted by the citizens (Gravari-Barbas & Renard, 2010). The city swaps its image of a sad grey city for an ambitious and dynamic one (Duteurtre, 2007)

### *8) The reconstructed city centre is today a true asset (2005-2019)*

The image of the city by the inhabitants will however take a more progressive approach, as still today the appropriation is not completed and many Havrais struggle with their history and the identity of their city. A work of communication, mediation and pedagogy is still undertaken by the municipality to make the population understand its heritage, this is done through museums, expositions, workshops and more around the Perret architecture (Gravari-Barbas & Renard, 2010; Duteurtre, 2019). Nevertheless, the reconstructed city centre is now the vehicle of the creation of a new brand building for the city, and this is exemplified by the seaside projects undertaken by the city, with Odyssey 21 and an aquatic and sports complex (Gravari-Barbas & Renard, 2010). The reconstructed City centre is today a true asset and the spearhead for the future development of the city, at the risk of seeing the city become a museum (Duteurtre, 2007).

## V- Analysis

In the previous chapter, the history of Le Havre was undertaken, and the evolution of its image in time described. In this chapter the main timelines and key moments of the evolution of the image will be extracted from the case study in order to be able to analyse the storylines shaping this evolution of this image. The main storylines extracted are first the city as the 'Face of Paris on the Ocean' aiming, through the reconstruction (1944-1965), to make Le Havre the extension of Paris. The post-reconstruction (1965-1982) period has been dominated by the storyline of 'Le Havre, the largest communist city of France' (Barzman et al., 1996, p.14/translated), following a 'Vision Shift' (1982-1995) which is the premise for the start of the heritage making process making Le Havre world renown and acclaimed as Le Havre, the Reinvented City (1995-2006).

The different timelines and their storytelling will be analysed following the theoretical framework produced in the literature review, dividing the different storylines into the three categories of storytelling. Institutional storytelling will represent the reconstructed city centre of Perret and the plan thereof as well as the strategies employed by the different municipalities around this city centre. Rationalization storytelling will represent the communication made around the reconstructed city centre, whether it is official communication from the municipality or the work of media, it is how the city centre is interpreted and communicated to the citizens. Reactionary storytelling will represent the image of the reconstructed city centre by the population and their action or inaction towards it.

From there we will then analyse the links between the three storytelling categories, the links being how institutional storytelling is translated into rationalization storytelling and identifying the differences between the two. Then the reactionary storytelling will be analysed to see how the different storylines fit in the surrounding context, what discrepancies arise between the needs of the population, the proposition of the reconstruction plan and different municipal strategies and how the proposition is sold to the population.

From this analysis we will compare the different timelines and assess the role of storytelling in the reconstruction process of Le Havre, answering the second research sub question: How has Storytelling been used in the reconstruction of Le Havre?

*Note: Every quote in the Analysis has been translated from French to English by the author.*

## **1) The Face of Paris on the Ocean (1944-1965)**

### **a. Institutional Storytelling**

The institutional storytelling of how the reconstruction took place englobes both the decision-making process on what kind of reconstruction should take place, who should be assigned to conduct the reconstruction and the reconstruction plan itself. First an analysis on the decision-making processes leading to the nomination of Auguste Perret will take place and then an analysis on what story the plan of Perret brings about.

In the decision-making process leading to the reconstruction plan, two stories come into conflict, the one by the municipality of Le Havre keen on rebuilding the city in resemblance to what the old pre/war city looked like, in the Normand tradition, and one by the French government wanting to scratch of the past and rebuild a new modern city being the face of Paris on the ocean, as Le Havre lays at the mouth of the Seine, the major river traversing Paris.

*“The mayor of Le Havre, he conceived reconstruction projects with local architects and journalists of Le Havre. And these projects were much closer to what pre-war Le Havre was like”* (Interview of Duteurtre, 2019, 5:36)

*“And so, there was this [...] opportunity to rebuild something completely new, exactly because [...] the city was reduced to nothing”* (Interview of Duteurtre, 2019, 5:00)

These two storylines are diametrically opposite, one talks of an opportunity to start from scratch while the other evokes the need to comeback to the roots. And while these two stories collide, this was exacerbated by the nomination of local architect Brunau as chief urbanist, and horsain (term from Normandie used for foreigners) Perret as chief architect. The nomination of Perret was the embodiment itself of the will of the state to build a modern city which they could be proud of.



*“The reason of the nomination of Auguste Perret at Le Havre is primarily due to the magnitude of the destruction of the city, because Le Havre was one of the cities most destroyed in France and Europe”* (Interview of Duteurtre, 2019, 4:12)

The 26<sup>th</sup> of September 1945, when Perret is first presented to the council, the urban inspector in chief Marrast justified the nomination of Perret

*“Mr Perret can produce a modern work if he has the freedom to do so. We have thus the possibility to mark the French reconstruction with a very special work, with a strong character, even more so as Le Havre is the door that opens on the sea, it’s the Ocean door and the people of the United States will come here. Here, this French renovation work thus needs to be significant”* (Marrast, 1945, In: Jacono & Arnould, 2000)

The minister of reconstruction R. Dautry held similar words when talking of the project of Perret to elevate the city on a slab:

*“Do this, and we will finally show the Americans what a modern city is”* (Speech of Perret to the municipal council, 26 September 1945, In: Jacono & Arnould, 2000)

The intentions of the government are to create an impressive piece of work to even compete with the United States, which are the epitome of modernity and success at that time. There is a clear willingness to reaffirm France as one of the next global powers, with its image having suffered after the war. The city of Le Havre almost seems like a laboratory, a playground to try things out for the government. This line of conduct for modernity also made sense to the government as Le Havre was the second most insalubrious and the third most overpopulated city in France (Liotard, 2007).

*“Urbanism is the city without slums, without courtyards, bacteria nests, without stinking alleys, without stagnating streams”* (Ministry of Employment, In: Paris-Normandie, 1948)

The decision of how the reconstruction was going to take place was made independently from what the local dynamic was. It is thus not a surprise to see that Perret took more and more power while Brunau had to take a step back.

Indeed, with a great piece of work, comes a great architect, as was aforementioned in the Case Study, Perret had strong reputation, both nationally and internationally and was the only French architect with an organised workshop. This gave the government a great deal of

legitimacy and the possibility to impose their reconstruction upon the municipality, when the municipality wanted to reject the plan of Perret, the government's response was unequivocal

*"They [the municipality] however see themselves notified by the government that the council needed to motivate their decision if they rejected "the propositions of a sir who is viewed as a Master of Art"" (Jacono & Arnould, 2000, p.117)*

This conflictual relationship between the municipality and the government made certain features of the plan of Perret reviewed, such as the elevation of the city on the slab, first rejected by the municipality and the population who did not want to lose touch with the ground, and then by the government as it was deemed too expensive.

*"Nevertheless, Perret was in contact with the local population and above all the mayor by presenting his projects at the municipal council of Le Havre. And there too was an open conflict, with a refusal of the municipal council of the project of Perret the way it was conceived at the start and the refusal of the cutting-edge trademarks of the project of Perret, notably the idea to elevate the city on a slab." (Interview of Duteurtre, 2019, 7:18)*

To resume, two conflicting storylines were at play during the decision-making phase of the reconstruction. While the government's intentions took the upper hand and "the state imposed Auguste Perret to the inhabitants of Le Havre" (Duteurtre, 2019, 5:39), the local municipality, backed by the populations managed to resist certain points, making the final plan, even though largely Perret's, a mix between the intentions of Perret and the inhabitants.

To further understand the storytelling of the reconstruction period, it is necessary to understand the story of the city, under what principles did Perret plan this city? what story does the plan tell? Some answers can be found in 'Contribution à une théorie de l'architecture' (1951), this collection of aphorisms (p.70-74) gives a crucial sight into the principles and views of Perret on architecture and urbanism.

*"Technicity [...] authentic source of inspiration [...] mother tongue of all technical creator, spoken as a poet, brings us to: Architecture"*

*"[...] character, style, harmony, punctuate the road that, through truth, leads to beauty"*

*“ [...] The one who hides a pillar makes a mistake, the one who creates a false pillar makes a crime”*

These aphorisms show the creative mind of Perret, obsessed with technicity, through which comes harmony, beauty, character, style. He brings out the principles that each feature of the building needs to be apparent, and that by seeing the building as it is, through its raw conception, its technical conception it will lead to beauty. This is a very intellectual statement, as one needs to be able to see the technicity, needs to see the building as a technical creation, which isn't the case with a common inhabitant of the city.

Furthermore, as an architect it can be questioned how he incorporates architecture with urbanism, as architecture tends to create objects, singular objects independently from each other. However, Perret defines architecture as the art of organising space, which sounds very much like a definition that could be given to urbanism. It can be hard to conciliate this idea of architecture as creation of object in the three dimensions of architecture (length, width and depth) and architect as a creator of space with the three dimensions of urbanism (physical, historic and social) (Jacono & Arnould, 2000).

The students of Perret have however, through a series of comments to the aphorisms, cleared this topic up.

*“Mobile, or immobile, everything that occupies the space is of the domain of architecture” (Perret, 1951)*

*“Between the architecture of crystals and living organisms [...] and cosmic architecture, which constitutes the orbits and celestial globes, nature appears amorphous and disordered. It is in this margin where architecture is not natural anymore that inserts itself order of essentially human architecture” (Comment of Perret Students; Manifeste du Groupe Perret-Union d'architectes, 1944 In: Abram, 1989)*

This comment brings forth the idea that human architecture betters natural architecture as it is orderly and precisely thought out, this is a promethean mindset, in which whichever geographic environment, human creations will replace what is already present. Perret therefore aims at liberating himself from the natural environment, this is done through the elevation of the city on a slab, through the order and repetition it entails, through the

technicity and prefabrication of concrete, through the weft of 6.24m. All these are supposed to bring unity, harmony to the architecture creator of objects, or monotonous for some.

As Hermant said in a letter to Guilbert in (24 february 1945) *“The entire question of urbanism needs to be rethought by Auguste Perret and his workshop, without which the work will limits itself to the “filling” of a few large squares”* (Letter of Hermant to Guilbert, February 1945, In: Jacono & Arnould, 2000, p.115)

Indeed, the city can seem more like an architectural exposition field in which buildings are placed rather than a city with urbanity (Jacono & Arnould, 2000). This is exacerbated by a process of land consolidation:

*“They [the population] came with a file with everything they could have found, photos, or other things showing how their goods were, and then they were given or a sum of money, the majority of people had this, or they gave you an apartment [...], or multiple apartments. [...] those who had a sum of money regrouped themselves into cooperatives and chose an architect, so or they were in the group of architects of Auguste Perret, so they did things in a similar fashion, or they were locals, which had as only instruction to respect the weft of 6.24m, and beyond that they were free. And so, we have some very beautiful buildings, and others a little less well made, everything depended on the people who appealed the architects”* (Interview Denecheau, 2019, 6:49)

Perret took architecture even further by promoting a different more bourgeois lifestyle, the apartments provided in the ISAI, were much more comfortable and modern than their pre-war counterparts

*“We are in 1947 and an apartment with double glazing is delivered, it could be more frequent, but in France that wasn’t the case, there was no double glazing, no air gap between walls for isolation, it was really very, very modern, the type of heating also was the subject of a deep reflexion, we are heated with air conditioning [...] and this overpressure in the apartments gets rid of dust, or odours [...] and the electricity is buried”* (Interview Denecheau, 2019, 30:03)

To conclude the plan of Perret for the reconstructed city tells the story of a highly intellectual approach to architecture and urbanism, based upon technicity and the freeing of

the constraints of the environment and thus the past by seeking unity in order. Thus, the complete opposite of what pre-war Le Havre was like, a disordered, cosmopolitan and chaotic city. The famous phrase by Perret then makes much more sense “The past is destroyed we cannot remake it” (26 September 1945, Municipal council Meeting In: Gravari-Barbas, 2004, p.592)

#### b. Rationalization Storytelling

The rationalization storytelling here is mainly not coming from the municipality, the government or Perret as no real communication strategy is put in place, and the 1950s planning does not yet incorporate participation in planning. Therefore, the majority of the interpretation of the reconstruction plan and reconstruction period comes from the media. Three main sources of rationalization storytelling can be observed, the artistic and political views, the local media views and the academic views.

The political storytelling has already been introduced with the comments of Dautry and Marrast in the Institutional Storytelling subchapter, they justify their decision by the monumental character of this reconstruction and the image of France as a whole, looking into the future and not the past. Vincent Duteurtre gave another interesting comment to justify this decision

*“It could not come from the inhabitants of Le Havre to want, to say “actually, we have a chance with this bombardment, to say let’s build a modern city for the 100 years to come and free ourselves from the constraints of the past”, it was not possible for the inhabitants to say that, someone from outside needed to do it” (Interview of Duteurtre, 2019, 6:24)*

This shows the state of mind of the state, claiming they know best what is good for the inhabitants of the city, and that over time they will come to accept it.

The artistic community was just as enthusiastic about the reconstruction, and this enthusiasm was almost unanimous.

*“In front of this vast conception, this network of ratios, both apparent and hidden, this rigor pushed to severity, we think of the “rational” cities of the 17th century, at the same time so serious and so loose” (Chastel, In: Le Monde, 1953)*

*“Techniques spoken as poet brings us to architecture” writes Auguste Perret. Le Havre addresses itself to the lovers of classic poetry, also defiant of contemporary hermetism and the romantic spirit. It will be a perfect introduction, neat and severe, to French dignity.”* (Chastel, In: Le Monde, 1953)

*“[The Havre is] the greatest success of the French reconstruction. [...] Perret, needing to rebuild a modern city, finds the most naturally, the spirit of the “buildings of the King”, develops a sort of Versailles of housing, without the slightest worry of compromising or reveling”* (Dalloz, In: Techniques et architectures, 1956, In: Jacono & Arnould, 2000)

Many articles from art critiques are dithyrambic about this new wave of modern creation. Their glance however is that of an intellectual elite, viewing the reconstructed city as an art piece, and object, thus without consideration for the population, urban life or history of the place.

The view of the reconstructed city by the local press is very different, while some journalist like Bernard Esdras-Gosse try to make the apology of the reconstructed city by merging the past and the new, others are much more virulent against the reconstructed city of Perret.

*“Industrial looking towers, the population has already been able to judge the ugliness of the ISAI”* (Le Havre-Libre, 29 March 1950; Le Havre-Presse, October 1965 In: Jacono & Arnould, 2000)

*“The ISAI, whose nine levels block the Town Hall square, seem to be less destined to rehouse the victims than to remind the inhabitants of Le Havre, in saecula seculorum [for ever and ever], that an Olympian character was in charge of rebuilding the city long ago”* (Léger, senator of the Seine-inférieure, Press conference, October 1949, In: Jacono & Arnould, 2000)

*“And from the start, at the time of the reconstruction of the firsts buildings there was a debate in the press, saying that the Perret team was going to construct rabbit cages for the inhabitants”* (Interview of Duteurtre, 2019, 11:42)

While Le Havre-Libre and Le Havre-Presse take it into their hands to defend the population and attack the new city from all angles, Le Havre-Normandie, under the influence of Bernard Esdras-Gosse tries to bridge the gap between the two sides. He takes the initiative to

become the memoirist of the reconstruction process in 'Alors, les Havrais rebâtirent leur ville' (1951) which translates to 'Then, the inhabitants of Le Havre rebuild their city' which can seem far-fetched as the reconstruction was mostly out of their hands, but it has the willingness to reconcile the inhabitants with their new city. In a series of publications 'These aspects of Le Havre that we won't see again' (1950), 'It was Le Havre before September 1944' (1962) and 'Le Havre of Grace in the time of the fathers of our fathers' (1953), he seems to be processing the mourning of the old city, to better accept the new one (Maridort, 2017).

*"Then, Le Havre, who had largely lost its personality, found a new one again, little by little, in the same time that its new face was modeled"* (Paris-Normandie, 12 April 1957, In: Maridort, 2017)

He thus becomes the promoter of the new city in "The Reconstruction of Le Havre and the industrialization of the building" (1953), by illustrating its modernity applied to the construction.

The third view of the reconstructed city is that of the academic world, which during the reconstruction period was not very present, except an article from Nègre (1947, In: Maridort, 2017) which did not bring a critical insight to the reconstruction and were satisfied by presenting the progress in terms of hygiene, amenities, urbanization and commerce all the while presenting a positive image of pre-war Le Havre.

### c. Reactionary Storytelling

The reactionary storytelling tended much more to the negative side than the positive, the inhabitants of Le Havre struggled a lot to appropriate themselves the city. This reactionary storytelling following the main idea of the rejection of the rebuilt city followed three angles, the trauma and the need to mourn not provided by this new city which liberates itself from the past, the incomprehension of the modernity, far from what the population is used to and the mythicization of the pre-war city due to the imposition of the rebuilt city of Perret.

Firstly, the lasting nostalgia of the pre-war Le Havre and a mourning process which was disregarded by the higher instances lead to a rejection of what the modernity stood for, the opposite of the past. Vincent Duteurtre explains this nostalgia and associates it with the trauma of the war:

*“Like in many [reconstructed] cities, there was this reflex to grab to, [...] what the city before war was, to reassure, to regain footing with the city, the people were so perturbed, the trauma was so strong that I think it is a natural reflex to want to remake what we lost”*  
(Interview of Duteurtre, 2019, 5:58)

This trauma also meant that there was a need of mourning by the population, of mourning their old city, all the deaths, a process of acceptance cannot take place without mourning. Perret however claimed that *“The past is destroyed, we cannot remake it”*, his entire ideology of architecture was focused around this idea, to free himself from the natural environment, and thus form the past.

*“This too was a very important element in the process of non-adhesion of the inhabitants to their city, it’s the question of mourning, there were thousands of dead in Le Havre, and the reconstructed city, the people associated it with the event of mourning, this trauma of mourning and until the generations have not passed, or the generations have not been able to accept this mourning, [...] this image reversal could not take place”* (Interview of Duteurtre, 2019, 36:59)

*“The people that knew the city before the bombings were never able to accommodate to this new city, the problem was that the emblematic buildings of the city were rebuilt in the exact same location as the previous ones [...] there was this superposition of the two images, for them it was unbearable”* (Interview Denecheau, 2019, 41:07)

Furthermore, as was mentioned in the section on Institutional Storytelling, the plan of Perret was very modern and very intellectual in its thought, in its identity, and very different to what they were used to that it was difficult to understand it for the inhabitants of Le Havre.

*“The inhabitants of Le Havre struggled a lot and took a long time to understand and accept this modern architecture which very distant to the codes [...] and the Normandie tradition and so, there was for a very, very long time a sort of incomprehension and rejection of the modernity of the new city”* (Interview of Duteurtre, 2019, 3:07)

*“Sir, what do you think of the urbanism plan? -What do I think? Not much. Neither good nor bad. I try to understand and it is not easy. (...) It’s a big problem for me. From what I heard*



*here and there, the people who come to see it are like me, only anxious to know what will become of the little house they owned, the street they inhabited.” (Inhabitant interviewed by Esdras-Gosse, 1946)*

Furthermore, the fact that they never really had the choice of what would happen with their city, their history, their identity amplified this rejection of the new city. The context in which the reconstruction took place therefore played an important role in the image the population had of the city.

*“It is certain that the context was also very, very strong in the divorce that took place between the inhabitants and their city, because we imposed Perret, because we imposed concrete, while concrete in Normandie, nobody knows what that is and everybody found it ugly, because we say that you will not be an owner of your building anymore, but a co-owner together [...] And that in France, private property is sacred, so it also contributed to destabilize the inhabitants” (Interview of Duteurtre, 2019, 35:24)*

There was thus a resistance that formed around the plan of Perret, resistance that managed to make compromises in the initial plan, but also a resistance in the imaginary, in the storytelling by creating an imaginary and fantasized ideal of their old city.

*“They [the inhabitants], took refuge in the image of the old city. For a very, very long time [...] in the restaurants there were only images of the pre-war Le Havre” (Dhervillez, 2016 In: Maridort, 2017)*

*“I was told in the minutest detail the charm of the Havre of before the destruction while they were extremely insalubrious neighborhoods” (Pintore, 2016 In: Maridort, 2017)*

*“We invented ourselves a mythicized city, fed off doubtful memories and true regrets [...]. We remember these animated docks where we looked at the tugboats move around on the pools, the schooners and the streamers. We remembered these nice open-air cafés where we took a drink, lulled by the tunes of the cabarets. We talked about theatre [...], operettas who make life sing [...] We dreamt to plunge back into this nocturnal frenzy which, along the road of the Drapers, of the Galleons, fascinated the sailors and cabin boys and whose a little naughty anecdotes still kindled the nostalgia. The rest: the filth and misery, drunkenness and syphilis, slums conducive to dubious promiscuities, the polluted waters running in the gutters*

*and the dark places where the thugs and girls without joy... The rest, Yes, we could forget it. The memory is so. She is sorting"* (Simon, 2011)

This modern and monumental architecture at the antipodes of what was present before thus became *"the scapegoat of daily life of the inhabitants of Le Havre"* (D'Architecture, 1994) of the lost paradise for over 50 years.

#### d. Synopsis

The connections between the three types of storytelling will help to make sense of the reconstruction process of the Le Havre. On one side, the institutional storyline came from the highest instance possible, the government, it could thus not be dispatched and imposed itself at the expense of the local municipality story to rebuild the city similarly to the old. The choice an internationally renowned architect strengthened this storyline and legitimised it. Furthermore, the willingness to create a laboratory for modern architecture out of Le Havre to take place in the political power plays of the country meant that only one agenda was followed, that of the state, whose motives are often unclear or not understood by the common population.

The lack of an official communication strategy to translate this institutional storytelling implied that the rationalization storytelling was monopolized by the media. While the enthusiasm of the elitist artistic community never got through to the population and that the academic community had not yet taken interest in the matter, meant that the local media was the main portrayer of the reconstructed city to the population, this portrayal was mainly negative, even though some efforts were made for the appropriation of the city.

The context of the trauma in which the citizens lived the reconstruction and the incomprehension to the modernity of the city, stirred-up by a virulent rationalization storytelling led to a rejection of the new city and the start of a fantasized depiction of the old pre-war city. The reality proposed to the population was not in accordance with their capacity of understanding this reality, and the reality depicted by the media reinforced the rejection, the population thus created a new reality, that of a glorified past.

## 2) *Le Havre the largest communist city in France (1965-1982)*

### a. Institutional Storytelling

The post reconstruction period is characterized by two main factors, the political color of the city, as it is under communist rule until 1995 and the crisis that hit in the 1970s following the post-war golden years. These will define the institutional storytelling of this period of history.

Firstly, the golden years meant that the population of the city grew at a massive rate because of a rural exodus of people looking for jobs, this entailed an urban sprawl of the city towards the north and the east, the two only placed towards which the city could sprawl as it is land locked. This was also due to the new national politic of development aiming at decentralization in the valley of the Seine. Eight metropolises were targeted, including Le Havre, leading to the industrial activity of the port growing tenfold due to the implementation of Renault in 1963, the reinforcement of the petrol and metallurgy industries and extension works in 1965. This meant the city needed a larger workforce, especially of the poorer working class (Gravari-Barbas, 2004). This urban sprawl indicates that the rebuilt city-center is not anymore positioned in the center geographically. Furthermore, after the crisis hit, the population really suffered, with high levels of unemployment as many industries shut down, such as the port. This meant the apartments were left mostly vacant as deemed too expensive by a predominantly poorer working-class population (Maridort, 2017).

*“they [the city-center] are the most expensive neighborhoods per square metre”* (Interview of Duteurtre, 2019, 32:00)

Meant for 40 000 people, the city-center only holds 27 268 in 1962 (Liotard, 2007), leading to a serious lack of animation and urban life. The city-center is thus left marginalized. Pascal Denecheau (2019, 12:46) confirmed this tendency in the interview, the city *“is very divided between very rich people and very poor people.”*

However, the city is beset by a real housing problem, on top of having to care for the housing of the victims of war, it now needs to care for the housing of the victims of life (Liotard, 2007). The communist municipality therefore had to take care of the urgency of the situation of the housing shortage, by building social housing massively.

*“money was not spent to beautify the city but rather for social actions”* (Interview Denecheau, 2019, 12:40)

It thus left the city-center relatively untouched and uncared for. Gravari-Barbas also questions whether this could be due to the political affiliation of the municipality

*“Without wanting to schematize situations certainly much more complex, one would tend to say that the analysis of other communist mandates in France, such as the one, for example, of Le Mans, testifies to the same reluctance of the local actors to exploit the vein of heritage and tourism for the purpose of economic development”* (Gravari-Barbas, 2004, p.588-611)

Nevertheless, the communist municipality has portrayed a poor image of the city as a whole throughout France, as “Le Havre, the largest communist city of France” (Barzman et al., 1996, p.14). Communism was viewed as the enemy from the east in the middle of the Cold War, and the reputation of the city really suffered from it.

*“And then there was also a point that was complicated in terms of image, it was the political color of the municipality, as since the 60s, Le Havre was ruled by [...] communist municipalities. And regardless of the work they did, the communists, the way to manage the city, which had probably pros and cons, there is no debate, but on the other hand in terms of image vis-à-vis the outside Le Havre was a little marginalized”* (Interview of Duteurtre, 2019, 13:50)

The context of the crisis and the communist municipality thus explain the further degradation of the image of Le Havre, as this poor image now extends to most of France. Le Havre is no longer just despised by its inhabitants, but also from the rest of France now. The image of the city is one of a grey industrial, poor, communist city.

#### b. Rationalization Storytelling

The rationalization storytelling during this period can be again divided in three subcategories, the political and official stance and communication, the local and national media coverage and finally the academic articles.

Once again, no official communication strategy is employed by the municipality, however one document comes out, that of ‘The black book of housing’ (Le livre noir du logement)

(Ville du Havre, 1966). This book aims at denouncing the critical state of contemporary housing and alerts to the need of more funds to construct 2000 new HLM (Habitation a Loyer Modéré, standing for Accommodation with Moderate Rent), which is the French social housing, and another 500 accommodation buildings. The book also includes a petition to sign for a *“radical change in the housing policy in our country”*. It is very indicative in the state in which Le Havre is situated in the post-reconstruction period. Furthermore, it is in the continuity of holding the state accountable for their situation.

The second storytelling that can be found by the politics is in light of the elections of 1977, where the conservative opposition uses the slogan *“Communist city, Sad city”* (Liotard, 2007). The bad image of the city is now used as a political tool for elections.

Political slogan that is in line with the media coverage on the city at that time

*“too many concrete cubes (...) Le Havre now secretes sadness and gloom”* (Le Courrier Havrais, February 1977 In: Maridort, 2017)

*“fighting the extension of concrete in the city and preserving the living environment”* (Le Courrier Havrais, 1981 In: Maridort, 2017)

The city gains the nickname ‘Stalingrad-sur-Mer’ and it’s famed boulevard who was supposed to compete with ‘Les Champs-Élysées’ is rebaptized ‘Staline-allée’ (Gravari-Barbas, 2004)

*“It was the Communist city, you know the nickname of Le Havre at the time, Stalingrad-sur-Mer. It is true that it is an appellation that was still heard at the time, so it really showed a picture of a marginalized city, grey, which did not correspond to a French identity in a broader way”* (Interview of Duteurtre, 2019, 14:28)

This image of the grey communist city was such that it served as a movie set to depict a city from the Eastern bloc, in the movie ‘Le complot’ of Agnieszka Holland in 1988. The image of the city is further deteriorated nationwide with the touristic guides at the time, preconizing to avoid the city by all costs.

*“It is a city that does not have a good reputation. The tourist guides, to take the Guide Hachette and the Gallimard, it was: «Le Havre, do not go there!» or «Le Havre, if you go*

*there, do not tell your friends, they would laugh at you!»*” (Dhervillez, 2016 In: Maridort, 2017)

An analysis of the touristic guides from 1967 to 1985 confirms this as Maridort (2017) writes. As a culminating point in the bad press of the city in the standings of the the cities where it is nice to live by the journals L’Express or Le Point, Le Havre sits constantly in the bottom places (Galinon-Mélénec, 2007).

*“and then there was surely the crisis [...], the workers' crisis that Le Havre lived on a head on. Le Havre is still an industrial city, mostly working-class. So the exterior image or even the overall image of the city was that of a city with an industry in crisis, a port [...] in crisis at the time”* (Interview of Duteurtre, 2019, 13:13)

It is in this deleterious context that the first real academic research on the reconstructed city takes places. Damais (1972) critics the socio-spatial composition of the city with a clear segregation between the reconstructed city-center or ‘Low City’ (rich) and the ‘High City’ (‘Ville Haute’) (poor) induced by the reconstruction. He also conducted a study on the densities and makes note of the empty spaces and their consequence for commercial activity and urban life.

On the other hand, Soucy (1970) attempt to answer the question whether the lack of urban life in the city-center is due to the urbanism of Perret, at the source of the rejection of the city-center or if it is due to the context, he is not able to provide an answer to this question but clearly states the reconstructed city-center of Perret is a social failure, dreary and late on its time.

The rationalization storytelling has continued in the continuity of the reconstruction period, by deteriorating the image of Le Havre, however, this time around the local media have found support in the politicians, whether it is the opposition who brand their election campaign under “Communist city, Sad city”, or the communist municipality who actively avoids the city-center, and the academia who blames the current problems on the urbanism used during the reconstruction, there no more opposition to shine a positive light on the city, whether it is the locals or nationwide.

### c. Reactionary Storytelling

The reactionary storytelling in this post reconstruction period is pretty much unchanged, the rejection is still total. The younger generations growing up with the stories of their parents reproduce the storytelling and rejection of the reconstructed city-center, while the newcomers have little to no interaction with it due to the socio-spatial segregation, they therefore assume that the city is to the image of where they live.

*“Indeed, afterwards the image is still degraded, the people who had participated in the reconstruction are gone, have aged, this pride has a little dropped and there was a lot of ignorance that settled on the history of this reconstruction, and the young inhabitants of Le Havre were unaware of the exceptionality of this reconstruction”* (Interview of Duteurtre, 2019, 12:50)

This pride Vincent Duteurtre talks about was from the few inhabitants who actively participated in the reconstruction, the last bastion of a positive image of the reconstruction is therefore gone.

*“By speaking with Mrs. Gruel (who was about 17 years old when she returned to Le Havre), I was able to note the importance of the narration of her parents and grandparents when she remembers the old town. Although having quite personal memories about this, she refers above all to what her family had been able to tell her”* (Maridort, 2017, p.77/translated)

And the newcomers do not understand the reconstruction any better

*“People who have not lived there [the city center], they consider them as poorly constructed buildings, people compare a lot with what they know, so for them it is the reconstruction, and everything is the same reconstruction. If they know someone who lives in a building, a building of the reconstruction and the walls are thinner, and we hear the neighbors, for them it will be the same thing for us. The quality of the reconstructed buildings actually varies from an architect to another as well as the amount that was spent by the reconstruction cooperatives.”* (Interview Denecheau, 2019, 31:49)

This abandonment and rejection of the city-center and the city as a whole ensued a degradation thereof as it was poorly maintained, hidden and not cared for.

*“The degradation coming, this economic construction will contribute much to form a repulsive image of the social Habitat. (...) The other phenomenon is the impoverishment of the architectural and urban design, in favor of important commands where the repetition of the types by the use of the counter-layer becomes part of the new production mode.”*

(Liotard, 2007)

The reactionary storytelling remained pretty much unchanged after the reconstruction, if not worsening by the gradual disappearance of the pride of those involved and the economic crisis. But while the reactionary storytelling did not alter, the physical structure of the rebuilt city-centre did, it suffered from the lack of maintenance and the patchworks made around it to hide it.

#### d. Synopsis

All in all, during this post reconstruction phase, the three storytelling theories were quite consistent one with the other. The institutional storytelling ignored the reconstructed city-centre and focused on the housing crisis, while the reconstruction itself was empty of both people and urban life. The rationalization storytelling used the crisis and political colour to even further degrade the image of Le Havre this time nationally as well as locally. And the rejection of the reconstructed city centre by the inhabitants led to the degradations thereof and therefore decreasing its esthetical appeal.

This period shows a first glance of what storytelling can achieve when the three theories of storytelling are in line, in just a few years the image of Le Havre was nationally discredited and despised.

### 3) Vision Shift (1982-1995)

#### a. Institutional Storytelling

The period of 1982 – 1995 is the start of a progressive vision shift of the reconstructed city of Perret which correlates with the start of a communication strategy of the municipality aiming to forge a new image of the city in the public opinion. This period is therefore characterized with a real work done towards urban communication, public relations and branding of the city (Maridort, 2017).



This shift in the strategy of the municipality follows the Defferre law of 1982, which prompted to more autonomy for communes and departments. This law sparked the start of a fierce competition between the important regional cities and the use of communication as a weapon in this fight (Maridort, 2017). Rouen, the capital of the Normandie region being less than a 100km away, was the main competition for Le Havre. In 1983, the department of Information of the municipality was created in Le Havre, its role being to produce a monthly report of the municipal actions. In 1985, the department of communication was created (Maridort, 2017) after it was assessed *“The scope of communication as a factor for the development of local democratic life has certainly been underestimated”* (Serveau, 1984 In: Maridort, 2017).

Following this, the communication strategy not only worked towards the betterment of the image of Le Havre, but also brought urban development around the city to spring to life the local economy. Thus in 1986, the project ‘Bridge of the Estuary’ (‘Pont de l’Estuaire’) takes place opening up the city considerably as it increases the connections to the south. This project will be the start of a series of other projects with the role to dynamize the city centre, making the city centre. These projects are the extension of the Town Hall, with the creation of an underground parking (1987), a pedestrianisation of the roads around the Halles (1988), the creation of a large commercial centre in the Coty neighbourhood (1994-1999) and the reconfiguration of the neighbourhood of the Rond-Point, which already started with the inauguration of the University in 1984 (Maridort, 2017).

This series of projects around the city centre illustrate the renewed importance of the city centre in the urban development and strategy of the city. The reconstructed city centre of Perret takes a crucial role in the change of image of the city and thus the regional competition.

*“For a long time, the neglected one was the reconstructed city centre [...] In the end, we beat around the bush. All operations that were made [...] [it] touched everything except the reconstructed city centre. There was the promenade of the beach, there was the beginning of a reflection on the city entrance [...] so in fact the reconstruction area was surrounded by planning programs, but no one touched the centre [...] there was no desire for the reconstructed centre...”* (Sylvie Barot In: Gravari-Barbas, 2004)

This is exemplified by a study the municipality requests from the CEBTP on the state of conservation of the concrete in the city centre (Maridort, 2017), thus showing the willingness of the municipality to become expert in their city.

Furthermore, the second event that sparked this newfound interest in the city centre is the change of political affiliation in the municipality, from 1989 to 1995 the municipality is mixt between the communist and socialist parties. The second deputy, Patrick Fouilland from the socialist party was put in charge of the urbanism in the city centre and was given little power

*“The second Deputy had no power, so he still had to take an interest in the sector left to him by the PC [communist party] and the SIVOM, i.e. the city centre and the reconstructed part (...)” (Barot In: Gravari-Barbas, 2004)*

This political tension resulted in the urban centre of Perret taking notice and being the only place the socialist party could express itself. Thus the project valorising the city centre are the consequence of a political affirmation.

In 1990 a study was conducted by the city to analyse the current state of the image of Le Havre, this study aimed to be comprehensive by incorporating 30 local thought leaders (heads of administration, economic organisations, trade-unions, businesses, sports and cultural organisations and journalists), 30 national thought leaders with the same composition, 270 people of the local general public (liberal professions, traders, senior and middle managers, employees, workers, service personnel, housewives, students, unemployed and retired) and 90 of the national general public. The image of Le Havre was compared to four other French cities along five criteria that could be viewed as an advantage or a handicap, three main themes came out the economy and industrial fabric, daily life and the image of the city overall. And finally, they tested slogans upon the population pool.

The results of this study will be further discussed in the section of reactionary storytelling, however, what is important to note is that the city officials were interested in the image of the city, the why and the how. This was a conscious strategic study to focus on forging a new image for the city.

## b. Rationalization Storytelling

The rationalization storytelling in this period of time follows the start of the communication strategy of the municipality and some secular academic conferences on the reconstructed cities. The communication strategy however hurts itself at first against the popular press, very present and not very diversified in Le Havre consisting of its identity. It has a high penetration strength but a low diffusion one.

In 1984 were the first strategies of communication of the municipality, Max Serveau conducted an investigation to find the assets of the city. And multiple assets were found, the proximity to Paris and England, the presence of the sea, a marina, an important beach, a harbour and industrial environment deemed exceptional, and a cultural history world renown, referencing to the impressionist painting movement, as well as the proximity to touristic sites such as the cliffs of Éretrat. However, the reconstructed city of Perret is not mentioned directly and the ambition limits itself to being a touristic stage rather than destination (Maridort, 2017).

The urban communication plan consists more of an educational communication, giving explanations on the diverse projects rather than a strategy willing to convince, to gain members to the cause. The reconstructed city centre is mentioned with a typing mistake, confusing the architect Auguste 'Perret' with the neighbourhood of 'Perrey', it briefly states the quality of the reconstruction providing important space for circulation and parking and branding the city as *"Le Havre in 1984 is the only big city without a parking meter"* (Maridort, 2017, p.83).

In 1985 a new study of the brand-new communication department is undertaken with the mission to find an identity for Le Havre. The reconstructed city is still viewed quite poorly, talking of a *"new city with right angles"* (Maridort, 2017 p. 83), the monotony of the concrete. Le Havre is viewed as *"lively with labor, more or less fluctuant depending on the interpretation each and every one"* (Maridort, 2017 p. 84). The identity of Le Havre however still rests in its harbor according to this study *"The port is the constant that nourishes the identity of the city (...) It is through the port that the past and the future of Le Havre combine"* (Maridort, 2017 p. 84).

However, this study also is the one to preconize the use of diverse communication methods in the face of the monopoly of the local newspapers. From this, the magazine 'Cité' is born which finds a real success, with the scale of diffusion going much beyond what was expected. The success story is so total that 'Cité Vision' follows, a 15 minute video by Topaze Production played on the national tv channel 'France 3' once a month from 1986 to 1992 and later 'Cité Minute' in the format of a minute played 3 times a day on the radio channel Europe 2 (Maridort, 2017).

In 1986, during the period of projects following that of the 'Bridge of the Estuary' a campaign was put in place to raise awareness, but also to inform and educate on the projects to the population with the name 'Le Havre has Hearts' (Archives Municipales du Havre, 1984, 526W5 In: Maridort, 2017), not only diving in to the affectionate using the word hearts, but also showing the plurality of the identity of Le Havre, with no true center, but many different neighborhoods. The campaign used the new magazine 'Cité' and 'Cité Vision' as platforms as well as posters, a press conference, a movie in the cinema, and a theatre play in the Town Hall. The diversity of medias used is remarkable, and the title of the article in 'Cité' in 1988 *"We remake the city [...] to better seduce"* give the objectives followed.

In 1990, another study took place based on the image of the city, one that was already mentioned in the institutional storytelling. The concretization of this research is a pamphlet in 1992 called 'Le Havre, you will come', this pamphlet was directed more towards the leaders of thought with the hope they will spread it to the general population, and the newcomers, often students and executives with the modernization of the activities of Le Havre. Finally, the reconstructed city center is valorized with *"... Buildings oriented to guarantee the best sunshine " or " 35 m<sup>2</sup> of green spaces per capita"* and *"The forest at 5 minutes of the center"* (Archives Municipales du Havre, 1991, 526W15 In: Maridort, 2017). The search for identity is also portrayed in the pamphlet with different appellation of the city *"Le Havre the Bretonne"*, *"Le Havre the discreet"*, *"Le Havre the ambitious"*, *"Le Havre the pioneer"* or *"Le Havre the megalomaniac"* (Archives Municipales du Havre, 1991, 526W15 In: Maridort, 2017). The main point around this communication is that for the first time the modernity of the reconstruction is viewed as an asset, whether it is luminosity, air, circulation, sunshine exposition etc... It adds that the condition needed to appreciate it is to

*"know how to open your eyes"* (Archives Municipales du Havre, 1991, 526W15 In: Maridort, 2017). This is a significant quote as it implies that the reason the inhabitants of Le Havre have rejected it is because they have closed their eyes or have just looked at the reconstruction but not seen it. This has two meanings, firstly it abandons the glorified myth of the pre-war city, which is symbolised with open your eyes, and secondly it means we will give you the means to see the city in a new light, we will give you the clues necessary to understand the city and truly see it.

*"because to speak and to claim something it must be understood and when we do not have the codes, when we have not benefited from a little explanation it is difficult to claim and explain this architecture."* (Interview of Duteurtre, 2019, 18:41)

However, the article is not devoid of critique towards the reconstructed centre either, as if to say that there was foundation to this critique. Once more this can be viewed as a process towards a transition by claiming the critique was not unfounded but now it is necessary to go forward and not live in the past, to take the advantages of the city and claim it as our own. This approach is continued when the old and the new are conflated.

*"The architecture of the in between war period succeeds to the eclecticism and uses concrete and brick "* (Jacono & Arnould, 2000)

*" many villas [...] present a modernity and elegance that anticipate certain achievements of the reconstruction"* (Jacono & Arnould, 2000)

This is an attempt to filiate the pre-war architecture with the Perret architecture claiming they have similarities in their modernity, in the use of concrete. There is therefore no separation from the past with the reconstruction but a continuity.

The article in 1994 in 'Cité' will go even further into defending the reconstructed city centre of Le Havre with a special edition titled 'Reconstruction'

*"These [the local elected representatives], guided by extremely conservative architectural ideals, dreamed only of finding a reproduction of the old Le Havre (...) The greatness of Perret was precisely to refuse that "* (Jacono & Arnould, 2000)

*"(...) Le Havre is to date a model of large-scale rehousing "* (Jacono & Arnould, 2000)

These statements are clear propaganda to reconsider the history of the reconstruction in a different eyesight. The idea of wanting to keep the old Le Havre is first denigrated and then put on the back of the municipality of the time, while Perret is portrayed as the hero who comes save the situation by refusing these demands. The reality of the situation was however very different, everyone, including the population wanted the city to resemble what they once knew. The second quote once again is far from the reality, the housing crisis that followed the reconstruction and the socio-spatial segregation it ensued was mainly due to the reconstruction itself.

And finally at the 50 year anniversary of the destruction of Le Havre the focus during the festivities was more towards the reconstruction than the destruction, with a theatre piece in 12 acts where all the witnesses were partisans of the reconstruction without an ounce of critique. It was portrayed as big saga where no conflicts existed between the municipality, inhabitants and Perret. The under title of the theatre piece expressed the objective of the approach as *"a spectacle that will be an opportunity for many inhabitants to rediscover their city..."*

During this period the view of the reconstruction by the academia also changed, during the second conference of the reconstructed cities, J.P. Damais who also participated in the first edition presents the difference

*"the reconstructed areas of the French cities devastated in the last war are today a legacy"*  
(Damais, 1994)

From an ugly, bleak, grey and rejected city, the stance on Le Havre changed dramatically, now a city which ought to be respected as it constitutes a unique moment in history. From living in the past, Le Havre starts to live in the present by categorising the reconstruction as the past.

To conclude, the period of 1982 – 1995 is the start of a communication strategy by the municipality with the clear intention to change the image and forge a renewed identity around the city centre. This objective is pursued through many urban development projects and the appropriation of the media with the creation of a communication department. The new forms of communication available notably the television provide a larger audience and a stronger communication, as the old saying goes 'an image provides a 1000 words'. This

communication happened at first progressively and more on the basis of educating and informing, to then over time take the a more propaganda route with the aim of convincing, even if the truth is sometimes left out. This shift in image of the city is also present in the academic world with the premise of a heritage-making era.

### c. Reactionary Storytelling

The reactionary storytelling of this period is most notably seen in the results of the 1990 study by the professional organization 'Points Clés Management' which was mentioned in the institutional storytelling section of this period. The aim of the study was to analyze the state of the current image by locals and by the exterior, as well as finding the assets the city could build upon to revive this image. The conclusion followed three main themes, the economic potential of the city, or its assets, the daily life and the overall image.

The first point being the economic assets, these were identified as being the harbor and its surrounding activities, the industrial activity and the important leisure potential, especially in relation to the seaside. With the flaws being the low diversification of economic activities, which were mainly related to the harbour (Maridort, 2017).

Concerning daily life, 70% of the inhabitants of Le Havre find the city enjoyable to live in, with a high proportion of the non-active population and the above 55-year-old population. The city is perceived as being dynamic on a cultural and sportive level, especially by the younger generation, the employees and labourers. However less than 10% of the pool of interviewees consider Le Havre as the most dynamic city, between the five cities proposed to them (Toulon, Brest, Lille and St-Etienne, all relatively similar cities to Le Havre with a strong industrial landscape) (Maridort, 2017).

Concerning the image of the city, Le Havre is regarded as an unwelcoming city, with poor urban life and a certain sadness about it. Except with the non-active population the degree of attachment to the city is very low, especially with the young. And finally, 60.1% of the local general public find the modern architecture not interesting, while 60% of the larger national public cannot pronounce themselves on the subject. The appreciation is also negative within the leaders of thought and the general public from Normandie.

However, Le Havre is the most well-known city, in the five available, abroad, it is well known for its harbour activities and its proximity to the sea, it is however not very easily

recognisable with no stand out landmark, and no particular image. It is regarded as not very culturally dynamic and with low amounts of tourism, which according to the study is due to the ignorance regarding the city. Finally, the city centre is considered austere.

The conclusions of this article display a slight betterment of the image locally and a general lack of image from the exterior. While the dark years of the crisis and unanimous poor image of Le Havre have passed, there is still a general feeling of rejection towards the reconstructed city of Perret and the lack of a singular strong Le Havre identity, the city is still most notably defined by its harbour. A city considered nice to live in, but with a rejected city centre.

#### d. Synopsis

The period between 1982 and 1995 is marked by the shift in vision of the city centre, from disregarded it becomes a true asset going forward. The municipality strong of a new communication strategy has performed numerous studies and research on the image of Le Havre to make the city more competitive regionally. These studies show a lack of strong identity around a focal point, rather a multitude of identities, one for each neighbourhood. They also show a lack of diversification when it comes to the economy, a strong potential for leisure and poor cultural dynamics. The solution is therefore made obvious to them, the reconstructed city centre of Perret, not only will this solve the identity crisis the population of Le Havre find themselves in, it will also rebrand the city and attract tourism to diversify the economy. Following this a strong storytelling propaganda for the reconstructed city centre takes place by glorifying it, legitimising it, and making abstraction of the past, now is the time to live in the present. The city centre is also starting to be viewed as a heritage in the academic world, this is the premise of the heritage-making period that follows.

### *4) Le Havre, the Reinvented City (1995-2008)*

#### a. Institutional Storytelling

The heritage-making period, from 1995 to 2006 was delineated with a strategy of label obtentions from the municipality and the protection of the reconstructed city centre. This political play was initiated by the communist municipality and a group of researchers, and then conducted by the new right-wing municipality present from 1995, under the impulsion of the mayor Antoine Rufenacht.



The new municipality set out two priorities for its mandate, first attenuate the social disparities in the city and second make the reconstructed city the showcase of the local identity and the window display for tourists, the target is therefore more towards the exterior than the locals. The municipality hopes that from an exterior positive image, the image the locals have of their city will also change. This strategy therefore focuses on the present and the future and finally let's go of the past.

The first step in this process was the implementation of the ZPPAUP, a tool of protection for the heritage available since the decentralization law of 1983. Installed in 1995 it not only protected the buildings but gave a juristic frame in which the renovation and restoration of the buildings could take place (Maridort, 2017). This was a crucial move as more and more shopkeepers were painting over the concrete, or hiding it behind fake facades, the reconstructed city was deteriorating as it was not taken care of.

*“there have been other concrete elements which are the operations of restoration [...], of changing the commercial signs, there was a cleaning work [...] back to the state of origin of the facades of Perret which has concretely valorized the image of these buildings. And so when people say, the city has taken up colors, yes indeed. Almost all the buildings have already been restored, they have been very well restored in the last years, because now we have techniques to remake the concretes identical to what they were originally, so that we no longer have the phenomena of patchworks, of really not beautiful cover-ups, with grey coatings on beige concrete. And so concretely the image, [...] the physiognomy of the city it has taken a little bit of quality, of gilding”* (Interview of Duteurtre, 2019, 32:42)

Thus, the first phase around which the city has been put in value is by having a clean-up operation aiming at revitalising the marginalised neighbourhoods and opening them up, reorganising the waste fields of the harbour and the interface between the harbour and the city.

*“there are still concrete elements of change, first the urban dynamics that there is around the reconstructed centre, there are neighbourhoods that have been rehabilitated, the entrance of the city that was really more meticulous”* (Interview of Duteurtre, 2019, 30:58)

The second phase turns around the communication projects aiming at increasing the attractiveness of the city, projects such as the planning of the beach by Alexandre Chemetoff in

1995 (under previous municipality) or the restructuration of the Malraux museum by Laurent and Emmanuelle Baudouin in 1999 (Maridort, 2017), the Casino in 2006 or the lighting show around the emblematic buildings of the city centre in 1996. These projects are clearly aimed at attracting tourists.

The strategy also works, in 1999 the label 'Pavillon bleu' is won by the city for the quality of its beaches and activity around them. And in 2001 it is the label of 'Art and History' which is won. However, neither of these labels is exclusive to the reconstructed city centre of Perret as the 'Art and History' label also takes into account the heritage of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. However, a new label will give the reconstructed city centre of Perret its recognition, the world-heritage label by UNESCO in 2004.

*"In this sense, the policy of labels enters into the same logic as the voluntarist heritage-making of Perret: to make by discourse a reality that does not yet exist" (Gravari-Barbas, 2004).*

Indeed, this race of acquiring labels one after the other in order to stimulate a change in image is basically using storytelling as method to create reality. There is thus a merging between the institutional and rationalization storytelling, between storytelling as a method of planning and storytelling as a method for planning. The process of planning and what constitutes planning is a story, and this finality is also used as a tool to tell a story. However, as the strategy was mainly used to change the image of the city for the outsiders first, it did not include the local population and thus did not merge with the reactionary storytelling, instead aiming at separating themselves from it. Therefore from the outside it may be seen that the change of image of the city is rather radical and sudden, it is actually very progressive as Vincent Duteurtre explains.

*"This process of change of image, of appropriation it is still quite gradual, there are milestones that punctuates the process, so we must cite the protection zone that was introduced in 1995, which is really the element a little founder of all this dynamic. It is worth mentioning in 2001 to obtain the label of art and history [...]. One must cite the research community which in the years 80, notably through a researcher named Joseph Abram, that undertook research on the work of Auguste Perret in Le Havre" (Interview of Duteurtre, 2019, 21:32)*

Indeed, the sacralisation of the heritage-making process with the obtention of the UNESCO world heritage label rests upon a strong foundation of scientific research undertaken 20 years earlier, but also the idea of seeking this label comes from the researcher community and the NGO DoCoMoMo (in the form of an association in France).

*“The scientific work he [Joseph Abram] has done in the years 80 has served as a real basis for all this dynamic of the valuation of protection, it was the scientific foundation of everything that happened behind and in particular also of the investigations of the DRAC, the Regional Directorate of Cultural Affairs, which carried out the inventory of the heritage of Le Havre in the 90s, early 90s I believe, and all this scientific background it allowed the obtaining of labels, protection but also a whole work of publication, a whole work of exhibitions, so a cultural work that allowed to talk about the reconstruction to the general public.”* (Interview of Duteurtre, 2019, 22:32)

*“the inscription to the world heritage, the idea she was not born in Le Havre, it was born really in the midst of researchers and in particular the association DoCoMoMo”* (Interview of Duteurtre, 2019, 23:58)

This idea was then provided to the communist municipality at the time (1993) who asked Joseph Abram to create a case file, the process was then undertaken by the following municipality under Antoine Rufenacht, but this would also explain the strong communication strategy of the municipality during the 1990s.

*“The idea of a UNESCO application from Le Havre took shape in 1993”* (Abram In: Maridort, 2017)

There were however very few people convinced of this project at the municipality,

*“and there were very few people convinced at first in the town hall of Le Havre”* (Interview of Duteurtre, 2019, 25:20)

However, there were some attenuating factors to the potential success of acquiring the label, the first one was the friendship between the mayor Rufenacht, the French president Chirac and the French delegate at UNESCO Guéginou (Rufenacht In: Maridort, 2017), which made it much easier to access to the indicative list of proposed sites (per country) for world-heritage. The second factor was the national politic strategy towards heritage-making at the

time aiming at recognising the modern heritage as well (Archives Municipales de la Ville du Havre, 1049W11). And the third factor was that the timing was perfect, Chandigarh was also building up a case file but were lagging behind Le Havre, and it was unlikely for the two sites to be accepted due to their similitudes in architecture (Le Corbusier was at first a disciple of Perret, after leaving in bad terms and lobbying to make the Perret architecture disappear), it was thus necessary to not lose time and prioritise this application in order to have a French site, instead of another one (Archives Municipales de la Ville du Havre, 1049W11). Le Havre and its reconstructed city centre of Perret for these reasons was the perfect match.

To conclude, the strategies employed by the municipality were present and future driven in quest for a new image of Le Havre and an acceptance of the city by its inhabitants through a positive outside opinion and at the same time a touristification of the city to bring in a new economy. This led to a race for the acquiring of labels merging the institutional and rationalization storytelling. Already backed by the state for political purposes and perfect timing the reconstructed city centre became a world-heritage site of UNESCO.

#### b. Rationalization Storytelling

The rationalization storytelling during this period is met between two camps, the municipality trying through storytelling to create a new reality and the local and national media reacting with polemic after the surprise of the UNESCO world-heritage label.

Firstly, the stance of the municipality can be understood as in order to substantiate this world-heritage label the city needed to bring the inhabitants on board, as Abram made them aware that one of the conditions of the UNESCO world-heritage committee is

*“awareness on the part of the population concerned without which any safeguarding enterprise would be illusory”* (Abram, 1996 In: Maridort, 2017)

Bonneau-Contremoulins and Lecerf noticed while going through the archives that nothing had been done towards the population to explain the world-heritage, even many people in the municipality were uninformed (Maridort, 2017). Indeed, the mayor Rufenacht opted for a strategy of discretion towards the population because of the fear that a failed attempt will doom the city image and the bad press his own term would receive (Maridort, 2017), term using the slogan *“Make the inhabitants of Le Havre once again proud of their city”*

Once the ZPPAUP was established, two weeks after the festivities of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the destruction of Le Havre and all the propaganda it ensued, two communication strategies from the municipality took place, firstly publish as many books, articles, make expositions, create a cultural dynamism around the city and at the same time help the population realise and understand the uniqueness of their heritage, and secondly with a field agent also called "heritage development officers", from 1999 onwards, in charge of explaining the new regulations to the shopkeepers and people, as well as a the department of 'Urbanism and Prospective of the city' mediating between the municipality and the citizens and educating the population. A meeting is performed every month including the citizens and the Architects of Buildings of France to review the current projects.

*"Finally, the creation of the ZPPAUP, of local initiative, is the culmination of this heritage production. "To promote and recognise the heritage of Perret, to protect it and to valorize it while foreshadowing its evolution, to prolong its modernity to transform what is too often perceived as a handicap as a development asset for the city, such are the issues of the ZPPAUP implemented on the reconstructed Center of Le Havre" (Le Havre, Rapport de presentation, June 1994, p.6)*

*"The city had instituted a system of protection of the reconstructed zone and I, when I arrived in the city, we worked a lot to explain the interest of this protection to the inhabitants to shopkeepers, to building companies." (Interview of Duteurtre, 2019, 1:21)*

The actions undertaken as indirect communication strategy include books such as "Le Havre, the port: Seine-Maritime" in 1997, "Le Havre: Auguste Perret and the reconstruction" and «Le Havre: City, port, agglomeration» in 1999, and then "Le Havre: a port, new cities" in 2005, these books playing an important role in the diffusion of educational material on the reconstruction to a non-expert public.

A communication campaign in 1997 by Jean-René Martel aims at the local population focusing on two points, the esthetical qualities of the reconstructed city, and the second one is to instil a common pride into the inhabitants. For this he used a poster campaign, using a picture of the city with underneath a note "A canal in Venice? No the square Saint-Roch" for example (Maridort, 2017).

A study was also published in 2001, realised by Sorgem between 1997 and 2001, making an analysis of the whole of the national press to understand what image Le Havre portrays nationwide. Its conclusions give a city with three faces : Le Havre as a harbour city, Le Havre as a destroyed city in 1944 and Le Havre and its architecture and reconstruction (Frecault et al., 2015). This gives a much better image already than the previous studies made (and aforementioned in the Vision Shift section) making way for a relative ignorance towards Le Havre. They also confirm that the direction the municipality is taking is the right one and their communication strategy functions.

Furthermore in light of the UNESCO label, Abram advises to publish more papers in professional and cultural journals to touch a specialist public as well as preparing a international exposition on the reconstruction and have more participations with the association DoCoMoMo through strategic publications, which was done in 1997 as in the international conference of DoCoMoMo there were 2 specialised articles dedicated to Le Havre (Archives Municipales de la ville du Havre, 1998, 1049W5).

An international exposition took place from 1998 to 2002 called “Perret and the poetry of concrete”, as well as a conference regrouping the three main representatives of 20<sup>th</sup> century architecture Brasilia, Le Havre and Chandigarh (Maridort, 2017).

The year of 2002, also called the ‘Perret year’ which was heavily consecrated to him, as at this time Le Havre was on the indicative list of UNESCO world-heritage waiting for approval or denial. It makes sense of six expositions, conference-visits, animated workshops for the children, hosting many specialised groups such as DoCoMoMo, The Friends of the French Monuments, and architecture schools, making for 1200 visitors, a catalogue on the Perret exposition is published in the Malraux museum presenting the interiors of apartments (Abram, 2003) and the thought of acquiring model apartment is germinating (Maridort, 2017).

However, once the UNESCO world-heritage label is acquired the national press is in full shock and cannot quite believe its eyes

*"After the cave of Lascaux, the Pont du Gard or the Mont-Saint-Michel, it is the austere city centre of Le Havre, a hieratic ode to reinforced concrete, which invited itself [...] on the list of*

*the 28 French jewels inscribed by UNESCO in the world heritage of humanity"* (Grégoire Alix, Le Monde, 2005 In: L'Express, 2007)

*"To this news, some questioned whether UNESCO had not fallen on the head. Perhaps thinking that beauty is the only criterion chosen.... But it is not. Good, because the concrete charm of Le Havre is not obvious"* (Cécile Margain, La Liberté, 2005 In: L'Express, 2007)

*"It is all Le Havre that freezes in history, since UNESCO has had this bizarre idea to include the city centre in the heritage of humanity"* (Edouard Launet, Libération, 2006 In: L'Express, 2007)

*"At first I thought it was a joke. Le Havre's HLM classified as a world heritage site! Has UNESCO gone mad or what? Tomorrow, it would require formica to replace mahogany at Buckingham Palace. The universal repentance virus had struck again. It was also going to have to kneel before the concrete horrors to apologize for our past mistakes"* (Gilles Martin-Chauffier, Paris-Match, 2005 In: L'Express, 2007)

While it is true a large part of the French press was at first very negative towards this nomination, it was however not the case for everyone, especially for the international press

*"Beyond a part of the" hot "press, there have been many, many articles for a very, very long time, paying tribute to Le Havre, in a documented way. Many foreign press especially: Anglo-Saxon, German, etc... The Germans have understood better. They also lived through the bombing. There were a lot of Japanese magazines too."* (Dhervillez In: Maridort, 2017)

*"Beneath beautiful changing skies at the Boudin [...], the city fascinates with a strange beauty, a mirror of New York on a human scale"* (Philippe Couderc, Challenges, 2005 In: L'Express, 2007)

*"While I tasted my second beer, the late afternoon sun began pouring gold on the Perret buildings and bouncing on the stained-glass windows of St. Joseph's Church. I have meditated on the impressive Renaissance of Le Havre since the terrible night of September 5, 1944. I have come to believe in reincarnation"* (Donald Morrison, Financial Times, 2005 In: L'Express, 2007)

Vincent Duteurtre also claims that this bad press was more positive than negative, as it provided curiosity, how could it be that a city the media portrays so negatively in the press got the world-heritage label? Let's go check it out.

*"In the worst case it created controversy, but the controversy was super constructive, because it attracted attention and it is only positive. And it didn't cost the city much at all. So, it is a master stroke for this case file from a political point of view."* (Interview of Duteurtre, 2019, 44:10)

To resume, while the municipality of Le Havre created a storm of propaganda trying to educate the citizens and the world on the quality of the Perret architecture in Le Havre, the diffusion never really took off and stayed quite local, except for the community of experts who were well aware. Until the boost in visibility provided by the UNESCO world-heritage label. This in its turn provided another storm, that of the popular media, in a way the polemic surrounding the label provided much more visibility than it would have otherwise and also provided a certain form of curiosity. Meaning that the rationalization storytelling the municipality have pushed in the last 20 years will be available to all the newfound interest in the city.

### c. Reactionary Storytelling

The heritage-making period for the reactionary storytelling, tells the tale of a progressive change in image for the inhabitants of Le Havre and the start of a real interest in the architecture as well as an acceptance that this city centre is now part of their daily life.

In 1994 an investigation is pursued to understand how the city centre is perceived ahead of installing the ZPPAUP protection. Around 66% of the population estimates the city centre is worthy to be protected, while the others do not, judging it as cold, ugly, sad and monotonous *"Why protect dreadful things"* (Extract of comments made, Enquête Publique, 1994 In: Maridort, 2017), others show signs of regret and nostalgia in comparison with the more traditional reconstruction of Caen, and some that were not even born during this time period have the same discourse. But many also praise the reconstruction, its space, harmonious proportions, rigor and logic and critic those who are not conscious thereof.



There is thus a split in the population based on their reactionary storytelling, what was before a unanimous rejection, became a majority of approval.

*"There is a proportion that we do not see right away, but that is made for people to live well in it, and it is felt, it is the effects of perspective that I was talking about, it is the extremely graphic side of the city. There are a lot of artist, photographer, graphic designer, it is a city that is a city of artists and a city that pleases the artists."* (Interview Denecheau, 2019, 15:07)

*"The inhabitants of Le Havre realize little by little that "these modern buildings that symbolize in their eyes the destruction of 1944, symbolize for others a particular skill very sought after: the skill to build"* (Choaty, 1999)

When came the UNESCO label the reactions were very much like the press, some surprise, some negativity, some positivity.

*"I don't know how he (the Mayor) grabbed this (the inscription) but it's nonsense! (...) When you see cities like Vienna, Prague, Budapest, three cities, which are something other than Le Havre."* (Montjaret et al., 2010)

*"Even the English did not stop at Le Havre. They were just passing by. A lot of people said Le Havre is ugly. So that now, finally when we know... Because we, little ones, were not really explained everything that was done. So that's why I come to visit. Because even when I was there all the time, there were things I didn't know while I was born there."* (Gravari-Barbas & Renard, 2010)

But Eric Baudet points out that *"three quarters of the people who are judging the city have never come"* (Baudet In: Normandie-Actu, 2012). This shows how the depiction of the city during the 70s and 80s as a very industrial city in crisis is still present in the French minds and it will take time for it to change.

Vincent Duteurtre gives a different explanation, basing himself of the fact that the ideal of a world-heritage site is aesthetic beauty, while the site of Le Havre is unique for much more than its esthetical features.

*"There was such a gap between the consideration of many for their city and this hyper ambitious project to make it one of the wonders of the world. Even if it is a scientific case, in*

*the idea of people it is rather an aesthetic question, which is wrong by the way, but that is what the UNESCO label represents for them. There was, therefore great questioning and scepticism of the population and local authorities on this project. It was a small group of "crazy" people who believed in it."* (Duteurtre in: Maridort, 2017)

In the end, the only truth is Le Havre does leave one indifferent, and this curiosity is what it will build on to rekindle its image

*"the discourse is that of the world heritage, it is a treasure of mankind, "Oh really? But how?" and by explaining the composition of the city, the quality of the construction, the quality on the concrete, the people are discovering, in fact, all this work that has been done, and proudly the city reveals itself through this discourse, this narrative that explains the quality of the city."* (Interview of Duteurtre, 2019, 33:57)

*"This surprise it was rather beneficial, meaning that that, many inhabitants of Le Havre were surprised at that, they said what is it? It brought forth their curiosity, they tried to understand why we got the inscription to the world heritage. And so, there was a new eye brought on the reconstruction by the inhabitants, following this kind of electroshock"* (Interview of Duteurtre, 2019, 16:07)

*"There is a kind of bile that has emerged locally and nationally. It was hardly if we chanted that Antoine Rufenacht had rigged the thing! For public opinion it was an undeserved reward. Others were more sceptical. While some have "eaten their hats" saying, "we do not understand but if the experts say... It will have to be understood. " And there are also some who came sincerely to us to congratulate us and enjoy it anyway, to ask us how we had done it!"* (Dhervillez In: Maridort, 2017)

This newfound visibility for the city will bring about an entirely new dynamic around it. First of all, the previous protection with the ZPPAUP now was legitimised and thus respected much more, the municipality also strengthened the tone on this point (Dhervillez In: Maridort, 2017). And the city slowly became the object of cultural tourism, first by the specialists and then by tourists all of the world.

*"The city became a city visited by specialists, and then gradually after by tourists in a broader way, and it became an element of pride for the inhabitants of Le Havre, meaning*

*that of a city that was marginalised, scorched, this city had become something of value that was admired by people from the outside and strongly.”* (Interview of Duteurtre, 2019, 17:12)

Furthermore, the image of the city changed in such a dramatic fashion in the last 20 years that some inhabitants that used to live in the city say the city has changed so much, became much more beautiful, while in the end, the city is the same, the thing that changed was the story behind it.

*“I am always amazed at the narration that is reflected by the people who come from outside, either who have lived in Le Havre, or who know a little bit about Le Havre from passing by from time to time, who all say "Oh yes since Antoine Rufenacht the city has changed so much, and I had come 20 years ago and it was really sinister, today the city has regained colours "while the city of Perret it is still there, it has not changed, it is quite surprising. [...] It is true that it is the same city, but we take care of it, and this is important in terms of image”* (Interview of Duteurtre, 2019, 30:25)

This physical change due to the degradation of the city and then the renovation can also directly be correlated to the storytelling, people take care of things they like, and abandon things they don't. It can therefore be said that it is a consequence of storytelling, however the physical structure of the city hasn't changed, some projects took place of course, but were mainly minor and did not change the physical structure.

To conclude, the image for most inhabitants of the city really has changed with the UNESCO label of world-heritage, but they were only able to change this image because of the previous communication strategy employed by the municipality making available a ton of documents to understand this reconstruction and what it means.

*“the inhabitants of Le Havre they say, "Yes Antoine Rufenacht he played it well, through this inscription he changed the image of Le Havre””* (Interview of Duteurtre, 2019, 43:45)

*“The concrete that was not liked became a noble and beautiful material for them [inhabitants of Le Havre] now it's very new”* (Interview Denecheau, 2019, 43:20)

#### d. Synopsis

To conclude the period of heritage-making, through the strategy set in place by the municipality to acquire heritage labels for the city, a new reality was being created through

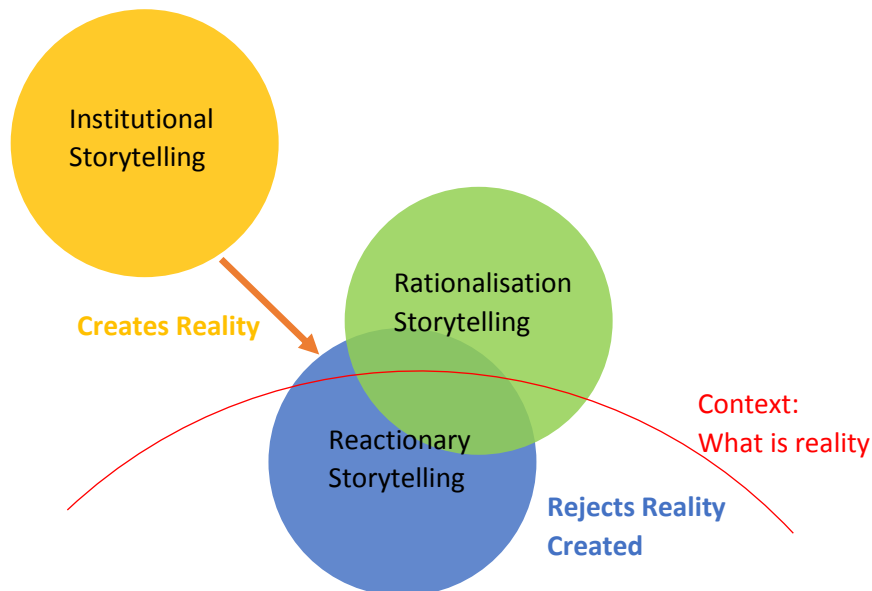
discourse which did not exist before. The rationalization storytelling was therefore completely in sink with the institutional storytelling as the municipality itself took care of the communication. However, due to the fear of repercussions of a possible failure, the population of Le Havre was not included in the process. This could explain the negative outtake of some locals and of the press. However, the strong communication strategy gave the keys to the inhabitants to understand their heritage once their curiosity was spiked with the obtention of the UNESCO world-heritage label. This shows the power of a clear storytelling method for planning, but this would not be able to have taken place without the understanding of the storytelling method *of* planning, as the core of success lies in the merging of the two theories of storytelling. Furthermore, it can be regretted that the storytelling as a reaction *to* planning was not taken into account, as a merging of all three theories, by incorporating the public in the decision-making process, would have provided far less contrasted and fastidious results over time.

### *5) Conclusion of Analysis*

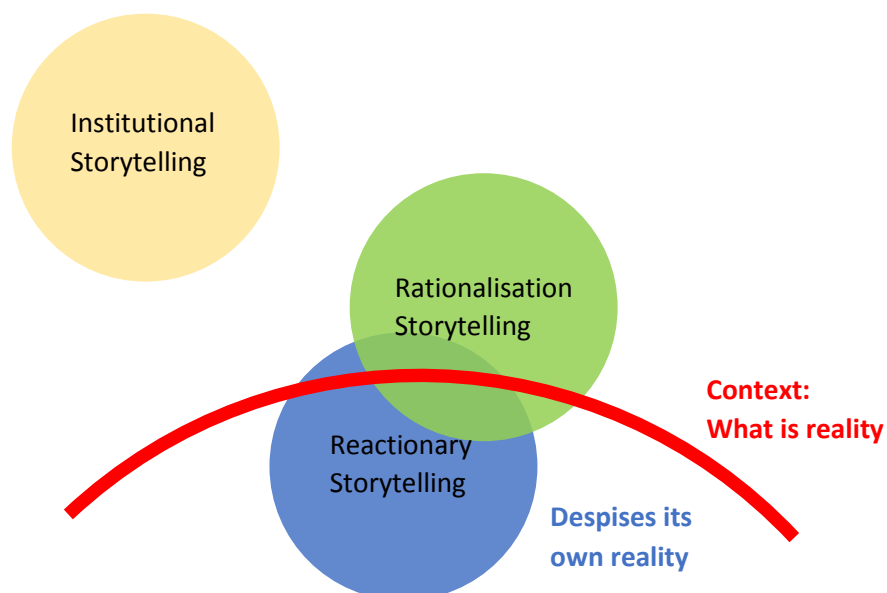
The analysis reveals how the evolution of the image of Le Havre is deeply embedded in the storytelling surround the city. The storytelling is manifested differently during different periods of time, these manifestations can give an idea of how the image of Le Havre really has changed.

During the reconstruction period there is a clear conflict between the institutional storytelling and the rationalization storytelling, but also a contradiction between the reality presented by the reconstruction Plan and the context. These disparities in the different stories all narrating for a different reality bring forth a strong reactionary storytelling from the population. The reality presented to them by Perret is not in line with what the reality they know, while the reality presented by the local press is easier to understand for the population. Usually institutional storytelling takes the upper hand during a conflict with rationalization storytelling, as the reality it presents is physically perceivable and legitimized by the institutions surrounding it. However, in this context the disparities between the context and the institutional storytelling lead to a misunderstanding thereof and a reactionary storytelling leaning more towards the emotional reality of rationalization storytelling. During this time the image of Le Havre is still relatively contrasted, while there

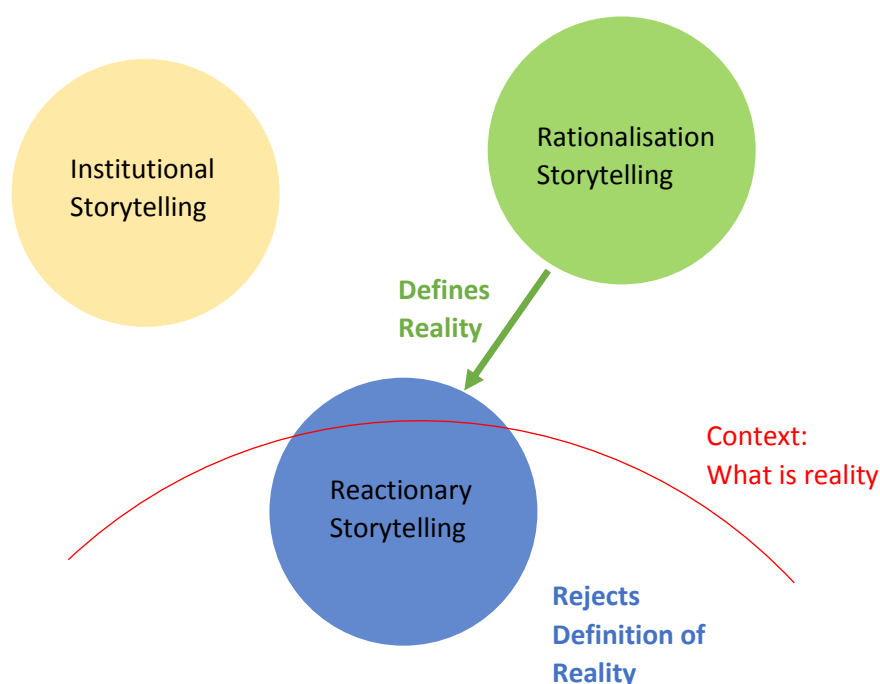
is a strong popular and local opinion of rejection towards the reconstructed city centre, there is also an appraisal and pride of the newfound modernity especially by the national press, but also by the locals actively participating in the reconstruction.



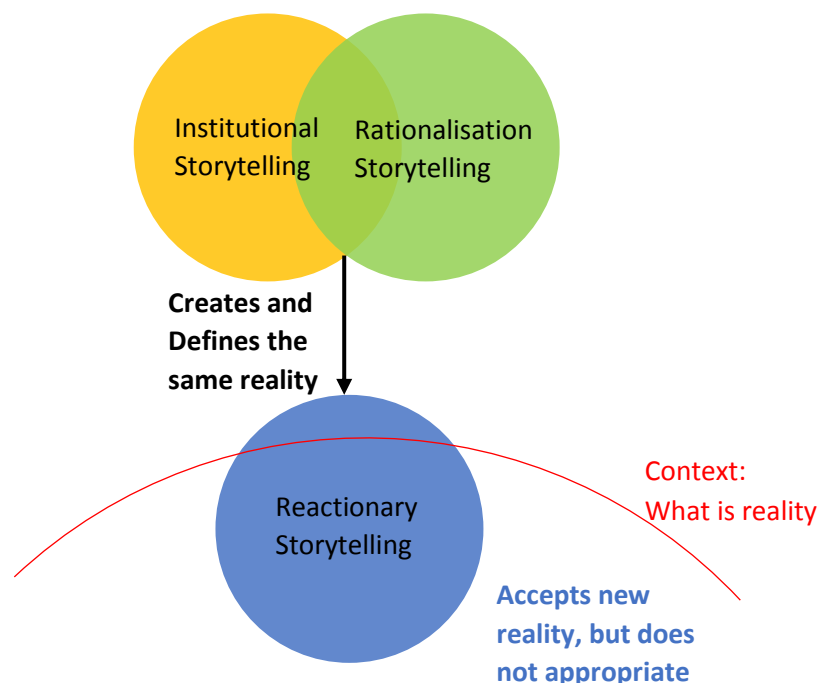
During the post reconstruction period the institutional storytelling led by the communist municipality decided to plainly ignore the reconstructed city centre focusing on the housing crisis. The city centre thus loses its identity as a city centre both geographically and socially, there is thus a rejection of it by the institutional storytelling. Following this the context played a major role and almost took the most space in the storytelling surrounding the city as the institutional storytelling was dampened. This led to a strong degradation of the image, where the context of the city became the reality of its physical structure and identity. The context being one of a city in economic and identity crisis the reactionary storytelling could only make the image suffer. This period brings forth a unanimous poor image of the city as a whole both locally and nationally.



Following this period, the municipality realizes it has suffered from not using a communication strategy to conduct a rationalization storytelling. The institutional storytelling therefore is aiming towards creating this communication strategy first around the city as a whole, by leaving the controversial reconstructed city centre out of the picture, and then under the impulse of a change in the municipality redirecting it towards the city centre. However, the rationalization storytelling this ensues is not resting upon a strong institutional storytelling, as there is only a limited amount of work done to revive the image of the city through urbanism and this urbanism isn't directly related to the valorization of the heritage of Perret. Therefore, the rationalization storytelling ends up depicting a reality first of all at the opposite of the context the inhabitants find themselves in considering their image of the city centre and second of all that isn't physically felt through the projects of the institutional storytelling. This period is therefore a period of propaganda trying to create a reality from scratch, it is therefore not very effective, but it lays the foundations of the strategy to revive the image of the city and is at the starts of a slow vision shift.



The period which made the greatest impact to the shift in image of Le Havre is that of heritage-making. Indeed, in this period, the institutional storytelling merged with the rationalization storytelling, both had the same objectives and were doing the same work. The institutional storytelling by acquiring labels created a new reality through discourse, as the labels themselves are in a way a rationalization storytelling, and by using a communication strategy with the role to legitimize the pursuit of the labels and then their acquirement. This merging of the two theories of storytelling meant there were no divergence between them, they both supported each other and strengthened the process. The only storytelling that would oppose it is the reactionary one, with a very strong context of years of reproduction of the storytelling narrative of the rejection of the city centre. There, to bypass this context and the reactionary storytelling, the strategy consisted of targeting the institutional and rationalization storytelling towards the outside, where the context was less strong, by attracting tourists, researchers and specialists. This would then create a reactionary storytelling that is in line with the two previous theories of storytelling and would in time change the local populations image and the context. However, this makes way for a more progressive and slower shift of image by the locals which still today are not unanimous about the enthusiasm towards the Perret city centre.



It can also be noted that during this entire period the inhabitants of Le Havre and the reactionary storytelling they represent were not actively involved in any of the institutional storytelling. While the use of including the population in the decision-making process could provide an institutional storytelling and the creation of a reality more in line with the expectation of the population, thus creating a reactionary storytelling more in line with the institutional one. Indeed, only institutional and reactionary storytelling were merged during the evolution of the image during the entire events following the destruction of the city. The next part will therefore explore the potentials of merging also reactionary storytelling with institutional and rationalization storytelling, by examining the use and potential of bottom-up strategies in the reconstruction of cities destroyed by war in contemporary Le Havre and by comparing it to the Japanese case of the reconstruction of Hiroshima.



## VI- Discussion

The discussion will aim at exploring the potential for the merging of reactionary storytelling and institutional and rationalization storytelling through the appropriation of the city by the citizens using bottom-up planning, viewed using the case of contemporary Le Havre, and through the incorporation of citizens in institutional planning in the case of the reconstruction of Hiroshima.

On the other hand, in Hiroshima a common storytelling dynamic between the citizens and the institutions provide a relatively smooth reconstruction process, making Hiroshima today a typical Japanese city, now market tested for new products. This reconstruction took place around a common narration as to rebuild the city as a symbol for peace, a reminder of the horrors of atomic warfare, thus positioning itself against the atom and its use. This newfound identity, to a city which was traditionally a military city was shared by the inhabitants and the higher instances. While the reasoning behind the two parties is not necessarily the same, the story is shared and becomes the driver, the corner stone of the reconstruction.

*Note: Every quote in the Analysis has been translated from French to English by the author.*

### 1) Contemporary Le Havre

Le Havre, as was seen in the analysis has been using a predominantly top-down approach to planning resulting in a shift of image by the population towards the reconstructed city centre which is finally reclaiming its status as the centre of the city by acquiring a new cultural dynamism and active urban life. However, the appropriation of the space and the opportunities this city centre provides is not yet fully operated. A new spree of bottom-up projects is however changing this dynamic with the inhabitants reclaiming the city as their own.

Vincent Duteurtre talks of the potential for appropriation through bottom up activities manifesting his surprise at the ignorance still present within the inhabitants of the potential of their reconstructed city, even 50 years after the reconstruction works finished

*"I am amazed, still today I discover that the inhabitants of Le Havre do not know how to go about with this modern city [...]. They are still discovering that they have gorgeous inner*

*courtyards where they can make gardens, they never really invested them, they have roof terraces, acres of terraced roofs, similarly they never really invested them [...] there is still enormous potential for appropriation and investment of the inhabitants in these buildings and in the public spaces also, that are very generous, very wide” (Interview of Duteurtre, 2019, 37:50)*

This brings up some questioning, if the population is still unaware and unable to exploit the assets of the reconstructed city, has the shift in image really occurred at a deeper level or is it just superficial? Has this strategy to create a positive image of the city centre really been done for the good of the people, or for a different agenda, such as boost the economy through tourism? Often in today’s society economic production comes at the expense of satisfying the needs of the population, following the reasoning that a stronger economy will provide better opportunities for the inhabitants and thus a better situation. However, this is not always the case as still today the city is contrasted between a bourgeois population in the quality apartments of the city centre and a much poorer population in the high city. Furthermore, this development towards cultural tourism brings share of problems, for example, a new dynamic of withdrawal into oneself. Indeed, many cooperatives in the face of tourism have decided to barricade the inner courtyards initially made to wander through.

*“So, a lot of condominiums have walled themselves, meaning they have fenced themselves, they have put up fences so it is not possible to enter. It is an aberration because at the time of the land consolidation, the construction of the blocks had to remain open so that we could cross, meaning that people could cross the blocks freely, enter, see a little how it was done and then leave through another street” (Interview Denecheau, 2019, 56:23)*

*“private properties fenced themselves off, they're afraid of others, they're afraid of the outside, and we said no we're not going to do it, we don't want to do it” (Interview Denecheau, 2019, 56:56)*

This dynamic contrast to another dynamic taking place in the city, the appropriation of unused spaces by the citizens through bottom-up projects usually coming from the artistic community. Pascal Denecheau head of the co-ownership board of the ISAI blocks V40 and V41 on the town hall square retraced some of the steps that his condominium took during the interview. Two types of actions were undertaken for the appropriation of the space,

firstly a stronger protection for the buildings, and secondly bottom-up initiative to reclaim the inner courtyards.

*“We thought that something had to be done, since these buildings were not protected, and that there were already projects in the co-ownership board, in the condominium, to put plastic Windows, in pvc, and to stop it I entered the co-ownership board.”* (Interview Denecheau, 2019, 3:41)

Pascal Denecheau later clarified that there was some sort of protection with the ZPPAUP, but that it wasn't constricting enough, as the doors, frames could still be changed. Hence there was an initiative taken up by the co-owners of the ISAI buildings themselves to first protect the buildings with the title historic monument and then to classify them, this being an even higher level of protection. This is a surprising move by the inhabitants as they take it into their own hands to protect their heritage even though it will provide many constraints.

*“And there were 99% of people, well at least a great majority of people who agreed to go to the classification, so that's important, I thought there would be a division, people would not want it, and in fact we were very, very surprised”* (Interview Denecheau, 2019, 49:07)

Not only did the co-ownership board of the ISAI undertake a process of heritage-making but they also took it in their hand to educate the tenants (not part of the co-owners) with which they were struggling to enter in contact. Many initiatives were put in place to set up a communication system to educate on the historic value of the buildings and the need to protect them.

*“so we organized a neighbours day celebration, to be able to meet, to be able to discuss, and then we set up the blog first and then the website, and the Facebook page also, so that they could see a little what happens, so that they could be informed in real time of things and then so that we can also distil our pedagogy by saying, “you live in buildings that are of great quality, this is how they are conceived” and it works”* (Interview Denecheau, 2019, 50:37)

Pascal Denecheau later also explained how these processes made a domino effect to the other blocks of buildings with a similar history to theirs. This shows how the local population is able to participate in this process and has not only the capacity to understand the reconstruction but also the willingness to make things evolve. Of course it can be said that

these initiatives are just surfing on the wave created by the municipality during the heritage-making period. But the inhabitants are not expected to create this dynamic by themselves, when the potential of merging reactionary storytelling to institutional storytelling this implies a collaboration, and these local initiatives show this collaboration is possible. It also stands on the opposite of what the municipal stance was at the period communicated by Vincent Duteurtre, director of the buildings department of Le Havre

*"If we had to wait for the inhabitants of Le Havre to be registered as a world heritage, we would never have been there."* (Interview Duteurtre in: Maridort, 2017/translated by author)

Indeed, the strategy of the municipality at the time was to be discreet and not communicate about the UNESCO world-heritage process. It can thus be regretted that the population did not participate in the process, a stance that Vincent Duteurtre does agree on.

The second point mentioned by Pascal Denecheau is the use of bottom-up actions throughout the city. In his condominium, there have been multiple actions to reclaim the inner gardens in the courtyards, with artistic installations, such as the Genius installation which created a temporary staircase to access the garden.

*"so now we have more and more events that come to take place in the heart of the blocks, and that call out to people, so many do not like it, and others find that it is good, it makes things move and it creates discourse."* (Interview Denecheau, 2019, 55:26)

In the rest of the city also has followed this dynamic, with many art projects such as 'La Pince qui Tue' who create collages of images of pliers on buildings to be destroyed to raise awareness on the new urbanism strategy of densifying the city centre and its implications on the heritage. A certain vegetablization of the city is also taking place with certain projects to create gardens on the roofs by Justine Marchand. The municipality is also trying to incite this project by proposing it to many condominiums. Indeed, a certain awareness of the potential of bottom up strategies for a complete appropriation of the city by the inhabitants is started to be realised at the municipality. When asked the question *"Do you think the appropriation of the city [...] needs to go through such phases, such elements [bottom-up strategies]?"* Vincent Duteurtre answered *"Yes only this way will it be completely*

*appropriated in a definitive manner and without complexes.”* (Interview of Duteurtre, 2019 41:10)

These bottom-up projects are thus a corner stone in creating a true positive city, not just in its image, but also in its everyday life, with the dynamism surrounding the city centre not being brought for and by tourists, but for and by the local population. Not only will this create a more attractive city and a better situation for its inhabitants, but it will most likely also spark tourism and the economy in a more sustainable way, as the image of the city and the tourism will be provided by a strong natural base and not created artificially.

*“And there is a real phenomenon that is happening of requalification of the public spaces of the rebuilt city through these cultural events.”* (Interview of Duteurtre, 2019, 39:21)

One of these events which happened in collaboration between the municipality and the inhabitants and had tremendous success is the cultural events called ‘A summer in Le Havre’ which take place every summer since the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the foundation of the city in 2017. This celebration was one of the pillars into changing the image of the city to an even larger extent in contemporary times, as many people fluctuated to the city.

*“There was a great festivity for the 500 years of the founding of the city with artistic events and the people came and they discovered the city and the buildings [...], it is very, very positive [...], it also returns a very positive image of the image of Le Havre and inhabitants of Le Havre are even a little surprised and then begin to understand that this is a city worth seeing.”* (Interview Denecheau, 2019, 40:18)

This once again shows the potential a collaboration between the municipality and their strategy and the inhabitants and their needs can have for the image of the city, and also for its urban life, its communities, and a general positive environment. This collaboration also permits the merging between institutional and reactionary storytelling, as if planning incorporates the voice of the citizens and their agendas into the planning process, planning will subsequently be more directed towards the actual needs of the people, create a reactionary storytelling which is positive as in line with what is expected. This positive reactionary storytelling can then impact the physical structure of the city, by taking care of the heritage, by using the space and providing animations, which is beneficial for commerce,

by providing a good image to the outside attracting tourists, businesses and scholars, but also by indulging self-governance through bottom-up initiatives.

## *2) The Case of the Reconstruction of Hiroshima*

Hiroshima is another city which was completely destroyed after World War 2 and faced the challenge of reconstruction at the wake of one of the most traumatic events in history.

Nevertheless, Hiroshima's image did not suffer the way Le Havre did, and the new reconstruction city was smoothly assimilated by its inhabitants. Of course, the reconstruction was faced with many setbacks, conflicts and critiques, but it also distinguished itself by the creation of a new identity around peace and banning the atomic weapon, thus being the precursor of a larger peace movement becoming very influential in America in the 1960s. A short Case of Hiroshima will be reviewed using the paper *Hiroshima's Path to reconstruction* by the Hiroshima Reconstruction and Peacebuilding research project, (March 2015) and in collaboration with the 'Hiroshima Prefecture' and 'The City of Hiroshima'.

This may seem as the natural reaction towards one of the most traumatic events in history, but Hiroshima before the war had an identity at the antipodes of this. Indeed, it was known as a centre of administration, education and industry but also the military capital of Japan, holding the Hiroshima Garrison Headquarters of the Imperial Japanese Army and later the Second General Army during WW2 in command of the western troops of Japan. Then how does the old military capital of Japan turn into the symbol for peace worldwide?

Firstly, the trauma of the atomic bomb has a big part to play in this, with an estimated number of deaths of 140 000 +- 10 000 in 1945, with many more that suffered from radiation in the decades to come, the need to mourn is evident, one does not just stand up having lost everything. Even with the Americans holding a tight grip on the press and censoring everything that had to do with the atomic bomb as Japan was under American control until 1952, when it reclaimed its sovereignty, the newfound identity towards peace and against atomic warfare could not be slowed down.

The institutional storytelling for this reconstruction prioritized culture as a way to recreate, and the only way this could happen so successfully was to have a strategy in line with the

needs of the population which was at this time the need to mourn. This was achieved by incorporating the public in the reconstruction of the city. Firstly, in the decision-making of the reconstruction plan itself, 34 plans were proposed, by citizens, government officials as well as foreigners and were published at the Hiroshima City Reconstruction Council and in newspapers. Furthermore, a law was enacted in 1949, after having been supported by a local referendum, this was the Hiroshima Peace Memorial City Construction Law which permitted the national government to assist the city financially, to transfer national government property but also to provide moral support to the population, for them to know they are not alone and backed and assisted by the government. The name of this law is also significant in the direction taken by the reconstruction, and the text written on the first article of this law shows the foundation of the new identity of the City *"Hiroshima is to be a peace memorial city symbolizing the human ideal of the sincere pursuit of genuine and lasting peace"*. And this was followed with the change of name of the 'Hiroshima Reconstruction Plan' into the 'Hiroshima Peace Memorial City Reconstruction Plan', so not only is the new identity towards peace, but the past is not forgotten with the city being a memorial city, the dead and the loss can be mourned for as long as is necessary. The plan therefore aimed at providing facilities to showcase this pursuit such as the Peace Memorial Park which includes the Peace Memorial Hall now transformed into a museum. Furthermore, medical care and emotional support was provided for the A-bomb survivors, the hibakusha, through free medical care and medical benefits as well as institutions like the Hiroshima Atomic-Bomb Hospital, in 1956, specialised in the treatment of radiation related diseases and the Hiroshima Atomic Bomb survivors welfare Centre, in 1961, which provided healthcare and livelihood support for survivors.

The rationalization storytelling on the other hand was at first limited as the press was heavily censored by the American GHQ (General Headquarters) until 1952. However, the international press was able to relate the complete destruction of the city and international aid was pouring in, especially from the emigrants originating from Hiroshima. The rationalization storytelling was however able to take place locally, with as its guiding line the new identity of peace. First was the creation of the Hiroshima City's Peace Administration in 1947 with as its main role promoting the reconstruction and creating a new identity. In the same year, followed the peace festival after the citizens request, still held annually with at

it's core the Peace Declaration speech performed by the mayor. Another significant action was the creation of a baseball team, the Hiroshima Carp, which was the only team without a parent company and funded by the government, by influential people and by donations of the population. It became the symbol of the reconstruction, and something the inhabitants to reattach themselves to, it gave the people a reason to dream and was tied to the progress of the reconstruction. More actions were undertaken to spread the image of the city to the rest of Japan, such as the 'Hiroshima Atomic Bomb exposition', in order to raise awareness and to promote peace throughout Japan.

And finally, the reactionary storytelling was characterised by a peace movement which gathered much attention throughout Japan and abroad through the 'World federalist Movement' and the 'Partisans for Peace Movement'. The reactionary storytelling also focused on the memory of the trauma, this is characterised by frequent discussions between citizens around the idea to keep the 'A-bomb Dome', finally in 1966 it was decided to be preserved, with the help of donations from within the rest of Japan. Thereafter a dynamic of passing on this information to the next generations occurred, with for example the NHK in 1975 calling for citizens to draw and submit pictures of the atomic bombing to be kept for future generations, or in 1969 the Hiroshima prefecture hibakusha (a-bomb survivor) teachers association to start the initiative to promote peace through education, this project was then extended to the rest of Japan with many school visits to Hiroshima and Nagasaki taking place. Finally, a study took place in 2005 'The questionnaire survey: 60 years after the atomic bombing', this study targeted around 38 000 people and asked them questions around their personal experiences. The themes coming out are first those of the bombing itself and the trauma of it, then of family, and then of peace and the nuclear. The study also asked the respondents what had supported them emotionally through this time and they responded with family, community and peace movements.

This quick and non-extensive summary of the storytelling employed during the reconstruction in Hiroshima does show a certain harmony between the three theories of storytelling, with it seems a common goal and objective, that to promote peace and to reject atomic warfare. The institutional storytelling involved the public and created its strategy around the needs of the population, it used key naming and focused its strategy around actions that they themselves say a story that is in line with the objectives. The



institutional storytelling therefore sells its story itself, it thus merges with the rationalization storytelling that becomes just an extension of the first. Furthermore, it also merges with the reactionary storytelling by incorporating the population in the process of the reconstruction and thus in the institutional storytelling. This merging is portrayed very well in the last study 'the questionnaire survey: 60 years after the atomic bombing' where the population's discourse is the same as the official discourse of the higher instances. This overview of the case of Hiroshima also gives us two very important topics which are heavily present and completely absent from the case of Le Havre, it is that of mourning. The first topic follows the strategy employed by Hiroshima heavily focused around this necessity of mourning and provides institutions and memorials to first of all acknowledge this need and second of all provide space and time for this mourning to pass, but also to not forget where the identity of the city comes from, it is important to remember the past, to understand where one comes from so as to understand who he really is. This has been a major issue in Le Havre, this identity crisis especially of the generations following that of the ones having lived the trauma only lived the city from the idealised, glorified tales of their old city by their parents and they did not know who they were, where they came from, why they got this new city centre. The second topic is that of communities, the harmony between storylines helped the Hiroshima population to create strong communities throughout the reconstruction period, helping them to cope with the difficulty of the task, the mourning but also the creation of this new strong identity. Identity creates itself in small communities, one needs to feel to be part of something, and communities help to provide this.

The reconstruction of Hiroshima was far from being perfect, whether it is because of its lack of financing and reconstruction policies leaving the poor to rebuild the houses by themselves, thus until the 1960s there were still slums, and illegally built houses that were then forcefully removed, forcing the hand of the government to build housing on a massive scale. Or whether it was because of the strain that was put on the private sector to rebuild and the length of the reconstruction. However, even with all these difficulties and setbacks the image of the city did not suffer as greatly as the one in Le Havre did, and this can be accredited to the excellent use of storytelling. The case of Hiroshima truly shows the potential of effective storytelling in the rebuilding of cities destroyed by war.

### 3) Conclusion of the Discussion

Both the case of Hiroshima and the recent developments in the case of Le Havre tend to show that the social results sought after in the reconstruction of cities destroyed by war are much more positive when the population is actively involved in the process. Indeed, it tends towards a better appropriation of space and image of the city thus leading to a more competitive city economically which enjoys a better urban life and prospects for the future. While often the rhetoric of the municipality tends toward believing they know what is good for the people more than the people themselves, it consequently can backfire. Even if the reconstructed city of Perret in Le Havre provided a much more comfortable, modern, unique city where it feels good to live in, the contradicting storytelling coupled with a lack of communication from the two sides created a different reality for the city centre.

Merging the reactionary storytelling to the institutional and rationalization storytelling will create one strong reality everybody agrees in, rather than two or three different realities competing against each other which will create a much smoother reconstruction process. Furthermore, it seems it also holds the utmost importance when planning for the reconstruction of a city destroyed by war to take into consideration the need to mourn as it is necessary to accept the past in order to live the present and project towards the future.



## VII- Conclusion

Through the exploration of storytelling, this thesis has brought considerable knowledge on understanding the role it plays in the reconstruction of cities destroyed by war. In the light of the ending of the conflicts in Syria and Iraq, this knowledge will provide a base ground on how to utilize storytelling in conscious manner to reduce conflict and provide a newfound identity and positive image for these cities.

Firstly, a framework has been set up to be able to complete an analysis on such a complex topic characterized by a network of different storylines competing between each other and defining different versions of reality. This framework was accomplished through a literature review exploring what storytelling is and how it is manifested in planning by categorizing the different theories on storytelling in planning of Forester, Throgmorton, Sandercock, Van Hulst and Bulkens et al. These categories are Institutional storytelling relating to storytelling as a method *of* planning, encompassing the entire planning process and the physical reality resulted by the process, Rationalization storytelling relating to storytelling as a method *for* planning which is the translation of the planning process and physical realization thereof to the population, and finally Reactionary storytelling being the way the population reacts in relation to the present context they situate themselves in to the Institutional and Rationalization storytelling. Thus providing an understanding to the role of storytelling in planning processes.

Subdividing storytelling in these three categories permits a clearer overview of the impact of storytelling on a particular case. The analysis on the case of Le Havre followed this framework and gave the clues to understanding the evolution of the image of the city throughout the reconstruction process itself and the future repercussions that followed. Through this Case Study different time frames were extracted with different stages of the evolution of the image of the city. During the reconstruction period itself it was noticed there was a discrepancy between the institutional storytelling and the rationalization and reactionary storytelling. Two factors emerged to explain this discrepancy, the lack of acknowledgment of the context and the need to mourn of the population and the lack of involvement of the planning institution in the rationalization storytelling that was taken over by the local media. Storytelling during this period was not utilized as a tool and did not take

into account the needs of the population. The following period of post-reconstruction presented an even further degradation of the image of the city, the institutional storytelling was characterized with the ignoring of the city centre, which had for effect to make the difficult context of the crisis be the leader of the reactionary and rationalization storytelling. The 1980s however, was the start of a new communication strategy by the municipality, thus slowly interfering with the rationalization storytelling. However, the rationalization storytelling conducted by the municipality was not in line with the institutional storytelling of the time, as the city centre was still disregarded by the municipality, it therefore took more the form of propaganda than a translation of the institutional storytelling. The impact on the reactionary storytelling was therefore contrasted. Following this, in 1995 the municipality changed political affiliation and the city centre was once more viewed as an asset under the strategy of heritage-making, the rationalization storytelling promoting the city centre finally had a strong basis to rest upon thus merging institutional and rationalization storytelling. The successful acquiring of the renown UNESCO world-heritage label was the pinnacle of both this storytelling merging and provided a real change in the image of the city by the reactionary storytelling, going from a grey, sad and ugly city centre to one the population was proud of. The change of image can thus be accredited to the merging of the institutional and reactionary storytelling, once the municipality understood the power of storytelling and used it actively with a communication strategy all the while creating a urban strategy around the promotion of the city centre, the reaction of the population slowly changed the image they had of the city

However, the reactionary storytelling is still contrasted with a portion of the population still having a poor image of their city, the discussion provided an answer to this. The renewed image of the city centre was still relatively artificially made, as it focused more on attracting cultural tourism to the city rather than providing means to the population to exploit it. Furthermore, the none participation of this reactionary storytelling force in the planning processes, meant a more difficult appropriation of the space. While the municipality seems to think this new dynamic could not come from the citizens themselves, the current citizen initiatives taken to provide real protection to their buildings and reclaim the city through bottom-up projects seems to say otherwise. From this, the assumption can be made, that with a merging of reactionary storytelling to institutional and rationalization storytelling a

more comprehensive and stable change of image and appropriation of the city could take place. To confirm this assumption, as short case study of the reconstruction of Hiroshima is undertaken, reconstruction characterized by a harmony of the three categories of storytelling towards a common identity, that of a symbol for peace and against atomic warfare. This case clearly shows an active involvement of the population in the creation of this identity and resulting from this the creation of strong communities and a common positive image of the city, not only locally but nationally. The survey undertaken 60 years after the atomic bombing showed the population received emotional support from the peace movements and the communities, as well as a similar storytelling to the official one around peace and against the atom. The image of Hiroshima hasn't suffered even though the hardships of the reconstruction, due to American control in the first few years and a lack of funds. Today, Hiroshima is a typical Japanese city, so much so that is market-tested for the rest of Japan. This case confirms the assumption that a merging of the reactionary institutional and rationalization storytelling can provide one strong identity and a positive image for a healthy reconstruction of its social, economic and political life.

## VIII- Appendix

### *A1- Interview Guides*

Vincent Duteurtre (10<sup>th</sup> of April 2019)

#### **Presentation**

Can you please present yourself, what do you do? How are you involved in the reconstruction process of Le Havre?

As a Havrais, what is your sentiment about the city and its post WWII history?

#### **The reconstruction and heritage-making process:**

Can you describe the state the city and its population were in at the start of the reconstruction process?

How did the responsibility of the reconstruction fall upon Auguste Perret and Why was it chosen to rebuild from scratch?

Was there a public participation process during the decision-making of the future of Le Havre at that time?

Between the end of the works in 1965 and 1970, Le Havre had a very good image as the forefront of modernity, was this shared by the inhabitants?

What were the reasons for the degradation of the image after the 1970s?

How has the image of the Perret architecture so drastically changed in the late 1990s?

What were the processes involved in obtaining the UNESCO world heritage label? Who was involved?

Has the image really changed with the inhabitants as well?

#### **The role of Storytelling**

How would you describe Storytelling?

What role do you think storytelling has had in the evolution of the image of Le Havre?

How has the context affected the outcome?

What importance would you give storytelling in the reconstruction of cities destroyed by war?

What is its relative importance to planning? How do they coexist?

#### **The power plays**

How are storytelling and power plays interrelated?

What agendas were at play both in the reconstruction process and later in the heritage-making process? And whose agendas?

What praise and faults do you see in this top down way of planning? How do you think a more bottom up approach would have turned out in Le Havre?

#### **Conclusion**

What future do you see for Le Havre?

Would you have any documents or contacts you think would be interesting for me to look into?

Pascal Denecheau (20<sup>th</sup> of May 2019)

**Introduction:**

If you could present yourself, what occupation do you hold? How are you involved in the appropriation process of Le Havre?

What were your views on the city, first as an outsider and then as a Havrais?

**Experience of living in the Le Havre:**

What year did you move to Le Havre, and what motivated your decision?

How have you experienced living in Le Havre city centre?

How have you perceived the modernity of the city?

In what way do the ISAI promote a different lifestyle?

What makes the city centre of Perret unique?

What potential do you see for the city, is there still some untapped potential?

**Evolution of the image:**

Le Havre has a contrasted history with its inhabitants, how have you perceived the evolution of the image?

While this image has seemed to change very suddenly from the outside, how has this evolution taken place in the minds of the inhabitants? And how has the outside image affected it? Would you have any examples?

What storylines took amplitude during this transition period? What role have citizen associations played in this?

How did the negative image of the city impact the life in the city centre?

How do the inhabitants of Le Havre feel about their city nowadays?

**Potential for bottom up strategies:**

You were involved in the appropriation, recognition and restoration of the buildings of Perret, could you tell me what was the nature of your work, and what actions did you undertake?

Le Havre was created by Perret as a city that could evolve, it still has many areas that can be appropriated, what are some of the initiatives towards this appropriation of space?

After such a long period of top-down urbanism, what potential do you see for bottom-up urbanism?

Do you think this is the last step necessary for the reconciliation between the inhabitants and the city?

## *A2- Interview transcription*

It is to be noted the transcription have been translated using google translate and thus may not be completely accurate, the quotes in the report and the interview guides however have been hand translated by the author.

### *Vincent Duteurtre*

S: already if you can be present quickly, what you do and in what way you are involved in the reconstruction of Le Havre and in the heritage.

V: so my name is Vincent Duteurtre, so I am Director of the buildings of the city of Le Havre and I intervene today, not in an important way on the reconstruction, but we still have some important buildings that belong to the city of Le Havre which we are responsible for the maintenance. The City Hall of course, St Joseph's Church. That makes two main public buildings and then if not some schools in the Center also rebuilt, the theater also. there is. But, in the past, in fact before this post there, on the valuation and protection of the reconstructed perimeter. And in this framework I had piloted for the city of Le Havre the project of inscription to the world heritage. there is. But before that, we had instituted, the city had instituted a system of protection of the reconstructed zone and I when I arrived in the city we worked a lot to explain the interest of this protection to the inhabitants to traders, to building companies.

S: so especially communication

V: UH of pedagogy one can say, the regulation a little pedagogical so that people understand the interest of protection and the interest of this architecture that was not well understood.

S: okay and as a Le Havre what is your feeling in relation to the city and its recent history after the second world war.

V: it would take two hours to answer, me my personal feeling, me it is a city that I like very much, which offers very interesting qualities of city in terms of space, light, breathing, relation to the sky, relation to the sea. A modern city, but which also has a classic inspiration, so that is pretty well aged finally. Which is not a city of modernity as extreme as that which we saw a little later in the sixties and then in a more refined, more structured urbanity, and that of this age, really matured much better than the major centers of the modern movement. Here, after this is my personal opinion of architect and inhabitant, but the Le Havre had a lot of trouble and took a long time to understand and accept this modern architecture that is far from the codes and, how to say, the Norman tradition and the coup, there was for a very, very long time a kind of misunderstanding and very strong rejection of the modernity of the new city.

S: Yes it is indeed what I read also on the subject, but before I pass in this register, I would like to be first to speak a little bit of the process of reconstruction and heritage. How did the



responsibility for reconstruction fall on Auguste Perret and why was the choice to rebuild nine decided at that time?

V: so, the reason for the nomination of Auguste Perret in Le Havre is firstly the magnitude of the destruction of the city since Le Havre was one of the most destroyed cities in France and Europe, finally in Germany there were some larger goods , but in France in any case, it is probably the one that was most bruised in the area bombarded and most violently since the entire bombarded area was reduced to ashes, burned for several days, there was nothing left, almost nothing of the city pre-war, except the basins that were built in negative so they did not suffer or not much suffered the bombing. [05:00] and so there was this, between quotation marks, this opportunity to rebuild something totally new, precisely because there was no more or in any case the city had been reduced to nothing.

S: but why did they choose this, instead of rebuilding exactly the same, because apparently it was also an idea, to do something new to modern, why this choice?

V: this is really related to the personality and appointment of Auguste Perret since the Mayor of Le Havre before Perret was appointed by the State in fact, it was the State that imposed Auguste Perret to the havrais. The Mayor of Le Havre, he had designed reconstruction projects with local architects and journalists, Le Havre. And these projects were much closer to what was the pre-war Le Havre, as in many cities there was this reflex of hanging up to, how to say, what was the city before the war to reassure itself to get back on foot with the city , people were so disturbed, the trauma was so strong that I think it's a natural reflex to want to redo what we lost. And it could not come from the Le Havre to want, to say here we have a chance finally with this bombing, is to say build a modern city for the 100 years that come and let us free from the constraints of the past, it was not possible for the Le Havre to say that, it took someone from the outside to say it. And that's how Perret is placed, but then he came back into conflict very quickly with the mayor who had a hard time understanding that position.

S: Okay, but precisely, was there a process of city participation during the decision-making on the future of the town?

V: then one can say on the choice of the plan of the building not much, it is nevertheless very much the Perret, its team and the Ministry of the reconstruction, which made the large choices. Nevertheless, Perret was in contact with the local population and the Mayor especially by coming to present his projects to the municipal councils of Le Havre. And here too there was an open conflict, with a refusal of the Municipal Council of the Perret project as it was originally conceived and the refusal of the more avant-garde brands of the project of Perret in particular the idea of elevated the city on a slab. One of the important marks of the project of Perret, and this point was much debated, refused by the mayor who did not want to lose contact with the ground, the Le Havre did not understand either that. And it is the Ministry of reconstruction who decided by saying "no we will not do this project on a slab it will cost too much", and so this point did not happen, but there were some topics like that of conflict.

S: but in the end Le Havre is still, from what I read a little bit above the pre-war elevation no?

V: Yes exact, yes there was still an elevation of the city of about 1M, 1m50, which is linked to the rubble of the ruins of the buildings that were leveled, which allowed to build up, raised the ground. Well it was also, evacuate the gravas it would have been very complicated, and it was also the opportunity to dry out a little this area that had problems of unsanitary, reassembled groundwater related to the proximity of the sea, it was also a little way to make the terrain a little more healthful. After, in the finer conception of the buildings, of the Islands, the Le Havre were still associated, first by the architects Le Havre, because there were many Le Havre architects who participated in the reconstruction with the team Perret. And then through the principle of land consolidation, I do not know if you have heard about this principle?

S: no

V: in fact this land consolidation is one of the peculiarities of the reconstruction of the Le Havre compared to others, it is that as we said we leave on a new city, the whole cadastre the plan of the pre-war plots was erased. And we went back on a new cutting of plots [10:00] and so there was a pretty complicated game for the former owner to be compensated and to find a property in a new parcel, and this principle in fact is the private condominium. The victims, the people who had war damage were obliged to put their damage, their money in common, to build collectively buildings. So here they came together through disaster cooperatives and these cooperatives were in contact with architects, with the Perret workshop to design buildings that matched what they wanted too. So through this principle of land consolidation there was still a strong involvement of the Le Havre in the design of the new buildings.

S: so Le Havre was partially financed also by the Le Havre themselves, because I was going to ask this question too, where did the funding come from?

V: no, it's State credits, war damage is State credits Yes.

S: and if we come to the image a little, I know that between 1965, where the work has finished, and between 1970 the city enjoys a rather positive image in France as a forerunner of modernity, and I wondered if already at that time this image was shared with the Habitation or already at that time they were really against it?

V: Yes, that's hard to say, I don't have the story, since I wasn't born then. But what is sure is that I heard from old Le Havre who had participated in the construction site of the reconstruction, engineers, architects, surveyors, and all were still very proud of what they had built what. There was a real pride of the innovative side, of the colossal shipyard, but on the other hand there was a lag between that pride of the people who had participated, contributed and then the Le Havre more generally that I think have not understood and have not accepted this new city. And right from the start, at the very moment of the reconstruction of the first buildings there were debates in the press that said the team Perret will build rabbit cages for the havrais.

S: Yes but precisely, what were the reasons for this degradation of the coup. In 1970, I know that there has been a crisis that has also affected a lot, but do you see other reasons too?

V: after actually the image is still degraded, the people who had participated in the site are gone, have aged, this pride it is a little dropped and there was a lot of ignorance in fact that settled on the history of this site, and the young Le Havre was unaware of the exceptional side of this reconstruction, and then there was surely the crisis of the years 80, the workers' crisis that Le Havre lived with full force. Le Havre is still an industrial city, mostly working. So the exterior image or even the overall image of the city was that of a city with an industry in crisis, a port also can be in crisis at the time, I do not know too much.

S: yes I think it closed a little later

V: Yes that's right. And then there was also a point that was complicated in terms of image, it was the political color of the Town Hall, since since the years 60, Le Havre was ruled by Communist town halls, Communist municipalities. And regardless of the work they did, the Communists, how to manage the city, which probably had pros and cons, there is no debate, but on the other hand in terms of image vis-à-vis the outside Le Havre was a little marginalised what. It was the Communist city, you know the nickname of Le Havre at the time, Stalingrad-sur-Mer. It is true that it is an appellation that was still heard at the time, so it really showed a picture of a city on the margins, grey, which did not correspond to a French identity in a broader way. [15:00] marginalization can be said of the city also at that time.

S: and so, how of this image still quite negative did it evolve so drastically after the years 90 until the acquisition of several heritage labels, and that of UNESCO?

V: in fact, seen from the outside we have a bit of the impression that the image she turned around, but things are still done gradually, and I even want to say, that things are not over. There are still many havrais, a little older people, the havraise bourgeoisie, people who do not understand modernity, who do not like it, who do not find it, it still exists I mean.

S: Yes there are also a lot of people who I think were surprised with heritage varieties, I read an article from, I do not know if you know her, Maria Gravari-Barbas.

V: Yes

S: who was talking about a surprise a little bit shared from everyone, towards this getting.

V: Yes exact, but at the limit, this surprise it was rather beneficial, IE that, many Havrais were surprised at that, they said what is it? It talked about their curiosity, they tried to understand why we got the inscription to the world heritage. And so there was a new eye on the reconstruction by the havrais, following this kind of electroshock, one can say. So that was extremely positive in the evolution of the image the own image that the Le Havre had of their city what. And in parallel there was the spotlight that this inscription it constituted in terms of image towards the outside, of notoriety of the city, and this was perhaps the strongest element in this phenomenon of appropriation and change of image. It is that, the city became a city visited by specialists, and then gradually after by tourists in a

broader way, and it became an element of pride for the havrais, IE that of a city that was marginalised, scorched, this City had become something of value that was admired by people from the outside and strongly. For the Le Havre it was something strong that is at the origin of a dynamic still reappropriation.

S: apparently this is not the case for everyone, I heard again thanks to the article of Maria, when you go to Le Havre and you ask some hoteliers or restaurateurs, often they send you more to the sea and the seaside than to the Center Rebuilt.

V: Yes that is why I say that there is still a way, but when you listen to the younger generations, they really integrate this modernity as a strong element, as a added value, how to say, something to put forward in a more natural way , and it still takes time, because to speak and to claim something it must be understood and when we have not had the codes, when we have not benefited a little explanation it is difficult to go to claim and explain this architecture.

S: but then I wonder, since before you said that Le Havre is a city still very industrial, is it still the case today or is there any universities in the Harbour, I guess Yes, is it became a city also more inte and so there is a greater ease in understanding this architecture or that, it has not changed too much?

V: it remains a predominantly working city and it is an integral part of the havraise identity, the first employer is the port of Commerce, then it is the industry. So there is still a large part of the population who works on the harbor and in the factories what, now it is true that [20:00] evolution it brought nevertheless a new public that never came to see, which is a cultural tourism public or touris urban and it is true that gradually the Administration has been structured to meet the demand of these new tourists, and therefore it is new services that have been created, new establishments to explain this architecture and the Museum institutions in the city also benefit from this new cultural tourism. And so I think of the Malraux Museum which is one of the cultural spearheads of Le Havre, it also enjoys tourism that is linked to architecture and it self-feeds, it is maintained in both senses what. So yes there is still a new cultural dynamic around this modern identity, of this reconstructed architecture, there is a lot of things happening Yes.

S: what processes have brought this UNESCO World Heritage label? And that was part of this process, because it came a little bit from the Minister of culture I heard. Were there also urban associations, did the Mayor Le Havre be part of it?

V: indeed, I mentioned above all the inscription to the world heritage but this process of change of image, of reappropriation it is still quite gradual, there are milestones that punctuates the process, it is necessary to cite the protection zone that was introduce in 1975, which is really the element a little founder of all this dynamic. It is worth mentioning in 2001 to obtain the label of art and history as you had to see. One must cite the research community, which in the years 80, notably through a researcher named Joseph Abram, undertook research on the work of Auguste Perret in Le Havre and the Atelier Perret in Le Havre.

S: yes I contacted him too, at least I tried.

V: Yes it doesn't have to be simple. The scientific work he has done in the years 80 has served as a real basis for all this dynamic of protection valuation, it was the scientific foundation of everything that happened behind and in particular also of the investigations of the DRAC, the Regional Directorate of Cultural Affairs, which carried out the inventory of the heritage of Le Havre in the years 90, early years 90 I believe, and all this scientific background it allowed the obtaining of labels, protection but also a whole work of publication, a whole work of exhibitions, so a cultural work that allowed to talk about the reconstruction to the general public. Good for a cultural environment rather but here it is really part of the research community, it has spread to the public power notably the city of Le Havre and DRAC, and from that there was a sort of update of what had been the reconstruction of Le Havre by exhibitions, by books by labels and the last inscription to the world heritage. Yes so this is a first element, after on the procedure strictly speaking of the inscription to the world heritage, the idea she was not born in Le Havre, she was born really in the midst of researchers and especially the Association DoCoMoMo, I do not know if you heard about it.

S: yes I read something about it, but I don't know exactly what it is either.

V: it is documentation conservation of the modern movement, worldwide it is an NGO that works to document and protect, make known and then protect all these works of the modern movement in the world. And there was a French antenna, in the form of an association and the DoCoMoMo in 1994 met for a symposium in Barcelona and this is where the researchers, thus Joseph Abram and Gerard Monier, for the first time evoked the idea [25:00], the hypothesis of making inscribe Le Havre for world heritage, and after it is the Town Hall of Le Havre who has heard about this, who said, well there may be something to play and that launched feasibility methodology studies in the years 95, 96 with Joseph Abram. And the first conclusions were really very positive about the ability of Le Havre to be able to be inscribed, and there were very few people convinced at first at the Mairie du Havre. But on the other hand they worked with the Ministry of culture so that gradually the dossier could advance and several steps with provisional files, a step also with the Ministry of culture, then there is a mandatory step what is called the indicative list. The tentative list you've heard about it, right?

S: no, from this one not on the other hand.

V: so in fact all the States that are Member of UNESCO proposes sites to the inscription every year and before proposing sites at national level, an indicative list that allows to tell UNESCO, Bah here in 20 years, 30 years that come all that we o n imagine presenting what. So the first step for a site that claims to be inscribed is to be on this national indicative list and here there was no modern site on this tentative list, there are many very old sites, at the time the Ministry of culture has a culture in very old stone core, and it was perhaps the most difficult step to access this indicative French list, after once the dossier was presented to UNESCO, it was easier to accept when it is in the UNESCO instance that had a look more focus on modernity what.

S: Okay, and did the locals participate in this process in one way or another?

V: no, at the time the locals and even the elect, really very, very few people was convinced of the interest of this reconstructed city, and one could not imagine a dynamic coming from the locals on this file the what.

S: so it came mostly from the outside

V: Yes rather, and then the Mayor also at the time was someone quite cautious, it was Antoine Rufenacht, who was both ambitious but cautious, and therefore who really believed in the record, but he wanted to not too communicate on it, as long as he had no certainty that it would succeed, because the for the blow if it had been refused it would have been extremely counterproductive what. Already that Le Havre benefited from a bad image, if there had been a refusal by UNESCO, or the Ministry of culture, it would have been violent for Le Havre. So today we can regret that finally the Havrais did not participate in this dynamic but I think it was just too avant-garde to have a real local dynamic.

S: Yes and then it is in the continuity of the reconstruction itself that has not really been done in collaboration with them.

V: and not accepted.

S: but precisely, I would like to speak a little bit of narration since this is the main theme of my thesis. And I will first quickly made you explain how I got there, so there was not a lot of infrastructural changes between the years 65 when the construction is finished and the years 90 and the varieties of labels. And yet this image has changed enormously and so I wonder how it is done.

V: excuse can you repeat your question, I was interrupted by a message.

S: no worries. I was just explaining, so there was a change of image and no infrastructural change, and suddenly I said to myself what made this change of image and I said to myself, this is what is called in English the storytelling, or the narration in French, but I don't know if it really says that. And it's mostly the way we talk about a place. So if we take Hiroshima, as I look a little bit too, from the reconstruction there was a huge narration as Hiroshima City of peace, which was very much mourning, and against the atom in General. And this city has rebuilt a little bit around this narration that there has been, which has always been in collaboration with people as well. And so there was less contrast we're going to say between what the Government wanted and what the people wanted, but mostly because the project was sold and some narration or another, at least that's the way I see it , and exactly what role do you think this narration has had on the evolution of the image of Le Havre, if there was a narration or on the contrary if there were none?

V: well I'd say it's a little bit both, but what you say is very fair, I'm always amazed at the speech that is sent back by people who come from outside, either who lived in Le Havre, or who know a little bit about Le Havre to spend MPs in time, who all say "Oh yes since Antoine Rufenacht the city has changed a lot, and I had come 20 years ago and it was really sinister, today the city has resumed colors" while the city of Perret it is still there, it has not

changed , it's pretty amazing. But in any case, well there are still concrete elements of changes it is first the urban dynamics that there is around the reconstructed Center, there are neighborhoods that have been rehabilitated, the entrance to the city that has been really neat, and in terms of image when one enters, when we arrive in the city, it changes anyway.

S: but precisely, are these neighborhoods rehabilitated and this city center more used one will say, because before it was still a little bit abandoned, is it precisely due to a new narration? Because, basically I try to ask myself the question, is what urban planning makes sense, or is it just the way we talk about urbanism that makes sense.

V: Yes, there are also concrete elements which are the fact of living in these areas, that is to say that it is concretely the areas, apart from the seaside which is still very, very expensive, but it is the most expensive quarters per square metre , the reconstructed city is not for nothing, good there is the proximity of all the public facilities, but there is also the quality of the apartments, and somewhere it would be unconsciously they recognize it. When they say good an apartment Avenue Foch it is very, very expensive, it is because the quality of life, the space, the light it is really crazy. This is not narration, it is the personal experience of people, that gradually also the consideration that one has of this real estate heritage it has evolved towards the positive. Well that's a first thing, the second also is that there have been other concrete elements that are the operations of restoration, of raving, of change of trade signs, there has been a cleaning work can be said and back to the State origin of the Perret facades which has concretized the image of these buildings. And that when people say, the city has taken up colors, yes indeed. Almost all the buildings have already been raved, they have been very well restored in the last years, because now we have techniques to remake the concreons identical to what they were originally, so that we no longer have the phenomena of patchworks, of really not beautiful occasions, with grey coatings on beige concreons. And the image concretely, how you could say the physiognomy of the city it has a little bit resumed quality, gilding. It is true that it is the same city, but we take care of it, and this is important in terms of what image. And after that, the narration, I think actually the discourse is that of world heritage, it is a treasure of mankind, "Ah good? But how?" and explaining the composition of the city, the quality of the construction, the quality on the concrete, the people are discovering in fact all this work that has been done, and proudly the city reveals itself through this discourse, this narrative that explains the quality of the city.

S: Okay

V: did I answer your question?

S: Yes more or less, but it is a very philosophical question, so there is not really a precise answer. But how do you think the context has affected the outcome, because I know that in France I have the impression that it is often difficult to accept change, if one takes for example the Eiffel Tower, it was supposed to be destroyed, and at first people found it rather ugly too, until they climb on it and they see the view of Paris and all that, but there is this context, it has of course the political context, but do you think that the context really

has a great effect on what happened in Le Havre , or it is more precisely because of a narration and not having listened to the population enough.

V: it is multiple factors, but it is certain that the context it is also very, very strong in the divorce that there were Le Havre with their city, because we imposed Perret, because we imposed concrete, while the concrete in Normandy , nobody knows and everyone thought it was ugly, because we said that you will be more the owner of your building but you will be co-owner together. And this in France private property is a sacred thing, so it also helped to destabilize the havrais, there are also concrete changes that have intervened, which explains this difficult appropriation. But then I will not start to explain the French sociology, but I quite share your observation that the French have a hard time accepting the change, we are still very traditionalist. However, many avant-garde sites in France, the references stop, the Château de Versailles, the Eiffel Tower and the Haussmannien betting. Who all in their time was avant-garde but who are still...

S: how important is it that you would give the narration in rebuilding the cities destroyed by war, do you think that grief has not been taken into account enough in the reconstruction of Le Havre?

V: Yes, that is exactly what I wanted to talk about just now and I did not mention, that too it is a very important element in the process of non-adherence of the Le Havre to their city, it is the question of mourning, is that there have been thousands of deaths in Le Havre , and the city rebuilt people have associated it with this event of mourning, has this trauma of mourning and as long as the generations have not passed or that the generations have not been able to accept this mourning, this is called resilience, this reversal of image it does not p not open the place. There was a kind of Chappe that really sealed things on the ground and prevented the Le Havre from appropriating this city. I am amazed as still today, I discover that the Le Havre not know how to go about it with this modern city, the inhabitants what. They are still discovering that they have gorgeous inner courtyards where they can make gardens, they never really invested them, they have roof terraces, acres of terraced roofs, alike they never really invested while good it is, there is still enormous potential for appropriation and investment of the Le Havre in these buildings and in public spaces also that are very generous, very wide, and the top elsewhere, there is a dynamic that must be talked about, These are the events called ' a summer in Le Havre '. It is cultural and event events that have been happening every summer in Le Havre since 2017, since the 500 years of the city where Edouard Philippe had launched like this a great program of festivities for the anniversary of the city, but in the reconstructed city, which was going on in the reconstructed city so that the Le Havre reappropriates this city, live it concretely, collectively and there are artists who have invested public spaces and who have restored a status immediately a little more dignified, more qualitative has These public spaces which was a little neglected, a little marginalised. And there is a real phenomenon that is happening to requalification of the public space of the city rebuilt through these cultural events.



S: Okay, but just all these events is a lot of what is called ' top-down ' urbanism and that comes from above in fact, do you also see the urbanism that comes from below that takes place in Le Havre at the moment, more ' bottom-up ' things?

V: Yes, but these have been the premise for a few years, I was telling you about the investments of the real estate classes, there they are really incentives of the co-owners, there is an association that has just created itself called ' the people of the places ', which really for purpose like that to create cultural initiatives in the various places of the city, not only the city rebuilt elsewhere, and that also has an operation that had been called genius, which was the investment of a courtyard of buildings built by Perret by the ISAI where they have involved artists to create an event within these courses and awaken the attention of the co-owner to say "see, we can come to settle there collectively", and this, it really comes from below and it is extremely positive, but it is still at the stage a little experimental, there is not yet the very, very strong dynamic.

S: do you think that the appropriation of the city must go through stadiums like this, by elements like that?

V: Yes there is only so that it will be completely suitable definitively and uncomplexed. In fact there is really a complex of Le Havre on this modernity, which gradually turns into a element of pride, in Dynamics, but this complex it is long to evolve anyway. And for that you have to give yourself freedom, for this is great this city of Perret it is made to be completed to evolve, it was conceived like that so I have a lot of hope in there.

S: Ben Super, I have one last question after I leave you because it's about 40 minutes, do you think there were hidden intentions, agendas, in the reconstruction phase and that of heritage? For example, more of the economic than social kind, because Le Havre has to get the labels was not at best anyway, do you think it is more due to bring a new economy, the agenda the reason why they made it, than social? Do you also think that is why there is a great divorce.

V: no I do not think, because actually there are issues of opportunity, many cities that saw that Le Havre was inscribed with world heritage came to see us saying, "Yes we would like to do the same, it's great, it must have brought you b and they said, if Le Havre did it, we will be able to do it. So, it is certain that there are questions of political opportunities in a procedure like this, but it is not that what, there is also a background work, a scientific work and you would not reach until the obtaining of the label if behind there is not a true cultural dimension to this project. And that was demonstrated and that was the truth in quotation marks. But on the other hand Yes necessarily there is also an important political component but which is also assumed by the Le Havre, the Le Havre they say "Yes Antoine Rufenacht he played well on it, through this inscription he changed the image of Le Havre what".

S: Yes it was beneficial to them in the end.

V: Yes regardless of the cultural aspect of the thing, in terms of tourism, in terms of communication, it is only positive what. In the worst case it created controversy, but the controversy was super constructive, because it attracted attention and it is only positive.

And it didn't cost the city any more. So it is a master coup for this issue from a political point of view.

Pascal Denecheau

S: great, in this case we can start perhaps, can you introduce yourself quickly, what do you do in life, what was your journey, how you are involved in the process of re-appropriation of Le Havre.

P: actually I am not at all from Le Havre, I have no connection with Le Havre. [...] I studied musicology [...] You could not buy in the Parisian region because the prices are too high, we said, we go to buy by the sea, not too far from Paris, and so we headed to the Normandy coast like that, and then we knew, my friend knew the harbor. He had made a school trip in 89, and he had been amazed by this city, all of architecture and he had kept a good memory of it. I was not very enthusiastic about this city, and we went there several times, and that's when we thought, that's where to buy, it's a good city, finally I discovered the city and I fell in love. And that's where we said where to buy? An apartment by the sea or at Auguste Perret, since we knew that Perret had built the buildings of the square of the Town Hall, and we had thought, it is either there or with something with a view of the sea, but it will not be elsewhere. And, so we planned some visits, and we went one day like this and we fell on our current apartment which immediately Plut us, in 2009. So when we arrived we knew no one, since it is a city where we have no connection, but we thought that something had to be done, since these buildings were not protected, and that there were already projects in the Trade Union Council, in the condominium, to put plastic Windows, PVC, and to stop it I went back to the Union Council. And it was my first step, a bit in this city since it is a big condominium, I started to meet elected officials and then I became President of the Trade Union Council, and there I was able to really prevent all the nonsense, and we launched an application file for Pro protection with the Ministry of culture, and after 2 years of instruction the Ministry of culture was supported, the buildings were first inscribed as historical monuments and then classified the following year. [...] 05:00 [there is a blog, and site, and an article in the magazine 2017 and more of the harbour] where in fact we explain why these buildings are classified, we try to explain to the inhabitants why they are good, and how they are different from the other buildings of the reconstruction n because in Le Havre, the real estate agencies for example, they do not differentiate between a building and the one next door. In the reconstruction of Le Havre there was the State that wanted to mark a strong gesture the reconstruction by entrusting to Auguste Perret, the urbanism, IE the overall plan of the city, but also some flagship buildings of the city, so the Church St Joseph , the Town Hall and then the four ilots, the 36-37, the 40-41 that make a part of the Town Hall square. And this is the first time that the State rebuilt buildings of dwellings, which they had never done before, and then handed the apartments to the war victims, since the city had been completely bombarded.

S: Okay, I would have a question about that, since I thought I heard, that there was some form of land consolidation that was made. So that all the inhabitants put together the money they perceived as war victims to rebuild. And so that was not the case with the islets?

P: there were two types then, people who had a good on the square of the Town Hall, for example, I take this example, they came with a file with everything they could find, with photographs, things that showed how was their good, and then either we gave them a sum of money, the greater part of the people had this, either we gave you a turnkey apartment, or several apartments, for example, we at the V40 there was a large hotel, which belonged to a family [...] and when the hotel was destroyed, they were given whole stairwells. For example, we our apartments are sold over time by these families who get rid of apartments little by little, but often they had about twenty, everything depended on the good, the others who have a sum of money have merged into cooperative and chose an architect, then either they were in the Group of architects of Auguste Perret, so they made a can ready the same, either they were Le Havre and they had only as instruction to respect the frame of 6m24, but after they were free, so we have buildings that are very beautiful, others less successful, and everything depended also on the people who appealed to the architects, often you have a very nice façade on the street, and the rear is less neat, which is not the case of ISAI of the place of the hotel of city, since Perret and its architects worked in the same way the inner courtyards as the facades on the street or on the square, that is interesting to observe.

S: you talked a little bit earlier also about the fact that you were not at all from Le Havre and at first you were not really enchanted with the idea of going to Le Havre and that after you fell in love with the city, precisely what were the reasons for this distrust We're going to say in relation to the Harbor, and now that you're Le Havre how does your feeling in relation to the city have changed?

P: so in fact I did not know the city, so one day we went there like that, it was in winter and I was very cold, and it is a city where you have a lot of wind since it is the coast, and there was a pretty cold wind , and I did not appreciate the first time I came. And then we came back after and there I really started to discover the city, because in fact it really has to live it, either-we are immediately in love with this city and I had not understood how it was made, for the city center in any case , because there are several cities in Le Havre. In fact, there are the parts that are coastal which are very beautiful, with beautiful houses, there are poorer neighborhoods, and there is this Center rebuilt, and when we walk in the city [...] And we say, a but that, they had thought that such a block would make a perspective with such another block, and on 10:00 realizes that they had really reflected and that they had actually worked on a three-dimensional model to pose the different buildings. And then it is true that it is a city where we discover that we are very, very good. We live well.

S: suddenly, because the image of Le Havre still, we will say, before its heritage with UNESCO, had a still negative image in France, did this image you know it, did it affect you or not at all?

P: me not since I did not know the city, I did not know much of its history, but when one comes it is true that there was a beginning of transformation since the former mayor who was called Rufenacht he had launched the dossier of UNESCO, but He did not believe it at all and the new mayor who was Edouard Philippe, who is now our Prime Minister, replaced him very quickly, so we were more known Mr. Edouard Philippe, he was a neighbor and he

began to transform the city, so there was ENORM LY of things that were done, there was the witness apartment of the city of Le Havre that showed, which was already beginning to make pedagogy on construction to try to give the Le Havre a more beautiful image than the one they had. But in fact many Le Havre hated the city, but outside the city there were also many people who did not like this city, I know the curator of the League? National that said "it's ugly, [...] these are cubes etc.. "and I told them, " you did not go to see the city? you've visited recently? "and they say " no, no ". And there was a great exhibition about a painter whose name I forgot, which attracted a lot of people, and there was an opportunity to show that the city had really changed.

S: you are arriving in what year already in Le Havre, I forgot?

P: in 2009, and it was there in the years 98-99, in the years 2000, or the city was still in its condition. It was very long under a Communist mayor who had things that remained very outdated for a very long time, the money was not spent to beautify the city but rather for social actions. It is a city that has a strong, which is very divided between very rich people and very poor people.

S: I know you've already talked about it a little can but your experience as an inhabitant of the Center, would you have some examples that you could give me that makes this city truly unique.

P: who makes this city unique?

S: How does it move, is there life, how does the downtown is now compared to before, or it was more or less neglected, what interests me is to see the change a little bit and how it is to live there now actually .

P: there are several elements in fact, there was a crisis, we get out there a little bit with shops in the street of Paris, which was a street that never really worked well, because it does not lead to anything, and the shops , many have been closed, and then there are new businesses that are born, who sell local products, [...] it has plenty of ideas, [...] so there are new shops. There is the arrival of cruise ships also that has changed a lot because now there are several cruise companies that come, and for example you can find yourself with three huge boats with a flood of tourists that are spilled. Most will do tours in Versailles, just the round trip in the day to visit the Palace of Versailles, to see Paris etc... Honfleur or so, but many choose to stay in the city to discover the city center that was rebuilt by Perret. It also changes the vision of the Le Havre in relation to their city 15:00 and then how do we live there? How is it unique? I cannot define it, but there is a proportion that you do not see right away, but it is made so that people live well in it, and it is felt, it is the effects of prospects that I was talking about at the moment , it is the extremely graphical side of the city. There is a lot of artist, photographer, graphic designer, it is a city that is a city of artists and a city that pleases the artists.

S: Okay, that's interesting, but it's also a city that was designed to be very modern, do you still perceive this modernity today?

P: much less now.

S: it was designed in the years 50 also, it's normal

P: now we have 70 years (many pictures on the site)

S: there was a process, they Redid the facades after the legacy not?

P: Yes there was a beginning, there was in the 90, there was a text called ZPPAUP [...] the text can be found on the site of the City Hall.

S: from the blow maybe coming back to ISAI themselves, they were conceived at the beginning by Perret to promote a lifestyle a little different, can you perceive it still today or more too?

P: the thought of these architects, we found very, very modern elements, we are in 47 and we deliver an apartment with double glazing, it must be more frequent, but in France it was not the case, there was no double glazing, there was no air slide between the walls to make insulation, it's really very, very modern, the type of heating also has been the subject of a big reflection, one is heated by R + C. That is to say we have a central boiler room that produces very hot water, which goes into a system, IE a large fan that takes the air outside, which heats this air, which sends it in the apartments, and this overpressure in the apartments dust-hunting, odor-hunting. That is to say, we have smoking friends and they can smoke in the apartment and a few hours after you no longer feel the smoke, it is elements like that that are...

S: really attention to detail.

P: Yes, and the electricity is buried, you do not have electricity under the bucket? These are examples like this. And then for the people who lived first these apartments, it was modernity since it was running water, hot water, a bathroom, in France after the war it was still rare. There is this modernity that we knew the people who had the apartments by living them and then we continue to see how they are well thought out. You really have to live to understand.

S: yes I feel it.

P: people who have not lived there, they consider them as poorly constructed buildings, people compare a lot with what they know, so as for them it is reconstruction and everything is the same reconstruction. If they know someone who lives in a building, a building of reconstruction or the walls are thinner, and we hear the neighbors, for them it is the same thing in us, and the quality of the reconstructed buildings actually varies from an architect has the other and the amount that was spent by the reconstruction cooperatives.

S: do you still see untapped potential for the city, because I SIAs that Le Havre was designed so that the city center evolves in a certain way, is there still things that could be better used, for example I SIAs that Vincent Duteurtre told me about the terraces and the roofs. I do not know if you have any other examples.

[...]

P: so the potential, we fight a little bit against it, IE the city has many real estate projects, including a tower that they want to build near the King's basin, a rather gigantic Tower twisted, so it's very in the air of time , but we consider it to be a heterogeneous element that will harm the harmony of the city, people are very divided the top, so the city would like to redensify in fact the city center, there is very little land available and the city is not aware , for them they will destroy for example a nursery school for this tower, it is a school of an architect who is known, I forgot the name. Who could have been rehabilitated to do something else but they no, they prefer to destroy it. And there is an artist in Le Havre, called ' La pince SA kills ', which makes quite gigantic collages that presents a kind of big pliers that destroys things and every time we see this collage on a building is that it will be destroyed , so sometimes it would be a bit of a shame.

S: but when I was talking about untapped potential, I was talking mostly about unused space right now and that the locals could even reclaim themselves by using them for example by making communal gardens or more ' bottom-up ' urbanism

P: so there have already been projects like this, the city would like to encourage us to do it by vegetating the roofs for example, 35:00 but vegetating the roofs it means well sealed, our architect who follows us... who is the Chief Architect of the monuments Hi storic, it is against it saying that these are sources of problems, we are very shared again, we would like to know if we take no risks. There are some condominiums that have appealed to gardeners architects, there was a nice project on an old dryer, on which they installed pots, in which they put plants, which live alone without any external intake [...] and it is very be The. It's been six years since they put it in place and they came back to see how it evolved and it's absolutely perfect, that is to say that the plants they generate themselves, they live in complete autarcie, it is quite interesting as work. And then there was an artist also called Justine Marchand who tried to put art on the roofs, it was her project of the school BOULLE, she called it the 5th façade. [...] Her idea was to put on the roofs of art so that the people who are in the towers can see from above [...] she thought that we could make gardens on the roofs and that people could appropriate them, the problem with us is that access is t ery difficult, it is done by a kind of sky Dome, very narrow and we could not implement it with us, but it is very beautiful what she did [...]

S: If you can talk a little bit of image now, I know that you arrived in 2009, where the image has probably already evolved well compared to the years 1980, but do you still see people still dissatisfied with their own city, is there always an evolution of image since you arrived?

P: there is still a lot of work to do, but it starts to change a lot, the city had first an apartment, the apartment witness, then they took over an old pharmacy to make it the House Auguste Perret, the House of heritage, which presents exhibitions, publications, really there are a lot of things and then there they spread in an old restaurant that was disused, that was abandoned, and they really start to make big exposures, there are a lot of people passing, who sees and in our building the fact that there is a classification historical monument, first they are very, very, very proud, for them it is a real recognition, and they understood that it was buildings that had great heritage value and that it was necessary protected and then well, maintain them to leave them to future generations. There was also

all this work, and this work was also done by television that came to interview us several times, by TV series, there were films, filming. So all this, it shows, these buildings are chosen as frames 40:00 that means they have a value anyway. There have been photographic shooting sessions of large houses like Hermès for their luxurious magazines with great diffusion. The image to change and then the 500 years of Le Havre also changed a lot, that is to say that there was a great festivity for the 500 years of the founding of the city with artistic events and the people came and they discover the city and the buildings and voila , it's very, very positive and that, it also returns a very positive image of the image of Le Havre and the havrais are even a little surprised and then begin to understand that it is a city worth seeing.

S: but suddenly, what importance do you give precisely to the external image compared to the Le Havre themselves, in relation to the evolution of this image, is it more coming from the outside or?

P: it came a lot from the outside but it came also from the younger generations, that is to say the people who knew the city before the bombing could never be done to this new city, more than the problem is that the emblematic buildings of the city were rebuilt on the same positions as the previous ones, the City Hall for example is at the same place or was the other City Hall, so for the old Le Havre there was this overlay of the two images, for them it was unsustainable. And then now they are very old, many are dead, and the younger generations they love this city, even the older people they come to settle in these buildings- there because they have elevators for some of them and then one is really close to the amenities, so we have everything.

S: have you noticed a few narrative scenarios that have taken an amplitude in this transitional period?

P: not really, no I don't really have a telling case No.

S: what was the role of the city associations precisely in the evolution of the image, did they participate much in this?

P: I believe the traders associations Yes, to precisely fight the closure of the shops and the fact that the large peripheral commercial areas come to harm them. The facts it was still neat the Windows, modernised the Windows, with softer lighting, sometimes by uncoffing parts to show raw concrete. The concrete that was not liked become noble and beautiful material for them now it's very new. And a period of destruction in the outlines of the Windows precisely, but there is a trade that has redone, not identical, but in wood one of the concrete frames, one of the frames double the Windows, we do not see necessarily it is well made. There's really this idea of coming back to something prettier. So it is rather the traders who do it, but after the other associations I do not think.

S: you yourself are involved in reappropriation, in the recognition and restoration of buildings. What was the nature of your work and what actions did you undertake?

[...]

P: so we what we did is first of all the protection was asked, to avoid degradations, i.e. for example to save energy, window replacements. Our Windows are made of oak, therefore an extremely noble wood, which resists the weather, but there are already Windows that have been changed by PVC Windows in the common areas 45:00 and we see very quickly that these Windows they do not hold standing in relation to the prevailing wind, to the westerly wind for example. So in fact the idea was already to protect them, also saying that all the works of Auguste Perret were protected and therefore that it was still strange that it is always not classified at least. And then there was also the fact that it was not found that it was a work of Perret, IE that there was very little contributed, it was young architects who had worked but he did not do anything. And when we started working on the archives, we realized that he had absolutely everything checked, even if he was at the end of his life, he died in 54, our buildings are delivered in 51. But Perret controls everything the architects do, and he's the one who says how to do it, why we put such material in such a place etc. etc. It was himself who chose the metal shutters, which was much more expensive than other wooden ones that we also wanted to put on. So we see that it is his work still, his last work in fact. When we knew that, for us it was obvious that we had to protect them.

S: but they were not protected until you arrived with UNESCO, with the ZPPAUP, with the city of Arts and history?

P: so they had a little higher protection with the ZPPAUP, but that was not binding, just now I talked about raverally or they imposed us some colors, but we could very well change the doors, the text became more restrictive to time, that is to say they have progressed gradually to not too upset the owners, and it has happened now, so there is a new text that has been made recently that is called AVAP (online)

[...]

P: and in fact we managed to have a lot of constraints without any subsidies, so the Ministry of culture was asked to protect these buildings, there was first the inscription to the historical monument or there is no need to ask the agreement to the co-owners , it is the State that decides to protect a monument because it has a particular value. But the Commission that had met in Rouen, so not very far, the prefecture in fact, decided to send the file to the Ministry for classification. So the ranking is the floor above the rocket, it is an even greater protection, it is a decision taken by the Minister, so after the consultations of the National Commission, and that it was necessary the agreement of the co-owners. So I have me as President of the Trade Union Council, we made a General Assembly of the co-owners or I explained to them when we were making this request-there were obvious constraints, very large, but that we were going to have subsidies and tax cuts. And there were 99% of people, finally a great majority of people who agreed to go to the rankings, so that's important, I thought there would be a Division, people would not want, and in fact we were very , very surprised. A few contres, but, grumpy old as always, but there were a great majority of people who said, "but yes, Yes, that's fine, you have to do it, it's perfect " that's it.

S: so there is really optimism for the city on the part of the locals



P: Yes, Yes, Yes, finally for the city, and for our ilots, because I live in relation to buildings that I know well, but after the buildings that are beside us, who have the same vocabulary, which have not been rebuilt 50:00 by the State, but they also understand that they are not bad, it did a little drag a powder gently. So this is basically our job. And then we set up the site, we set up a blog, me as President of the Trade Union Council, I can only dialogue with the co-owners, i.e. those who have an apartment or a trade, but it is difficult to speak with the tenants, those who inhabit, the locals, so we organized the party of neighbors, to be able to meet, to be able to discuss, and then we set up the blog first and then the site, and the Facebook page also, so they powerful see a little what happens, so that they are informed in real time of things, and then so that we can also distill our pedagogy by saying "you live in buildings that are of great qualities, that is how they are conceived" and this, it works. So it is at the same time all this and then the last act, it was this article that we were commissioned, so the city of Le Havre ordered us for its review 2017 and + for the protection of historical monuments. UNESCO, it is just a label, that is to say that if the city changes too much the city centre, it will lose its UNESCO label, and UNESCO is not at all a regulation, it is something that is going to bring the tourists for example, but it is absolutely not a text that will oblige us to do anything, the city has an interest in doing things well to keep its label, but if UNESCO decides, because in addition it put this label in issue fairly regularly, they come to see us if we changed some of the choses, if etc... For us the only text that really contradicted us was the ZPPAUP, then the AVAP, then now this new text, I forgot what it's called. [...]

S: but the urban planning it has been very long, what is called 'top-down', i.e. it comes from the municipality and that it is imposed on the inhabitants. Do you see potential now so that on the other hand there is a urbanism that comes from the inhabitants, who reappropriates the space and also the city at the same time?

P: no I do not have that impression, can be but I do not know any concrete case. We try to do it but, there for example what we had thought to do is put art in hearts of ilots, put a work of art that could dialogue with architecture.

S: this is exactly the kind of urbanism I thought I was.

P: I had no understanding of this, so this is how it is, I was an idea that interested me, I talked to the cultural service of the city asking them if they had a work of art to lend us, something large enough to be in proportion, that one could not deteriorate because it would really be at the heart of the Islands, because one has for example a garden that is below, because in fact the parking is all around, so the garden is in hollow, so if one puts a work in the Middle it is Prot because you cannot easily go down to the garden. And the city reflected and then in the meantime we had architects who made for the month of architecture an installation called genius, which was a temporary staircase to descend into the garden, so that people would take ownership of the garden so that they powerful down there, then a whole wooden installation around, very colorful, you will see this on our site. And then there was another artist who put a red Chair in the garden, and then now he put a fish. And then this year we have Claire Le Breton, who is a 55:00 plastic artist who works on a form of alphabet she drew, including a heart and she made it done by young professional

high school, concrete hearts, so they made all the mould design, reinforcement etc. These hearts have been sunk and are going to be installed in the garden of the V40, so now we have more and more events that come to take place in the heart of the Islands, and that challenge people, so many do not like, and others find that it is good, it makes things move and it makes you talk.

S: but it is the inhabitants themselves who reappropriates the place.

P: absolutely, there is actually this approach.

S: do you think that this kind of initiative is the last step necessary for a total reconciliation between the inhabitants and the city, which the inhabitants themselves say, this place is ours, and we want to do this with?

P: there are two trends, we wanted to fight a trend that is very common, so our downtown, we are in a pedestrian area, with a lot of beer bar, with all the nuisances that go with, IE alcoholic people who come urinating with us, that's it. So a lot of condominiums have turned up, i.e. they have grilled themselves, they have put up grids for more than we enter their homes. It is an aberration because at the time of the land consolidation, the construction of the Islands had to remain open so that we could cross, that is to say that people could cross islets freely, go home, see a little how it was done and then come out in another Street, and currently, it's increasingly impossible to do, IE, condominiums, private properties grates, they're afraid of others, they're afraid of the outside, and we said no we're not going to do it, we do not want to do it, first our grids they are rusty so we can no longer closed them, but there were projects to rehabilitate them, to change them, to close and since we are historical monument there is no longer question, it is necessary that people t go home, make pictures, come and see etc... And we frequently have people who cross, so sometimes they dare not enter, but we were obliged to remain open and admit art precisely so that people come in and visit him, but we are the few, and the city does nothing to prevent this. While this is absolutely not legal, that is to say we must be able to cross, it is really, it was wanted like that.

S: is this one of the risks, you think of the touristification of the city?

P: I think not, but on the contrary we are proud to see the people who come to photograph the plaque historical monument for example, and it's pretty funny, they will go home, many people do not understand why they are classified. What makes us laugh is that a few times you have people who will look to see if there is not an old vestige some part in the courtyard, and so they are looking for and they find nothing, and it makes us laugh a lot because that's it. And there are others who come on purpose to see too. And if we closed it would be an aberration. Even we have people who can not go to the witness apartment because there is a lot of visiting, but there may be many who come to see and sometimes they ask us, "can we go home?" and the locals at times they say "but Ven EZ, come to us" and they invite people they know absolutely not to come home to see, so they are proud, it happened several times this. But again I'm not talking about the whole reconstructed city, I'm talking about the islets that I know, has left the fact that many locks, that, that we see in

the city while walking. Because before we could go through places and now we can no longer, but when we arrived we were not yet in this fear, in this will to lock ourselves.