Business History

ISSN: (Print) (Online) Journal homepage: www.tandfonline.com/journals/fbsh20

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To cite this article: Antonio Iodice (30 Apr 2024): The 'Palladium of prosperity': Lobbying between Marseilles and Paris from the revolution to the restoration (1789-1817), Business History, DOI: 10.1080/00076791.2024.2343864

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/00076791.2024.2343864

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Published online: 30 Apr 2024.

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BUSINESS HISTORY
https://doi.org/10.1080/00076791.2024.2343864

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The 'Palladium of prosperity': Lobbying between Marseilles and Paris from the revolution to the restoration (1789-1817)

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ABSTRACT

This article investigates the multifaceted lobbying activities carried out by the Chamber of Commerce of Marseilles (CoC) from the French Revolution to the Restoration periods (ca. 1789-1817). Part of historical literature recognises this crucial period as the birth of modern-day lobbyism. I will examine the long and heated political debates regarding the free port of Marseilles, definitively abolished in 1817, through the strategies employed by the CoC to preserve it. These strategies encompassed sending delegates to Paris, discreetly engaging with state councillors and ministers, disseminating pamphlets and songs, as well as consolidating influence on municipal and regional powers. Freedom of trade in this context was paradoxically intertwined with the local merchants' monopoly on the lucrative French Levant trade, alongside the prosperity of hinterland manufacturing facilitated by mercantilist policies.

ARTICLE HISTORY
Received 30 May 2023
Accepted 11 April 2024

KEYWORDS
Lobbying; France; Marseilles; French revolution; French restoration; Napoleon; trade

1. Introduction

The weight of state decision-making on economic and social life prompts citizens in civil societies to engage with state institutions to advocate for their own interests. This is particularly true when looking at Business Interest Associations (BIAs) and lobby groups. Lobbying is nowadays an essential activity that occupies a significant portion of the efforts of BIAs and business professionals, especially in their relationships with decision-makers in the United States and the European Union (Gastinger & Dür, 2021). In Washington, for instance, there are more than 1,600 organisations that claim to speak on behalf of public groups (Grossman, 2012a).

The term 'lobby' refers to a hotel lobby in its original meaning in English – a common room – so that 'lobbying' strictly speaking means 'going to the lobby', usually to meet an influential person. Beggars in pre-modern Europe usually waited in powerful persons' lobbies

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to ask for favours or benefits in exchange for gifts or loyalty. This anglicism has no equivalent in Latin languages and has deep historical roots.

The date of the first appearance of lobbying is still debated. Some scholars identify its birth around 1791, when the young American Republic recognised the right of its citizens to assemble and express their opinion to their leaders by promulgating the first amendment to the Constitution (Clamen, 2012; Nalu, 2012). According to Kammen (1965), the origins of US lobbying can be traced back to the period before the Revolution, when lobbying and diplomacy were closely intertwined. It became evident that each agent must work on behalf of all American colonies, rather than just one of them, leading to the realisation that the US as a whole had become their constituency.

In Europe, there was no such positive aggregating view of lobbying. Quite the contrary. Lobbying in continental Western Europe was made through semi-institutionalised corporations, such as Chambers of Commerce, Trade Companies, and so on. In that notable year, 1791, the *Le Chapelier* Law in Revolutionary France eliminated corporations, a tradition from the *Ancien Régime*, where institutionally recognised business groups, such as Marseilles' Chamber of Commerce (CoC) could act as intermediaries between individuals and state authorities (Fitzsimmons, 1996). Unlike American citizens, the French were formally forbidden to group together in a corporation to defend their interests because this practice had been characteristic of the *Ancien Régime*. France was at the forefront of continental European law-making and this approach was more or less transposed onto other European states. Even Great Britain, a European nation in conflict with France during that era, enacted similar laws in 1799, known as the Combination Acts (Batt, 2008).

These two examples – the French/European and US scenarios – reflect two opposite legislative behaviours, based on divergent perceptions of lobbying activity: whereas in the United States it was both prolific and well received, in France – as well as in other European countries – it remained without a clear status and was practised in an obscure way (Grossman, 2012b; Sachet-Milliat & Igalens, 2019).[1]

This article will investigate the representativeness, influence and lobbying strategies practised by a BIA, namely, the CoC of Marseilles, in this transitory period to highlight the historical roots of lobbyism in its day-to-day application. I will consider, through a qualitative analysis of archival materials preserved in Marseilles and Paris, the successes, setbacks and failures of the changes in the CoC's lobbying practices, the temporal dimension of its capacity to influence decision-making and the platforms and channels of corporate political activity.

BIAs are defined as 'formal organisations of groups of businesspeople which have as their goal the aggregation, definition, representation and defence of the group's business interests' (van Waarden, 1992, p. 521). The CoC fits well into this definition, as it united a large number of local major merchants (*négociants*) and successfully escaped the formal constraints of the *Le Chapelier* Law. Its primary goal between 1789 and 1817 was to defend at any cost Marseilles' free port statute and the substantial privileges and monopolies associated with it, which directly favoured the CoC's members. For several generations, the CoC could rely on well-established and dependable political connections. Suddenly, because of the Revolutionary events, all aspects of political and economic life became uncertain. What follows is an intriguing case of an early functional BIA operating in a volatile world, paving the way for associations that would emerge later on in the nineteenth century.

2. Methodology

I have relied primarily on political and institutional sources, such as assembly minutes, memorials, pamphlets, and the correspondence between the CoC and its agents. It is important to note that these documents reflect the perspectives of their authors, often agents of Marseilles' CoC advocating for their institution's personal gain. Most policy outcomes are not zero-sum games but compromises that entail varying or mixed degrees of success (Mahoney, 2007). Let us be clear: lobbyists do not seek to organise or improve the world, merely to adjust it to their own best interests. Lobbyists use the concepts of common good and public interest as a scalp to exhibit when they win or to reclaim when they lose. Nevertheless, the necessity to remain consistently informed about the arguments presented by opponents and the evolving political landscapes prompted the CoC to amass and safeguard a substantial quantity of documents generated by its adversaries. Bringing these sources together often reveals conflicts that have been overlooked by those who have exclusively relied on national records, allowing us to uncover multidirectional influences disavowed by powerful actors seeking to legitimate their power. What emerges from this methodology is less a history of the lobbyism of the CoC than a reconstruction of lobbying in practice, as Marseilles' *négociants* tested precocious strategies to exert political influence to reach their goals during active negotiations about decrees, trade agreements, and in national institutions. Considering the diverse array of sources and actors mentioned in this paper, Table 1 serves as a concise summary.

In addition to the sources mentioned above, printed materials intended for broad readership have played a significant role. Pamphlets, newspapers, memoirs, political periodicals and official documents poured forth from the printers, fuelling increasingly heated debates (Clay, 1997; Gérard, 1964; Kennedy, 1972; Skuncke, 2011). An exemplary case is Departmental Prefect Thibaudeau's memoir (1834), where he effectively illustrated the need to publicly accommodate influential organisations like the CoC to secure political support, even if this does not entail sharing their ideals or enacting new rules.

Table 1. Main steps of the edict for the free port of Marseilles.

Source	Date	Actor/s	Relevance
ACCIMP, D 23	03/1669	Louis XIV, King	First free port edict
ACCIMP, A 17	1700-1705	Joseph Fabre, deputy of Marseilles at the Council of Commerce	Letters and memorials from the Council's session and royal ministers
ACCIMP, D 25	31/10/1774	Municipal authorities of Marseilles and CoC	Report to Intendant of Provence and Secretary of State for the Navy
ACCIMP, mq. 3.2.1.1	05/1814-02/1815	Pierre Perron, Pierre Plasse, Pierre-Honoré Roux, CoC's deputies	Lobbying activities in Paris
ACCIMP, mq 3.2.1.1	29/09/1814	Soap- and soda-makers manufacturers of Marseilles	Memorial against the free port
ACCIMP, mq. 3.2.1.2	20/02/1815	Louis XVIII, King	Ordinance for the free port re-establishment
ANP, AE/BIII/252	09/1817	21 members from the CoC, the Municipal Council, *négociants* and manufacturers	Commission report against the free port
ACCIMP, mq. 3.2.1.2	10/09/1817	Louis XVIII, King	Ordinance for the free port abolition

The period of the French Revolution offers an interesting vantage point from which to study lobbying history precisely because of the intermingling of different ways of doing it depending on the rapidly changing institutional and cultural contexts of reference within the space of a few years. The Constituent Assembly proclaimed the end of all particular privileges in the Kingdom with an ordinance of 11 August 1789 (Mosneron, 1792). This declaration was an earthquake for the well-established interests of various organisations, corporations and individuals across the country. It stimulated the rapid creation or strengthening of corporations and clubs to avoid losing acquired privileges or to gain new ones by exploiting the malleability of the new legislation.

The best way to assess a BIA's extent of 'power' is to identify and recognise the profiles of its partisans and evaluate their operations. As long as the CoC succeeded in establishing itself as the sole representative of the Marseilles community, it was able to exercise continuous lobbying through appointing agents and deputies who produced regular reports and letters. The splitting of the front in the early 1800s, prompted by the economic changes following the Continental Blockade and the growth of the local chemical industry, undermined its representative strategy and led to the emergence of new BIAs. Representativeness and political legitimacy are therefore key elements in this paper.

Historians underscore the crucial importance of petitions both in early modern political practice and for relations between rulers and their subjects or foreign economic operators (Lloret, 2015). In recent decades, they have highlighted the possible ways of lobbying through official petitions (Vermeesch, 2012), the printing of journals or pamphlets (Peacey, 2007) or even dinners and parties (Schnyder, 2022). All these tools were used by the CoC.

French scholars have studied this phenomenon in the Revolutionary and post-Revolutionary contexts. Gainot has reconstructed the events surrounding the formation of a colonial lobby that defended the interests of landowners and slave owners in Santo Domingo between 1789 and 1802 (Gainot, 2015). Ferradou investigated the presence of an 'Irish' lobby in Paris between 1792 and 1796 that sought France's help in establishing an independent Irish republic (Ferradou, 2022). Flamein studied the development of BIAs with financial interests between 1785 and 1800, reconstructing the formation of interest groups to control large trading companies and their monopolies even before the Revolution (Flamein, 2015).

These scholars worked on the documentation produced in the Constituent Assembly and subsequent governing institutions without dwelling on the relationship between the 'diplomats' of the BIAs in Paris and their employers, with the partial exception of Flamein.

Such lobbies were formed in a relatively short time, whereas the case analysed in this article recalls long-term dynamics, which better resemble the professional lobbying operating nowadays. Bonnet (1984) recognised the significance of the Marseilles free port issue during the period of the Consulate and the Empire, but he did not incorporate it into the CoC's long-term political strategies. A long timeframe is necessary to assess winners and losers of policy processes as well as the degree of success that actors could achieve (Wuokko et al. 2022). The BIA formed by the CoC of Marseilles had a century-old history and partially managed to survive the French monarchy and the Revolutionary government, but in the end lost the lobbying struggle due to its intransigence, which led it to disregard second-best alternatives.

My analysis unfolds chronologically. I begin by clarifying the nature and unique features of the free port of Marseilles (sec. 3); the subsequent sections are structured and ordered based on the changing institutional contexts. I examine the lobbying activities carried out

by the CoC before the convocation of the Estates General in 1789 (sec. 4), their influence within the revolutionary government (sec. 5), the tumultuous period of transition to the Consulate and the Napoleonic Empire (sec. 6) and the repercussions following the restoration of the monarchy (sec. 7).

3. Genesis and consolidation of Marseilles' free port, 1669-1775

Officially part of the French Kingdom since 1481, Marseilles retained a long-term leeway of independence from the central power (Roncayolo, 2014). The economic and political elite of the city was made up of nobles and *négociants*, but the former were ousted from access to major city offices from 1669 to 1766. This paved the way for the consolidation of the sphere of influence represented by the heterogeneous *négociants*. The latter were wholesale merchants, theoretically distinct from merchants who ran shops and from nobles who lived off land revenue, although the distinction in practice was not so clear-cut (Salvemini, 2009). The *négociants* used their authority and influence to assert themselves as legitimate interlocutors and unequivocal representatives of the local community, succeeding on decisive occasions in temporarily putting aside 'the incommensurability of their own particular interests' to act as a single entity safeguarding the public interest (Xambo, 2014).

The main institutional platform through which *négociants* gathered and negotiated together with the monarchy was the CoC, created in 1599 to organise the protection of French trade against corsairs in the Mediterranean Sea (Takeda, 2011). The CoC frequently collaborated with the municipal authorities, where the same *négociants*' family members operated, and had direct relationships with the royal ministers. Some of its agents resided full-time near the councillors in Paris. Bonin, a former head of the city (*échevin*) and deputy for the CoC in 1667, reported how the CoC had to act as the sole representative of the city (Fournier, 1920, p. 8).

In 1669, the CoC obtained the free port statute for the port of Marseilles and, thanks to the efforts of its delegates, the monopoly on French trade with the Levant and Barbary coasts. The CoC persuaded French administrators that only a powerful institution with a thorough knowledge of local business situations in the Levant would enable French subjects to compete with the English, Dutch and Venetians (Horn, 2011). Following the free port edict, cargoes from North Africa and the Eastern Mediterranean paid a prohibitive 20% tax when they arrived in France on foreign vessels, or even on French vessels if they had called at Genoa, Livorno, or other foreign seaports. This also applied if the cargoes were unloaded in a French port other than Marseilles.[2] The tax was a clear contradiction of the free port principle as it was practised, for instance, in Genoa or Livorno. Its revenues were collected by the CoC. Other relevant features of the free port were:[3]

- Abolition of most taxes on navigation, trade and specific goods such as salted fish.
- Abolition of taxes on exportation of goods from Marseilles.
- Moving of custom officers' clearance houses to the border of Marseilles' hinterland. This allowed local manufacturers to import raw goods and export finished products free of customs when French vessels were used.

The free port was at the same time an edict that fostered the free arrival of goods and people, like the one issued in Livorno in the sixteenth century, and an act of navigation

similar to the English one promulgated on 9 October 1651 (Ormrod, 2003; Tazzara, 2017). As early as 1620, the city also enjoyed a sanitary monopoly whereby all ships coming from the Levant were obliged to quarantine in Marseilles.

A large part of the ruling class ended up uniting around the constitution of these monopolies in the defence of their interests. Most *négociants* in the city regarded the free port, according to the French historian Masson (1904, p. 1), as the 'Palladium of their own prosperity'.[4]

They frequently clashed with customs agents in Paris whenever the latter tried to reintroduce fees and custom houses inside the city borders. As early as 1703, the CoC put pressure on the royal government by sending a man 'of genius', the *négociant* Joseph Fabre, to Paris with a dossier of almost five hundred pages to obtain a full restoration of the 1669 free port's edict.[5] Fabre did not let the CoC down. Schaeper (1988, p. 540) described his mission as 'one of the most successful and resourceful lobbying campaigns in early modern French history'.

In 1775, a year after the royal investiture of Louis XVI and the new municipal reform in which the nobility regained the monopoly on the first municipal office, the CoC asked in vain for another reconfirmation of the free port. It produced a long dossier, sent to the deputy of Marseilles on the *Council de Commerce* (Masson, 1911; Salvemini, 2009).[6] This account usefully frames the issues at stake with the free port before the Revolution.[7] The CoC bemoaned mainly the introduction of two new taxes: the one on paper, an export commodity for the Levantine countries, which employed fifty-two factories and more than 400 families; and the one on starch, another commodity export produced in more than twenty-five factories in the city, with distribution mainly to foreign markets.[8]

The CoC advocated the value of the free port for the 'common good':

> It is thanks to this free port that are due the resources we have had on so many different occasions, it is through it that this city has carried trade to all parts of the world, that it has supplied the manufactures of the kingdom with all the food they have needed, that innumerable fleets of vessels have been built, and that the shipping that has ensued has maintained the sailors that his Majesty has needed for his Navy.[9]

Several collateral projects were brought forward, aimed at strengthening Marseilles' maritime trade: elimination of the monopoly of Lorient for trade with the Indies Company (Le Bouedec, 2016); liberalisation of trade with the overseas colonies; enlargement of the routes secured by the free port to include the North Sea or Guinea routes and slave trade; and granting of a trade treaty from the Ottoman Empire for free access to the Black Sea ports. These demands demonstrated the growth of city trade and the need for new markets, as well as Marseilles' willingness to advocate for its own interests while attacking those of others, in this case Lorient.[10] Marseilles' particularism, which even during the Revolution led the CoC to avoid coalitions with other seaports, will ultimately be its undoing.

4. Petitioning the king: the CoC's strategy at the eve of the Revolution, 1789

The advent of the Revolution forced the CoC to widen its lobbying activities to keep the Third Estate in Marseilles under control. Louis XVI convened the Estates General of 1789 to manage the turbulent situation in France. He ordered the compilation of the *Cahiers de doléances*, which were lists of grievances drawn up by each estate in France – the Clergy, the Nobility and the Third Estate, which consisted of everyone else – between January and April.

Each estate had the chance to 'propose, remonstrate, advise and agree' everything concerning the administration of the State directly to their sovereign.[11] Similar to the Scandinavian Diets, the *cahiers* allowed the three estates to collectively express 'the voice of the nation' to their ruler, advocating for the promotion of the common good (Bregnsbo & Ihalainen, 2011).

Times of crisis necessitated the formation of unprecedented associations, as was the case with English manufacturers and London merchants in the 1780s (Norris, 1958), or with gentry and popular organising efforts in 1770s Pennsylvania (Bouton, 2007). In the context of Marseilles, members of the Third Estate consented to structure their petitions to the government in a standardised format. Each corporation of the Third Estate wrote a *cahier*, which was then merged into a common one. They designated a specific group to represent their collective opinion, the CoC, because of its proximity to government offices. The CoC also contacted members of the other two orders, like the bishop of Sisteron, asking for support.[12]

Seventy corporations made up the Third Estate. Among them, *négociants*, shopkeepers and shipowners formed the 'aristocracy' (Fournier, 1908, p. XXVII). Summoned by the CoC in the premises of the Loggia on 19 March, there were 539 *négociants* and around one thousand assistants. They elected twelve deputies to draft their *cahiers*. In the third section, dedicated to commerce, they officially demanded the re-establishment of the free port in accordance with the edicts of 1669 and 1703, insisting on the customs union of Marseilles and its hinterland and the adoption of *entrepôt* transit – tax-exempted – for all prohibited goods that could be used for military reasons (Fournier, 1908).

The other corporations' assemblies also explicitly petitioned for the full re-establishment or extension of the free port. These requests, written in more or less the same terms, appear in the *cahiers* of the corporations of lawyers, commercial agents, packers, glove and perfume manufacturers, watchmakers, bricklayers, goldsmiths and jewellers, painters and sculptors, porters, glassworkers and master hairdressers.

Master hairdressers even demanded that the *négociants* be allowed to trade directly with the East Indies. This issue seems far from their own corporation's interests, but 'as hairdressers, we want to disappear completely in order to unite our particular interests within the larger interests of the nation' (Fournier, 1908). This source gives us a hint of the capacity of the CoC to guide and control public attitudes, as well as to improve coordination between different corporations, two features common in modern day society as well (Dür, 2019; Pitteloud, 2023). On the contrary, the *cahiers* of the Third Estate from neighbouring Provençal towns that acted as major bases for Mediterranean shipping, such as La Ciotat, called for the abolition of Marseilles' privileges (Laurent & Mavidal, 1879, p. 328).

As a result of the control efforts of the CoC, all the appointed deputies of the Third Estate in Marseilles were *négociants*. The sending of the *cahier* to the capital allowed them to demonstrate the claimed unity of the city (Crémieux, 1907). The city's grand seneschal wrote that non-merchants, who accounted for more than half of the Third Estate's members of Marseilles, were not represented at all (Viguier, 1896, p. 301).

5. Assemblies debates on the nature of free port and privileges, 1789-1794

The shift to the 'national' stage forced Marseilles' agents to widen their perspective further. Theoretically, unifying the national customs territory by abandoning privileges and exceptions of 'feudal' origin, including Marseilles' free port, was a requirement of the Revolutionary ideals (Fraccarello & Steiner, 1990; Hirsch, 1975; Whitman, 2001). The challenge was to

persuade the Revolutionary assemblies, by using their own rhetoric, to align the promotion of the free port with that of the common good. Even in today's democracies the common good, usually referred to as the public interest, is often a flexible label used for rhetorical purposes (Bitonti, 2020).

One key opponent to the free port system was Nantais shipowner Mosneron de l'Aunay, deputy in the Commerce Committee, which had replaced the *Conseil de Commerce*. He repeatedly observed how the representatives of the various manufacturing cities voted almost unanimously for the abolition of free ports (Cougny & Robert, vol. IV, 1891, pp. 444-445). Nevertheless, Mosneron himself distinguished between the free ports of Dunkirk and Bayonne and that of Marseilles. According to him, the latter was a necessity for Levantine trade and best fitted the city's geographical position. This distinction led the CoC to refrain from pursuing second-best alternatives or seeking to establish broader coalitions with other seaports. The CoC was worried that efforts to liken the unique free port of Marseilles to others would result in either the abolition of all free ports or the standardisation of their regulations. Their agency was provincial.

The free port issue was debated in other committees, such as the one set up on 12 August 1789, where the CoC managed to elect one of its supporters as president (Lopez, 1987). The work of this committee recommended the reintroduction of the 1669 free port, together with the edict of 1703, with the concession to lower the tax on goods carried from the Levant *via* Italian ports from 20 to 10%.[13] The CoC disliked this compromise and relied on Pierre Peloux and André-Louis-Esprit de Sinety – from the Third Estate and the Nobility, respectively – to counter the tax reduction.[14]

The debates went on without practical results. Meynier de Santinelles, president of the Agriculture and Trade Committee of the Constituent Assembly, former *négociant* of Nîmes, presented a new project for the customs regime to be established on Marseilles' territory at the session of 26 July 1791 (Sauveplane, 1989). He argued for the preservation of Marseilles' free port by asserting that it operated under specific regulations that made it a pivotal commercial centre for the Levantine and colonial trade of the Kingdom. He contended that the existence of the free port had enabled Marseilles to gain a foothold in soap manufacturing and coral processing, previously dominated by Genoa and Livorno. No historical evidence support this claim.[15]

Meynier's Committee endorsed the reinstatement of the free port, albeit with several modifications. The 20% tax, the instrument for the trade monopoly with the Levant, was abolished, while the region's mixed manufacturing regime survived with no changes.

The question of the exceptional status of Marseilles remained at the centre of other Revolutionary collegial institutions. In the session of the Legislative Assembly of 6 January 1792, a *négociant* and deputy from Hérault opposed Marseilles' free port and argued for the nullification of all exceptions to the principles of the Constitution (Cougny & Robert, vol. V, 1891, pp. 302-303). Other opponents were the deputies of Paris and the Nord regions, who advocated for the adoption of a capillary network of free ports following the Colbertian model. The issue was postponed to the meeting of the committees of the Council of Navy and Commerce (Masson, 1904).

These committees drew up a written report recalling Meynier's one, printed in June 1792 (Mosneron, 1792). The report was heavily attacked by Hérault's deputy, who insinuated that Mosneron was a spokesman of the customs officers of Dunkirk and Bayonne, and an unspecified former deputy of Marseilles 'Italian in name and character, who would like to have the

monstrous privileges of this city consolidated by a new decree' (Masson, 1904, p. 69). We do not know the name of this deputy, but the episode highlights how committees were sometimes manipulated or used by individuals and groups to further their own interests and gain an advantage in the political arena. A similar situation can be seen in the power struggles in Sweden during 1809-1810 (Ihalainen & Sundin, 2011). Accusations like those fired at Mosneron imply the existence of a new coalition between the CoC and other seaports, probably a sign of its weakening position.

These heated debates were halted until late 1794, due to revolutionary incidents, the end of the monarchy and the Terror period. However, fortune was not to favour the CoC in the events that followed. Shortly after the signing of the Treaty of La Jaunaye, which brought an end to major counter-Revolutionary hostilities, the Constituent Assembly abolished the free port of Marseilles through a decree of the 11 *Nivôse* of year III (31 December 1794). The Marseilles customs regime, according to the edict, was 'contrary to the principles of unity, freedom and equality that are the basis of our government' (Bonnet, 1984, p. 437). This was a major setback for the resourceful CoC of Marseilles.

6. Free port or *entrepôt*, a long-term dilemma, 1797-1806

The problem of the legal status of the port of Marseilles resurfaced only after the end of the White Terror, a period of heightened political tensions, especially in Southern France (Devlin, 1989). The advent of the allegedly moderate Directory rule in 1795 initiated new projects to strengthen economy and trade (Bergeron, 1978; Clinquart, 1979; 1981). According to future prefect Thibaudeau of the Bouches-du-Rhône department, of which Marseilles was part, in this period the free port became an obsession:

> As the consular government regressed to the men and things of the monarchy, the people of Marseilles dreamed of the restoration of their ancient privileges. There was one which was dear to them above all others, their free port. It was a real monomania for them. They believed that this regime, under which their trade had flourished, would restore it to its former glory (Thibadeau, 1834, p. 156).

The executive directorate of Marseilles sent a letter to the *Conseil de Commerce* on 17 January 1797 to report the increased trade difficulty for vessels due to the permits and controls required. According to their argument, establishing free ports in all the major maritime communes of the Republic would have been the only way to restore trade.[16] Napoleon's rise to power revived hopes. Other plans for the free port were issued from 9 November 1799, through the Municipal Council in Marseilles and the Council of Agriculture in Paris.

Nonetheless, a new obstacle emerged that would fully engage the advocates of the free port. The departmental prefect, Delacroix, took the Genoese experience as inspiration to suggest a new regime that would limit the free territory to only part of the port, thus reintroducing the custom houses in the city and taxing manufactories' outputs.[17] In April 1801, the Marseilles customs director, Brach, agreed with this new approach and presented a memorial in favour of the re-establishment of the free port to Napoleon and the Board of Trade.[18] Two laws of 15 May and 29 June 1802 granted or reconfirmed the *entrepôt* regime in Marseilles and twelve other ports of the Republic.

The *entrepôt* was divided into two categories, 'real' and 'fictitious'. The real one referred to all goods whose entry was prohibited, as well as those requiring a certificate of origin, or to

the following: manufactured goods of all kinds, tobacco leaves, wines, spirits, sugar, indigo, salted fish, brandy, oil, coffee, cocoa and other colonial goods from foreign countries. Goods in the real *entrepôt* could stay for up to two years, within which time they had to be sold or re-exported. The fictitious *entrepôt* was granted to non-prohibited goods at the specific request of the merchants. They undertook, upon payment of a deposit, to re-export them within the year or to pay entry fees. The issue with the *entrepôt* system lay in the stringent spatial control imposed on commodities. During their storage period, these goods were securely held in enclosed warehouses and were not subject to any processing. In contrast, the free port, by shifting the customs border to the countryside around Marseilles, facilitated the unloading and processing of commodities without customs duties, with payment only required in the event of export within the kingdom.

According to Fauris-Saint-Vincent, a notable of Aix, the wealth and abundance generated by the free port was beneficial for the entire country, even in terms of manufacturing development:

> It is thanks to the trade of Marseilles that Grasse owes its perfumeries and tanneries; it is to the trade of Marseilles that the owner of the gardens of Hyères became wealthy; that there was the creation of the immense paper mills in the valleys of Saint-Pons, Gémenos and Saint-Zacharie; cotton mills in the vicinity of the city of Aix; tanneries in Luc, Brignoles and Cotignac; powder and starch factories and laundries in villages that had previously been unknown; potteries and earthenware factories in Aubagne and Apt, wax factories in Apt (Bonnet, 1984, p. 439).

However, as can be seen from the entries of vessels into the port during the Revolutionary period, the crisis of Marseilles' trade can be traced back to 1793. At that time, the European and colonial markets became inaccessible due to Revolutionary wars, while England conquered nearby Toulon, where the Navy fleet was moored, and blockaded the region (Pourchasse, 2018). As can be seen in Figure 1, in the following years, despite the absence of a free port statute, trade slowly recovered (Pansini, 2015).

This did not seem to influence the policy preferences of the CoC and its supporters. Thanks to an amendment to the *Le Chapelier* Law of 1791 and an edict of 24 December 1802, the CoC was officially re-established and, with it, the demands for the free port – as distinguished from the *entrepôt* – resumed (Conquet, 1981; 1983; Lemercier, 2000). Once back on stage, the CoC ensured the wide circulation of a new memorial to support the free port among

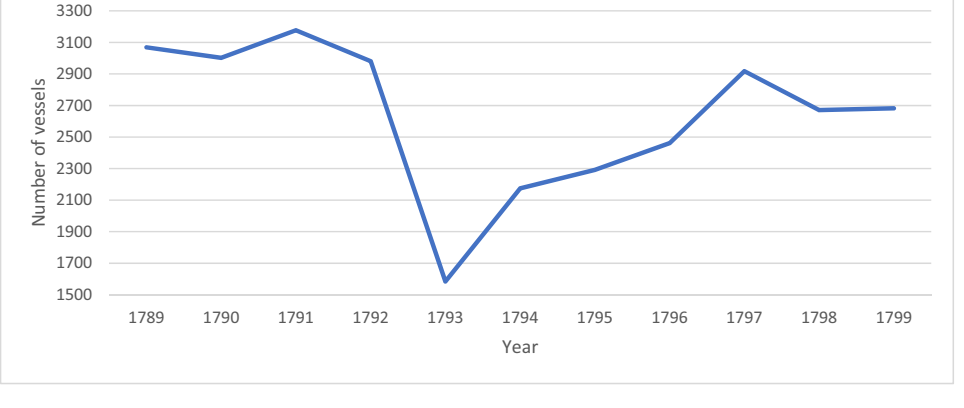

Figure 1. Vessels calling at Marseilles, 1789-1799.
Source: elaboration of data from Carrière (1957, pp. 220-225).

key figures in the consular administration, such as the Minister of the Interior, the Director General of Customs and the Departmental Prefect.[19]

Like the revolutionary Pennsylvanians in the United States, the CoC in Marseilles constructed extensive networks of resistance to shield themselves from the adverse consequences of state policies. According to Bouton (2007, pp. 145-167), these networks can be conceptualised as a series of concentric rings. The outermost rings encircled national institutions, the intermediate ones encompassed regional and departmental institutions, like those in Aix and Lyon, while the innermost rings were designed to protect the CoC and its members at the city level. Each ring was staffed by a different set of people, but none of them were all-encompassing or impenetrable.

Jacques Penchet, an influential *négociant* of Marseilles, for instance, sent a memorial directly to the Minister of the Interior clarifying their hierarchy of preferences: although the *entrepôt* was nevertheless a step forward, it by no means achieved the results of the free port. The response to Penchet was written by the corporation of the custom officers, a strong adversary of the CoC since the previous decade (Ferrier, 1803). They quoted the author of the *Progrès du Commerce* and the contemporary work by the Marseilles-based writer Blanc de Volx (1803), to argue that the *entrepôt* system was sufficient for Levantine trade. The customs officers openly opposed the renewed lobbying intentions of the CoC:

> We are told that the free ports have many supporters […]. However, which cities are asking for them? Those that enjoyed them, which proves at most that this regime is favourable to them (Ferrier, 1803, p. 85).

Many more printed memoirs ensued, in which each faction argued for its own solution on different grounds, while heated discussions continued.[20] What looked like decline to the CoC – and certainly was the loss of monopoly rent – created an arc of opportunity for other sectors in the region. For instance, the Minister of the Interior aligned with the soda manufacturers in the capital against the soap factories in Marseilles, which relied on imported soda and fostered unfair competition (Démier, 1991, 372).

Almost at the same time, the CoC commissioned another significant memoir, divided into two parts (Capus & Sinety, 1804). The first part was written by Joseph Capus. He was a lawyer, previous councillor of Marseilles, once secretary of the *Conseil de Commerce*, then of the CoC following its re-establishment (Masson, 1931). He attempted to address every possible opposition regarding the free port, also referring to the economic theories of Montesquieu, D'Argenson and Peuchet. Capus denounced how the British government had lobbied French legislators to act against Marseilles' trade system because it enriched the whole of France: 'the influence of the English government has been recognised in all the unfortunate events of which Marseilles has been the victim'. A second, shorter part was drafted by deputy de Sinety. He dealt exclusively with the geographic layout of the region, with an illustrative map and indications of roads and hills, to better point out the places where customs officers could set up checkpoints to prevent smuggling.

After reading Sinety-Capus' text, a *négociant* from La Ciotat, who was probably involved in a colonial lobby group, wrote a reply to add several observations on the decline of Marseilles' trade due to the new *entrepôt* system. He referred to the latter as the 'boulevard of defiance', while the free port system was 'a wise Liberty'.[21] His interest in colonial trade outweighed the fact that he was from a city opposed to Marseilles' free port, to the point that he became an extraordinary deputy of the Constituent Assembly for Marseilles (Masson, 1931).

The Departmental prefect Thibadeau, an essential element in the intermediate ring of the CoC's protection network, was not as compliant. Despite the CoC putting considerable pressure on him, he was afraid to take sides:

> The Chamber, which is to say the body of *négociants* it represented, ardently desired the free port in order to recover its former powers. It was the constant object of all conversations, of all wishes. The present uneasiness stemmed from the maritime war; but, on pain of being unpopular, I was obliged not to state my whole opinion and not to declare myself openly against a wish so violently pronounced (Thibadeau, 1834, p. 156).

Due to meet the Emperor at the end of 1804, Thibadeau promised the CoC to submit to him a draft decree that the *négociants*. Like a sovereign of the previous decades, obtaining the Emperor's favour would quickly resolve the issue according to a pre-Revolutionary lobbying logic. Napoleon, however, rejected the draft and commented:

> It is a madness of the Marseillais. They do not know what they are asking for […] their free port is a miserable palliative. French trade must be freed from the domination of England. The free port has had its day: we are no longer in the time of Colbert […]. They are sick people who must not be irritated (Thibadeau, 1834, p. 159).

Napoleon's strategy was to avoid the issue and the agents sent to him by the CoC (Courdurié, 1980; Masson, 1904), while studying how to imitate Genoa's free port with the Director General of Customs.

At a meeting in Fontainebleau on 11 July 1805, the Emperor replied to the concerns of the president of the *Tribunat* – an assembly formed by the constitution of 1799 – about the statute of Marseilles that the city was already a 'free port' thanks to its *entrepôt*. A year later, as Napoleon returned to Paris after the occupation of the Kingdom of Naples, the CoC sent – as it turned out, in vain – a new delegation chaired by the Mayor, who reported how Napoleon was eager for 'the establishment of a free port [in Marseilles] similar to that of Genoa'.[22]

The Customs Director received orders to draw up a draft law for such a free port to be implemented within three months.[23] During this period, the CoC opted for civil disobedience and delayed the plan for the Genoese-model *entrepôt*. On 1 April 1806, the Municipal Council, where the merchant elite still enjoyed considerable influence, voted not to implement any new project until the Emperor's next visit to the city (Bonnet, 1984). Delegates were unsuccessfully sent to Paris by the Minister of the Interior, while on 21 May the Municipal Council officially declared its support for the CoC and for the complete re-establishment of the free port. Napoleon did not want – or have the time – to visit Marseilles in person and no further decisions were taken. At the urging of the CoC, another small committee of Marseilles' citizens was formed in Paris in Guieu's mansion, a former councillor of the CoC. The committee, together with the city delegates, met regularly over the following months and wrote a draft law for a new edict. This, however, was never presented (Masson, 1904).

7. The return of the Bourbons as an opportunity for an increased lobbying effort

The production of official writings on the free port recommenced only with the Restoration and the return of the Bourbons to the throne. As if the world had been asleep for the last thirty years, Thibaudeau wrote, the people of Marseilles resumed their demand for the free port in the same terms as in the 1775 memorial. This time, however, the lobbying effort

followed a double approach: a 'private' one with delegates directly lobbying key figures in the government, and a public one with widely circulating printed memorials, songs and newspaper articles.

Numerous texts were produced, including the work of the former Marseilles *négociant* Sabin Peragallo (1814), who had made his fortune with the Santo Domingo-Eastern Mediterranean trade. In his opinion, the free port was the solution to all 'ills' afflicting Marseilles. In a letter to the CoC, dedicatee of his booklet, Peragallo proudly reported how Royalist circles appreciated it and many asked him to print more copies.[24] He also wrote a song about the free port, staged at the Grand Theatre of Marseilles on the visit of the younger brother of Louis XVIII, the future king Charles X.[25]

In addition to Peragallo's enthusiastic efforts, a grassroots political lobbying campaign was underway, proving how, as stated in 1784 by the English manufacturer Samuel Garbett of Birmingham, seising the initiative from the government was the first requirement for successful lobbying (Norris, 1958, 451). The CoC took the lead in this campaign with the support of the Marseilles and Lyon manufactories, somewhat of a contradiction compared to the isolationist strategy followed in the Revolutionary period.[26] Three permanent delegates were sent to Paris in May 1814, only a month after the sovereign's return. In July of that year, Dunkirk requested the reinstatement of the free port, supported by the general counsel of the Nord department. Bayonne followed suit with a similar request, backed by the High Pyrenees prefect. Lorient also joined these appeals in August. The Ministry of the Interior faced substantial pressure.

The mission of Marseilles' deputies was twofold: to present a memorial regarding the free port and to facilitate the drafting of a new decree.[27] To underscore the enduring influence of Marseilles' BIA, an appendix to the memorial entrusted to them by the CoC contained the signatures of the city and departmental deputies. The three deputies, all of whom were likely former *négociants*, were Pierre Perron, Pierre Plasse and Pierre-Honoré Roux. They worked in Paris from May 1814 to March 1815.

The 'three Pierres' spent most of their time in the lobbies of ministers and statesmen – literally, lobbying – while writing letters to other personalities or reports for the CoC.[28] Their strategy was to petition key government figures without taking the discussion to the two parliamentary chambers.

On 26 June 1814, the King himself had read their memorial and passed an official note to the Minister of the Interior.[29] On 15 July, their pressure on the Minister of Finance led to the promise of a decrease in customs duties pending a free port law (Démier, 1991, 534). Moreover, contrary to the public stance of the CoC, they asked for Marseilles' free port not to be assimilated and treated in the same way as the other free ports, such as those of Dunkirk or Lorient.[30]

Other valuable contributors to the CoC's cause in those days were the president of Paris Commercial Court, who was a former *négociant* of Marseilles (Masson, 1931); his general secretary, and former head of the *Compagnie Royale d'Afrique*; the auditor councillor at the Court of Audit at the King's Council; and State Councillor Jourdan. Thanks to the latter's intermediation, the three Pierres obtained an audience with Becquey, president of the Trade Committee, to hand him the bill received by the CoC and agree on the various tricky points, such as the 20% tax on Levantine goods (art. 22).[31]

However, the draft presented for public reading a few days later by Becquey was not the same as the version agreed with the three Pierres: there was, for example, the reduction of

the tax on Levantine trade to 10%, to apply only to foreign vessels. The CoC's agents, alarmed by this unexpected change, increased their visits to the councillors of state to obtain an invitation to attend the meeting of the Trade Committee and the Council of State to be held on 6 September 1814. The discussion in September became intense, with the issue constantly being referred back and forth between the various ministries and the desire to avoid it being brought to the Chambers, where the CoC's position, despite the presence of one of its agents, was weaker.[32] In his report on the draft bill at the Chamber of Peers, Bequey hinted at future restrictions that would be placed on the free port to adapt it to the changing times, but did not go into detail. The royal document appointing him to review the free port was published in the French newspaper *Moniteur*, evidence of public interest in this matter.[33]

In the meantime, the first divisions within the Marseilles front began to appear. The CoC's BIA consistent strength had been based on its ability to represent the entire Marseilles' community, with apparently no internal dissent. Soap-makers, for instance, backed the CoC's calls for the free port with the condition that they could transport their soaps inside the Kingdom without incurring customs duties and receive an export bonus linked to taxes collected on foreign oils.[34] Over time, however, they began to doubt the CoC's ability to keep to the agreement. Soap factories were Marseilles' industry that benefitted most from the economic autarchy implemented during the Imperial period (Bonnet, 1987; Daumalin et al. 2010). During a meeting in August 1814, the producers of artificial soda, a material needed to make soap, stated that they did not want any change in the current customs system.[35] The following month, sixty-eight entrepreneurs sent a memorial to the Minister of the Interior in which they protested against the free port, where all goods produced in Marseilles would have paid import duties when entering the Kingdom.[36] The presence of another local corporation that argued against the return of the free port and communicated with Paris without the intermediation of the CoC, undermined the latter's credibility and put the delicate negotiation process in crisis.

Disagreements on this matter were also expressed through the local press. An anonymous Marseilles *négociant* submitted his thoughts on the free port to the editorial office of the *Journal of Marseilles*. He wrote against 'those who have the memory of the former prosperity of Marseilles, which inspires legitimate remorse, while still leaving hope for the future' (*Réflexions addressées*, 1814, 541). According to the author, even the shipowners of Marseilles sided against the free port for fear that it would be difficult to certify the origin of the shipments and the differential customs duties to be paid. This episode, together with the song of the free port staged at the theatre of Marseilles, hints at the growing audience being informed about the work of the CoC, which led to the concept of popular opinion becoming increasingly relevant for French – and subsequently – European economic policies.

On 2 October, the three Pierres reported that the King was astonished to read letters from Marseilles against the free port.[37] The CoC responded by strengthening their authority. Just five days later, the *Municipalité* appointed the three Pierres as official deputies of Marseilles and tried to mediate with the soap-makers (Démier, 1991, 546). Becquey reluctantly let the three Pierres read the draft edict that was under examination at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.[38] The edict was very vague and left all details to a later regulation. The Marseilles' delegates feared that the 'proponent […] wants Marseilles to have only the name of the free port'.[39] The CoC still held political significance, and both the royal government and Napoleon's previous administration endeavoured to maintain its support by aligning its demands with the legal framework inherited from the French Revolution.

Meanwhile, the soap-makers' protests were joined by those of the manufacturers of thread and cotton cloths processed in Marseilles, who feared free competition from Levantine products; similar complaints also came from oil producers in Provence. In defence of the free port followed the replies of the vegetable soda traders and natron importers, who did not want their products to be taxed in the same way as foreign goods.[40]

On 16 February at 8.30p.m., the Marseilles deputies – the three Pierres and the delegation sent by the soap-maker – met at Becquey's house for the reading of the soon-to-be-published regulation. The three Pierres stayed until 2:30a.m. to discuss the main issues with this new document, which not only diminished, but would 'destroy the free port that the King and the Chamber of Commerce wanted to give us'.[41]

The new edict, dated 20 February 1815, outlined in thirty-three articles the functioning of the new free port.[42] Most goods were subject to *entrepôt*; the domestic market was beyond the customs line for all types of goods; the 20% tax on Levantine goods was cancelled. While this marked the failure of the three Pierres' mission, the edict was not put into effect, because on 1 March 1815 Napoleon landed in Cannes and regained power until July.

Even during this short period, the Emperor managed to return to the question of Marseilles' free port and the project for a Genoese model. Minister of State Chaptal, who was Director General of Trade and Manufactures, sent a letter to the CoC on 29 April in favour of the Genoese *entrepôt* model over the complex and inefficient system formulated by the Bourbons. At its session on 9 May, the CoC expressed its opinion: the solution proposed by the sovereign was certainly not satisfactory, but it was still preferable to the Imperial project.

It was the first time that the CoC seemed willing to accept a second-best alternative, probably because of the acknowledged internal dissent. Its *négociants* still relied on the strength of their BIA to influence future decision-making processes and manage the free port in their own way, despite the recent setbacks.

When examining contemporary local newspapers, such as the *Echo du Midi* of 24 August 1815, the free port established after Napoleon's fall and the sovereign's new return was rhetorically presented as an equivalent of the one from 1669.[43] In practice, this was not the case, and the CoC was vigilant for opportunities to shape the new edict to its advantage. A letter from the Mayor of 25 October alerted the Municipal Council of the intention to appoint a commission, together with the CoC, to examine the matter. On 13 March 1816, the deputies of the Bouches-du-Rhône department took the matter to the Chamber of Deputies, in agreement with the CoC. The deputies, who were both nobles and *négociants*, asked the CoC for help in putting pressure on the government by presenting a draft law in nineteen articles to 'regularise the provisory rules that are paralysing the free port of Marseilles'. They accused the 'bankers of Paris' of monopolising the Council of Commerce.[44]

At the same time, the artificial soda manufacturers, retail merchants and artisans were complaining about the complications caused by the presence of the customs border in the city. The alliance of these factions – soap makers, retail merchants and artisans – produced a memorial calling for a return to the simple *entrepôt* system. The long years of stagnation in international trade and the Napoleonic policy of economic autarchy had weakened the foreign trade sector and pushed many *négociants* to progressively rely more and more on the domestic market and the manufacturing sector, such as artificial soda and the chemical industry, perceived as the future of the city.

On 15 January 1817, the CoC sent a petition for the free port signed by three hundred Marseilles *négociants* and manufacturers to the departmental prefect, who had already

decided to convene a commission to decide which system to adopt.[45] This commission was made up of members of the CoC, the Municipal Council, some other *négociants* and manufacturers.[46] It was very different from the one formed by the Third Estate in 1789, which was monopolised by the *négociants*. The prefect, in March 1817, informed the CoC that, due to the many petitions against the free port and the public opinion in Marseilles, a return to the pre-1789 statute as advocated three years earlier was now impossible.[47] Almost all the deputies voted for a return to the *entrepôt* system.

The project put forward by the CoC was examined by another commission convened by the prefect on the orders of the Minister of the Interior, who unanimously decided against the free port.[48] Pierre-Honoré Roux, deputy of the CoC and former member of the three Pierres' deputation, denounced the composition of this commission as being made up of individuals known to be against the free port.[49] A new BIA made by manufacturers and artisans had by now taken over, supplanting the *négociants* of the CoC and defeating the latter at its own game. With an ordinance of 10 September 1817, the free port of Marseilles was banished to become a nostalgic memory of Marseilles' past. In 1845, the secretary of the CoC Bertaut noted how 'this free port, idolised by the past generation, is still the fixed idea of some Marseillais at this very moment' (Bertaut, 1845, p. 253).[50]

8. Conclusion

This paper brought forward a strategic analysis of the policy preferences of the Marseilles' CoC, its strategy to accomplish them, and their successful or unsuccessful outcomes in the reform processes that occurred in France from the Revolution to the Restoration. Northern American scholars provide a history of lobbyism in which radical change took place through the Revolution and Revolutionary assemblies, ending up in a new government (Bouton, 2007). Scandinavian scholars have recently offered an alternative story of an incipient transition towards modernity, a 'Nordic model' in which radical change took place within an apparent continuity of the established order, without open revolution (Ihalainen & Sennefelt, 2011). This paper depicts an intermediate model, centred on how radical changes and open revolution(s) of the established order forced an already-existing BIA to adapt its requests over time, which in the end were overshadowed by a lingering continuity from the previous century.

The CoC monopolised the representativeness of the entire business community by devising a unified strategy for reintroducing the free port policy and its associated privileges. Reinstating the free port policy passed through different strategies adopted throughout the shifts in the political and institutional landscape.

The initial strategy was to reintroduce the free port just as it existed before 1789. Over time, the strength of other BIAs and political authorities, especially during the Empire, forced the CoC to accept compromises such as the *entrepôt*, or to voluntarily stall the game. I would call these different strategies rather than preferences, as the CoC never seriously considered second-best alternatives, at least until the Bourbon restoration. Even then, it blindly relied on its capacity to influence such alternatives to obtain its free port at a later stage. It refused to engage in compromises, rejected alliances with similar BIAs in the country – such as the merchants supporting the free port of Dunkirk or Lorient – and failed to realise the emergence of other BIAs that undermined its own authority over time. Its failure in the end was not due to state policies that curbed lobbying but to the incapacity to adapt to continuously

evolving scenarios. A similar situation unfolded in the British American colonies during the 1770s, when colonial lobbyists lost the support of the British mercantile community due to the changing economic situation, which ultimately contributed to growing unrest (Kammen, 1965).

Despite its failure, corporations and BIAs such as the CoC proved to have better access to policy makers and better resources than many other advocacy groups (Biard et al., 2015). Their existence was necessary for the functioning of the French absolutist economic system, which was based on social collaboration and needed corporations to group the interests of its subjects into specific instances, as well as for the modern capitalist state (Beik, 2005). The CoC members were both the heralds of an *Ancien Régime* lobbying model and the representatives of consolidated interests that survived the new Revolutionary order of 1789. The *Le Chapelier* Law was merely symbolic, because the CoC continued lobbying even when it was dissolved through agents and *négociants* in the country, before being formally re-instituted in 1802. The need for representativity and a direct connection with power overlooked adverse political conditions, even when dealing with laws ratified at the national level.

The empirical observation of the influence and power of a significant European BIA between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries partly resembles contemporary dynamics. Antonio Gramsci argued that understanding hegemony required not simply explaining the actions of the dominant classes, such as the CoC in this case, but also uncovering the actions of the subaltern classes and the emergence of dissent, their active or passive affiliation to the dominant political formations, their attempts to influence the programmes of these formations in order to press claims of their own, and the consequences of these attempts in determining processes of decomposition, renovation, or neo-formation (Litowitz, 2000). Coordination and cohesion were indispensable prerequisites for a BIA to preserve what it considered as 'common goods' that were necessary for the proper functioning of the economic system. In practice, the common good is made of the democratic aggregation of various particular interests, where lobbying is a physiological, natural element of the game. In today's context, as debates on freedom of trade and economic zones persist, the historical narrative of the Marseilles' CoC serves as a compelling reminder of the enduring relevance of coordinated lobbying efforts (Tazzara, 2018). Understanding the complexities of lobbying dynamics and the adaptive capacity of business entities remains critical in navigating the intricate intersection of economic interests and political landscapes.

Notes

1. Policy historians collectively credit factors related to interest groups in 385 of the 790 significant policy enactments that took place in the US from 1945 to 2004. Unlike Anglo-Saxon countries, France adopted only very recently (Sapin 2 Law, 2016) the official definition and a legal framework about corporate lobbying activities.
2. Archives Chambre de Commerce-Industrie Marseilles Provence (ACCIMP), I 58, 10/07/1703.
3. For the full edict, see ACCIMP, D 23, 03/1669.
4. The Palladium (ancient Greek: Παλλάδιον, Palládion) was a wooden simulacrum that, according to ancient Greek beliefs, had the power to defend an entire city.
5. ACCIMP, A 17, 1700-1705.
6. According to the Intendant of Provence De Latour, a supporter of the Chamber's *négociants*, this was also the best time to exploit the benevolence of the newly elected Secretary of State for the Navy Antoine de Sartine. ACCIMP, D 25, 23/08/1774.

7. ACCIMP, D 25, 31/10/1774.
8. ACCIMP, D 25, 16/10/1775.
9. ACCIMP, D 25, 09/04/1775.
10. See, for example, ACCIMP, D 25, 09/04/1775.
11. Archives Municipal de Marseilles (AMM), BB 224, f. 34. See also Grateau (2015).
12. ACCIMP, D 26, 12/08/1788.
13. ACCIMP, D 26, 12/08/1790.
14. ACCIMP, D 26, 1790. Pierre Peloux (1748-1794) was a silk merchant and a member of the Public Health Committee. He was forced to flee to Spain in 1793, where he was imprisoned until his death (Masson, 1931, pp. 372-373). ACCIMP, C 9935, 1790. André-Louis-Esprit de Sinety (1749-1811) was a military man and deputy of the Nobility in the National Assembly. He was also president and perpetual secretary of the Academy of Marseilles from 1805 (Cougny & Robert, vol. V, pp. 327).
15. Archives Numériques de la Révolution Française, AP, vol. 28, 26/07/1791. Marseilles' growth in the coral industry stemmed from an entrepreneurial approach founded on the fisheries of the *Compagnie Royale d'Afrique* (Lopez, 2012).
16. Archives Nationales de Paris (ANP), F 12 2176, 07/03/1797.
17. AMM, 16 F 37, 28/07/1801; ANP, 20 F 169, 30/01/1801.
18. ACCIMP, mq 3.2.1.1, 03-04/1801.
19. ACCIMP, mq 3.2.1.1, 09/01/1802; 15/01/1802; 23/02/1802; 03/04/1802; 07/04/1802.
20. ANP, AE/BIII/252; Bibliothèque Municipal de Marseilles, 2236, *Mémoire et consultation pour le corps des marchands de la ville de Marseille*, Aix, veuve d'Augustin Adibert, 1786; ACCIMP, D 26, 01/01/1790.
21. ANP, AE/BIII/252, Jean Abeille, *Réflexions sur l'entrepôt de Marseille*, 10-11/1804.
22. ACCIMP, B 5, 21/03/1806. In the following years, Napoleon would also make changes to the customs system in the occupied countries and impose restrictions on the free port of Livorno, limiting maritime trade to that which was directed toward France (Viennet, 1947).
23. ACCIMP, mq 3.2.1.1, 28/04/1806.
24. ACCIMP, mq. 3.2.1.1, 01/1814.
25. BMM, 11220, 1814.
26. ANP, F/12/636, 17/06/1814.
27. ACCIMP, mq 3.2.1.1, 13/06/1814. A further element at stake was the possible reconstitution of the *Compagnie Royale d'Afrique*, suppressed in 1793.
28. ACCIMP, mq 3.2.1.1, 31/05/1814.
29. ACCIMP, mq 3.2.1.1, 26/06/1814.
30. ACCIMP, mq 3.2.1.1, 19/07/1814.
31. ACCIMP, mq 3.2.1.1, 15/08/1814.
32. ACCIMP, mq 3.2.1.1, 8/09/1814.
33. ACCIMP, mq 3.2.1.1, 5/11/1814.
34. ANP, F/12/636, 30/07/1814.
35. ANP, F/12/2474 d, 03/08/1814.
36. ACCIMP, mq 3.2.1.1, 29/09/1814.
37. ACCIMP, mq 3.2.1.1, 02/10/1814.
38. ACCIMP, mq 3.2.1.1, 11/10/1814.
39. ACCIMP, mq 3.2.1.1, 31/01/1815.
40. ANP, AE/BIII/252, 25/11/1814. Natron is a type of artificial soda which the new law on customs threatened to equate to other types of soda from which taxation it had hitherto been excluded.
41. ACCIMP, mq 3.2.1.1, 20/02/1815.
42. ACCIMP, mq 3.2.1.2, 20/02/1815.
43. ACCIMP, mq 3.2.1.2, 24/08/1815.
44. ACCIMP, mq. 3.2.1.2, 13/03/1816.
45. ACCIMP, mq. 3.2.1.2, 02/01/1817.
46. ACCIMP, mq. 3.2.1.2, 14/12/1816.

47. ACCIMP, mq. 3.2.1.3, 06/03/1817.
48. ANP, AE/BIII/252, 09/1817.
49. ACCIMP, mq. 3.2.1.3, 02/05/1817.
50. ACCIMP, mq. 3.2.1.2, 10/09/1817.

Disclosure statement

The author reports there are no competing interests to declare.

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