



Evaluation of the European
Capital of Culture
Wrocław 2016

Terra (in)cognita

THE EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE

IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF WROCŁAW'S

CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS

FORMAL ANALYSIS



WROCŁAW 2016
European Capital of Culture

Evaluation of the European Capital of Culture Wrocław 2016

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1. Report: Reading Instructions

Usually this part consists in an introduction outlining the aims and contexts of the study. Of course, both of these elements will appear in the presented report, but it is far more important to explain to all interested parties the content of this document and what can be expected from it. **Presented below are the notes that we hope will help you navigate through it.**

Its most important context is the European Capital of Culture Wrocław 2016, in which many of us have been / are involved to a great degree, so research findings can create a lot of emotion¹. Therefore, it is worth keeping in mind that the whole obtained research material has been presented in a nutshell, i.e. in the form of a summary of the most important observations. This applies both to the methodological side of the work and to the conclusions drawn from the interviews. For this reason, we do not include a detailed description of the assumptions, methods or the course of the study, although of course we do write with whom and what we talked about as well as reconstructing the circumstances influencing the shape and interpretation of the empirical material. We present the conclusions drawn from the analysis of free-form interviews and at the same time minimise the number of quotations from the statements given by the interviewees.

Such a drastic limitation of references to source data may create a feeling that the conclusions are inadequate to reality or that they lack empirical entanglement. However, we do assure you that all observations are based on collected and thoroughly analysed empirical data. Respondent's accounts are important evidence and each element of our inference is grounded in them. We do not publish them for a simple reason, which is an exponential increase in the volume of the document and, consequently, the time required to familiarise oneself with it. **Quotes from recorded statements, used as illustration and / or proof, have been specifically selected.** In other words: they have been chosen so that personal data of a speaker and the institution in which they work could not be decoded. We promised our interlocutors anonymity and confidentiality. And promises are not made to be broken.

At the same time, we wish that the reader would be aware of a researcher's work scheme. Free-form interviews with in-depth elements are more of a journey taken with a respondent than mine excavation, and a researcher is a traveller rather than a hewer. While the interviews conducted using such a technique give fewer comparable elements (of course they are still there, and for this reason the interviewer has to maintain a certain discipline of a conversation), there is a lot of details expanding the explored area in various ways. The effect of such an interview can be compared to a puzzle - the information obtained from the interviewees is not read so much as it is arranged in an image of a certain phenomenon, process or mechanism by matching the elements obtained from different respondents. A puzzle seems to be an appropriate metaphor here because its elements are not juxtaposed accidentally: one needs to be well aware of the context and have solid arguments for composing them in a specific way. It is possible to define this kind of analysis as formal, determined by its assumptions, applied narrative model (the analysis itself) and gravity of characteristic phenomena, the description of which is consistently deprived of attributes of place, time and events or identification of authors and focused on formal (relational, functional) aspects of the analysed phenomenon, i.e. the approach of the ECoC by the cultural circles in Wrocław. The way the narrative is developed also explains the "density" of the text and the caution when drawing conclusions at the end.

Thus, the tool used in the study had an impact on the heterogeneity of the material obtained and at the same time was a strong filter, because it assumed the interest in the subject matter of the study and its reflexive processing on the part of the interviewees: creators and / or cultural organisers associated with some institution. The concept on which we based the selection of institutions to the sample functioned in a similar way.

We started the study with a list of cultural institutions primarily consisting of those financed from the city budget. Secondly, there were appropriately diversified, so-called "non-governmental" organisations: grassroots, private and / or collective initiatives shaped as entities with relatively well-established formulas of functioning and relatively stable organisational

framework, although they were not limited to institutions founded solely for the purpose of creating and / or distributing artistic culture. The selection of participants from the second category was conducted in a way that would make the artistic disciplines, modes of distribution and the forms of their activity correspond with those of the city institutions invited to participate in the study. Assumed distinction between types of institutions and disciplines of art/culture proved to be effective at the general level and helpful in trivial ordering of the field of urban culture. However, it did not reflect (as we had anticipated) the real situation. Nevertheless, the heterogeneity we encountered during the exploration of the area surprised even us. The institutions participating in the research differ in so many ways that it is not be easy to create a list of all of them. And yet we can take into account only the diversity that emerged during the interviews².

In the initial stages of selecting the sample it was important to take into account assumed differences and divisions of public / private institutions established specifically for the distribution of symbolic culture / setting different goals and treating symbolic culture as a tool for their realisation, the diversity of artistic/cultural disciplines that these activities deal with and forms of these activities. Other important elements included: the scope of collaboration with the ECoC, the scale of events that this collaboration involved, realisation of individual projects within the ECoC and commissioned production of events, the size of the institution measured by the number of its employees and the scope of its work, the duration of its presence in the Wrocław cultural field. Meanwhile, in the course of the research already in progress, in direct contact with respondents we came across other, no less important characteristics of the institutions. They vary in terms of the level of institutionalisation, which translates into their presence in the city's public sphere, their visibility in the eyes of the residents and municipal authorities; the model of management, reflected in the autonomy of the institutions' members and the level of mobilisation of their employees (or in contributing to their demoralisation); and further - in terms of materialising the experiences of employees in decisions and forms of action as well as and what they (institutions) learn and how they think. Lastly, it should be taken into account that they are involved in different areas of managing the field of culture and acquire means of sustaining their existence at different levels and in various ways: from being financed through grants, which has a big impact on the continuity of their activities, to operating as cooperatives or on a purely commercial basis.

Each of the captured differences translates into very specific conditions and consequences of actions, and thus into the experience of those involved in the creation and/or organisation, distribution of culture, into their opinions, attitudes, sense of satisfaction, etc. All of them combined result in particular points of view, evaluations filtered through the positions in the field and personal experience, deepened by limited participation in ECoC events due to involvement in the given institution's activities. As one of the speakers says: "it has been a madhouse for us too." In other words, the researcher's questions triggered responses in which the perspective of a person working in a particular cultural institution and performing a specific function there mixed with the opinions caused by individual experience.

The status of the material obtained has also been determined by self-censorship. As it turned out, our assurances of confidentiality and anonymity did not prevent it. This manifested itself in loud thinking: "This is the question of what should be said [laughter]", "I do not know how much of this will be brought to light", but also in starting a sentence and quickly reorienting its content (the beginning of the sentence refers to the question asked, but its second part refers to something completely different), suspending voice and changing tone, stammering when the conversation would touch upon sensitive issues, denying that certain processes took place, although other parts of the conversation clearly revealed it. However, all of this is unavoidable. Unfortunately, it is not possible to "talk to an institution" (although we apply this simplification here). This can only be done with people who work in it. The task of the researcher analysing the material is, among other things, to put these perspectives in order and pick up the moments in which self-censorship was at work, to determine its influence on the content of the statement. Researchers must listen carefully to what is being said to them, but they cannot believe everything that has been said. It is also important to keep in mind that individualised experiences and particular perspectives are the basis of general opinions formed regarding given phenomena.

During the material collection, the test sample was evolving very dynamically. The first reason was the refusal to participate

in the study, expressed directly or indirectly. Incidentally, the latter turned out to be much more demanding for researchers and persons recruited to participate in the study. It resulted, among others, in not collecting the assumed number of interviews and some asymmetry: more interviews were conducted with entities established and maintained by the city. The second reason (although perhaps this was just another form of hidden refusal) was the misunderstanding of the idea of a free-form interview, used as a method of collecting data in this study, by the interlocutor or the person who was to introduce the researcher to the institution (so-called

“doorman”). After presenting the topic of the conversation and the issues to be addressed, there was a request to provide specific questions and to limit the interview to them. There was a strong pressure put on the researchers to redefine the situation by reducing it to what the respondent understood and considered safe. Changing the definition of a situation does not necessarily have to make it impossible to conduct an interview, the request for specific questions before the meeting and limiting the responses to already prepared ones do. They would result in material that does not have the same status as the one obtained through a free-form interview during other meetings and the invaluable importance of such a conversation - the spontaneity of speech - would be lost. Regretfully, we declined a relation constituted this way. The last circumstance is the impossibility to establish contact with a specific institution despite long and repeated efforts.

Finally, let us state clearly what the report is not about and what is impossible to find in it. It concentrates on the description of certain issues, and does not include all that were revealed in the conversations (taking into account and developing all the topics that appeared in the interviews would lead to a production of a thick volume). Thus, it is characterised by a descriptive and diagnostic approach. At the same time, it does not constitute a complete diagnosis of the state of culture or cultural sector in Wrocław. It talks about answers given to posed questions and attempts to expose the complexity of the circles in question. It stops at this point, suspending the desire to formulate any recommendations. This study is certainly not an attempt to evaluate the work of specific institutions or persons operating in the cultural sector and / or their collaboration with the European Capital of Culture in Wrocław.

Finally, a note about the independence of the researchers themselves. We were not completely autonomous in terms of the subject of the research (or the theses on which the interviews were based), however, we certainly were regarding its design, implementation and, above all, drawing conclusions.

Since the report does not contain references to sources helpful in the correct approach and definition the issues that we deal with here, we would like to point out that such concepts as the broadened field of culture and its aspects, transceiver logic, participatory logic, evading public, eventisation and many others have been derived from two reports: “Poszerzanie pola kultury. Diagnoza potencjału sektora kultury w Gdańsku”³ and “Punkty styczne: między kulturą a praktyką (nie)uczestnictwa”⁴.

2. Who is Talking, What is Said

At the heart of the research was the attempt to determine whether and how the organisation of the European Capital of Culture has changed the functioning of the cultural institutions in Wrocław. The year 2016 and the preparations preceding it were intended to reveal the attempts to make the residents of Wrocław contribute to culture and freely take advantage of its diversity, to provide them with easier access to cultural and educational programmes and to create, notice and and recover public space open to social activities, shaping pro-social and civic attitudes. Some activities were to give impetus to cultural development and permanent changes and create time and space for conversation about metamorphosis of culture. Finally, cultural sector was to attract qualified professionals prepared for running local and international, traditional and innovative projects and to ensure the recognition of Wrocław due to the importance and magnitude of cultural events. The theses for the interviews were thus directly derived from the project’s objectives and came down to (non)participation in culture (interest in the offer in the context of the advantages and disadvantages of celebrating the ECoC as a participatory practice) and the effects of the ECoC

in the cultural sector, specifically its impact on the institutions' working conditions (including the offer, sponsorship and business support, organisational reinforcement/increased employment, consolidation and collaboration/tensions and conflicts within the circles)⁵. The specification presented here, in linguistic terms consisting in a collection of records from the ECoC-related documents (e.g. "*Spaces for Beauty: Designed*"⁶) and sociological jargon has been turned into following conversation topics of the free-form interview:

- evaluation of the year 2016 from the perspective of recent years and its justification,
- collaboration on the ECoC project: what it consisted in, if it required or initiated any changes in the institution or brought new experiences and how they will be used,
- reflections on the ECoC project (e.g. if - and if so, how - it influenced cultural organisers, creators, viewers, etc. in Wrocław), what will remain after it is over (this year and in subsequent years) and which of these effects are considered as important and sustainable.

It is important to keep in mind that these are not specific questions posed during the interview. The structure of all interviews was more or less based on posing a very similar opening question on each topic, followed by themes appearing in a particular conversation. It is also worth keeping in mind that each of the opening questions had its liberating potential, but also its limitations. Their value consisted in initiating a conversation aimed at gaining an account of participation in culture, in the events of the ECoC Wrocław 2016 and the effects of collaboration within the framework of the ECoC achieved by the specific institution.

We looked for respondents on such positions within the institutional structure that made them familiar with the structure itself as well as its surroundings and audience, allowed them to collaborate with the institutional / artistic environment and gave them certain decision-making responsibilities. Moreover, we were interested in persons working in the "artistic" rather than administrative sector (but they were able to combine those functions) and for long enough to have experience and orientation in what had been happening in the years preceding the European Capital of Culture in Wrocław. We realised that the profile of the respondent constructed in this way is contractual, i.e. in some institutions more than one person would actually be involved and in others it would be difficult to distinguish the function of an organiser from a creator. And that is exactly how it was. It was not uncommon for two or more people to come to the meeting. Other times, it was necessary to have not one, but several meetings with a single institution. And each of the interviewees was surprised to have been selected for an interview and concerned if they could actually help and if their opinions would turn out useful. There is also some difficulty in defining the scope of the research, since it was conducted in sixteen institutions, including nine city/public and seven non-public organisations, but the total number amounted to nineteen interviews with twenty five persons, each lasting between forty minutes and an hour, although there were also some that took an hour and a half.

Here we shall finish the presentation of the project and the model of carrying out the research together with enumerating the strengths and weaknesses of the sample selection techniques and the collection of empirical materials. This indication is not meant to serve as justification of a concept that has failed (unfortunately, we do not have research techniques devoid of limitations or not entailing certain distortions) but to bring attention to what needs to be taken into account when interpreting the data as well as while reading the report. In the qualitative sense, a very rich material was obtained and this curse of abundance has resulted in a difficult choice of what to focus on and present in this text.

5 A wider review of the assumptions of the evaluation project with reference to key categories of participation and the ECoC effect can be found in the report by Pluta J., Banaszak E., Błaszczak M., Kajdanek K., 2017. *Participation in culture in the perspective of the European Capital of Culture Wrocław 2016. Report based on CATI research with inhabitants of Wrocław and of Lower Silesia voivodship*. Wrocław (<http://www.repozytorium.uni.wroc.pl>).

6 The ECoC Programme Book (version 06.2015) *Spaces for Beauty: Designed* <http://www.kalendarz.wroclaw2016.pl/programmebook>

3. The Fight Between Lent and Carnival

Respondents commonly agreed on one thing - they highly appreciated the actions taken by the institutions they represented. To this end, they applied qualitative and quantitative criteria. Qualitative criteria referred to the programme's capacity and impact, to artistic, social and discursive potential, that is, to being the subject of intellectual, social, educational work. Social plans (understood as what is important and at the same time setting directions for the efforts) were described as equal to artistic ones. Sometimes they would mention started or completed investments and their locations related to qualitative change in working conditions. Quantitative criteria consisted in the number of prepared events (events are to be understood very broadly here because of the wide range of activities we deal with), their variety and the number of participants. Attendance of the public, opinions of critics and the circles, awards, nominations, festival invitations played a role in confirming the quality of what was presented in terms of importance and relevance of the topic, courage in its presentation, response to specific needs and artistic values and quality of production. Thus, the importance of social resonance of work done by whole teams of cultural organisers cannot be overestimated. It has to be admitted that the question posed intensified the processes of (self-)presentation. At the same time, what was specifically indicated as justification and exemplification of the assessment of the past year has huge gravity and remains in the realm of facts. These indicators have been growing for many years and reflect the efforts, energy invested in a variety of events and attracting audience, in its education and social programmes. Representatives of those institutions which have taken part in the study and at the same time have a quasi-monopoly in the field of Wrocław culture, are firmly convinced that they could produce almost twice as much and that it would be "consumed". One of them asserted that the preparations and related reorganisation had begun with the decision of granting the title to Wrocław. The extension of the changes over time and not limiting them to the celebration year, according to obtained statements, concerned two more institutions; out of the three, as many as two of them were moving in the direction of reorienting the formula of their activities. It should be borne in mind, however, that the increase in activities of institutions participating in the research concerns those actions that can be carried out with the resources consisting in the employees themselves, based on their stronger effort regarding organisation and production, while those that require external cooperation and / or involvement of new professionals remain less intense. The most frequent causes of this state of affairs indicated in the study include budgetary limitations (e.g. the budgets of these institutions do not allow for ongoing curatorial guided tours, preparing and providing audio description, employment of sign language interpreters or other forms of audience support, systematic research and popularization of their results, methodical implementation of programmes involving disadvantaged communities in the city, etc.). Nevertheless, 2016 was an exceptional year for the overwhelming number of respondents: difficult due to the amount of work involved and very interesting because of the projects and new situations they had to face. "[M]ost interesting things have been done." And in many cases it cannot be separated from the ECoC because of larger and smaller projects carried out on this occasion and subsidized by it. This collaboration enabled organisation of a number of projects with "European-level" budgets, inviting esteemed artists, reaching out to places where the institutions' audiences function on the daily basis and provided the opportunity to work with high-level specialists, get to know the procedures and protocols required in collaboration with Institutions of different profiles and with different requirements. As a result, the teams were expanded. which made it possible to introduce the facilities that had been planned for years in order to professionally provide access to culture to marginalised social groups, such as persons with visual and hearing impairment, physical disabilities, etc. All this was in line with the aims of the European Capital of Culture project.

What is the problem then? The problem is that this was the case of only particular projects and lasted only in the course of their duration. The prosperity that the institutions experienced was very temporary. Usually they no longer have those people or those facilities, nor do they offer the solutions and formulas that were so appreciated by the audience. (Those one-time reinforcements are painful especially where such actions, if carried out long-term, could change a lot.) Rarely did they come into possession of exhibited objects or resources produced during the implementation of certain events, or keep the staff. "It was about adding a lot of fuel to the fire that quickly burned out." It was an external source of energy, connected to specific goals, but it was done in a way that seems to have impeded the use of results of this momentary gain. In other words, for some time these institutions proved to be very effective, surprisingly well coping with "often badly-oiled machines", but in most cases, this result was achieved not due to

the institution's gaining knowledge (drawing conclusions in terms of organisation and modernizing itself, eliminating bottlenecks at internal and interinstitutional levels), but through bottom-up mobilization of formed ad hoc or already existing teams, intensification of effort, reorganising responsibilities of the people who create them. This is not about professional duties, but private ones. The fundamental resource turned out to be the people in institutions, not the institutions themselves (rules, institutional memory). At times, there were occasional changes in the internal structure made through independent lobbying efforts by people and departments involved in the implementation of the ECoC programme. However, neither the process of team formation nor the process of making other structural changes entered the stage of institutionalisation (it was often heard in the conversations that "those teams just formed somehow"), which shortened their life span and made the use of the acquired teamwork skills problematic. On the other hand, the process of team formation and the level of consolidation and involvement of existing members significantly translated into satisfaction and constituted one of the most important components of the evaluation of the whole ECoC project in Wrocław by the employees of the cultural sector. Some are overworked (they would talk about taking leave at times they do not usually do) and very happy, have trouble moving at "lower speed", others are frustrated and close to professional burnout. Moreover, the budgets go back to their previous sizes. Cultural institutions have failed to launch the sponsorship market or enter into partnerships with a local business, because it was not them who established those contacts. They could have done it themselves, but their employees either do not know how or cannot convince the superiors to do it. Funding for the implementation of various tasks (including education and integration) is thus mainly sought from local and national institutions distributing public funds. Therefore, there was no revolution. It is even difficult to talk about change or reorganisation. The only and unquestionable benefit of this busy year is gaining extensive professional experience by people working in culture. It does not matter what they worked on, what artistic or social value it had. Everyone has learned something (some less, others more), although not necessarily everyone will have the chance to exchange these experiences, to use them in practice or to contribute to the development of broadly understood cultural scene. This issue raised greatest concerns, including the belief that acquired skills and competencies need to be forgotten, because with current limitations they may cause profound frustration.

There was a hope for a qualitative change in many aspects of how Wrocław cultural institutions function. Or at least a hope that "there would be no return to the guerrillas from previous years" and that the achieved level would be maintained. However, 2016 turned out to be exceptional, it was - according to the announcement - a celebration, after which everything returned to "normal", to the previous state. Considering the mode in which the effort put in organising the events that were included in the ECoC programme, "leaving the service" has its positive sides, but it also reflects two different visions of the culture's functioning (implemented and expected) quite well. The implemented one is perceived as a "constant fight between lent and carnival"... Institutions have a great deal of autonomy in project planning, but they have to stick to statutory goals and, above all, the budget. It is difficult therefore to deny the accuracy of the reversal of this metaphor.

4. Culture with a Capital and Small "c"

Of course, one can complain about many issues that characterise Wrocław cultural institutions financed from the city budget. At the same time, if they are defined as culture with a capital "C", then it is safe to say that it is in good shape and doing pretty well (although according to many it could probably be better). What requires support is culture with a small "c", or rather actions, institutions or collectives which deal less with the dissemination and distribution of artistic work and more with artistic activities treated as social interventions and with culture considered as a tool for local community revival, civic engagement, empowerment, responsibility for every "little piece" of common property and common good and as an instrument to prevent exclusion and marginalisation of disadvantaged communities. And these need sustainability, long-term duration and grassroots work: education, intensification of activating activities as well as interest in them and their acceptance. It would also be desirable to recognise whether one is dealing with exclusion and discrimination or with a local community of a specific subculture which it protects by a certain kind of "inbreeding" (i.e. unwillingness to cooperate with institutions, animators or artists).

These are the conclusions more or less confirmed by those involved in "high culture" as well as persons working according

to the do-it-yourself principle, i.e. enabling and facilitating initiatives that arise from the creativity of informal social groups and individuals. It seems that this is supported by the view, firmly rooted in these environments, which is: we already have (relatively) large institutions, now it is time for small initiatives, time to improve communication between residents, activists and the city - this is the purpose that the ECoC project was supposed to serve. **Culture with a small “c” is therefore defined as one that does not stand on a pedestal, does not divide into social classes according to tastes or symbolic competences.** It strives to change attitudes towards culture, activate people, support alternative forms of participation, provide tools for collaboration, co-organisation and coexistence, integrate and not exclude, all this in order to build (micro)communities protecting and supporting individuals in solving some of their problems on their own. Culture is a tool for inclusion and creation, a way to gain social competences. These skills are considered more important than competences needed for example to interpret a work of art, and this is why some of the study participants are almost inclined to make cultural institutions instrumental to accomplishing this purpose. Looking from this perspective one can notice that **the ECoC responded to a variety of tastes, and at the same time it was addressed primarily to narrow and elite social groups that already have the opportunity to pursue their interests** and open access to culture in its various forms. The suggestions included in the respondents’ answers indicate that, consciously or not, the Matthew effect occurred. In other words, the shape of provided offer created preferential bindings, i.e. describing the probability of a new connection in social networks, in such a way that not so many new participants joined the network as the already existing members gained new opportunities and previously unknown experiences. According to this, those who use the city’s cultural institutions basically every day were able to and did participate in it more, were able to and did try something new, collected the impressions they had not had before: they listened to philharmonic musicians while watching the exhibition of a world famous abstract artist or to a classical music concert on the marathon route, and much more. This certain redirection of the offer created for the ECoC celebrations also includes the way of participating in it: being a consumer/receiver of an already prepared product rather than a participant in an event and more frequently operating on an axis that differentiates between large-scale, folk events and phenomena of niche and elitist nature. This folk, popular character was recognised by the study participants as pretty, scenic and spectacular, action-based. Probably this is needed as well; according to the respondents the problem is that it was not balanced by other forms or activities at the micro scale, addressing local communities and at the same time giving an opportunity for social change in the place of residence. This popular character not only made it impossible to feel the difference between the pretty and the beautiful, or between being a recipient and participant. Its location in space and the shape it took made it difficult to break other schemes: centre-periphery, organiser-client, institution-petitioner, flop-success, etc. It must also be admitted that the answer to the question on what triggered this coupling, what caused the preservation of the schemes that were planned to be broken, would require different research than the one presented in this report. Once again we shall emphasise the phrase “has not been balanced”, as the case here is about proportions, about the side on which the scale tipped.

[1] It’s not that I wish to criticise all of this totally, and so on, for sure there is a lot of advantages and...I could, i do not know, now quickly name some, that a lot of people got involved, there was the micro grants programme, which was probably...the only one that reached the people, the common people...with an opportunity where, where you could just do something with little money and have the satisfaction with it...

Such activities did take place; the most often mentioned are “microGRANTS ECoC 2016” programme and “Wrocław – Backyard Door”. None of the respondents say that nothing was done, stressing that it would be a clear disrespect for the work of cultural organisers, for the achievements of artists, but somehow they do not notice or underestimate the potential that would lie in creating places where one could successfully initiate something, energise grassroots activities and bring them to another level, feel satisfaction,

empowerment, belonging. Nor does anyone deny the need for fun and accompanying carnival. However, the thing cannot amount to this - a carnival absorbs resources but contributes very little to some kind of social change. It is a way to preserve the status quo rather than breaking it. At the same time, the adherents of culture with a small “c” openly admit that, firstly, many goals that the ECoC project set for itself and attempted to implement are important but, in their view, they are not the most important ones. Secondly, so far no one had the courage to consequently run the ECoC so as not to perceive it as a “cultural

feast”, but as a tool for social work. According to the respondents, such turn of events was contributed to the paradoxical ECoC effect, that is, putting money into big events and thus lack of funds for small initiatives or collectives; creation of a variety of valuable initiatives by urban policy-makers, and at the same time difficulties with taking care of their development in time, reaching some stability and having impact on the environment; big investments in material sphere, but at the same time a lot less funding for the social tissue - while revitalisation, in order to bring about positive results, must work on both levels.

One has to admit that postulated understanding, treatment and functioning of culture would require the courage to abandon many existing schemes and frameworks of thinking and acting, as well as a radically changing the concept of culture and participation in it. It would be a social experiment based on the bold use of culture (and not only culture itself, but also e.g. sport) to solve social problems caused by this way of people organising themselves in space of a big

city. To achieve that, micro-activities, small events directly targeting specific social groups, and therefore invisible to others, would have to be preferred over actions that reach almost everyone who shows some interest and result in positive assessments made by the public about “a lot going on”. This would also require changing the question of “did you like it?” to “is it effective?” It is worth considering that “there is probably no such recipe that, I do not know, someone simply comes up with something, reproduces it and ... it works.” Finally, one would have to accept the risk that not everything works and succeeds. In other words: other measures of success would be needed. **So, in a sense, culture with a capital “C” and a small “c” appear as competing dynamics.**

There were also few respondents who claimed that winning the ECoC title gave them a “creative kick”, resulted in ideas that would continue to grow in the years to come. But perhaps the remarks by advocates of using culture as a tool of facilitating and animating social processes regarding the fact that for many people the ECoC lacked motivational impact or energising influence, that elsewhere “organisations or social movements [...] got such a kick that they could suddenly start operating at a completely different level” are not groundless, in the face of the following comment made by one of the study participants working in a public institution (and this was not a single statement):

It is amazing that [laughs] the European Capital of Culture ended, when was it - two months ago [laughs], everyone has already forgotten about it, no one is talking about it any more, it is over, goodbye (...) The ECoC project was won, implemented and completed and now you have to start the next project.

What is worse, some collectives are concerned that somebody will make a decision that will put their existence to an end, because they are not “in line”, “are uncontrollable.” They feel that the year 2016 protected them because of the negative PR effects such decisions would have at the moment of confronting them with the objectives of the competition application. It is also fair to say that Wrocław is a big cultural centre and reaching a higher level is not easy, as in the case of smaller cities. There, the difference is usually much more visible and to a larger extent contributes to moving to a different level of action. It is difficult to expect spectacular effects if “you start at the top of the stairs.” This is reflected by the theme recurring in discussions (with members of various creative associations): hunger for cultural events in every form of children and adults from outside Wrocław and tales about cultural over-abundance in its centre, about difficulties in inventing something that would prove interesting. Therefore, it is possible that one of the (perhaps unconscious) elements shedding light on the shape of the finished project is this specific over-abundance and accompanying search for something spectacular.

5. Paths to the Spaces for Beauty

This will be a very brief description of **ways to enter the bloodstream of the ECoC in Wrocław**. Its small size is a consequence of the scarcity of the material obtained. There are many reasons for this: from the fact that the subject was not clearly distinguished or explored during the interviews, to the respondents’ position in the institution (which involved participation in events

and resulting knowledge). Poor acquired material limits any attempts at its grouping, sorting and comparing. At the same time, this theme gained in importance in the course of the analysis. The way of entering the bloodstream seems to cast light on several important phenomena we have already described and which we will continue to analyse.

Collaboration was possible and did take place at the institutional level. Relevant departments and their managers or directors of the institutions engaged their teams in creating, implementing the programme of the ECoC events and in their production in various ways. The latter case refers to all those events that were said to have been brought “from the top”, “in the file” in order to, on the one hand, emphasise the respondents’ insignificant influence on their type and form, and on the other, to indicate the way they participated in their creation (which was usually limited to their production). They were programmed by other actors, and the process from idea to implementation was moderated by teams connected with the ECoC Festival Office, for example with curatorial sectors of culture. This is a rather incomplete and schematic picture, but it is about highlighting the level of cooperation that will be temporarily called institution-institution. Sometimes the cooperation took a very formal form, its scope and shape resulted from the previously made agreements. In other cases it sprang from informal, joint actions of Wrocław cultural institutions, based on earlier undertakings and the fact that their employees already knew one another. Over time, they would turn into a proper contract. This level reflects the project’s use of existing institutions and their networks of collaboration. This is probably unavoidable in the implementation of such concept as the ECoC, which does not change the fact that its particular architecture has had particular implications at different levels of project implementation (which, as already stated, will be discussed below).

Collaboration could be and was in practice arranged on the basis of personal relationships: friendships and acquaintances. It should be strongly emphasised that this is not rooted in favouritism, nepotism or protectionism, but in horizontal, informal networks providing knowledge on who possesses which skills and competences, what their ideas for “culture” are and what surrounds them. The invitation to collaboration involved a specific person with their body of experience and potential, useful in implementing a specific formula set for a particular objective of the ECoC (although usually that person was an employee of one of the city’s cultural institutions). By employing such a way of involving someone in a project cycle, it is certainly impossible to exclude a certain degree of randomness or personal preference as to the working method, the characteristics of the person invited or being guided by simple friendly feelings towards them. And hence the lack of - possibly expected - greater objectivity of the criteria of recruitment to various projects gathered under the common name of the European Capital of Culture. On the other hand, these are the issues strongly affecting the atmosphere of joint work, the sense of autonomy, involvement and identification with a particular project. The networks created in this way are also much more democratic, as they do not include, or do so to a lesser degree, vertical institutional arrangements and formal and informal dependencies (e.g. of power) that they generate, or to a much lesser degree strive to create them.

The third identified way to enter the bloodstream of the ECoC is to **make independent decisions in a larger or smaller team.** This decision was not only a matter of being a part of the ECoC, but the way of functioning within its framework and the level of involvement. In other words: whether, in practice, it would be participation in some theme, a special weekend, a festival or perhaps the participation would be limited to a presentation of a performance, and the decision is about its choice. Or, to the contrary: it would be a result of years-long preparations for something special in artistic sense - of concepts inspired by the idea of European Capitals and formally equivalent (from own ideas, challenging difficult tasks and independent efforts to fund them from various sources, to implementing ideas and good practices that proved successful elsewhere, to joining initiatives of other actors) and based on the decision to direct actions towards the ECoC (assuming that given institution and all the funds raised will carry out tasks related to the ECoC). However, this kind of autonomy is not given to all interested. For obvious reasons, such an extensive independence was only available for non-public institutions well embedded within a stable organizational framework and well-established formulas of operation and management. The last of the noted ways of joining the ECoC activities is related to **multilevel institutional mediation.** The chain of institutions collaborating within the framework of the ECoC was so long that the entities carrying out tasks at the end of it did not realise that they were part of the project and that the event was included in the program.

The “unconscious” entry into the bloodstream contributed, as one might expect, to a series of unfortunate conditions. Apart from the chain of intermediary institutions, it was possible to identify two more, mutually reinforcing ones. Firstly, it was

already the next edition of a given event (it had started before the year of celebrations as part of the preparation for them and at the same time was to serve the implementation of long-term goals). Secondly, the respondents clearly identified the European Capital of Culture with the year of its celebration (as if in their optics the process of starting and ending being a capital was limited to calendar year 2016). This particular case demonstrates that the established system of collaboration identified primarily the formally structured fields of action⁷ and its orbit of influences involved mainly institutions, although at times they showed little interest in the project. It also proves structurally (but also functionally) determined neglect of poorly formalised collectives, although their members actually wanted to participate in the creation of the project and the programme of the event, were ready to take responsibility for it and were aware of its premises and objectives. In other words, they had the will and knowledge allowing active participation.

6. Are These Really Bitter Lamentations? Mapping the Tensions

Many remarks made during the interview show disappointment, complaints, dissatisfaction, criticism, etc. However, we have come to the conclusion that their emotional, judgemental tone is deceptive, so it should not be deeply analysed. However, these statements need to be treated as descriptions and the layer hidden in the elements recurring in them must be decoded.

What, then, was revealed after taking such an approach to the collected material? **Tensions of a structural, conscious, spatial character - typical of various forms of culture in the city - which seem to have a significant influence on building long-term effects of the ECoC's effects and relations between actors of urban culture.** In this section of the report we try to map them to the extent to which they were revealed in conducted study.

6.1. MODUS OPERANDI

Let us begin by pointing out a certain modus operandi characterising the relations between Wrocław cultural institutions and the ECoC (office). Here it primarily indicates how the ECoC influenced other actors and how they related to this. However, it must not be forgotten that this is a certain distortion resulting from the characteristics of the material - conversations only with one side of these relationships. A relation is a reflection of interdependence and interaction. Both sides must deal with the conditions that are (co)create to a large extent. It must also be borne in mind that the framework of this bilateral relationship is also defined by other entities and conditions which the talks did not capture.

Wrocław cultural institutions treated the ECoC as another cultural institution and one very different from them. On the one hand, it has a long, rich and significant tradition (both as an EU project and as Impart in Wrocław); on the other hand, it is somewhat deprived of it in the place to which the title is granted and has a very limited time horizon. As it is known, IMPART Festival Office of the ECoC Wrocław 2016 was founded on the basis of Impart, although it was created mainly by young, creative people recruited for this particular project. On the other hand, the analysis of the interviews gives the impression that the history of this particular institution is “suspended” in favour of the ECoC as a project of the European Union. Thus Impart as the Festival Office of the ECoC Wrocław 2016 seems to just initiate its activities and it takes place in a space being an area of activity of many other institutions dealing with culture in different ways. At the same time, the scale of the facility's possibilities and the accumulation of activities and resources at its disposal exceed the potential of many cultural institutions that engage in relations with it. Hence, this is not always an equal and partner relationship. It seems that the tradition and achievements of one institution (ECoC) did not balance the traditions or achievements of others (keeping in all proportions), but the tradition and achievements

met a completely different kind of advantage: it translates into power. It is the ECoC that was the priority due to its image, prestige, international commitments. Even if one does not intend to use this inequality in a wrong way and tries to treat others as partners, there are situations in which the definition of a relationship as partner or equal by the stronger party is perceived as false and not devoid of hypocrisy. One might say that people became “hostages” to a structurally shaped situation, i.e. existing rules and available resources. Their efforts to release resources were/are only possible according to specific rules and at the same time reflect(ed) the structures of their relationships. In other words, for instance, Wrocław’s long-existing institutions were forced to calculate what really pays off in such a relationship. It took the form of speculation on such topics as: “who should show interest in who and what,” “who should recognise someone’s value and accomplishments,” “who should ask whom and what to ask for,” “who should make a bow to whom,” “who contributes to the relation and what it is,” e.g. the audience, a good brand for financial support of the project, in what form it should take place, etc.⁸. These were soft forms of violence - it is not easy to distinguish them because they do not show their character. However, this was Wrocław institutions (that is how we define all of them except for the ECoC because, paradoxically, the latter - although no one said it directly - was not quite perceived as such) that, in making an organisational or sometimes financial effort, had to make sure their work was visible.

6.2. MYSTERY OF THE “FRAMEWORK”

Jak mantra powracała na przykład kwestia “ramy ESK” i różne trudności związane z wpisaniem w nią własnej identyfikacji wizualnej, trudne negocjacje w tym względzie:

(...) The ECoC’s taking over these certain formats, it must always be in the frame, that ... that is a bit as if, I do not want to say that they have tried to cover it, but to stress strong partnership all the time.

A logotype is one of the most important elements of visual identification, deciding its recognition on the outside. Pushing it to the background, its reduction, illegibility or location beyond the perceptual field, etc., makes the institution invisible, suggests insignificant contribution and confirms who has power in a given relationship, who is subordinate to whom. In addition, bad execution of visual identification is partially a bad fulfilment of a contract, resulting in financial consequences. In the cases analysed here, it all created a sense of appropriating institution’s work for the benefit of the ECoC, intensified thinking about the benefits of the institution and not about the “common parts”. For the employees, recognition of the institution’s visual identification guidelines and promotion of the event prepared by the institution were very clear factors of appreciation of their efforts by the ECoC. The impression was that the more they had the feeling of being on the front, being a flagship event, the more they felt valued and were ready to play down, shrug off and overlook all the inconveniences related with the collaboration (too late contracts, unclear arrangements, vaguely defined ranges of competences, untimely flow of funds, constant monitoring if promotional materials items were hung in the right shape, time and place, etc.). On the other hand, the less respected their participation was, the more often tensions of personal character rooted in the past appeared: “And this translates into it, you want to do something and even though both sides ... probably feel the power of these programmes, for some reason they will not go for it, because there is some animosity.” A different problem consists in exactly those animosities rooted in the past, on which the festive atmosphere during the ECC celebrations had no effect. Although in this situation people should forget them and show professionalism, it was the emotions that triggered the dynamics characterising their actions⁹. When a joint action was limited to the inclusion of the ECoC logo and small promotional support, it was rarely defined as collaboration, as gratification (such a gratification would consist in taking anything into consideration on the part of the institution), and more often as an instrumental use for own purposes. The very possibility of becoming a part of the ECoC programme and its “framework” was not considered

⁸ The lack of explication is not a result of their absence in the material, we do not mention any specific information on purpose, because they can lead to focusing on persons and situational details rather than on the structural aspect.

⁹ This is again a dependence very well characterized in sociological conceptions of interpersonal relations. The shape of our actions is more determined by emotions than by reflection. Emotions work immediately and therefore are good “triggers” of any action, reflection takes time. Emotions also determine whether we feel good in a given interpersonal relationship. Reflection is able to limit their impact but cannot eliminate it completely.

a distinction. It seems that that was also perceived as an organically external body entering (mostly) city institutions. Because they are financed from public funds, their employees (although not all of them) felt obliged to accept the responsibilities arising from the commitment made by the city and did so. At the same time it worked as a confirmation of the hypothesis of not always partner relationships. On the other hand, it created the conviction that “we were not involved in the ECoC too much.” Such comment also indirectly confirms the expectation of a different shape of the relationship. It turns out that for institutions/employees who know their value (proven by individual and collective achievements), it is not enough for the ECoC’s “framework” to ennoble them, as if they did not have their own rank, tradition or position in the field of culture.

6.3. ANTICIPATED PROFITS AND LOSSES

Another example of tensions in the institution-institution sphere and their social environment was the need for constant control over the circulation of PR materials. According to the obtained accounts, the tasks connected with that were shifted to people working in Wrocław cultural institutions, although they did not “hang” them or decide on the place and time of their appearance. According to the statements, no facilities were provided. **During the implementation of the ECoC programme emerged an intermediary between the institution organising particular events and its social environment.** A rather ineffective agent, if one is to believe recurring reports. The tension in the relation was triggered not so much by the fact of mediation taking place or assessment of its effectiveness, as the anticipated risks and losses. They appeared more real to the institution than to an intermediary, i.a. because, according to respondents, this situation could have consequences for the institution. It would be responsible for its own losses as well as for the negative undertone or unfavourable attitude of the environment towards the European project. The interviewees felt that weight and seemed dissatisfied with being held responsible for that duty, at the same time not being provided with sufficient power to fulfil it. The interviews also indicate that it was quite common practice to leave the institutions (especially the hosts, that is those that were not initiators of the undertaking, but just the body producing it) with prosaic activities related to the organisation of events. This would be nothing unusual if not for certain circumstances that contributed to the tensions. According to the statements, there were multiple arrangements incompatible with the actions already taken (“they refer to guidelines they have not provided, so I have the right to give my interpretation of guidelines that I do not have or guess what the former agreement says”), while structures and division of tasks/responsibilities/rights were being established as late as during the action, which contributed to the illegibility of information circulation and decision-making within the ECoC for the external body. We may assume that this was partly a result of learning, insufficient workforce that would have worked on a project of this scale before, group dynamics related to team formation, “running” time and compression of events and tasks. This may be the cost of building a large organizational structure in a short amount of time, which is easy to design on paper, but it is impossible to predict in advance all the difficulties involved and the overall shape of the relationship between it and the other actors in the cultural field (as the stories often end up with reaching a compromise). Another issue is that if so much has been achieved thanks to the increased efforts of people employed in Wrocław institutions, they probably lacked the time to prepare for certain tasks (e.g. gathering information on competences, functions, division of duties, rules, deadlines, terminology) and they learned by of trial and error. All this was reflected in the sense of inertia and stagnation, waste of time, little of which remained for factual issues and implementation of tasks: “kilometres of walking to meetings that did not result in anything, contracts shifting between both sides for dozens of times,” and “everything suddenly started, like boom, and so there were nerves, because they probably got lost.” It also led to feelings of fatigue and mistakes. It is no wonder that such “field recognition through battle” fosters more ambivalence than satisfaction, encourages the analysis of various types of risk, and sometimes leaves one with a conviction, that a specific institution decreased the risk connected with structures responsible for the organization of the ECoC. Such organizational processes simply involve social and image costs.

6.4. INSTITUTIONAL ECONOMY OF EFFORT AND THE UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES

The context for a different aspect of this relation and a different tension is the previously mentioned lack of a mechanism for transforming the results of collaboration into changing some elements or working conditions of institution. **Many activities were**

interpreted as tools for “making money” that was available, “but beyond experience, without some long-term advantage [for the institution].” It seems that such a reception was strengthened by placing various activities in the interpretational frame, which the project constituted. It is prevalent in many fields of culture now: “I think if you ask anybody who, for example, works in film industry, for them too every film is a project, every festival is a project(…)” It is also a way of gaining and organising experience, which makes it difficult to perceive projects from some different perspectives. Under these circumstances, the clash of professional experience, considerable competences, high aspirations and (under)investment of culture - some ideas are not implemented because there is not enough financial support - made co-operation with the ECoC so valuable (because it was possible to do some things on a different scale, implement ideas that had not been realized due to previous level of subsidies), as it generated a certain institutional economy of effort. On the one hand, plans and dreams, on the other hand, the abundance of resources treated as one-off reinforcement (in a sense, it was so, without possibility for continuation), as an opportunity for realisation of long-held concepts in the field of past activity that should be used. The economy of effort was also strengthened by an important dilemma: the continuity of own events constituting a brand of institutions and the city, or implementation of completely new ideas. **Engaging in the ECoC project did not strengthen implementation of the usual programme accompanied by something special, dedicated to the celebration in any “capacity-enhancing” way;** it rather made the institutions face the necessity to decide between continuity of existing undertakings, minimising various risks (e.g. between the lines appeared concerns about whether cyclical festivals / events would be financed from existing sources if these are the sources funding the ECoC in Wrocław and avoiding this risk by submitting an event to the program of celebration) and stopping the machine at work and launching a new one in a short time and for a short period. And that largely determined the shape of the decision. It led to consequences expected by none of the actors of Wrocław culture. **The space for initiatives originally intended for the ECoC Wrocław 2016 shrank to something already being carried out, just having its special edition** (e.g. in the sense of implementing what was dreamt and thought about, planned, also in relation to the previous cyclical events but what had not happened due to limitations regarding cooperation, contacts, grants, the scale of the institution’s activities, e.g. in terms of marketing. There was no networking with grassroots initiatives: neither the institutions sought them nor the initiatives established a contact with the institutions, employees did not recognise an opportunity to establish new collaborations. The solutions, shaped by the effects of the described tensions, gave the employees of cultural sector a sense of consuming the title, depriving it of motivating influence, an energizing impact on the organizers, artists, the public, and the belief that, paradoxically, those who lost in the competition for that title in Poland managed to maintain that:

(...) the European Capital of Culture, this title spoiled us a bit, I mean... I was involved in many cultural projects outside Wrocław, especially in those cities that finally fought for this title till the end and did not get it, and there was this jealousy, maybe even anger, and such...such ambition - OK, so...we are able to organise a cultural event at the European level and we will do it better than Wrocław would. I mean, the motivation was still there, we already got everything, so sometimes we made organisational mistakes which should not have happened, but we already got that title and so we would often just feel comfortable with it.

There was also a sense of not having fulfilled the objectives in the shape they took in the victorious application of Wrocław, having preserved the status quo (the ECoC took place on a large scale and involved high culture circles, it was visible but at the same time had no social power at the bottom), a conviction that there was no courage to launch a functional approach to the ECoC, use it as a tool. There were difficulties with the legibility of what is part of the ECoC celebration and what is not (what seems to have caused the most confusion in this regard were well-known events, recognised as a brand of Wrocław culture). This led to relying on already existing networks and collaborations, resulting in a picture of the ECoC as benefiting, rather than contributing, not providing opportunities but taking advantage of them:

I do not know [...] whether it is really because of the ECoC, because we...it is a bit like that...certain foreign contacts had often been established by us earlier, they were used by the European Capital of Culture, these are not... these are not new collaborations...

Related to this were doubts and ambiguities in the assessment of the ECoC events and effects: **relying on already existing, significant cultural undertakings, oriented on local circles, in which the city had participated for a long time, not only brought confusion regarding (non)participation in the programme of celebrations, but also provoked questions (more or less explicitly articulated): would the established audience of a certain event have attended it regardless the ECoC?**; did the incorporation of events with established brands and high attendance levels into the ECoC project result in increased participation in culture? This raises suspicion that for the audience it may have been of little importance whether something was or was not part of the celebration, because they would have attended it anyway. However, in terms of attendance, the audience contributed to the success of a large and, in a sense, one-off project, was instrumental in it, lowered the risk associated with the whole undertaking. This assessment may be too harsh, but working on events well-proven in many respects (branding, audiences, staff) somehow automatically brings up issues connected with risk reduction - which is not considered bad itself, while raising ambivalent feelings regarding what is going to happen at this moment - with partial achievement of the objective, with misrepresentation of the original idea, with instrumental thinking. For certain, whether anyone wanted it or not, it generated a sense of focusing on the activities of the ECoC, on the brand constituted by the city and on its recognition outside. That does not mean that everyone was dissatisfied or criticised it; again, it is the matter of proportions, contexts and consequences, e.g. the perception that the main beneficiaries were persons from outside: from tourists to artists. **This is probably one of the reasons for the feeling that Wrocław artists were not sufficiently promoted. This resulted in the conviction of inconsistencies in the projects, failing to turn them into some long-term action directed at something that could be a more or less concrete goal, that would enable establishment of a common image of it, become a result of agreed strategies, etc.** And finally: much better visibility of institutions (well-established in terms of organisation, with clear structures of functions and employment) by the ECoC and municipality,

and at the same time the lack of recognition of structures, leaders, modes of operation of new forms of social activation by hierarchic bureaucracies, failing to use existing channels of cooperation between Wrocław cultural institutions and various social movements, and thus a much greater share of the former in activities aimed at implementation of the celebrations, in achieving long-term goals, raised many negative emotions among the grassroots artistic and activist collectives that had been operating for many years. This led them to feel that the city called them partners and at the same time used them, as well as gave them a sense of being neglected, disrespected, that their energy was wasted, the circles were divided and their neutrality was used, that they had to deal with tools that quickly replaced the dialogue with imposed conditions and denial of previous obligations/commitments. The result of all this was bitterness and the conviction of being marginalised.

This is followed by appropriation of the entire concept and expropriation of the ideas on which the application was based (participation, grassroots initiative, collective, activism). In a word, they were wrapped like nice sweets to be sold as the city's product. In the opinion of some of the representatives of artistic and activist circles, that was to be an event that would unite and create dialogue between artists, activists and the city, while it divided them and separated from one another.

It should be noted that there are no actions free from unintended consequences and that those indicated are not homogeneous in their nature: some of them are statements of facts, while others emphasise the communicative aspect of certain events, which does come down to the statement: "That is how it was." The communication medium turned out to be the organisational and substantive form of the ECoC project, i.a. interpreted by some of the interested parties as a lack of coherent strategy or answer to the question of the role of undertaken actions in the city's social policy, in solving problems of e.g. disadvantaged groups and of how, through culture, sport or education, their problems can be solved. This was also reflected in the changes on the position of the director of the ECoC office, which became a sign of transforming the concept of the event: moving away from qualitative changes and focusing on benefits for social policy, social value of events, giving people the tools to do something with their lives and surroundings towards counting the attendance percentages. There is also a different side of what is described here: the original ECoC programmes (which would not have been accomplished if there had been no celebrations), such as "microGRANTS ECoC 2016", "Wrocław – Backyard Door", "Coalition of Cities", big events and parades, that is the events most frequently mentioned in the interviews (slightly less often mentioned were the A-i-R WRO and the "City of the Future" programmes) were much more recognised, attracted attention and prompted reflection. It is therefore possible that, at least in these circles, this and not other background contributed to their greater visibility, traceability and dissemination of the ideas that they represented.

6.5. FERMENT OR CONTROL?

The last area of tension observed in the interviews was the result of an attempt to bring together all the activities that took place in culture as one big whole. **There are many indications that contemporary culture as a phenomenon can not be embraced by a clear, distinct frame.** However, there has been pressure from different sides to assign actions to specific areas and to give them specific priorities. This revealed a rupture between those who do not mind this “dissolution” and transgression (more than that, they can perceive it as a value) and do not see a reason to waste energy on its restraint, and those who support the hitherto borders of (sub)areas of culture (i.e. entitlements, missions and goals), the separation of spheres, sectors, domains and forms - even by means of some bureaucratic procedure - although they are more and more intertwined and the roles and circles mix. Again, if one is to believe the results obtained, the latter concept of culture won, which, according to part of the interviewees, resulted in the “lack of courage to do absolutely crazy things. It is a great idea to integrate the society and try to get the population involved in doing it (...) there was no such openness to innovative ideas.” There were suggestions, unfortunately not elaborated by the respondents, such as “not being inside, I saw a lot of intrigues there,” that those pressures turned into conflicts of interest and one of the tools for the realisation of interests and playing them out was the committee evaluating the projects. In other words, there were conflicting interests within the ECoC, and this largely affected the shape of the ECoC, which resulted in the reduction of space for communication. At the same time, it was not that discussions and negotiations were forgotten, but that some actors were excluded from them, while others forgot that sometimes such processes fail or take an absurd turn (but still it should not be overlooked that they were and are an added value). That also revealed claimant attitudes and recognition of such a category of relations as commitment - on many sides. For example, if you use local/public resources, you owe something to this community, you commit yourself to supporting its efforts, getting involved in its projects in the field in which you operate. On the other hand, however, local governments do not have the absolute obligation to support external initiatives just because they are part of culture, but are obliged to subsidize culture and civic initiatives from public funds to counter total commercialisation and its many negative effects, in the way that it does not act as an instrument for disciplining those who are considered to be unrighteous or for controlling creators and creativity. In the meantime, the collected material gives evidence of violation of such obligations. As a consequence, it was forgotten that there is no single recipe for reaching the objectives announced in relation to the ECoC in Wrocław, - unless you consider it a creative ferment, looking for new formulas and taking non-standard actions (which entails a high risk), accepting that something may go wrong. Wondering if something succeeds when it has already started is not only a waste of energy, because things carried out in such ventures sometimes work, sometimes do not, but also inhibits the courage to use culture as an instrument, and stops from making efforts related to profound influence of culture, to building their effects and awareness of their existence. Apart from what was being said here: a certain dose of “wastefulness” is needed. This is because people easily admit to taking actions which proved successful in the long run and do not remember that they had protested against them earlier. They also forget how many unsuccessful attempts led to celebrated success.

Unintended consequences turned out to be those unwanted and therefore triggered defence mechanisms in the form of post factum justifications of decisions and attitudes, and refraining from insight into them and not disclosing them, even for personal use. An example of this mechanism is primarily shifting responsibility: “this is how I persuaded the decision makers “,”it has been taken over by the ECoC like many festivals in this city.” The interviews contain a number of contradictory statements on the subject, like the latter, which was followed by the claim “we came up with it [referring to the festival described as taken over] because we wanted to join the ECoC.” Various “philosophies” were also being created (a special idea for this occasion, referring to a certain collective mythology, supporting it by considering it as a founding one and important to the sense of identity of the residents and to the identity of the city, creating the “founding” myth of Wrocław to strengthen the identity, bragging about achievements, the desire to inscribe one’s own recognisable product in the ECoC, etc.). **There was also the blurring of the borders between the events that were included in the ECoC programme and those that were not and/or positive interpretation of this fact** (“I think it is good because, well...well, Wrocław as a city was the European Capital of Culture in 2016 and the way I see it, everything that was happening in Wrocław, was happening in the European Capital of Culture (...) in my opinion all cultural activities of this city in 2016 were simply part of the European Capital of Culture programme”).

unintended consequences defined as unwanted but somehow sensed, which revealed themselves under certain conditions. That resulted in characteristic ways of (not)explaining them or positioning oneself in reference to them. Terra (in)cognita. Although this land has been studied, few people behave as if they were aware of it. What is not being said, what remains invisible, is the specific rationality that the institutions were following while shaping the ECoC, triggered by the conditions under which they operate. And these conditions, as it has turned out, are very complex. This complexity raises the question of to what extent it can be controlled and handled. And to what extent is it possible to anticipate unintended and at the same time unwanted consequences of institutional actions and to counteract them, thus optimising the conditions? It is possible that with such a scale, complexity and diversity, characteristic of the city's cultural institutions and undertakings like the ECoC Wrocław 2016, many arrangements at different levels - structural, functional, spatial and conscious - are impossible because they depend on too many factors to keep everything under control at all times or to plan everything carefully (and this has to be accepted). This translates into the inability to control risk. Perhaps the solution is not control or management, but mapping and understanding the risk, departure from from gigantomania and change of the criteria according to which the success of any venture is measured. Many interviewees were convinced that the mistakes during the Opening should have been taken into account in case of that kind of event, because such things do not always work out well, and the "old" criteria of success - apart from the clash of interests and opposing concepts of culture - intensified the tendency to withdraw, to use more caution and show less courage. Many point to the fact that an ill-considered desire to control what is uncontrollable produces a conviction of power that does not exist, thereby hindering mapping and understanding of risk.

7. Reproducing Contradictions

Basing on the interviews, it can be concluded that events related to the European Capital of Culture in Wrocław failed to overcome the contradictions characterising big-city culture of modern societies, although a significant part of the interviewees explicitly or implicitly assumed that they set such tasks upon themselves. In other words: what happened reproduced the phenomena that boost certain dichotomies, the parts of which seem to contradict one another. In this part of the report we attempt at a short characteristic of the paradoxes revealed in the obtained empirical material.

7.1. CENTRE-PERIPHERIES

One of the objectives of the ECoC was to facilitate access to educational and cultural programmes, and its implementation was to be based on, i.a., taking culture beyond the strictly defined centre of the city, where most institutions for organisation, protection and dissemination of symbolic culture are located. The interviewees were aware of such an attempt; at the same time a lot of their activities were focused on attracting people to their own institutions, which of course are located in the centre. Some of the activities were the result of contracts signed for specific productions, but there were also their own initiatives, focusing on attracting the audience to the place where they operate, sometimes turning it into a multifunctional centre (strengthening the association of the centre with the city centre). The awareness that it is important to cross the border between periphery and the centre is linked here with the fear that going outside the centre means failure of the venture - or maybe even an act against the interests of your own institution. This connection, according to some interviewees, was at the heart of the activities of the people who created the ECoC programme. Thus, events that were part of the ECoC celebrations were not able to eliminate the concerns about the risk of doing something outside the centre. It also seems that the attempts to do so accumulated in some places and did not have the same effect on each part of the city, so little changed in the spatial centralisation of culture, in perceiving other places appropriate for cultural events and risk-free. The division, generated by the places and the fight against stigmatising potential of residing on the periphery, remained. It was argued, for example, that one was not perceived as a partner in cultural undertakings - also by the main animators of the ECoC - due to their location, even if the location was directly neighbouring the centre.

Reflection on the reasons for this failure would require a separate study, because there are many factors to consider: from events that require appropriate infrastructure and space available only in the city centre to conflicts of interest, which, as we write earlier, found a new field of competition and materialised in the form of the ECoC programme. However, one should be aware that the very centre of the Wrocław is at the same time its cultural centre and for most residents of Wrocław it is not a place of residence, but a place that one visits. It is not the space one arranges, but just uses what is offered in it (consuming culture rather than creating it). This type of practices and associations strengthen the scheme that was to be broken. It also seems that they do not change attitudes towards culture, weakly activate people and do not support alternative forms of participation. One should also consider how much participation in cultural events with the predominance of transceiver elements develops the skills of cooperation, co-organisation and co-existence. All of this pushes one to reflect on how to integrate culture and social sphere in order to initiate changes in the place of living and at the same time make it clear to the residents that culture does not have to divide and may connect, involve, and build (micro)communities.

7.2. FESTIVALISATION-DEFESTIVALISATION

The second, very clear and controversial contradiction consists in the festivalisation, which stands in opposition to promoting sustainable and long-term cultural initiatives. What this contrast represents is complex, because there are many overlapping axes created by such phenomena and their dimensions as large scale, folklore, elitism, niche, closeness and openness, quantity and quality, big and small events, stopgap activities and continuity. For the interviewees, the term “festivalisation” stands for one-off events based on short-term actions, ephemeral, spectacular, media-driven, connected with collecting experiences (not related to promotion of sustainable initiatives that raise social and cultural competences), multicultural and blurring the border between culture and entertainment, the beautiful and the pretty, etc.

The celebration of the European Capital of Culture was supposed to create the conviction that it was about culture, its inherent potential, its importance and finally overcoming (dis)interest in culture among those of Wrocław residents (and not only), “who can meet at a cross-country running event for the sake of running, but cannot meet at a cultural event for the culture’s sake”, counteracting the fact that apart from meeting with culture it is also about something else. The ECoC was to stimulate the residents of Wrocław, to inspire them to bring something to the community, and to do so through culture, perhaps not very visible, but deeply influential. **Unfortunately - according to the interviewees - it turned out to be a schizophrenic undertaking. There were many undertakings** of a social, difficult and risky nature, thus raising both fears and high hopes:

In the beginning, frankly, I was scared, I was afraid of this project [“Wrocław – Backyard Door”], because I know from experience that the projects related to...such an area of social activities, because this is what this project was about, they are extremely difficult and require long preparations from the organisers and from the artist.

The respondents recognised their orientation towards work with public space, the presence of art in it, the departure from the commercial dimension of the former and the latter (space and art), social and non-utilitarian values, open and courageous use of art as a tool for overcoming urban social problems. They were valued for providing something that the residents had no idea they could offer to one another and to the artist, for exploring instruments for social change (for example, such an instrument can consist in controversy, unification in shared disagreement on something, integration around something perceived as needed and useful). **At the same time, what could not be avoided was so-called “festivalosis”: multi-sensory, huge cultural ceremonies, branding, events served for immediate consumption.**

Thus, maintained was the pattern of participation in culture/being cultured consisting in attending parties, temporarily joining seemingly ritualized pseudo communities - although there was an intention to prevent it. The schizophrenic feeling was deepened by a number of factors:

- **the above mentioned, highly esteemed goals are usually accomplished through hard-to-discern actions, as they are small, tedious, stretched in time** (“cooperation with the residents is not established in a week or two”),

dispersed in space, get little media coverage (such projects should not be broadcast so the residents do not feel used or commercialized, because then the effect is lost), risky (they may fail, the impulse may not bring effects, while the costs and commitment associated with their preparation are incurred), so they can not compete with the visibility of big events,

- **there was a discrepancy between the consequences that a particular project entailed and the goals set up before the ECoC programme.** A particular event is/was not evaluated negatively itself, but it happened when it was perceived from the perspective of what is/was the task of the ECoC Wrocław 2016. Perhaps the contradictions within all assumed goals were not reflected upon.. Perhaps they cannot be reconciled when they take these and not other forms. As a result, contrary to the intentions of the organisers, the energy invested in attracting tourists made the residents of Wrocław feel convinced that they are not the beneficiaries of the project¹⁰. Perhaps it was caused by great promotion of big events of temporary nature (so great that few have not heard of them), which attracted participants and at the same time did not find a place in the identity of the residents of Wrocław (despite sometimes referring to the history of Wrocław and its inhabitants), while inviting to take on the role of a tourist (they referred to cognitive, emotional, social experiences characteristic of such a role, taken on during participation in other cultural events),
- **There was a noticeable imbalance between grassroots work and promotional activities.** Before winning the title of the European Capital of Culture, Wrocław did not complain about the lack of promotion (also through cultural events, including big and well-known festivals attracting people to the city) and this was not necessarily the most important goal (this time it would not be a contradiction between the goals set but the problem with establishing their hierarchy). This also refers to small actions, events addressed directly to specific groups and not visible to others (micro-activities leading towards the objective) and big ones, which reach almost anyone showing some interest (resulting in good evaluation by the public: “a lot has happened,” and lowering the risk of accusations regarding: “what the money was spent on and why only some benefited from it”, since festivalisation reduces it by indicating that everyone had a chance, all you need is want),
- **there was a disproportion between funds allocated to different types of projects.** As it is known, big events absorb a lot of financial resources (which is also related to the issue of open, free access to them), and do not necessarily translate into broadening of participation in culture or related long-term effects. Participatory projects are, in turn, much less expensive and often produce lasting results. This disproportion is strongly felt also due to such factors as: energy invested in participation in grant competitions regarding education or social inclusion - instead of being invested in activities, this energy is used for securing them; the lack of liquidity, which translates into operational activities - there is no guarantee that the work will be continued, which often forces the one-off character of events instead of their continuity in time. Moreover, some forms of support provided by the local government paradoxically cause tensions, conflicts, downtime, breakup of collectives that burn out as a result of that. In other words: the lack of support and funding of existing cultural actors or focus on sustainability of cultural projects that already exist have led to the feeling that the great events took place at their expense,
- **there is a visible gap between operational beliefs:** “when there is a lot of events, that is good, it means that something is going on”, “the more, the better” and “the growth does not need to be large, what is more important is their wide resonance”, their social impact. It seems that the multiplicity of events and the large number of institutions are not the best indicators of cultural development. Although there are many events and institutions, their addressees may still complain that nothing happens even when they are not able to consume what they are offered. The organisers, creators and audience complain about the low quality of what is available and the lack of funding for cultural ventures while, at the same time, a lot of money is wasted. Event overproduction also creates a sense of confusion and does not translate into increased use of the offer: “There were a lot of priorities

regarding culture, there were a lot of events and I think the person who just wanted to take advantage of this offer was either lost or not really aware of what was going on”.

7.3. EUROPEAN-LOCAL

The last revealed issue is the European versus Polish/local/Wrocław character. Of course, the idea of Europeanism is firmly inscribed in the European Capitals of Culture and stressed in various documents. It forces the organisers to operate on several stages: from local to national, to European and global. However, in this particular case one could have the impression that **operating on several stages caused tensions, forced manoeuvring between contradictions**. For example, employees of many city institutions accepted the idea of praising local achievements during the EcoC (they are convinced that Wrocław artists have something to boast about), informing about them, inscribing them in the identity of the city and its residents. They considered this idea as their own and the more they expected that during the ECoC year Wrocław would pride itself on it and that such initiatives would be venerated. That is why the respondents noted the disproportion between big names and events (treated as import of significant things) and much less energy put in Wrocław artistic circle, which works on the good opinion of the city and its culture on the daily basis; between the means for events designed on a European/global scale and funds allocated for promotion of Wrocław artists and creative circles on these stages. Again, this is the question of proportions: it was thought that what dominated was imported culture, created outside Wrocław, Poland and made available to the residents of Wrocław as recipients, much less animating locally or involving Wrocław artistic circles. The opposite had been expected: financial resources were to go to Wrocław’s cultural circles and the residents. The respondents point out that this also did happen and had good results, although events and promotion received small amount of money. So, in their opinion, one can imagine what would have happened if bigger funds had been invested, assuming that the increase of quality is proportional to the amounts allocated for it.

Another exemplification is the impression that one was an extra, and not an active, leading actor in the social ritual (especially during the Opening Ceremony). It was caused by confrontation of own feelings with promotional materials addressed to recipients from outside Wrocław and Poland. After viewing them, it was concluded that participation/co-creation, collective experience was turned into something to trick and lure one who would not have taken part in the production of the city advertisement of their own will. On the other hand, as researchers, we have recorded descriptions of initiatives in which the ideas of European/local identity were intertwined in a very interesting and skilful way.. It must be admitted, however, that they were not aimed at the promotion or recognition of the above two elements (artists and artistic circles), but can be regarded as contribution to the realisation of such goals as joining four scenes (Wrocław and Lower Silesian with European and global ones) and building pride in Wrocław cultural heritage.

8. Expanding the Field of Culture

The narratives of the study participants concerning the activities of cultural institutions in Wrocław in the last year (and sometimes also several years back) and **reflections on the European Capital of Culture in Wrocław clearly indicate a phenomenon known as expanding the field of culture basically in all aspects of its functioning** (although at different levels, not in each institution and not in every activity of the ECoC, some still followed the transceiver logic to a far greater degree, others managed to fall within participatory logic with varying degrees of success). The expansion observed in the interviews refers to:

- structural field. This means that some cultural institutions become a framework for many activities, including informal and/or voluntary initiatives and associations, for example by hosting meetings of various grassroots societies, providing their space to non-governmental organizations with whom they collaborate, supporting beginner artists. They also act as information and education centres for children and adults, distribute cards that grant

preferential access to other Wrocław cultural institutions participating in networking programmes, facilitate the processes of creating / organising events and communities,

- sectoral field. As can be observed in the previous examples, legal forms and projects mix in special circumstances. The activities are undertaken by those who do not necessarily deal primarily with culture as well as those who are professionally involved in it. There are also attempts to enter into various sponsorship arrangements, providing more or less stable forms of protection for the activities undertaken and resulting in different forms of the presence of sponsors (e.g. on the premises of the institution and vice versa),
- the field of action formulas. This means expanding the presence in the public space (e.g. festivals, exhibitions located not only inside buildings but also around them, in squares, schools, on pavements etc.), new practices resulting from collaborations with non-cultural institutions (workshops with psychologists or their lecture at a film/theatre festival or participation in rehabilitation programmes with probation officers, engaging specialists in social and sensual integration activities for people with disabilities), but also preparation of audio description and translation of events into sign language, conducting social consultations on various subjects, organising debates for dialogue and democratizing and socializing the process of cultural management,
- the field of offer. This expansion has a quantitative aspect concerning efforts to increase the supply of various events (in other words: more and more new events are being prepared and the offer provided by already existing ones is broadened) and qualitative one, which means that offers become multi-faceted and multi-sensory (live music is played in cinemas and museums/art galleries, shows are accompanied by cocktail parties and social gatherings, other more familiar formulas such as workshops, lectures are implemented), etc.,
- the field of reception. Access to culture is facilitated in a variety of ways: from admission free days to preparing events available for people with sensory or physical disabilities, entering open areas of the city, but also by facilitating the transition from reception to participation, to co-creating an event and/or being a creator (courses in painting, pottery, ceramics, drawing, stained glass, craft and 3D printing, as well as making recycled dolls or props used in jointly produced theatre productions, workshops which result in a performance starring actors and course participants presented to the public),
- the field of objectives. In addition to the objectives traditionally pursued by cultural institutions, there are also social objectives. It is difficult to determine if their appearance to such extent and intensity was caused by the subject of the conversation - because the celebration of the ECoC set a number of social objectives before cultural institutions (residents' involvement in culture-forming processes, easy access to cultural programmes, search for and establishment of spaces promoting social activities, pro-social and civic attitudes) - or if the dynamics of changes is really the most significant in this aspect. In any case, institutions established for the production, protection and distribution of culture deal with education, animation, integration, activation, rehabilitation and revitalisation, and these social objectives are realised through such forms as photographic, theatrical, journalism workshops, performances staged in hospices together with workshop participants, reading sessions with actors addressed to children, practising yoga to music and many others, which are always treated by organisers as a chance to meet people from different backgrounds, to raise self-esteem of vulnerable persons and the socially disadvantaged, create equal opportunities for social and educational development, enable the creation of positive individual and collective identity, show other possibilities for self-fulfilment and functioning, counteract loneliness, enable cooperation and operation (and many other prerequisites).

Culture is thus becoming the main medium of “work at the grass roots”, understood as educational activities promoting equal opportunities, as a means of inclusion and creating a habit of participation. The respondents themselves employ this concept and many actions that they assessed positively are defined in this way. They are also aware that they sometimes enter the areas which until recently were poorly institutionally explored by their sector, and that it is the result of changes in culture, leading to mixing between artistic circles and social activists. The changes consisting in including social objectives in activities of cultural institutions, remodelling the formulas of work in order to implement them and enter into dialogue with the recipients are

therefore accepted and generally positively evaluated. “Work at the grass roots”, in their view, is not only meant to compensate for what is currently neglected by school (that is, classes that raise knowledge and competences in the field of symbolic culture, especially important now, when a recipient of contemporary art must be even better prepared to contact with it, to decode its meaning) and social setting, but also to change the mentality, perception of reality, to encourage (self)reflection, create habits of participation in culture, help to acquire new skills (more of social than symbolic character), allow to build personal capital. It seems that for these reasons the interviewees praised and highly evaluated programmes like “microGRANTS ECoC 2016”, “Wrocław – Backyard Door” or “A-i-R WRO”. “[S]mall projects, despite appearances not very expensive, have entered the space where culture was not really present until then.” So this is where instrumentalisation of culture is probably most visible.

The extension of the roles and functions of culture, its instrumentalisation, pragmatism, involvement in development discourses and the realisation of social objectives were/are done by institutions traditionally referred to as cultural as well as by those which do not carry out such activities but focus primarily on facilitating them among the groups that want to run them and on building networks with similar entities. For the former, they are of secondary significance, but still important; for the latter they are a priority, and cultural events are understood in a much broader sense (they include a football match in the backyard and a bicycle workshop that promotes physical activity) and to a large degree are treated as an aid tool. It also seems that cultural activists and social activists are aware of the dangers that these processes entail. This awareness manifested itself in the form of dilemmas or controversies that intensified in their perception in connection with the activities of the ECoC. Firstly, the “transfer” of culture to other areas of social life (education, sport, gastronomy, social rehabilitation) and the other way round invites reflection on what culture is, asking questions about the boundary between entertainment, leisure activity and participation in culture. Are food-truck rallies, containers of culture in Wrocław parks, brightly coloured bridges and lawns, mappings, big shows and marches still culture? These events were evaluated differently, for example this way: “there were these cool ECoC containers, I live in such a neighbourhood where there is a lot of parks and I saw people... this leisure time culture, it was so cool.” For those who advocate for preserving autotelism of culture, it is not necessarily something positive.

There were also curiosities, the ECoC pavilions. (...) And as we looked, there were better ones, for example in Staszica Park. (...) but that was not it, it was not a pavilion of culture, it is like a complete mistake, isn't it. It is just in the name. It really became a meeting place, so to say, yes, for integration, people started going to the park and using park not as a place to drink beer on a bench or take the dog, but on Saturdays, on Sundays it is full of children, families, sunbeds, children have crayons, music is playing, it is fun, a couple of bands turned up. Very cool thing (...) if it was about that, if culture was pursued, somehow more. We do not come only to spend time in a nice way, over barbecue (...) That is the point, that we mistake culture for recreation, because you can play with children in different ways. Because creation is still close to culture, creativity, while this is recreation. Well, culture, yes... (...) culture is a broad concept (...) The point is that (...) it is certain knowledge (...) interest in something (...) But I understand that in such a developmental and common concept, culture ... it is about development and creation. The point is to understand one another better. The point is to have, to look for common ground, to respect differences and work on that, it is ... a process and a skill.

First of all, for me these things have nothing to do with culture, because illumination of a building, even if it was most beautiful or an illuminated tram crossing the bridge, this is not culture. This is ordinary, nice, it looks cool, but it is just a show. (...) contact with culture has to give us something, is to move us somehow, sometimes give us something to think (...) I do not like to subsuming fireworks under culture.

The problematic issue consists not only in mixing the beautiful with the pretty or threat of primitivisation (the loss of important elements, included in the former: content, inspiration, education, knowledge, cognition and experience of something new, that provokes reflection), but also in mixing entertainment, free time activities with cultural events, which often give the same result (which makes it difficult to answer the question of what culture is). Areas of recreation and social integration in the city space are very important, they expand the functionality of such public places as parks, but according to some cultural organisers

it is not yet a reason to call this culture. Such indication means redefining culture in the direction of any way of spending time and so they oppose it. This concept, however, should preserve such elements as creativity, experience, acquisition/development of knowledge or skills and transforming it into some social capital: mutual understanding, respect, cooperation, recognition of otherness and opening to others, rather than re-creation/reproduction. And the containers should encourage people to take the initiative, so - in their opinion - it should be a place for cultural meetings. According to them, their function was changed while the name remained because it suited the project better. Nevertheless, the ways of entering open public spaces and their temporary admission with the intention of facilitating participation and engagement in cultural events raise doubts:

treated by the audience more like big fuss (...) all the time I think that it is not my cup of tea (...) I believe that even though it is the European Capital of Culture with capital letters, it should, if it is in the outdoors, it should take into account the perceptual capabilities (...) of random viewers to some greater degree. Because there are so many people passing, watching ... I do not understand, it makes no sense. (...) an outdoor show is a different case, a regular show makes sense when it has a set location, a courtyard, something, because then those random people are not there. While when it is in the Market Square, I do not know, in front of the bank, or on Solny Square, then... even this Solny is still a bit, a little ... but there in front of the bank where the Czechs played [that very experimental thing], well, total horror. Horror, because simply everybody passes by there.

What also raises objections is the encouragement to participation by e.g. distributing tickets by employers, trade unions and associations, but without making an effort to pose a question if the recipients would understand what they are to encounter. Such procedures were considered as discouraging and not encouraging participation in culture, its intensification, as lacking the ability to reach the recipients and hindering maintenance of relations with them. The possibility of achieving social change through such superficial, momentary, one-off actions is also questioned.

In conclusion, the respondents accept social objectives set out before cultural institutions and had done so even before Wrocław winning the title of the European Capital of Culture. They realise that the extension to social issues, on the one hand, has been forced by actual changes and inadequacies of traditional patterns/formulas of cultural institutions, on the other, results in new types of relations between culture and other areas of social life and changes their ways of functioning and/or increases the number of functions performed. At the same time they know that the ECoC Wrocław 2016 projects strengthened some aspects of expanding the field of culture and thus strengthened some of the dilemmas. It is also difficult to accept some of the ways in which the field was expanded, and some of them were evaluated quite negatively. However, it is important to remember about the multiplicity of voices and much greater recognition of programmes based on micro-projects, on artists' mobility, on building audiences, well-thought reaching new recipients through new forms of influence, discrepancies in the assessment of some non-standard activities such as containers of culture in parks, and about widely shared (although not by all) negative opinion on action-based entering into public space, inappropriate and unprepared for such interventions, and that disparities in evaluations are the result of their different criteria (for many, the one-off big events they have the advantage that people leave the house and meet; therefore, spending time outside the house and among other people is still highly valued and has impact not only on evaluation of certain events but also on the solitary and/or domestic reception of cultural content). Finally, it must be borne in mind that these evaluations were based on a variety of actions aimed at attracting the recipient. On the one hand, actions designed to attract local audience, on the other, to attract a mass audience; actions oriented towards sustainability and focused on accidental entry into the sphere of culture's influence. Such multidirectionality activates different planes and evaluation criteria.

9. In Pursuit of Evading Viewer?

Cultural field in Wrocław is expanding, and the ECoC has contributed to the process (especially with overproduction of events and increasing the number of social objectives). The paradox of this phenomenon consists in, i.a. the increasing number of institutions, cultural events, objectives, functions and attractive formulas, and decreasing number of participants. This releases the so-called Matthew effect: those who already participate in culture, do so to an even larger degree, also because of being very efficient in the use of solutions designed to encourage the (non)participants. Has, therefore, the participation in culture expanded? The European Capital of Culture in Wrocław was to be an opportunity to initiate changes in this matter, to attract the(un)interested in culture and (not) participating in it. When it comes to the (un)interested, we think about those who do not meet for the sake of culture itself, they are attracted by “eventfulness”, excitement, mixing everything with everything, so that one can feel something for a moment without a deeper involvement and quickly forget, and at the same time meet up with friends, do some business and eat something. When we consider (not) participating in culture, we mean that they do not use the offer of cultural institutions, are beyond the reach of their influence, and not that they do not participate in culture at all.

Attracting to cultural institutions, changing the profile of participation were the goals that resulted in many bitter words addressing the ECoC Wrocław 2016 project, they indicated stopgap measures, non-systematic and discontinuous character of activities, an empty burst without continuation, they criticised triggering energy at the given time without any influence on the people or on the state of culture as well as the lack of incoherence (events detached from one another without added effects or continuation). Those features i.a. justified distancing and critical attitude of the respondents. The paradox consists in the fact that, on the one hand, almost no one complained about the lack of participants in their activities and almost everyone boasted about accomplished audience (although not all were satisfied with the profile of participation and participants; one could hear complaints about “Wrocław pigeons”, wandering from vernissage to finissage in pursuit of free food and alcohol and repelling the audience or potential buyers of artworks), on the other hand, none of the respondents could answer the question whether or not the ECoC activities contributed to the increase (or perhaps decrease) in the number of their institution’s recipients/participants. The level of participation noted by most of them was either the same or slightly increased by visitors/foreign tourists. Exceptions were the events (one-off events!) on such a scale as for example the exhibition by Eduardo Chillida at BWA Awangarda. Moreover, these estimates are either based on ticket sales or very approximate and supported by imperfect instruments or presumptions supported by random observations (these were the majority). In other words and very simply speaking, although the institutions do possess statistical data, the tools for evaluating the ECoC objectives related to participation in culture were not developed in culture. **The fact that some ways to record events and their attendance do exist and are in use does not mean that they are suitable for all tasks.** The institutions do not always have a system to monitor participants or to keep in touch with them. Information about how the audience responds to the offer and evaluates the institution’s activities is often obtained from random personal contacts or by following social media. They do not tend to be methodologically programmed or systematic observations. There is therefore no knowledge to set specific goals or instruments that would determine if they are actually implemented. The available tools concentrate on quantitative criteria, encourage focus on current activities, in a way blocking the possibility to experiment, explore and make mistakes and programming an understanding of success. The fact of being the European Capital of Culture did not change that. No special preparations were made for defining objectives, no specific tools for evaluating them were developed, the process of monitoring their implementation and consequences extended over time was not programmed (the impersonal form of the statement results from avoiding to indicate responsibility as well as awareness of the fact that this problem is not exclusive for cultural institutions in Wrocław, as indicated by sociological reports on the state of culture in major Polish cities). Thus, the possibilities to answer the questions: did the activities of the ECoC Wrocław 2016 have influence on the interest and participation in culture among these social categories, which so far avoided cultural institutions (past young age, uneducated, unemployed and living outside the city centre, coming from socially and substantially degraded districts, etc.)? and if they did, have any habits of participation in culture been created as a result of this influence? and finally, after such an abundance of cultural events, will the residents of Wrocław feel hungry and create opportunities for valuable events themselves? - are very limited.

the understanding of goals, choose the formulas of implementation and methods of evaluation and consolidate the evaluations in systematic data collected in various ways imposed itself during conversations. Let us look at one example: free entry / unticketed events. This practice is supposed to increase participation, being a facility for the economically disadvantaged, marginalised and excluded due to economic, demographic and social characteristics. Our respondents had various doubts regarding this practice: is it really inclusive, does it teach participation in culture, or perhaps it changes nothing or very little in the lives of those people and therefore they do not get involved in events made available this way? Perhaps thinking that providing plenty of easily accessible events will lead to participation, seeking opportunities for it, creating opportunities for them to happen is a bit naive, because it assumes that culture provided by institutions established for this purpose is more important than the ordinary daily matters or equal to them. The less well-off have something else on their mind, they have different goals, so creating “the need for culture” in them requires some work, entering their paths of everyday life, finding them, making an effort to fit the event to the recipient so that they could understand and experience it (otherwise it may have the opposite effect - they will become discouraged and will not want to take part in anything any more).. The problem lies not only in the use of simple divisions that are closed to alternatives and other social worlds, but rather in the fact that the question of whether or not non-participation is, or is not, an element of the lack of choice, a sense of marginalisation, coercion. Answers to such questions require competence to reach certain people and enter their worlds without destroying them, which cultural organisers - as they claim themselves - do not necessarily have (after all, they are specialists in the field of art or other cultural disciplines, not ethnologists, sociologists, pedagogues, etc.). This indicates what, in effect, some of the projects of the ECoC can be focused on - at best on people who face constraints in realising their cultural aspirations, their models of being a certain kind of a person. Their orbit reaches few (un)interested, (non) participating, and the really marginalised categories remain completely beyond it. Free entry to a cultural institution is convenient, but perhaps one should clearly ask: for whom and what? The observations of these institutions' employees often indicate that the price of the ticket is not always the determining factor, more often - in case of contemporary art - it is the approach to the viewers, taking care of them through guidance, physically being with them and offering them the tools to understand the work and learn something, establishing a direct contact so as to reduce the distance between the figure of the great artist and the ordinary person, to stimulate curiosity (sometimes by attractive form and blurring disciplinary boundaries). Ambivalent feelings are also raised by the fact that efforts and facilities in the form of free admission or charging a nominal fee are inspired by some holiday. The holiday is over, and the commitment and effort involved are on a level that cannot be maintained all the time. Holidays take important place in social calendars and the efforts associated with them is not negated. It is rather a call for reflection on whether the endeavours, impossible in the light of everyday activities of the institution, can serve as tools for making a habit of using a cultural offer, as a means to achieve such goals as raising interest of the so-called common men in fairly sophisticated art and/or making an artist and their work recognised among those that are not related to the field of art or broader symbolic culture. Not every offer is perceived as one intended for a given recipient or one that may interest them, mainly because they do not understand or know it, do not know how to behave in a certain institution. All of this generates the fear of social nature (“I’ll make a fool of myself”) - of losing face in the presence of others, turning into shame for being who you are. Maybe that’s why not every free admission attracts interest, most often - according to observations of the respondents - these are open events. They note that the residents of Wrocław responded to the call of the European Capital of Culture organisers, participated in the project, but they were not present in the institutions, but at large, one-off events; they got organised and active, perhaps they will remember those events, but it happened in a specific way - serving to sustain the trend of festivalisation/carnivalisation/eventisation:

I think that not many more could visit us, at our events, so to say, but it is not some huge scale that you could feel it, a mass mobilisation and all of them suddenly storm galleries, cinemas and theatres, so, they did storm it more, that is right, mostly the events, for example the opening of the ECoC.

So it did not form a (permanent) audience for city’s cultural institutions, and certainly not for the less popular ones. Quite the opposite, it triggered the competition for the participant (sometimes lower attendance was recorded when the events overlapped with the ones included in the ECoC programme, which forced limitation of own activities and strictly guarding the

separation of dates). Free culture is sometimes free work of artists and organisers. This does not always cause a conflict of interest, but sometimes it is necessary to choose, because unprofitable brilliant ideas and proposals are absorbing, taking up the time required to do gainful work and ensure continuity of own initiative (association, foundation, theatre, gallery, etc.). . This does not mean that interviewees are in favour of commercialising culture and, consequently, refraining from the use of such tools as free access to culture. Expression of such doubts serves as a call for discussion on the methodology of the tool, warning against basing on simplistic visions of reality (which is not alien to some cultural organisers and decision-makers). On the other hand, this leads to show a great effort that is wasted if viewed from the perspective of achieving the goal of increasing participation in urban institutionalised culture of those who have not participated in it yet or have to a small degree. The image of participation in institutionalised culture that emerges from these questions is a “multiple-storey construction”. The respondents point out that there are certainly no simple recipes like: more free events will increase the participation of those who are excluded by income, because it is not only low income that repels from culture, but many other circumstances have their share in it. . It is a reminder that, paradoxically, such a form of providing access requires developed civic awareness, perception of cause-and-effect relationships that lead from solutions/responsibilities (e.g. taxes) to other solutions/rights (e.g. free admission to a concert, show or free use of library), connecting manifestations of a certain attitude, such as reliability, in various spheres of social life, raising awareness among decision-makers and beneficiaries of the role of culture in social development and functioning. This is necessary to avoid leaving the viewer with the belief that culture is only “cool” when it is free (because such motivation makes the audience not appear when they have to pay for anything, even if it is just a small fee). To make the viewers know that the creators and organisers work for them, make an effort, and to make them aware that they take part in a project absorbing the resources that somebody has to provide.

The need to discuss the methodology of reaching objectives (i.e. activation, intensification of cultural needs of Wrocław residents, extension of participation in culture, etc.) is also generated by such tools as extensive programme, promotion of culture and promotional activities within culture, the shape of cultural education, etc. From this point of view - the whole problem with the ECoC is that even what was a good practice is just a microscopic sting, related to a rather unreasonable hope of curing specific problems; that it is expected that their concentration in one year - a shock dose - can have a long-term effect; that many activities equate opening and popularising. (Popularisation is aimed at those already familiar with symbolic culture, who see its sense and value. So in this sense, these activities are elitist. And what to do with people who are reluctant to combine free time with intellectual effort, with usefulness/utility, with acquiring new skills?).

10. Positive Points, Negative Points

This part of the report discusses the **respondents’ assumptions and evaluation of the long-term effects of the European Capital of Culture Wrocław 2016**. In other words, we will try to show what, according to the respondents, will remain after the ECoC. As suggested in the title, this is not an unambiguous or one-dimensional assessment. Projects of this kind are not perceived as black or white. The rating depends on the perspective from which one looks at a given element. Even the focus on short-term actions is not seen in a purely negative light and entails ambivalence. It is negatively assessed because of the scale of the resources absorbed, the efficiency in such issues as the development of cultural participation, involvement and drawn experience. On the other hand, no one or almost none of the interviewees deny that huge shows were a good promotion of Wrocław outside and accompanied other ways of making it recognisable, attracted people from outside the city, allowed to gain experience in working with events on such a scale. Several of them have turned out to be very good in artistic terms and will go down in history of the city (which is measured by the events). Even those considered as artistic and organisational failures had this advantage that they made people leave home, meet other people and spend time in their company, and this could potentially result in something valuable. Every element of the ECoC project, every event (especially those more famous, which got more publicity) is viewed from many sides and their evaluation depends not only on the point of view, but also on how this point of

view is defined and expressed. The most often recurring perspectives were those set by the European Capital of Culture: social objectives (perspective of the residents / recipients of culture), promotion of the city (perspective of the city), human capital and infrastructure (institutional perspective). They have been specified in the following way.

10.1. PERSPECTIVE OF THE RESIDENTS / RECIPIENTS OF CULTURE

Let's start with the perspective of the residents/recipients of culture. **The first issue considered was the extent to which the ECoC was used as an opportunity for social revival of places recognised by the residents of Wrocław** (Plac Społeczny, Wyspa Bielarska, Plac Wolności). The respondents do not claim that nothing is happening there, but in the opinion of some, not so much are these places dedicated to social initiatives, young creators, animators or serve the broad dissemination of culture as they are commercialised. So in these places (and not just places), the ECoC, as an important undertaking, did not push the message that culture does not need to result in recovery of costs because it repays with very important functions it performs, because without it, it is impossible to preserve collective identity. This does not rule out commercial success of certain cultural events, but limiting to them is dangerous. Secondly, it was questioned whether the events / eventfulness, which after all became recognisable marks of the ECoC in Wrocław, could actually contribute to emergence of some habits connected with cultural participation, bring about some long-term effects in the field of culture. Not all large, glittering, attractive events are included here. Some of them are rated as good and at the high level, but it is also suggested that one could do without the majority of them and they are treated as vacuums sucking the money that could have been spent on social projects. It is believed that bigger resources enabled strong promotion of events and increased attendance, but did not bring in residents, especially those (un)interested and (un)involved. According to the respondents, there was some openness due to the ennoblement connected with winning the title, which encouraged familiarisation with the cultural offer of the city. However, this happened with varying intensity which was the result of the event promotion. For this reason, some of said events became hits, the information about them reached the general public, they had a new ECoC audience, others, equally good, did not. Promotion is also a tool to create an opinion about something and thus the latter events were deprived of the chance to be rated as something valuable. What will happen when additional funds for cultural promotion disappear? This leads the interviewers to recognise that the project has had much narrower impact that it should have and will leave behind a much smaller trace than it should. Thirdly, let us recall one more element of this perspective. Nobody condemns spectacles or festivities. It is about the proportions and what dominated (also in terms of promotion): the pretty and ordinary (but attracting attention) or the valuable, beautiful, moving, teaching something; it is about not putting equation mark between the pretty and the beautiful. Contact with what we can define as culture should give something, should leave something behind – some trace in experience: affection (emotional aspect), reflection (intellectual aspect), learning something new (educational aspect), “entering” into some understandable content (cognitive aspect, because a form without substance is much less valuable, in many cases deprived of strength of influence, and the message must be understood by the recipient so that they would want to repeat the contact with it). It is clearly stated that “fireworks” and the pretty should not be subsumed under culture. At the same time, culture does not have to be difficult, one does not need specific competences: “the artist places, for example, I do not know, a mirror in a yard, which lights up suddenly, brings the sky close to those tenement houses and is surrounded by these tenements. So even a person who has never had any contact with culture in their life will understand the message of such a project.” Then, the residents are left with the soft, uncountable benefits, such as experience of engagement, taking care of something, responsibility for something, learning about yourself, about others, about the city:

This project [“Wrocław – Backyard Door”] was still emerging and I did not like it, because I live in Olbin myself, so this courtyards are not alien to me. It was so completely detached from the inhabitants. On the other hand, when they realised that these are a bit specific communities that consider the backyards to be their fortresses and started to getting people involved, it turned into something wonderful. I saw children build a tree house the on Jedności Narodowej Street. And those children, who often had not know one another or what to do with their free time, suddenly all those children, grandmothers, grandfathers, parents were involved in the construction of this

tree house, which was designed by some artist who decided that it would be constructed this way, in this form, that it would refer to something, and those kids immediately got it, they have learned something, the artist has learned something, the ECoC has learned something from it, and finally, those who watched it, they have learned something too.

As a result of the processes of mutual learning, learning something about oneself and others, the priorities changed. The amount of money involved in the project became less important than the fact that it was being implemented, its message/content, form, the sense of being unique because of the selection of the artists, therefore what will remain is the experience from the contact with art, with the artist, with culture, mutual learning about one another. This entails a (micro)change on an individual and social level. High evaluation of such projects does not necessarily relate to their execution (because there were highs and lows), but their purpose, the values they carry. The good aspect of those activities consisted in the fact that:

the city opened up not only for collaboration with famous curators and the like, but it also gave space to these grassroots initiatives ... and it is also understandable that if someone lives in a given environment, they know best what it lacks and what it needs, I suppose that this is even more important and better than just introducing, inviting a prominent expert from Warsaw, who has no idea about some small environment, I do not know, in Nadodrze or (...) in Trójka, and that it was probably such an impulse that encourages others to act.

Fourthly, despite various objections, the respondents appreciate what has been done, “what made people realise that culture is there and you can participate in it at different levels, because there was not just very high art but also grassroots, workshop-based, activating initiatives.” Eventually, accumulation of events and formulas (festivals, workshops, debates, interviews, talks) in one city at frequent intervals, constitutes accumulation of development opportunities for specific people who can benefit from them. What is more, one cannot ignore the memories that will remain after the participation in marches, festivals, concerts, fairs and in all those formulas facilitating grassroots activity and socialisation. And most importantly, the interviewees were convinced that in this respect their evaluations were very provisional. In their opinion, it takes time and inertia of everyday life to see what will remain in this field after the activities of the ECoC.

10.2. PERSPECTIVE OF THE CITY

Above all, **the promotion of Wrocław was appreciated**. According to the respondents, the importance of promotion results from the esteem that it leads to, from its consequences in the form of attracting people from other places, from their exchange of experiences, which is seen as a kind of resource capable of transforming into different types of profit: for example into cultural richness and economic prosperity. It was also acknowledged that the events of good artistic and organisational quality, which took place in the city, create its atmosphere and its importance as a centre of culture. It was, however, questioned whether the ECoC should have focused so much to on such tasks, because the promotion of the city had been very good for many years. No one argued that such activities should be abandoned, but rather raised questions on proportions of actions and measures that could have been invested to a larger degree in already existing cultural and social initiatives. Promotional actions included performances marking the opening, half-way and final of the ECoC, which, in the respondents' opinion, should have focused on other objectives: first of all, on including the residents of Wrocław in the project, the opportunity to work on and celebrate the community identity, taking advantage of the unusual history of the city, and even creation of mythology reviving both history and collective identity in common consciousness. It ended up with misguided messages in substantive and organisational aspects, “while, considering media interest and the number of participants, those were the biggest events of the whole year.” Importantly, it is not claimed that everything must always result in a success, but that the opportunity to work out important issues should not be wasted just because something does not prove to be a success. And that such a waste of opportunities because of some failure shifts the event from the social sphere to the (unsuccessful) promotional activity.

10.3. INSTITUTIONAL PERSPECTIVE

In the institutional perspective, **investment in the infrastructure was appreciated**. Many recognisable buildings and institutions that they house were associated with the fact of Wrocław being the European Capital of Culture and with preparations for it. So was taking care of the aesthetics of the city - parks, houses and the surroundings of mentioned new or renovated municipal cultural institutions. In many cases, the respondents were not sure whether such relations actually existed, but believed that coincidence in time supports such associations, and these leave traces in the memory of the residents and visitors of these institutions. Therefore, for many reasons this is a good move for the cultural map of Wrocław. **What worries them is connecting the EcoC with great infrastructural-institutional enrichments, which often function contrary to its postulates: glass walls, empty sterile spaces, security guards, lifeless buildings**. It is considered a paradox that they were promoted as the ECoC symbols.

New institutions in the field of Wrocław culture are not appreciated by all respondents either. Their assessment depends on their profile, goals and the way in which they will be implemented. There is also concern about subsidising new actors by the same, one entity. It is claimed that this means a real reduction of subsidies for “old” institutions. Thus, the intensification of structuring processes, i.e. the adoption of some clear structures or forms by new initiatives, is not always desired. In this regard, more does not mean better, more means less (money).

Another important element is human capital. Firstly, because infrastructure is dead without people with specific skills and experience. Secondly, because there was an opportunity to work with creative projects. Thirdly, a great deal of organisational experience was gained during the implementation of events of various scales and characteristics - “the entire army of cultural producers, cultural organisers educated on the battlefield” - and those who want to work in the field of culture were given jobs (even if temporarily). Although the acquisition of professional experience by cultural organisers was dependent on the size of the institution, the scale of the undertaking and the extent of (co)operation with the ECoC, the experience of these persons, their contacts, knowledge, skills constitute a profit not only for Wrocław, but for Poland. Such an army of people with such potential will not be absorbed by Wrocław cultural institutions (although it was being pointed out that cultural centres in estate communities can channel people who gained experience during the ECoC, some respondents took a positive view on creation of such institutions and drawing those persons into collaboration), so they will use their abilities in other places in the country (or perhaps abroad). In the daily work of many institutions it turns out to be important who came to Wrocław: if they accepted the invitation, to what and in what character. The result consists in Wrocław strengthening its role of a cultural centre. And it is very likely that this will make inviting valuable things easier. Not necessarily well-known and famous ones, because these are cost-intensive for a variety of reasons (fees, infrastructure, security, insurance, production and promotional requirements), but not only the known and famous can be valuable. It is important to appreciate, although it happened on a smaller scale than had been expected, that thanks to the publicity of the ECoC, the general public heard about a lot of small places that do something interesting and these places, these people reached some audience. Thus, the places that revealed themselves in the program gained new audience, while cultural institutions were able to show their new faces, connected with extending the scope of their activities. Some Wrocław cultural institutions can add events of great significance to their portfolio, which alters their perception and treatment (as if they have reached the next degree of initiation). Just the lack of major mistakes alone will make them trustworthy in certain types of activities. **In many cases, the PR benefits are undeniable**. Three scratches spoil this image:

- the first one consists in low strengthening of many of the institutions participating in the study. Fundamental strengthening took the form of targeted measures (for production and promotion) and did not affect material resources, model of management or the memory and ability of the institution to learn, even in terms of human capital the effects achieved are not unequivocally assessed (as it has been indicated earlier in this report). These factors, in turn, are reflected in the transformation into conditions of liquidity in the implementation of goals and objectives,
- the second scratch is related to the emphasis put on support and funding of the existing cultural units and on sustainability of the cultural projects that already exist, operate from the bottom up and do grassroots work. However, according to the interviewees, investment and strengthening was low in the case of initiatives

facilitating grassroots cultural events, which treat culture as an instrument of social change and revitalisation, and which intermediate between the residents and the city's institutions. Their involvement in the first stages of applying for the title, the content of various conversations taking place on this occasion (which were, probably justifiably, turned into ideas and promises) strongly collided and continue to collide with interest in them, attention paid to their work and its conditions, their inclusion in activities and the level of funds provided. This has led the persons active in this field of culture to feel instrumentalised and detached as well as concerned about the future, by realising, on the one hand, fragility of the foundations of their actions, and, on the other hand, conflict of many interests with an actor much stronger than them, which led to divisions in the circles,

- the last flaw lies in many missed opportunities for debate and dialogue. Sometimes virtually a waste of launched processes with already existing groups, opportunities for getting to understand the needs of activists, people working in local community collectives and generated grassroots energy. That is why it is considered important to preserve the value of the Wrocław Culture Congress, which enabled people to meet (in a variety of culture-related ways), diagnose the situation and discuss it and, most importantly - shift the focus from oneself to opening up to others. In short: it has initiated a reversal of the earlier trend. Some respondents perceive the same potential in Wrocław's cultural development strategy.

11. (Con)texts, or an Epilogue

The European Capital of Culture created ambivalent feelings. The reasons for this we have tried to present above. Generally speaking, this is the result - according to the assessment of the study participants - of re-evaluating some events and effects of the ECoC at the expense of others, some of which were strongly publicised as the premises and objectives of the European Capital of Culture in Wrocław. This seems to have caused a lot more visibility of shows/events, marketing, and infrastructure, with their advantages and disadvantages (which, however, does not mean overlooking other, highly valued events). It also resulted in the conviction that **the city has benefited from this project to a larger degree (image, marketing, tourists, portfolios of institutions etc.) than the residents** (and thus another dichotomy was recreated: city-residents). Therefore, there is a strong hope for continuity - after the ECoC celebrations - of the projects that hold promise for sustainability of activities and effects, for unconventionally understood phrase "spaces for beauty", for the awareness of the need to take care of the place, the people, relationships, acceptance of otherness and community beyond divisions, because counter-proposition is cruel and inhuman. According to the respondents, **out of activities proposed by the ECoC, this potential lies primarily in such projects as "microGRANTS ECoC 2016", "Wrocław - Backyard Door", residency programmes, debates and dialogue leading to socialisation of the city's cultural management, democratisation of the city budget distribution, discussion about culture.** This potential also lies in individual actions - because anyone who can somehow influence public opinion in the above-mentioned matters should do so. Some of the interviewees show concern about the political climate around the EU and the ECoC constituting before their eyes, considered as unfavourable. This climate is not conducive to experimentation and maintains political functions of culture. Hence, they believe that being a Capital of Culture in certain cases does not have to mean obtaining benefits, but bearing costs. It is not without significance that the image of this specific, Wrocław edition of the ECoC has an impact on the desire to identify or be identified with this project, which results in accepting invitations to cooperate or not.

Any study examining any sphere of social world is sensitive to its contexts. One of their elements are logistic conditions accompanying the research process. The lack of attention paid to the context of events, statements of the study participants, neglecting the configuration of the factors determining the character of empirical material brings very concrete results: the conclusions change tone, terms and concepts transform their meanings, turn into interpretation of facts. Changes of contexts always work this way. This is nothing exceptional. What is exceptional is that it is so clearly visible in the presented report. The most important factor of the study turned out to be time. The interviews were conducted shortly after the end of the events related to the European Capital of Culture Wrocław 2016 - from the end of January to the beginning of March 2017. This is a brief period of data collection. First of

all, it resulted in the number of collaborating cultural institutions. Secondly, the proximity of the events of the ECoC Wrocław 2016 reoriented the course of the interviews. The respondents found it difficult to assess and evaluate the long-term effects of the past year because imagining them (possible developmental paths and forms of their implementation), observing them is a temporal function. Thirdly, the moment in which the study was conducted influenced the obtained statements. They were emotionally charged. Therefore, it is important to remember that such statements are complex, rich in meaning. This is the main reason why this report is difficult to read. Sometimes there is an impression of returning to issues already completed and resolved, another time there is a sense of contradiction, caused by rapid changes of perspective (from personal to institutional, from report to interpretation, etc.).

Emotional approach to any issue proves high commitment to it, almost complete devotion to the case. Perhaps not all the participants are extremely optimistic, but everyone cared. They all consider themselves as the citizens of this city and assume the resulting obligations. The whole problem consists in their very engagement and being so anxious about the success of the project. This made the ambitions go much further than the effects. **There were even situations when it was wrongly expected that a concentrated social intervention spanning only one year would be able to defeat time.** And culture is not medicine after all, and events do not work like antibiotics. Hence, it was so difficult for them to accept the consequences that we call unintentional and unwanted. Some of them were imagined and at the same time undesirable. We talked with professionals and practitioners who know the conditions of their actions and are able to characterise them.

The problem with unwanted consequences of actions and with growing contradictions characterising urban culture of modern societies is that they cross the borders of Wrocław, the borders of Poland, the borders of a united Europe. Their solution would require radical changes. Is one city able to make a revolution? Even if such radical reforms were possible in one place, would they abolish all or most of the phenomena perceived at the moment as negative by the respondents, if these changes were not synchronised on many levels and in many areas? Is this synchronisation attainable? **The statements of the study participants are sometimes very critical, but it should not escape anyone's attention that they reveal the complexity of the operating conditions and thus raise the question of how they can be optimised and controlled.** In other words, they discuss the criteria for evaluation of activities in the field of culture and the basis of autonomy of the field. They also indicate the need for a debate on participation in culture and the necessity to reflect on tools for making culture accessible, especially to those social categories that cannot make contact with it on a commercial basis. The comments and reflections are valuable. Let us ask, then, is this not an important profit gained from the European Capital project? Let us ask if anyone would like to be emotional or propose postulates of this magnitude if they were not involved in the undertaking being a subject of the conversation with every part of their being?

