



Evaluation of the European  
Capital of Culture  
Wrocław 2016

**Archipelagos of Culture.**

**The European Capital of Culture**

**Wrocław 2016 as Social Experience**

**REPORT FROM QUALITATIVE RESEARCH**



**WROCŁAW 2016**  
European Capital of Culture

# Evaluation of the European Capital of Culture Wrocław 2016

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# 1. Introduction

One of the main research projects carried out within the framework of the evaluation of the European Capital of Culture Wrocław 2016 programme was a qualitative study realised with the residents of Wrocław in a form of focus group interviews (FGI). The research focused on the social context of the culture's functioning in the city and aimed at its in-depth diagnosis. A particular stress was put on experiencing culture and the ECoC in Wrocław.

The first thing that comes to mind when analysing the collected empirical material is the conviction of multifacetedness and complexity of the phenomena examined. The city's cultural sphere can be described metaphorically as an archipelago. We are dealing with multiplicity of smaller, relatively closed and relatively independent cultural islands inhabited by different categories of city residents. Although these islands form a genetic whole, they are divided by a barrier that is difficult to pass. This report can be treated as a sketch of a map that shows the specifics of this archipelago. We are aware that this is not a complete or finite map. Undoubtedly, it can be further refined by conducting further studies on urban culture and its users. However, we dare assume that the sketch of the multiverse of Wrocław's culture that we present in the report provides a solid background allowing us to interpret and understand better the social reception of the European Capital of Culture, including the data collected in quantitative research with the citizens of the city, the agglomeration and participants in the ECoC events.

The report summarises the year-long research project, which was carried out in four waves - subsequent stages during the ECoC in Wrocław. The results of the first three waves of research are presented in partial reports, prepared on an ongoing basis. This report summarises the entire FGI study. Undoubtedly, it duplicates some of the findings included in the partial reports, however, looking at them from the perspective of the full material gathered, taking into account a certain dynamics of events related to the continuity and development of the ECoC Wrocław 2016 project, prompted us to partially reinterpret them, and allowed to further specify and establish better relations between them.

In the report summarising the results of the FGI research with the city residents, research findings were presented in the form of a glossary, which describes the main categories and concepts that constitute the most characteristic elements of the "islands" forming the cultural archipelago of the city. As it is with glossaries, it is not an exhaustive catalogue of concepts, but a (rather subjective) selection of those which the authors of the report found less obvious, especially characteristic or more striking than others. Discussing them, we also describe the main links between them, identified in the research. They were interpreted in the course of the analysis basing on the respondents' statements, often on excerpts concerning various issues raised in different interviews. Therefore, the quotations included in the report do not serve as evidence, but merely as illustration - they are to let the reader familiarise with the specifics of the collected empirical material as well as with the way in which the issues discussed in the report were revealed.

## 2. Note on the Research Method

The main idea behind the concept of the research constituting the subject of this study, was the assumption of the city-forming role of culture. What is worth emphasizing, this assumption is also included in the idea of the European Capital of Culture (as a political project of the European Union); it was also reflected in the document defining the concept of the ECoC project in Wrocław: Wrocław's Application for the Title of the European Capital of Culture 2016. This assumption results in perception of the ECoC project as an impulse to stimulate cultural activity of the residents. This, in turn, is supposed to translate into prosperity and social activity that would bring about "city animation" on two levels:

- individual, manifested in the activation of the residents in the public space, and thus ensuring its vitality,
- collective, expressed in the development of cultural sector, consumption and tourism, considered as key elements of the city's economic base.

The consequence of such approach was the adoption of three basic categories that organised the research area. The first one is participation in culture. In the applied research theorem, this category is considered as a set of practices of leisure time consumption, related to participation in cultural events offered in the public sphere.

The second category is the **city**. It is regarded here as a system that mediates certain forms and sources of consumption, including those related to **participation in culture**. In the light of the assumptions on the relationship between culture and the city (and urbanity) presented earlier, the intensification of consumerist practices leads to changes defined as the development (qualitative and quantitative) of this system, and thus to the revitalisation of urban spaces (that individuals representing some forms of participation in culture can enter) and to stimulation of economic sectors related to satisfying postmodern, symbolic consumption, refined by its specific forms. At the same time, the activation of this type of practice answers the purpose of socially redefining the city's image and building new narratives around local development.

The presented approach distinguishes a specific sphere of culture that concerns these elements of cultural life that organise and provide the structures of the urban consumption system. This sphere can be defined as **urban culture**. It is distinguished by its generally open (public) and social character. Beyond the sphere of urban culture remain cultural practices and mediators of these practices, which are carried out individually, in private and socially closed spaces. Thus, for example, urban culture consists in watching films in the cinema, but not in private, at home.

The range of issues raised in the research, in accordance with the aforementioned theoretical concept, was organized around two main axes: 1) attitudes towards culture (including participation in urban culture) and 2) perception of the European Capital of Culture. The discussions during the interviews addressed the following topics:

- recognising and communicating the cultural offer of the city (in particular the events of the ECoC),
- motives and ways of participating in urban culture,
- ideas of and expectations for the European Capital of Culture,
- experiencing the ECoC Events,
- and the summary of the ECoC Wrocław 2016 project.

During the interviews of the first and second stages, more emphasis was put on issues of cultural participation and expectations for the European Capital of Culture, while in two successive waves on issues related to attitudes towards the ECoC and evaluations of this project.

### 3. Research Implementation

The research was conducted using the method of focus group interviews in four waves. A total of 10 interviews were conducted, each of them included 6 participants - the residents of Wrocław.

Three interviews in the first wave were conducted at the turn of March and April 2016. The second wave, covering two interviews, took place in the second half of June 2016. The next wave consisted of two interviews as well. The meetings took place in October 2016. The last, fourth wave included three interviews, which were completed after the official final of the ECoC in January 2017.

The diachronic approach to the research allowed us to control the research process. In subsequent waves it was not only possible to gather new empirical material, but also to deepen and widen it, along with ongoing analyses and interpretations. Active responses to emerging research hypotheses made it possible to put under the microscope those that revealed themselves somewhat in the margins of the discussion, appeared incomplete and had not been included in the original scenario. The result of this approach was, among other things, the modification of the interview scenario after the first two waves.

culture. Focus groups were homogeneous in this respect. In the first wave, one group consisted of people who were passive in the field of culture, i.e. those who had not participated in any cultural event during the six months prior to the study - in particular, they did not participate in musical concerts, plays or theatrical / opera performances. They did not visit a museum or an art gallery. The second discussion group recruited culturally active people: those who during the half-year prior to the study had attended at least two events, such as a theatre performance, an exhibition in a museum or an art gallery or a ticketed musical concert. A special category of participants in the culture was represented by the respondents in the third focus group. It was a kind of an “avant-garde of cultural consumers”, people stepping beyond conventional or passive (realised in a role of a spectator) forms of experiencing culture. They were recruited from among participants of niche, intimate ECoC events (lectures, seminars, meetings with authors, art exhibition previews and closings, workshops, etc., taking place directly before the research).

In the second wave of research, the selection criteria applied in the first and second focus were replicated. In the fourth group, there were participants actively taking advantage of urban cultural offer: attending (2-4 times per year) various concerts, exhibitions, theatre and opera performances, or taking part in one of Wrocław festivals (Wratislavia Cantans, Jazz nad Odrą, Brave Festival, New Horizons, Underwater Wrocław, Stage Songs Review, Jazztopad, etc.) and sports events such as the Wrocław Night Half Marathon. The fifth focus group consisted of respondents who had not participated in any cultural event during the six months prior to the survey - in particular, did not attend music concerts, plays or theatre / opera performances, did not visit a museum or an art gallery.

The fundamental recruitment criterion in the third and fourth wave was participation in events organised within the framework of the European Capital of Culture Wrocław 2016. The sixth group included persons who declared participation in the events of the ECoC programme between June and September 2016. What was important is that not only did they participate in large cultural events, but also knew that they were organized under the auspices of the ECoC Wrocław 2016. In the seventh group, the respondents were persons who did not participate in ECoC events. That did not exclude the situation in which they participated in other cultural events. When recruiting respondents in the fourth wave - to the eighth and ninth groups - the same criteria were applied as in the third wave.

Persons invited to participate in the last, tenth group, were those who took part in selected niche (directed at small, but more experienced and developed audience) events of the ECoC programme in November and December 2016.

The respondents in each group were varied by gender and age.

## 4. Understanding of Culture

The interviews with respondents revealed several different ways of treating culture. These ways are determined by understanding of the function of culture, perceiving its meaning, assessing accessibility, etc. It can be assumed that the approach to culture is the main factor that determines ways of participating in it and attitudes towards the European Capital of Culture project.

### 4.1. CULTURE AS THE SACRED

*With my daughter, we have just been at ... Geppert Zbigniew, because he is an interior designer. Such simple forms, one would think, at the Contemporary Museum on Strzegomski Square. It was quite interesting, that exhibition. [...] just to sit 6 in front of some image, thinking, am I rising, is this picture rising, because it is cubism, isn't it? Cub Art actually, that is between cubism and constructivism, such a situation. Well, so you can imagine that all these, let's say, the forms of those cubes that are painted there, that they are rising above us, or that we are rising above them, that's what you would have to do, sit down quietly and somehow think about this and then see what is happening there, imagine it. (Nikodem, group 10)*

The first approach to culture identified in the research is to consider it as “the sacred”. In this sense, it is associated with “high culture”, art, artistic and aesthetic values, which, however, possess a significant surplus. They do not come down to “like” / do not like” valuations, but carry a deeper meaning. Aesthetic experience is supposed to touch on the aspects constituting the essence of humanism - to promote “ennobling”, personal development, experiencing a kind of transcendence.. Thus, cultural values are perceived as really important and valuable, but still difficult to access and even incomprehensible. Their full experience requires special competence that the respondents who perceive the culture in terms of the sacred usually do not possess. Cultural experience is recognised as a certain social duty, commitment, even obligation. One does not necessarily need to fulfil this duty, although not participating in culture is treated by the respondents themselves as something embarrassing which must be explained. The duty-imposing nature of participation in culture means that it does not have to be associated with experiencing pleasure or satisfaction, also because of the aforementioned lack of competence to fully experience the values attributed to works of culture.

The consequence of such an approach is a peculiar religious approach to culture. It is placed in the sphere of “sanctity”, separated from matters related to the ordinary everyday life. Also participation in culture is considered as a special, ceremonial ritual that takes on the features of a certain mystery play. What takes place during this mystery play is an exclusion from the sphere of “everyday life,” including work, household, family, etc. The material expression of this symbolic transition from the profane to the sacred world, which is an immanent element of participation in culture, is the fact that cultural values are managed and made available by specialized institutions such as opera, museum, art gallery or theatre. Therefore, in order to experience culture, one visit such a “temple”, which further ritualises the acts of participation in culture.

#### 4.2. CULTURE AS A REWARD

*Sir, I work all the time, so I have a few things to do, since - as they say - I barely manage to make ends meet. And so, working, I try to provide for my family. So what does it look like? I work and work, and when football match begins, I like to take a day off and watch this match. For example now I worked at Christmas and Christmas Eve, and New Year's Eve, and the Epiphany, as someone said there, just to indulge a bit later, to take the weekends off, even just Saturday and Sunday. (Mariusz, group 8)*

The second approach consists in understanding culture as a reward. As in the case of treating culture as the sacred, also in this perspective, the foundation lies in the separation of existence into two spheres, namely the sphere of duties and the sphere of free time. Culture is included in the latter. Thus, participation in culture is an element of free time consumption and a way to break away from everyday commitments. The idea of culture according to this approach is not narrowed down to the so-called “high culture”. Access to cultural values is, however, mediated by various types of institutions, and their consumption takes place in public spaces. In this sense, participation in culture is not about experiencing cultural values individually or in the comfort of home - it does not include reading books, watching films or listening to music at home, etc. The choice of specific forms of participation in culture is conditioned by individual preferences.

Participation in culture is connected with the transition from the sphere of duties to the sphere of free time. However, it does not take place freely or without restrictions. To take advantage of the cultural offer, one must earn it - fulfil all obligations imposed on yourself. It is also, for example, a matter of free time management, securing appropriate financial resources to cover the expenses arising from participation in culture, but also - in a special case - going into retirement, which is considered as time free from professional obligations. Culture (participation in culture) is therefore a reward for “dealing with” surrounding reality, skilfully managing it, settling current affairs. It should be stressed here, however, that of the decisive importance is not so much the objective fulfilment of certain conditions, but the subjective conviction that one deserves a reward, which is the transition to a free time zone.

The factor motivating to participation in culture does not consist just in the need to break away from duties. It is also, or even primarily, a public manifestation of entering the free time zone. Participation in culture communicates the fact that one has

deserved a reward - it is to show that one has dealt with daily affairs and can afford time off. The mechanism at work here seems to undermine the widely shared view that participation in culture is induced by social pressure: the benefits are connected not so much with presentation of the self as a “cultured person”, but as a resourceful person, coping with current, everyday burdens.

Paradoxically, treating culture as a reward may lead to exclusion from culture. While participation in culture is a manifestation of being able to regulate current affairs, its lack is interpreted as “overwork”: “I cannot afford culture because I am too busy, I do not have time for it - I cannot allow myself the luxury of taking advantage of the cultural offer in the rush of everyday duties.” However, passivity in the field of culture is not perceived as inappropriate or improper by those respondents who regard culture as a reward, since it proves not so much the inability to deal with everyday matters, as emphasises the dutifulness.

### 4.3. CULTURE AS A CATALYST

*I do not choose whether it will be this event or that one, or some other. I want to spend the weekend somehow, in an interesting way, with culture, and then we can plan it if time allows. (Izabela, group 4)*

The third approach to culture revealed in the research is related to its instrumental treatment. Culture presents an opportunity - as a mediator or a certain catalyst - to achieve certain goals not directly related to the experience of artistic or aesthetic values. Participation in institutionalised culture offered in public spaces is an opportunity and occasion contributing to the realisation of certain practices that serve primarily social inclusion. This does not undermine the aesthetic experience, yet it makes it a secondary, accompanying, even side effect.

Culture, according to respondents’ statements, can lead to two basic goals. They both concern different aspects of inclusion in social communities. The first one is related to production and manifestation of the community identity. In this context, culture provides the opportunity to share experiences with others and thereby builds a sense of community identity. By participating in a cultural event, an individual becomes a member of an audience connected by similar tastes and social practices. This also creates a natural communication layer which enables their articulation and thereby revaluation of its social identity.

The second aspect concerns the production and consolidation of social bonds - especially between family and friends. Cultural offer is regarded as a chance to meet and spend time together. Thus, leaving the house to attend a cultural event is an opportunity for social interaction which leads to revaluation of the affinity with certain primary groups.

### 4.4. CULTURE AS A RESERVOIR

*(...) what do all these events give us? First and foremost, we, present here, can choose the events in which we want to participate from what this culture in the broad sense of the word gives us, because we will somehow expand our horizons, we will have a nice time, we will go to an exhibition opening, we will go to a jazz concert, we will watch a film together, and after the concert, the opening, we can share our thoughts, and this is what drives us, enriches our personality, our spirituality. Something for the body, something for the mind. (Paweł, group 3)*

From the statements of the respondents, collected during the interviews, one can extract one more way of perceiving culture. It is regarded as a specific system of values - sources of various kinds of intellectual, aesthetic and artistic experiences and stimulations, but also of emotions and fun. Thus, culture serves the spiritual and cognitive development and enrichment of personality. At the same time, the experiences drawn from culture are considered forms of individually-experienced pleasure.

In the approach to culture presented here, the separation of culture into “high” and popular is of secondary importance. Of course, the respondents distinguish different types of culture and types of experiences related to them. They therefore recognise the complexity of the cultural system, its various circuits and structures that organise it according to its different qualities. However, they do not apply evaluating categories that would indicate that one of them is better than other: art

contributing to personal development and entertainment focused on fun are treated in a similar way. The repository of culture offers different cultural forms depending on the expected experience.

## 5. Participation in Culture

Participation in culture can be analysed in terms of mitigating the tension between socially-defined sphere of values (and resulting obligations) and structural conditioning that organises the functioning of individuals in society. From this perspective, participation in culture is a way to engage these two spheres. Therefore, the determinant defining the level and manner of participation in culture consists in the extent to which the two spheres overlap. It should be emphasized here that their definition (and therefore their mutual positioning in relation to one another) is relative. It is determined from the perspective of an individual and depends primarily on their understanding of culture.

It should be stressed that the modes of participation in culture identified in the study should not be equated with relatively stable and sustainable attitudes. Neither are they attributes that typify people with specific socio-demographic or personal characteristics. Ways of participating in culture are rather dynamic constructs, influenced by social environment, circumstances, type of cultural offer and - above all - attitudes towards culture. They can be treated as certain social dispositions, preferred (but not exclusive - not excluding other) motives and approaches to consumption of cultural values.

### 5.1. SELF-EXCLUSION

*My free time is very limited. I work for 8 hours, sometimes 10. In addition to that, I've already finished one study programme and now I'm trying to finish the second one and defend my master's thesis. I spend free time with my friends drinking alcohol. Another form of my entertainment is redecorating my flat. (Maciek, group 1)*

The presentation of ways of participating in culture should begin with the most passive one, which can be described as self-exclusion from culture. It is conscious and deliberate exclusion from the sphere of cultural practices that are mediated in urban system of consumption. However, self-exclusion is not caused by objective factors, external to the individual (such as the lack of cultural offer), but results from the perception of the social world, in which urban culture and participation in it do not fit in the life of the self-excluding person ("culture is not for me"). The lack of or very limited participation in urban culture is not necessarily related to refraining from taking up any cultural activity - people who do not use the city offer often experience different forms of cultural interaction in their private sphere (e.g. reading books, taking photos, watching films on television and the internet, etc.). Self-exclusion usually corresponds with the perception of culture as the sacred and as a reward.

The sense of self-exclusion consists in separating the "private" sphere from the "public". Urban culture is located in the latter. This sphere is considered as unfamiliar by the individuals who pursue this type of participation in culture. Although they recognise the values of socialised interaction with culture (in particular with regard to "high" culture), they exclude themselves from it. Their activities focus on the private sphere, where the rhythm of life is determined by daily duties, work and family.

Self-exclusion manifests itself in the syndrome of factors excluding from participation in culture. They all contribute to a low motivation to reach for cultural values. There are several planes on which the self-exclusion from culture takes place. The first one is the lack of appropriate competence, declared by the self-excluding individuals. They regard experiencing cultural values as difficult and not available to everyone - requiring specific knowledge, sensitivity, ability, etc., that they do not have. Therefore, they are unable to reach the sensations (get rewards) that should be associated with participation in culture. The aesthetic and intellectual experiences that culture would provide them are inconceivable, incomprehensible, and therefore alien. Thus, they simply lack the desire to strive for and experience them. All the more so - in the case of such an approach - participation in culture always involves a certain cost: it requires, for example, saving leisure time for cultural practices and using certain financial resources for this purpose.

Cultural exclusion also takes place at the social level. Participation in culture is perceived by the self-excluded as a public activity. In their life activities, however, they are primarily focused on private sphere and social circles limited to primary groups that remain within it. The consequence of this is a social barrier preventing access to culture resulting from low resources of social capital. These deficits are manifested in two ways. First of all, an important role here plays the lack of trust in what is “public”, which results in treating this sphere of social life as alien and, consequently, reluctance to engage in it. Secondly, due to the limited network of social relationships in which they participate, no socially favourable circumstances for them to participate in culture are formed. Typically, the networks in which they participate neither stimulate nor create social pressure to engage in cultural activity, as they are made up of similar individuals. At the same time, perceiving participation in culture as a practice realised collectively, they have no one with whom they can go to the concert, to the cinema, theatre, etc.

One can also notice exclusion from culture at the information level. Separating the private sphere from the public one results in the self-excluded person’s insufficient knowledge of what is happening in the latter. They do not participate in the circulation of information available to the public, and - as their comments on the ECoC indicate - even if they have contact with it, they find it somehow invisible or transparent. Dissemination of the city’s offer is based on informal flow of information, transmission of it within social circles in which they operate: by neighbours, “friends from the park”, co-workers, parents of other children, etc., who are usually poorly informed about what concerns the public sphere as well. As a consequence, the self-excluded declared in interviews that they would often learn about an event likely to interest them “too late” to take part in it. This is accompanied by the lack of activity in terms of acquiring information. In their perspective, it involves some effort and requires detaching from one’s own affairs. As a consequence, what reaches them are at most “scraps” of various reports, mainly those particularly loudly and intensely advertised. In fact, only these pieces of information are readable and accessible to them. Information distributed through other channels, especially those that require any involvement, does not reach them. Therefore, they do not have the knowledge of the city’s cultural offer and, inevitably, cannot use it in a conscious or active way.

The perception of culture as the sacred or a reward results in the fact that participation in it - according to the axionormative system that constitutes the point of reference - is considered to be advisable and in some way important. As a consequence, passivity in the field of culture creates feelings of guilt or even social disability in the self-excluded. That is why they justify their lack of cultural activity, pointing to a number of barriers preventing access to it. These can be divided into two categories: external to individuals and directly related to them. The first category includes high cost of participation in culture (both tickets and indirect costs), lack of relevant information and advertising, the offer not meeting expectations, as well as difficulties related to communication and transportation (reaching and return from an artistic event). The second category is made of such elements as lack of leisure time, professional and family responsibilities, particularly those related to the childcare, lack of appropriate company and difficulties with logistical organisation of “meeting culture”. Such a barrier also consists in the difficulty with the proper (according to the respondents) perception of cultural values. Perceiving it as inaccessible means that, as they claim - it is better (more effective and of greater benefit) to focus on something else than cultural practices.

## 5.2. MANIFESTATION OF A CULTURED INDIVIDUAL

*When I go to the theatre, opera or, say, an exhibition that is widely advertised, I do not go there because e.g. I like the artist, I just go because it is advertised, so I go with a friend of mine. (Monika, group 2)*

Another form of participation in culture emerging from the interviewees’ comments, is “manifestation.” In such an approach, culture is considered as an important element of social life, which plays an important role in social development (in the very broad sense of the term, including, for example, the development of the city) and personal development. Hence, participation in culture is treated as a duty, and even a kind of social obligation. The approach described here constitutes the way of inscribing the private sphere into the public sphere.

The key motivating factor in this way of participating in culture consists in revaluation and manifestation of one’s identity while at the same time satisfying the aspirations of “being a cultured person.” This is, however, an imitative activity, caused by

a sense of social coercion, resulting more from the aspirations to enter normatively defined (and seen as attractive) social roles than from interiorised needs for contact with art or aesthetic experiences.

It must also be emphasized that this method is reduced to purely passive encounter with cultural goods and values - in the role of a recipient. Participation in culture is rather superficial, does not result in deep aesthetic or artistic experience or intellectual stimulation, although it may involve strong emotions related to the socialized aspect of cultural practices. It often takes the form of “checking off” cultural events, especially those which are in some way trendy, valued, loud, well-advertised and appear attractive or important to the general public. The respondents for whom participation in culture was primarily a manifestation of their social identity and position, mostly presented relatively low cultural competences. They were not sufficient to make an informed or independent assessment or selection of the cultural offer - although the selection of the events in which one participates is usually modified by habits, tastes, previous experiences with participation in similar events, etc. However, the main factor they usually follow in their selection are opinions of others (including, above all, advertising and recognition attributed to particular events). At the same time, they are not able to independently determine the value of what they experience by interacting with cultural values. They seek for cultural capital, although they have no knowledge of its value. They know that it is important and can be useful, but they cannot use it consciously or deliberately and do not distinguish between its forms or characteristics. If there is any key to their actions, then its not of aesthetic nature or derived from some other autotelic value and its use does not require specific competence. This key appears to consist in utility, related to the possibility to revalue and communicate an identity that they find attractive.

Such “manifestational” participation in culture is followed by a lack of reflexivity or criticism. Respondents who represent this approach are often aware of their relatively low competences in the field of culture. However, they are not willing to raise them - seeking the maximum (although, as mentioned above, one-dimensional) usefulness resulting from participation in culture, they seem to look for a guide - someone who would tell them what (and why) is interesting, valuable, noteworthy. Someone who can provide them with arguments, or better - ready solutions regarding what to choose from the rich offer of urban culture. In their opinion, this role should be served primarily by the media, cultural organisers and local authorities. They expect them to prepare an attractive (valuable) event, (effectively) inform them about it and indicate that the proposed offer is appropriate for them: confirm its attractiveness, uniqueness and aesthetic value. They also expect to be provided with arguments that would support the relevance / value of the event. However, these arguments are not used for critical analysis of these cultural “guides” or the event itself. They are to rationalise the interest and participation in a specific event. Thanks to these arguments, the participants “know” what they have experienced and what the experience gives them.

The collected empirical material allows to indicate the place of participation in culture in the context of the mechanism of production and revaluation of social identity. Social pressure experienced by those practising this way of participating in culture shapes a specific normative pattern, the crucial element of which consists in diverse cultural activities: events at which it is “good to be seen”: from entertainment to “high” culture. For an individual, participation in culture as a form of fulfilling a certain social role, and so it becomes means of reaching their aspirations and an attribute through which these aspirations are manifested and which at the same time communicates the identity and social position.

### 5.3. SWITCHING BETWEEN TWO WORLDS

*For example, I went to that cabaret night. This is because it was such a nice escape from this everyday life, from these duties. From these worries. Well it was just fun to be there (...) Just to relax a little. On the daily basis, well, there is stress, obligations and so on. And then I switched off and focused on the fun, on laughing (Jarek, group 5)*

Combining the sphere of “everyday duty” with the sphere that accommodates cultural activity also takes the form of a more or less smooth transition from one to the other. In fact, according to the respondents’ statements, it is possible to distinguish two approaches which differ mainly in the frequency of this transition. Nevertheless, this difference is merely a manifestation of a number of deeper determinants, essentially rooted in social characteristics of persons who represent these modes of participation in culture.

According to the first approach, participation in culture is a festive celebration of the reward that free time becomes. Participation in culture becomes a ritual to emphasize the significance (value) of success understood as ability to manage the sphere of everyday life. It serves as a distinction separating these two spheres. As a way of spending free time, it gives the latter a special, “festive” and refined character. Thus, the persons who represent this way of participating in culture understand it as a specific combination of the sacred (with an important role of cultural institutions) and a reward. The ritual transition from the sphere of daily obligations to the sphere of free time filled with culture takes place both in the symbolic aspect: detachment from ordinary practices, daily life-related activities (such as work, family) and replacing them with something special, unique, not belonging to current affairs; as well as the physical aspect: entering the “temple” of culture, a place (institution) in which it is made available.

Considering participation in institutionalised forms of culture as a specific form of a leave from everyday life defines the specificity and context of this kind of activity. Being an expression of special, distinctive and festive forms of leisure time, it takes the form of a “holiday” celebration. In such circumstances, activities such as sightseeing, going to the theatre or a museum, attending a concert or a festival are treated as a form of spending time typical of the social role of the tourist. Thus, participation in culture takes place primarily during vacations (holiday) and usually outside the place of residence. The perception of the European Capital of Culture as an event for visitors (more about this later in this paper) is also a consequence of perceiving urban culture as something addressed to “tourists”.

The transition between the sphere of daily life and the sphere of entertainment manifests itself differently in the situation where culture is treated primarily as a reservoir of experiences or a catalyst for bonding processes. With such an approach to culture, participation in it is usually a relatively common and fairly regularly repeated practice. The transition between aforementioned spheres takes place quite smoothly. Its aim is not to ennoble or emphasize the importance of free time, but a temporal detachment from everyday life. The aim of participating in culture is not so much an aesthetic or intellectual experience but achievement of satisfaction that results from spending time with others, having fun etc., and provides notions different from those inscribed in the sphere of everyday life, such as a sense of freedom, relaxation and time consumption.

In this approach, encountering culture is not a programmed matter. It is quite spontaneous in terms of the place / time / circumstances of the transition discussed here, as well as selection from what urban culture has to offer. It often takes the form of “going with the flow” of city life. One can join and leave this wave at any moment. The respondents who made such use of urban culture were aware that there is - in some way parallel to their private life - a vibrant cultural life and it is only up to the individuals when and how they get involved. What is important, they had quite a low orientation in the city’s cultural offer. In fact, this knowledge is unnecessary for them since their participation in culture does not focus on a cultural event itself. The content of the interviews indicated that the participants in culture according to the scheme discussed here were not able to recall any details about the event that they attended, including for example the name of the artist who played the concert they went to. The very selection of events is also quite accidental: there is no greater (or at least crucial, major) significance of what kind of event it is, what artistic values it offers, whether it is film in the cinema, a concert, or a stand up in a pub. It is crucial that this offer appears in due time and place - to be an opportunity to detach from the world of everyday duties.

#### 5.4. FRYING SAUSAGES

*You just have to like it, jazz for example, you can go and see, someone will play something, but generally you just go to some restaurant, you go to the pub to sit down or just go, no? For example, jazz, when there’s a concert on the New Year’s Eve, some stars come there, then why not, right? It is nice to listen, because you know this music, but when it’s like, jazz, then not so much. (Małgorzata, group 7)*

Another way of participating in culture revealed in the study is experiencing culture “by chance”.

However, it takes place in different circumstances than the above mentioned “switching”.

First of all, presenting the characteristics of this syndrome of participation in culture, it is important to point out that culture

is not a value in itself here, it is not given any specific meaning or significance. In fact, it remains unimportant, though not transparent. Respondents who exhibited this manner of participation in culture were generally uninterested in culture or participation in it, believing that the offer of institutionalised urban culture was not for them. They do not see this as a problem, as they do not aspire to participate in culture. However, this is not the case of self-exclusion syndrome. It is true that in the presented approach involves a separation of the private sphere, which is the domain of social functioning, but it is not explicitly separated as the opposite of the public sphere. Both these spheres coexist. According to the interviews, persons who participate in culture following the “by the way” scheme, develop their own fields of social activities within the public sphere, yet they have very little to do (and certainly do not deliberately address) with symbolic culture. It is rather about having a beer in a pub or an open-air event where beer and fried sausages are served. In this approach, value consists in a form of relaxation in the company of others, the culture itself (in the meaning that it is given) is treated as something “in the background”, an accompanying element. In this sense, experiencing (artistic) culture is reduced to the fact that it is encountered in an incidental way.

Participation in culture is habitual to a very low degree. If such habits exist, they are related to participation in mass popular folk events, especially those that already have their history and are therefore known and recognised, such as the Wrocław Christmas Fair, the New Year’s Eve in Rynek or the Europe on the Fork Festival.

This manner of participation consists of several characteristic elements. First of all, it refers only to popular culture, which does not require any competences. It must be easy to comprehend, its experience cannot require practically any effort. Participation in it should not be engaging, and, above all, must not interfere with rest, recreation based on a rather inactive way of spending leisure time.

Secondly, as mentioned earlier, the cyclical nature of certain events present in the urban cultural offer creates circumstances that facilitate the formation and activation of social, informal, ritualised interactions. Moreover, this model of participation in culture employs the principle of engineer Mamoń: “I like melodies I have already heard.” Thus, the acceptable cultural content is something already familiar (also because it is easier in reception). What is unknown is seen as unattractive and unworthy of attention.

## 5.5. COLLECTING IMPRESSIONS

*I was, in March, there was that exhibition (...) of Eduardo Chillida, (...) a friend with a degree in art history says: listen, let's go there, because I haven't seen anything like that in my life and neither have you, and in fact I did not (...) now, why did she say that I'd never experienced anything like that? Because when you to the museum, there is silence, right, it is simply quiet and you just focus on what you see, and here there is silence, there is some sculpture, because he mainly carved in alabaster, iron, and then there is this music too. A bit like double stimuli (Danuta, group 3)*

The catalogue of ways of participating in culture that emerged in the study could be closed by the approach here referred to as “collecting Impressions”. Related to a very frequent and active use of urban cultural offer, it is characteristic of, above all, persons with high cultural competences and developed taste but also open to novelty.

In this model of participation in culture, the public and private spheres permeate. For those who represent the pattern of experiencing culture discussed here, public sphere is the main domain of social activity. The world of culture is not a separate, clearly outlined field - it is embedded in everyday life. Participation in culture appears as a “normal”, natural - albeit different from others (such as work) - immanent and essential element of life. In “collecting impressions”, culture is regarded primarily as a reservoir of sensations. Using it requires a good knowledge of the urban cultural offer - insight into its richness and diversity. The key ability here consists in connecting the elements of this offer with expected forms of experience. Thus “going to the cinema” is treated in a different way than attending the opera. Moreover, not only does this differentiation concern cultural content and place, but also the context in which the act of participation occurs. In this sense, a visit to a museum during the popular “night of museums” is something different from a private view or an “ordinary” visit to an exhibition. Therefore, the selection of elements

from what urban culture has to offer depends on the recognition of the offer and expected effect, which depend on individual tastes and habits. It should be emphasized that the recognition of a city offer requires its constant monitoring. This calls for sophisticated mechanisms of information acquisition, established communication channels either within social circles or on the internet. The ability to acquire information about urban culture is - apart from the ability to understand and experience cultural values, critically analyse sensations and choose the offer of good quality and adequate to the expectations - the competence typical of the described syndrome of participation in culture.

It is worth to pay attention to one more skill. Respondents whose cultural activity was oriented towards “collecting impressions”, recognised objective factors that may impede access to culture, such as limited finances, family responsibilities, as well as difficulties in finding information about cultural offerings. However, in contrast to self-exclusion, these are not barriers excluding from culture, but rather pose a challenge to overcome. The ability to deal with such problems results primarily from a good insight in the functioning of the cultural world and high social capital. Therefore, instead of resigning from participation in urban culture, they are more likely to look for free events, discounts or cheaper tickets sometimes obtained using their informal connections, events that can be attended with children or the possibility of organising childcare for the duration of a given artistic event, etc.

From the point of view of an individual, participation in culture based on collecting impressions has a number of important functions: it fosters the development of personality, creates and maintains social bonds, serves as entertainment and broadens cognitive horizons, etc. It should be emphasized at the same time that participation in culture is usually caused by highly-interiorised (although of course socially-shaped) needs. Benefits from participation in culture are treated selectively, while cultural practices for their achievement are related to the expected profit. Thus, satisfying the needs of entertainment is usually not associated either with deeper aesthetic experiences or spiritual and intellectual excitement. The development associated with expanding cognitive horizons, stimulating intellectual reflection and experiencing aesthetic experiences are provided by other activities. Interestingly, both acts of participation in culture and accumulated experiences do not necessarily have to be manifested or socially communicated, often remaining intimate and not discussed with others.

## 6. Perception of the ECoC

In this part of each interview, addressing the European Capital of Culture in Wrocław, the topic of the discussion was, among other things, the expectations for the ECoC, related experience, perceived recipients and beneficiaries and the assessments of what was happening in the city within the framework of the ECoC. The responses revealed a number of major narratives / perspectives, from which the interviewees perceived that event. These perspectives help explain what the European Capital of Culture meant to the residents of Wrocław.

### 6.1. WROCLAW'S SUCCESS

*The point is that this ECoC brings some prestige, it is one of such events. For example, we will get a better chance when competing for events in the future, whatever, sports events or others, i don't know, some music stars will be more willing to come to us because we have conditions for it. (...) Some artists did not want to come to us, why would they, to the middle of nowhere. And now we are actually proving that it is not like that here. (Kasia, group 8)*

Granting Wrocław the title of the European Capital of Culture was considered as a recognition of the success of the city (and its authorities). The European Capital of Culture was a distinction which had to be earned through hard work. In this context, the ECoC crowned the process of changes that had been taking place in Wrocław and the manifested appreciation of the status that the city had achieved. The title of the European Capital of Culture was considered as legitimation of Wrocław as a lively place with rich cultural life comparable to European metropolises, acknowledged by external (though not clearly specified) bodies.

Above all, in the eyes of the respondents, this award grants prestige to the city. This is supposed to be a result of splendour associated with the Capital of Culture that Wrocław is to get its share of. In this context, the organisation of the ECoC is regarded as a symbolic sealing of the city's promotion to the "first league" of European cities. Therefore, such success is not only a distinction, but also allows to communicate the status of the city as one of the important places on a map of Europe that can easily compete with others. The comments of the respondents also touch upon a financial aspect: granting Wrocław the right to organise the ECoC was linked to the European Union assigning some funds that made the organisation of this event possible.

An important element of such a perspective is that the title of the ECoC was won in a competition. It was a laurel that, together with victory, brought splendour to the city. Interestingly - respondents often did not realize what the competition consisted in or who took part in it. Some respondents indicated other Polish cities that applied for the organisation of the ECoC, while at times the victory was treated as if Wrocław was selected from among all European cities.

## 6.2. CITY MARKETING

*The idea of the event has been created so that European cities could promote themselves, spend money on it. This is just like Euro 2012, just now we have the capital of culture. This is a chance for the city to promote itself: "what a wonderful city we are because we are the European Capital of Culture" (Bogusław, group 1)*

Another perspective that needs to be mentioned consists in perceiving the ECoC as a tool for promotion and development of the city. According to this vision, the European Capital of Culture is primarily a chance to promote Wrocław internationally. In the respondents' opinion, thanks to the title of the European Capital of Culture, numerous cultural events were organized in the city, which, on the one hand, presented Wrocław in Polish and international media and, on the other, attracted many tourists. As a result, the interest in Wrocław, primarily as an attractive tourist destination, was to grow.

This, in turn was to improve the city's economic situation. The influx of tourists on the occasion of the ECoC would contribute to the increase in traffic and income from tourism, catering and entertainment sectors and subsequently to the economic prosperity of Wrocław as well as, in the longer perspective, to new investments serving the city and its residents.

This perspective also consists of two other, slightly different elements. Firstly: promotion of Wrocław by the ECoC does not only serve the development of tourism. Increasing the recognition of the city in the international arena is to raise interest in the city on the part of investors and business partners. There is a reminiscence of Wrocław's efforts to organise the EXPO exhibition and the investment of LG group, which was recognised as its consequence.

Secondly, respondents emphasized that the ECoC is a factor which gives rise to new investments in the city. According to the interviewees, the organisation of the event forced the city to prepare to it properly, for example by putting the elements of public space in order (in order to make the city look good in the eyes of the visitors) and, above all, by the establishment of the National Forum Of Music, considered by the residents as Wrocław's pride and showpiece.

## 6.3. CULTURE SHOP FRONT

*Everybody has the opportunity to get something out of this whole event - one more, the other less, but we have all seen something somewhere, and I think so many residents of Wrocław have seen something: either by chance, being somewhere in the city, or you could simply choose something from this repertoire. (Piotr, group 6)*

In another sense, the ECoC appears as a kind of a shop front, where you can see and pick a cultural offer. The organisation of the European Capital of Culture - in opinion of the respondents - created an opportunity to get acquainted with various cultural values, as well as to "see the stars". Filling the city with activities, initiatives and cultural events organised within the framework of the ECoC made it possible to take advantage of this offer and thus draw on various experiences and impressions.

In such an approach, the ECoC is something passive, devoid of an active impact on potential audiences, mainly on the residents,

but also tourists. Presentation of the cultural offer remains passive and - in a sense - unimposing. It is located somehow “next to” the daily routine, but that does not make it absent. The European Capital of Culture was more or less noticeable, or at least its existence was acknowledged, although it often happened that the respondents were not able to give any specific details about the project. It was mainly the case of the people who did not get involved in the cultural life of the city. In this sense, the ECoC project did not have a direct influence on participation in culture. Making use of the offer made available by the European Capital of Culture was left in the hands of the interested persons. The approach discussed here assumed that they themselves should become curious about the contents of the shop front and chose what they find interesting. The ECoC merely creates opportunities for participation in culture, acting as an intermediary providing the cultural offer to its recipients. The role of the European Capital of Culture is thus reduced to the facilitating factor, with helps overcome the barrier of accessibility, especially spatial one. What is important, in such an approach to the ECoC its success is accounted exclusively in terms of richness of the offer that it provides, and not, for example, its quality, the impact of the ECoC on cultural life, increased participation in culture, etc.

#### 6.4. MEETING THE STARS

*On Facebook, a friend was boasting about the pictures with all these actors (...) with Brosnan (...) All of these top guys, he was boasting because he was there, he got in, was able to take pictures, so he was very happy. (Artur. group 10)*

The European Capital of Culture was also understood as a form of a special, great artistic undertaking - a year-long mega festival. The magnitude and importance of this event resulted not only from the duration or intensity of the events taking place under the aegis of the ECOC but also their scale. This scale was defined primarily by the “stars” and spectacularity of events recognised by the respondents. This spectacularity was assessed in terms of popularity of events, expressed in the combination of own preferences and tastes, recognition of artists and media coverage. It should be emphasized that in the statements of respondents who presented such a way of understanding the ECoC, opinions expressing approval for the presence of particular cultural celebrities and significant events clashed with claims that spectacular events and desirable artists that they had expected to see were missing.

The consequence of understanding the ECoC as a mega-festival, a certain revision of important personas of contemporary culture (and even a sort of Cultural World Cup) - that is, an event that would be a great spectacle of celebrities, resulted in the whole project being perceived from the perspective of huge events that were supposed to (or could) take place during the European Capital of Culture in Wrocław. Significantly, the perception of the ECoC was limited to this type of events and the project was identified with them. Thus, the evaluation of the ECoC boiled down to assessing whether the programme of events was full of events spectacular enough.

#### 6.5. COLLECTIVE DUTY

*Well, I am not a native resident of Wrocław, because I came here 35 years ago, but everything connected with Wrocław is me because I live here. Because I live here. So whatever happens, I somewhat am interested in it, maybe not from A to Z, but still, wherever I go, I praise Wrocław, I talk about new places or what is worth seeing for example. (Grażyna, group 4)*

Particularly noteworthy is the perspective in which the European Capital of Culture plays an important role in integrating the residents of Wrocław and shaping their collective identity. The respondents’ statements reveal the existence of a specific feedback between the city and its residents.

The driving force for this mechanism is the respondents taking on the role of the “citizens of the city”: conscious members of the community of residents, which for them constitutes an important group of normative reference. Seeking their collective identities, they feel responsible for their place of residence, and thus are inclined to engage in any activity they perceive as serving

its interest. They share the belief that such engagement stimulates urban life, activates local potential as a source of urban development, and thus contributes to improving the quality of life.

The European Capital of Culture is also perceived in this context: as an event important to the city, and therefore also to its residents. Thus, the ECoC becomes a platform for social engagement that shapes local identity. Perceiving this event as belonging to city, the “citizens of the city” take on the role of its host. They feel responsible for the ECoC’s success (as the city’s success), trying to express their support for the project in various ways. At the level of their social microcosms, they invite guests (family, friends and acquaintances from other places), praising the events taking place in Wrocław. They manifest “spiritual” (and political, expressed in legitimising the activities of the municipal authorities) support for the idea of the project, but also feel obliged to actively participate in the events organized as part of the ECoC, especially those that they consider particularly important. This way, they become members of the city audience. This makes them feel proud of being Wrocław’s residents (boasting that they are “from Wrocław”) and identify with the success of the city, recognising that they partly contributed to it. This allows them to shine with its reflected light, derive from the prestige resulting from organisation of such an important event as the European Capital of Culture. They do this, however, not only for their own benefits, but also (or perhaps primarily) for the community in general or the “city” they feel part of. Therefore, this way of approaching the ECoC and personal involvement allows, first of all, to fulfil the citizen’s duty towards Wrocław, secondly: to revalue and express their identity as residents of Wrocław (which they find attractive); and thirdly: to take advantage of the cultural offer. It should be emphasized once again that this is being done with the sense of acting for the benefit of the city.

## 6.6. POLITICAL WHIM

*(Krzysztof, group 9) I still see one related fundamental problem, what we are talking about is that the city should be for the people. The communication system is a tragedy, It’s been like that for 20 years.*

*(Monika, group 9) It is a broad subject, so perhaps let’s not talk about it.*

*(Krzysztof): No, it is not a broad subject (...) I am just surprised that nothing has been done about it for many years, although there is money and they keep coming.*

*(Monika): Because it is invested in a meeting place for tourists. (Krzysztof): Good that not for naturists.*

The way of perceiving the European Capital of Culture presented here has the same origin as in the case described above. The main difference consists in the fact that according to the approach to the ECoC as a “collective duty”, the event was “ours” (people representing this approach), while when considering it as a “political toy” it belongs to “them” - the politicians. The foundation of this perspective is based on the perceived opposition between life, interests and expectations of the residents and the life of the “city”. The city’s policy - for those expressing the perception of the ECoC described here - is focused on “city” issues that are detached from everyday-life problems of “ordinary” residents. The European Capital of Culture is perceived as a manifestation and embodiment of this policy. What is important, for the respondents, the ECoC became a tool for criticism of this policy - an element that can channel negative narratives around what is happening in the city’s public life.

The ECoC Wrocław 2016 project, in the perspective presented here, is considered alien to the residents. The residents have their own problems related to living in the city and expect the authorities to engage in solving them. The European Capital of Culture does not serve such purpose. It is regarded as a tool of self-promotion of the authorities, a caprice that favours, at most, the interests of the elites. What is more: it generates unnecessary, in the opinion of the critics, expenses, which makes issues they consider as more important left unresolved.

This perspective also includes an opinion that the ECoC is prepared with the exclusion (somewhat above the heads) of the residents. This can be explained with a desire for a partner, subjective treatment of “common” Wrocław residents. They would be inclined to change their opinions on the ECoC and accept it if it was consulted with them and implemented according to their expectations and ideas.

## 7. Football Metaphor

The complexity of diverse ways of understanding culture, ways of participating in it and approaches to the European Capital of Culture is reflected in a multiplicity of attitudes towards the project. These attitudes refer to the ways of experiencing the European Capital of Culture and include both a component referring to participation in the events of the ECoC Wrocław 2016 as well as a component referring to orientation and knowledge (the ECoC awareness) and emotional element related to the reception and evaluation of the project.

The attitudes towards the European Capital of Culture project in Wrocław revealed in the study can be characterised using the analogy drawn from the world of sport: describing the attitude towards the ECoC in categories applied in depicting the world of football supporters. What is interesting and worth emphasizing, the interviews with the respondents often included comparisons of the ECoC to the European Football Championships, which took place in Wrocław in 2012.

The “ECoC supporter” syndrome consists of several symptomatic elements. The first one is manifested in the interest in what is happening within the framework of the European Capital of Culture: following the programme, collecting opinions, discussing the ECoC with others, etc. The second one is “keeping fingers crossed” for the success of the event. This is linked to the support and / or criticism of the organisers.

Finally, the element of this attitude is the readiness to participate in the spectacle...

### 7.1. NON-SPECTATORS

*What does the European Capital of Culture mean to me? Well, first and foremost, it is a huge cultural event, but it does not change the fact that I have not become, so to speak, more culture-oriented, no, I have not started to participate in these events. I just know they exist, I know, you can hear about them, but that has not changed much in my life. I still somehow do not participate in this (...) It did not add to my time, so to say. (...) time or willingness to do some things (Monika, group 5)*

The first attitude that can be identified by analysing the empirical material collected in the interviews is expressed by indifference towards the ECoC. This indifference stems from the fact that the European Capital of Culture was “transparent” to the people who present the attitude discussed here. They knew that such an event took place in Wrocław, but it remained beyond the sphere of their direct perception.

Overlooking the European Capital of Culture takes two forms. One of them is the relatively frequent use of the attractions offered by the urban system of consumption, usually including such participation in culture, which can be described as a manifestation of a *cultured individual and switching between two worlds*. Although people who declare such an approach are aware of the city’s cultural offer, they were not able to recognise the events covered by the ECoC program within it. More precisely: they did not know which events were a part of the ECoC programme and which were not. Interestingly, even when participating in some events with the European Capital of Culture logo, they were unaware that the event was included in its programme. In a broader perspective: they thought that cultural life was flourishing in Wrocław and - from their perspective - what was happening within the ECoC, was simply lost in this richness. Suffice it to say that in the first wave of research, in April 2016, the respondents expressed the expectation that the European Capital of Culture in Wrocław would finally start (despite the fact that it had been going on for 3 months already).

A special form of “not noticing” the ECoC similar to the one depicted here is the dissonance between what was observed as the ECoC and what was expected. In other words, the respondents had (sometimes not directly expressed) expectations towards the European Capital of Culture - primarily as something exceptional and spectacular. Meanwhile - from their perspective - nothing like that was happening. The consternation was particularly aroused by the fact that the ECoC programme included events and events that have long been the part of the cultural landscape of the city.. In this sense, the events that take place every year (mainly “flag-ship” Wrocław festivals, such as Jazz nad Odrą, T-Mobile New Horizons or Stage Songs Review) organised in 2016 under the auspices of the European Capital of Culture obscured the sense and clarity of this undertaking in the eyes of the respondents. The second

form of failing to notice the ECoC was slightly different. It characterized primarily the behaviour of those respondents whose way of participation in culture can be described in terms of *self-exclusion or frying sausages*. In such a perspective, the European Capital of Culture, like a club that one does not support, functioned beyond their sphere of experience - somewhere parallel to their lives, which was only encountered incidentally and superficially. In general, this category of people was not interested in the European Capital of Culture: they claimed that it was not for them, that they were not able to afford it, that they were overwhelmed by other issues that prevented them from engaging in this event but also because of their beliefs.

This attitude of separation was expressed not only towards the European Capital of Culture as such, but it also referred to the exclusion from circulation of information on the subject. Respondents did not feel (properly) informed about the European Capital of Culture: in particular, they did not know what was going on within it. Therefore, this was happening beyond the horizon of their experience. In addition, such people generally believed that the ECoC was not intended for them. This is why they were indifferent to the event: they themselves felt no need or motivation to be interested or involved in it in any way.

## 7.2. PICNICS

*(Jolanta, group 4) I do not play the guitar, but I support them [in breaking the Guinness Guitar record], this is my city.*

*20 (Paulina, gr. 4) However, it is then that we can identify ourselves as fans.*

The most common type of sports fan is a so-called “picnic”: someone whose interest in sporting events is limited to more or less regular attendance at specific events (especially those that are universally regarded as exceptionally attractive and important, e.g. matches of the representation or encounters with recognized opponents), focusing on the show itself, feeling the stadium’s atmosphere and enjoying the experience of participating in it. A similar approach can be identified among the participants of the European Capital of Culture. For representatives of such an attitude, the ECoC is the source of sensations but also the plane on which social identity is formed.

Respondents representing the attitude discussed here generally had an overall idea of the European Capital of Culture programme, although it was limited to major, broadly publicised, mass phenomena - those considered to be flagship events. They willingly participated in them or at least declared their interest. By getting caught up in the excitement, they felt that they became part of something significant. They felt they belonged to the audience, which for them constituted a social reference to being a *citizen of the city*.

Their attitude towards the ECoC Wrocław 2016 project was generally positive, at least as long as they considered it a success. They could - as residents of Wrocław - feel proud of it, while simultaneously idealising expected benefits, which in their belief were to follow its implementation. In that point their approach met with the recognition of functions of the ECoC focused on marketing and development, which in turn translated into the legitimacy of the general urban policy and local authorities. That does not mean that they were totally uncritical. They reacted to various kinds of mishaps, errors and shortcomings that they noticed - especially concerning the organisation of individual events and ways of communicating the ECoC programme to the residents. However, such critical opinions only partially disavowed, not undermining the generally positive assessment of the European Capital of Culture. Moreover, they themselves believed (see: *collective duty*) that they should present the ECoC to others in a positive light.

## 7.3. FANS AND ULTRAS

*For me, a true spiritual feast was the concert of David Gilmour who I associate with Pink Floyd, and I love the band. So it was something fantastic for me, especially that once I had the opportunity to go to their concert in Prague. Those were the first, it was really a long time ago, so the first such quadrasonic concerts in the stadium, and the impressions you got - like in a studio. And I still love their songs to this day. I was also invited by my daughter to a concert by Katie Melua with the choir, in winter, but it probably was not associated with the ECoC. There was also*

*a wonderful meeting with, it was in Impart, with this Wrocław-based Portuguese, probably Jose Salvani, [Joao de Sousa] I do not know if I get the name right. A guitarist and a singer, he combined Polish songs with fado, such a cool fado, a bit more animated. Well, so when it comes to such live concerts, there are cool things that I got to participate in, last year and this one. (Elżbieta, group 8)*

Among the attitudes towards the ECoC there is also one that resembles the behaviour of football fans and ultras, that is the most passionate supporters. The category of fanatics of the European Capital of Culture consists of persons who were particularly passionate about the project. Their involvement was manifested in participation in many different, also less popular, niche ECoC events. Hosting the European Capital of Culture in Wrocław was considered a great opportunity, especially for themselves, to collect new, unique impressions. In their opinion, the ECoC was prepared and addressed primarily to the residents of Wrocław, although they themselves - living on their own “island” - did not consider themselves to be a unique category of consumers of culture, differing from the rest of Wrocław’s residents.

They were generally enthusiastic about the very idea of the European Capital of Culture being organised in Wrocław, recognising the multiplicity and variety of benefits associated with it. Not only the personal ones, but also the possibility of general development (improvement) of the quality of cultural life in Wrocław, the emergence of local creative circles, stimulation of the city’s culture, as well as promotion of the city and its growth. However, there was a considerable ambivalence in the evaluation of the ECoC’s implementation. If their own experiences with the ECoC were positive, they tended to glorify the effects of the project. However, if the experiences of the European Capital of Culture had not met their expectations - they expressed disappointment and articulated very critical opinions.

Their criticism did not concern just the mistakes in organisation of individual events (as in the case of picnics), but also on the programme conception itself. It involved statements about not fully used opportunity, which they associated with granting Wrocław the status of the European Capital of Culture.

Those who can be called fans have a very good orientation in the ECoC programme. Controlling the circulation of information about the ECoC on their own, “they had their finger on the pulse”. They were the main participants in more niche events addressed to specific categories of audiences. In fact, only those who can be identified as the ECoC fans show understanding for organising ongoing, already established cultural events under the auspices of the ECoC in 2016.

Respondents showing the attitudes of the ECoC fans considered themselves not merely as hosts, but as an immanent part of the European Capital of Culture. Some of them (who can be called “ultras”) did not stop at passive consumption of cultural content and values provided by the ECoC events. They would often get actively involved in co-creating various events or take on the role of the “ECoC Ambassadors” - persons who promoted the European Capital of Culture in their own circles.

It was, however, impossible to find supporters equivalent to football hooligans: none of the respondents were going to fight for the European Capital of Culture in Wrocław.

## 8. Summary: Social Resonance of the ECoC

*Well, like the Guinness record, like New Horizons - it happens every year, Europe on a fork, these are the events that take place every year. There are some concerts Wrocław every year, so it was really the same, just with this ECC logo. (Jakub, group 8)*

In the third and fourth wave of the research, a quasi-workshop component was introduced to the interview. The respondents were asked to try to summarise the European Capital of Culture project. Collected statements (both written and verbal comments) provided a base for a number of conclusions summarising the perceived benefits and costs of the project.

The European Capital of Culture was widely and unequivocally perceived as an event primarily for tourists. It was thought that both the programme and the way of advertising it were addressed to visitors coming from outside Wrocław. The premise for

formulating such a claim was, for example, the observed discrepancy between expectations (expressed primarily by persons with lower cultural competences) of the festive character of the project and what was found in the programme. The *culture shop front* lacked an offer those respondents would find interesting. For example, according to some of them, no recognised popular music stars - names known to them from radio and television - came to Wrocław.

The programme featured “Wrocław’s” events that the locals know and which were taking place without the patronage of the ECoC. From their perspective, the ECoC became an instrument for “selling” the local cultural offer outside, raising tourists’ interest in the cultural life of the city. The more so because the program did not include various events that they consider as being addressed to them and in which they themselves participate.

Wrocław is also a beneficiary of hosting the European Capital of Culture. In the opinion of its residents, the city has benefited primarily through promotion and increase in tourist traffic. Following cause and effect links appear: a tourist arrives - spends money in restaurants, hotels, shops, cultural institutions - some of it is added to the city budget - it is used to improve the quality of life in the city (investments attracting tourists and making the lives of locals easier). In this context, residents are seen as beneficiaries. They (as a certain collective, not necessarily individually) are to benefit from the ECoC indirectly: investments in the city marketing (because the European Capital of Culture is recognized as such an investment), stimulating tourism and creating infrastructure related to the implementation of the event are to bring profits from which the residents of Wrocław will benefit.

Other perceived profits from hosting the ECoC in Wrocław included enrichment and animation of the city’s cultural offer. Interestingly, this advantage was perceived in two ways. It can be said that the so-called “Matthew effect” occurred here: individuals with higher cultural competences recognised more individual benefits. In other words, for those who already had developed good habits related to the participation in culture, the offer presented within the ECoC provided an opportunity for even more intense and attractive use of culture. On the other hand, those who did not have such habits did not benefit from the richness of events featured in the European Capital of Culture programme. In spite of that, they appreciated the fact that thanks to the ECoC “a lot was happening” in Wrocław and although they were not too interested themselves, others could benefit from it.

The respondents did not have much to say about the negative aspects of the European Capital of Culture. Again, two narratives can be pointed out. Among those who participated in the events of the project, positive sentiments and good experiences prevailed over critical remarks. At the end of the day, they believed that undertaking the organisation of the ECoC was definitely worth it. On the other hand, those for whom the ECoC remained invisible did not quite know what to criticise. It was much easier for them to repeat opinions they heard (primarily the “official” political narrative about the benefits of the European Capital of Culture) and indicate the positive aspects of the project.

Recognised negative aspects of the European Capital of Culture included primarily insufficient information and promotion of events among the residents, various errors and omissions in organisation of individual events and the lack of pop culture celebrities whose presence, according to the respondents, could make the ECoC more attractive. There were also negative voices regarding the limited accessibility of some events, that is limited number of seats and high ticket prices.

Despite some criticism, however, it seems that the balance of the European Capital of Culture Wrocław 2016 is, according to interviewees, positive. In general, they believe that the organisation of this event was worth it, the city was able to meet the challenge for better or worse and Wrocław will be profiting from the European Capital of Culture also in the future.

## 9. Attachment. Participants of Group Interviews

### GROUP 1, 29 MARCH 2016:

**MAGDA:** 28 years old, police officer, unmarried, works and lives in Wrocław

**MIRKA:** 47 years old, works in Wrocław, lives in the suburbs, married, two teenage children. Her hobby is gardening.

**MAJKA:** 39 years old, professionally active, married, two children. Spends her free time sleeping or reading

**MACIEK:** 28 years old, works as a computer scientist, unmarried. In his free time plays the guitar, likes playing computer games and spending time with friends.

**JACEK:** 41 years old, self-employed, married, two children. Claims that he has got no time for a hobby.

**BOGUSŁAW:** 48 years old, self-employed, divorced, one child. Interested in photography.

#### GROUP 2, 31 MARCH 2016:

**MONIKA:** 42 years old, linguist, works as a certified translator, unmarried, an adult daughter. Interested in literature and Russian and French cinema. Likes trips out of town.

**ELŻBIETA:** 60 years old, accountant, married, three children and one grandson. Takes care of her mother. Enjoys cycling and nordic walking.

**JUSTYNA:** 30 years old, works in a pharmaceutical company, in a partnership. In free time enjoys walking, sightseeing and going to the cinema.

**TOMASZ:** 40 years old, chef, divorced, has an adult son and a one-year-old grandson. As he admits himself, he likes sports.

**ADRIAN:** 30 years, freelancer, in a partner relationship. Likes walking, "watching things" and computer games.

**ANDRZEJ:** 56 years old, self-employed, married, two children and a grandchild. Free time devotes to his hobby: militaria and hunting.

#### GROUP 3, 14 APRIL 2016:

**MIROŚLAWA:** 56 years old, works with disabled children and adolescents, married, two children and a grandchild. Her passion is mountains, forests, mushrooms and allotment garden.

**IZABELA:** 34 years old, returns to work after maternity leave, married, one child. Creates educational toys for her rehabilitated son.

**DANUTA:** 65 years old, pensioner, widow, one child, two grandchildren. Her passion is the University of the Third Age at the University of Economics.

**KRZYSZTOF:** 67 years old, pensioner (former freelancer), married. Deals with photography and literature as a hobby.

**PAWEŁ:** 34 years old, bass guitar teacher, married.

**ZBIGNIEW:** 43 years old, married, one child. His hobbies are music and film.

#### GROUP 4, 22 JUNE 2016:

**ARTUR:** 42 years old, professionally active - a trading company in the construction industry, in a partnership, daughter. Interests: music, books, animals, bushcraft and survival.

**DAMIAN:** 24 years old, a third-year student of electrical engineering at Wrocław University of Technology, single, casual work. Interested in football, often attends various concerts.

**PAULINA:** 22 years old, studies dietetics, unmarried. Interested in sport and fashion, likes concerts and cinema.

**IZABELA:** 43 years old, accountant, married, one child. Likes spending her free time actively, especially cycling. Interested in books, cinema, travelling and events in Wrocław.

**GRAŻYNA:** 63 years old, pensioner, adult children, three grandchildren. Collects oil lamps.

**JOLANTA:** 60 years old, works professionally, grandmother of a 13-year-old grandson

#### GROUP 5, 24 JUNE 2016:

**MONIKA:** 28 years old, works in the office, married without children, with disability (on a wheelchair).

**EWELINA:** 35 years old, professionally active, son and partner. Lived in Denmark for four years.

**JAREK:** 46 years old, store manager. In his free time deals with grooming and handling dogs at shows.

**WIESŁAW:** 57 years old, freelancer, married, adult children, guitarist in rock band.

**GRAŻYNA:** 47 years old, pensioner (former office worker with 20 years of experience), two sons, partner.

**BARTOSZ:** 28 years old, professionally active - customer service, married, no children. In his free time: films, music, books, sport.

#### GROUP 6. 19 OCTOBER 2016:

**MARIA:** Working pensioner. Two grown-up children and two grandchildren. Likes reading books and visiting the countryside.

**DOROTA:** Grandmother who devotes a lot of time to her grandson. Professionally active.

**MARIUSZ:** Electronics engineer working in a large corporation. One child. In his spare time likes to go to the mountains, but also watch a film or go to the theatre.

**KATARZYNA:** Accountant at a large company. Mother of an adult and already independent daughter. Devotes her free time to trips in the low mountains, bike, fitness, swimming pool, theatre, cinema.

**ADAM:** Student of architecture. Not only interested in architecture but also music: often goes to concerts. Likes to watch a good film at home.

**PIOTR:** Metrologist working in the automotive industry. Has an adult daughter. His hobby is ornithology.

#### GROUP 7. 20 OCTOBER 2016:

**MALGORZATA:** Runs a small shop. Spends her free time at the allotment garden, sometimes cycles, likes going out of town.

**SEBASTIAN:** Married, 2 children, works as an automation specialist. Spends his free time at the allotment garden or fishing.

**WERONIKA:** Senior high school student. In her spare time likes reading books and going to the cinema.

**BASIA:** Married with three children. Works as a babysitter. In free time: a book, good film.

**JACEK:** Divorced, teacher. Spends most of his free time watching films.

**LUKASZ:** Senior high school student. Interested in sport. Enjoys spending his free time playing computer games.

#### GROUP 8. 23 JANUARY 2017.

**KATARZYNA:** 26 years old, married, without children, higher education degree. Works as a process engineer.

**JAKUB:** bachelor, 21 years old, living in Wrocław for 4 years. He has just earned an undergraduate degree from Wrocław University of Technology. Employed.

**TOMASZ:** bachelor, 37, higher education degree, pensioner. Casual worker at a call centre.

**MONIKA:** 42 years old, married, one child. Works in a shoe shop.

**ELŻBIETA:** age bracket 51-65 years old, lives in Wrocław, employee of the local government.

**MARIUSZ:** age bracket 51-65 years old, lives in Wrocław, with a disability. Employed. A football fan.

#### GROUP 9. 25 JANUARY 2017:

**PIOTR:** married, no children, 26 years old, higher education degree. Works at a petrol station. In his free time likes going to the gym, twice a week plays football with friends. Recently got interested in squash.

**KLAUDIA:** 24 years old, unmarried, a three-year-old daughter. Works, simultaneously studying special education. Primarily interested in music and film.

**WALDEMAR:** 48 years old, married, three adult children. Works at a foreign company. Interested in sports, likes cycling and swimming.

**MONIKA:** 39 years old. Mother of two children. A qualified environmental engineer. A housewife. Likes experimenting in the kitchen. In her free time reaches for books.

**ARTUR:** 50 years old. Two children in college. Runs a Cosmetics Warehouse. In his free time likes swimming, listening to music, watching films, sometimes going to the theatre.

**KRZYSZTOF:** past 50. Married with three children. Runs an IT company. In his free times goes hiking or reads. Also interested in music.

## GROUP 10. 26 JANUARY 2017

**JUSTYNA:** 24 years old, unmarried, no children, lives in Wrocław, works in a bank - serves companies collaborating with the bank. Describes herself as a typical lazy person, who in her free time does nothing, rests. Also likes to go out and have fun with friends.

**ARTUR:** between 36-50 years old, runs his own company, simultaneously working in a computer shop. Spends his free time at home, reading, playing computer games, watching TV.

**OLIWIA:** 37 years old, married, two children. Runs her own business. Due to many professional and domestic responsibilities, does not have much free time.

**BARBARA:** 64 years old. Pensioner, sometimes getting occasional jobs. Also looks after her grandson.

**NIKODEM:** age category 51-65 years old. Adult daughter. Works at Polish Academy of Sciences. Likes active, sporty leisure activities: skiing, sailing, cycling. Interested in history of architecture.



