

Europeanisation of Culture as an Effect of EU Cultural Policy. Wrocław ECOC 2016 Research

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Introduction

This article presents the results of social empirical research¹ conducted in the Polish cities competing for the title of European Capital of Culture (ECOC) 2016. The Polish ECOC competition took place between 2007 and 2012.² Eleven urban conurbations entered, six of which proceeded to the final round. In the end, Wrocław was selected (along with San Sebastián in the Basque Country) as European Capital of Culture. The empirical research focused on the seven cities which, on the basis of a cooperation agreement, founded the so-called Coalition of Cities to support Wrocław's artistic activities in 2016. We worked on the assumption that the competition process for choosing the ECOC in Poland took place in an atmosphere of high levels of engagement from creative communities and urban movements, which were, through the organisation of the competition and then implementation of the ECOC 2016 festival, counting on a fundamental change in the artistic and social space, improved quality of government and governance of the city,³ and the opportunity for modernisation of the cultural infrastructure. The research employed qualitative methods using in-depth narrative interviews, participant observation and analysis of secondary sources, in this case mostly the bids made in the competition by the seven ECOC candidate cities selected for the study: Gdańsk, Katowice, Lublin, Łódź, Poznań, Szczecin and Wrocław. One of the approaches to the research assumed that the dynamic of the analysed changes is fundamentally influenced by a change in the discourse, understood as the rela-

¹ The specific results of the entire research process are presented in the book Paweł Kubicki, Bożena Gierat-Bieroń, Joanna Orzechowska-Waślawska *Efekt ESK. Jak konkurs na Europejską Stolicę Kultury zmienił polskie miasta*, Nomos, Kraków 2017.

² Białystok, Bydgoszcz, Gdańsk, Katowice, Lublin, Łódź, Poznań, Szczecin, Toruń, Warsaw, Wrocław.

³ I follow Michael Foucault in distinguishing between government and governance.

tions in power regulating the forms of speaking and thinking about a specific reality and determining the “regimes of truth”.⁴ A key role in shaping discourse viewed in these terms is played by opinion leaders, who concentrate significant symbolic resources, impose the rules of the game, and decide who will have the privilege of being listened to.⁵ For this reason, opinion leaders from the various cities were interviewed. First and foremost, these were people directly involved in preparing the ECOC competition application, members of the campaign team and those responsible for cultural policies (local government officials, employees of local government culture departments). Second, they were the leaders of local urban movements, local media journalists and bloggers. A total of 60 interviews were held.⁶

The discourse of this article focuses on the question of Europeanisation as a phenomenon explaining the processes of integration in culture. Given the European nature of the ECOC competition, as a form of implementation of European Union cultural policy, it was necessary to verify the impact of the Europeanisation mechanism on the design of a large international festival/event from an artistic and social perspective. Since the interviews were conducted with the people preparing the application forms, during the research the discussion on the ECOC remained within the confines of the plans for the future they nurtured at the time. In keeping with the methodology of political science discourse, in this article I employ the methodological tools for theoretical analysis used in European studies and check the empirical application of the defined concepts. I also verify the influence of the impulses for integration, in terms of the European Capital of Culture programme objectives, on the dynamic of city-forming movements and cultural transformation in Poland. I assume that in Polish culture a certain “change” has taken place, reflecting integration trends, i.e. shaping pro-European mechanisms. This is suggested by the statements of cultural operators and competition entrants in Poland.

In this article, the issues of Europeanisation are divided into three topics: Europeaness, the European dimension, and Europeanisation per se. I defined the concepts, before asking respondents about their use in the concept for the European Capital of Culture for the various candidate cities. “Europeaness” is a noun defining a feature characteristic of something (like Polishness or Germanness, it does not exist of its own accord, but characterises something). Usually, Europeaness refers to the European axiology, meaning the set of values, norms and beliefs (human rights, democracy, tolerance, solidarity) at the basis of the integration process and constituting the foundation of the European socio-political community. The concept of “the European dimension” is a normative and practical one. It is a

⁴ Michael Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith, Pantheon Books, New York 1972.

⁵ Alain Touraine, *Thinking Differently*, trans. D. Macey, Policy Press, New York 2009.

⁶ The quotations given in this chapter were first printed in the book: Paweł Kubicki Bożena Gierat-Bieroń, Joanna Orzechowska-Waślawska (2017), *Efekt ESK...* op. cit.

specific European Commission guideline in the ECOC competition rules, accepted in Decision 1622/2006 EC⁷ This term is also widely used in EU documents on culture. Europeanisation is a term used in European studies on the basis of political science and international relations. In most discursive practices, it refers to the specific details of the processes of integration in its political dimension. There are at least 10 theories of Europeanisation.⁸ In this study I employed the “top-down/bottom-up” conceptions of the German theoreticians Tanja A. Börzel and Thomas Risse.⁹ The Europeanisation mechanism is part of the Europeanising processes observed in broader terms.

Europeanness

Let us examine the main concepts more closely: Europeanness, the European dimension and Europeanisation. The Polish European studies scholar and identity analyst Wiesław Bokajło¹⁰ sees Europeanness as the dichotomous suspension of axiological systems between the Christian and secular tradition of humanism. According to Bokajło (a view shared, for instance, by Cris Shore and Gerard Delanty), the Christian idea of human dignity and freedom as the highest humanistic value was transferred, so to speak, from the sphere of the sacrum to that of public life, i.e. incorporated into the lay legal systems that comprise the secular canon of human rights, democracy, solidarity and freedom. Europeanness is the position of individual and collective identification of Europeans (regardless of nationality or country of origin) with fundamental European laws, as well as conscious use of freedom, perceived as a higher value than local traditions and customs. Europeanness is the right to freedom of speech and of intellectual and creative expression. It is also being accustomed to freedom-based standards of cultural expression, artistic sophistication, the cult of literary virtuosity and artistic genius (but also artistic rebellion and respect for avant-gardes), as well as, in the pragmatism of working life, professional management of culture based as much on protection of elite val-

⁷ Decision No 1622/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 October 2006 establishing a Community action for the European Capital of Culture event for the years 2007 to 2019, OJ L 304, 3.11.2006.

⁸ The best-known are the concepts of the British scholars Helen Wallace and Robert Ladrech, the American political scientist James Caporaso, the Italian British-based professor Claudio Radaelli, and the Norwegian researcher Johan P. Olsen.

⁹ My arguments are based on the publications: Tanja A. Börzel, Thomas Risse, “When Europe hits home: Europeanisation and domestic change”, [in:] *European Integration*, online paper, no. 4 (15), 2000, and the article: Tanja A. Börzel, Thomas Risse, T., “Europeanization: The Domestic Impact of EU Politics”, [in:] *The Sage Handbook of European Union Politics*, eds. Knud Erik Jørgensen, Mark A. Pollack, Ben Rosamond, London 2007, pp. 483-504.

¹⁰ Wiesław Bokajło, “Europa i europejskość: idee i pojęcia”, [in:] Wiesław Bokajło, Anna Pacześniak (eds), *Podstany europeistyki. Podręcznik akademicki*, alfa 2, Wrocław 2009.

ues as on egalitarianism in access to art and culture. Other scholars (Klaić,¹¹ Fisher,¹² Gudrun,¹³ Purchla¹⁴) perceive Europeanness in terms of international or regional cooperation between multiple entities. They define it as the standards of proper governance of cultural institutions, strategising of cultural actions and processes, a high level of urban cultural policies or protection of cultural heritage. Others see in Europeanness the threat of cosmopolitanism and denationalisation as well as mythicisation (Klocek di Biasio, Michalski, Münch¹⁵). Europeanness has also been perceived as inclusive multiculturalism, or as a method of constructing socio-cultural consciousness (Piasecki, Woroniecki¹⁶). Andrzej Chodubski's¹⁷ discussion of contemporary civilisation sees the emergence of global civil society in Europe as lying in European and integrational transformations. The characteristics of European society in the era of globalisation indicate a tendency for Europeans to reflect on Europeanness. This concept assumes the formation of a participatory democracy and a participative approach. It also assumes decentralisation and deconcentration, resulting in the empowerment of society and crystallisation of a sense of autonomy towards the central structures. Modern European societies are eschewing a philosophy of "rule" in favour of harmonious and horizontal co-existence, searching for alternative, non-traditional organisational structures without hierarchies and authority. The pluralist co-existing societies are open to various systems of values and demonstrate understanding towards immigration as a phenomenon of civilisation. These attributes of social change are often called the essence of Europeanness.

¹¹ Dragan Klaić, „Mobilność wyobraźni. Międzynarodowa współpraca kulturalna. Przewodnik”. Fundacja nowej Kultury Bęc Zmiana, Narodowy Instytut Audiowizualny, Warszawa 2011.

¹² Rod Fisher, (ed.), *Art Networking in Europe*, The Arts Council of England, London 1997

¹³ Pehn Gudrun, *Networking Culture. The Role of European Cultural Networks*. Council of Europe, Strasbourg 1999.

¹⁴ Jacek Purchla, Magda Vášáryová. (eds), *Modele mecenatu państwa wobec integracji europejskiej*, MCK, Kraków 2008; Jacek Purchla, *Dziejewo a transformacja*, MCK, Kraków 2005.

¹⁵ Beata Klocek di Biasio, Bogdan Michalski, Felix Münch, (eds), *What Europeanness Means Today? European Identity and Its Multicultural, Economic, and Social Dimensions*, Wyd. Adam Marszałek, Toruń 2015.

¹⁶ Ryszard Piasecki, Jan Woroniecki, "Europeanness: A Path to Unity Within The European Union", [in:] *Comparative Economic Research*, Vol. 19/1, 2016, pp. 45-63.

¹⁷ Andrzej Chodubski, "Wartości cywilizacji współczesnej a unifikacja i dezintegracja Europy", [in:], Barbara Fijałkowska, Arkadiusz Żukowski (eds), *Unifikacja i różnicowanie się współczesnej Europy*, Elipsa, Warszawa 2002.

The European Dimension

As we have seen, the second research problem, the European dimension, is justified expressly in Decision 1622/2006/EC,¹⁸ which specifies the regulations framework of the European Capital of Culture programme. In article 4 point 1 of the Decision, the European Commission introduced the criteria which candidate cities were required to fulfil in the ECOC programme. Below is the definition of these criteria:

As regards “the European Dimension”, the programme shall:

- (a) foster cooperation between cultural operators, artists and cities from the relevant Member States and other Member States in any cultural sector;
- (b) highlight the richness of cultural diversity in Europe;
- (c) bring the common aspects of European cultures to the fore.¹⁹

From the point of view of the unification processes, therefore, the ECOC was supposed to generate international cooperation between numerous decision-making levels of cities, between artists and artistic institutions, and in this way to contribute to the creation of lasting partnerships and institutional relationships in Europe. It was meant to forge the conditions for implementation of the integrational paradigm of “unity in diversity”. In keeping with the European cohesion policy, the idea of the ECOC programme was to ensure lasting and sustainable development of European cities and regions, underscoring active, engaged citizenship. As the European Commission declared the year 2007 the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue,²⁰ the idea of “dialogue” also became a permanent element in ECOC programmes. The notion of “unity in diversity” was gradually expanded to include the issues of tolerance and respect for difference, preventing discrimination and supporting European solidarity. The strategic EU document *European Agenda for Culture*, accepted by the Council in 2007,²¹ confirmed the actual change in the paradigm of the EU cultural policy from “unity in diversity” to protection of “cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue”. As Dorota Jurkiewicz-Eckert notes, the stress was on the idea of “increasing accessibility to various cultural and linguistic forms of expression, as well as promoting intercultural dialogue contributing to the formation of the European identity, European citizenship and social

¹⁸ Decision No 1622/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 October 2006 establishing a Community action for the European Capital of Culture event for the years 2007 to 2019, OJ L 304, 3.11.2006.

¹⁹ Decision No. 1622/2006/WE, op. cit., p. 3.

²⁰ Decision No. 1983/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 concerning the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue (2008), OJ L 412 of 30.12.2006.

²¹ European Commission, Communication on a European agenda for culture in a globalizing world, Brussels, 10.05.2007, COM (2007), 242 final and Resolution of the Council of the 16 November 2007 on a European Agenda for Culture, Brussels, OJ C 287/01, 29.11.2007.

cohesion”.²² All the aforementioned characteristics of the “European dimension” were amendments added to the 2006 Decision applying to subsequent ECOC cities.

Europeanisation

As I mentioned, Europeanisation is a new research category in political science and European studies, of which it is regarded as a subdiscipline. It is not a European studies theory, but rather a method for explaining the processes of integration. To do this, Europeanisation makes use of methods from other fields: it employs international relations theories, classical European integration theories, communications theory, functionalism, neo-functionalism, realism, liberalism, and universal theories of the social sciences (including new institutionalism). It also calls upon political science (democracy theory, legitimisation of power, political systems). Political scientists and European studies specialists agree that Europeanisation is the process of adaptation of European Union member states to the EU’s *acquis communautaire* requirements, i.e. implementing the Union’s legal and political production at domestic level. Europeanisation, they stress, is not a synonym of communitisation. They also consider it to be a process, rather than a state, and a non-linear and non-uniform one. Scholars usually point to its two tracks, something that was particularly highlighted by the German researchers Tanja A. Börzel and Thomas Risse in their 2000 article “When Europe Hits Home: Europeanisation and Domestic Change”. The authors analysed these two “pathways” as a top-down process, when supranational institutions influence nation-states, which open themselves up to this influence, and a bottom-up one, taking place through transfer of competences from national to supranational level. Following this line of thought, Europeanisation allows the nation-state’s institutions to be open to the influences of international (supranational) institutions, thus permitting the adoption of transfer of European rules, laws and standards from domestic to European level. On the other hand, Europeanisation means creation of international laws on the basis of the legal heritage of sovereign countries. Which of these levels is dominant usually depends on the way in which a given policy is shaped and framed. At times, the dual tracks are distributed evenly. In most cases, however, Europeanisation denotes a process of adaptation of national laws to the supranational solutions. One can say that top-down Europeanisation has a formal dimension, while bottom-up Europeanisation is less formal. There is also horizontal Europeanisation – cross-loading, which takes place when a transfer of procedures occurs resulting from mutual communication and exchange.

²² Dorota Jurkiewicz-Eckert, “Od Traktatu o Unii Europejskiej do Europejskiej Agendy dla Kultury – narodzony i rozwój polityki kulturalnej UE”, [in:] *Studia Europejskie*, no. 1 (73), 2015, p. 76.

The most classical definitions of Europeanisation are represented by the reflections of the scholars Helen Wallace and Robert Ladrech, as well as the political scientist James Caporaso and the Claudio Radaelli. Wallace,²³ one of the first to notice the possibility of integration processes influencing domestic inter-institutional relations, underlined how this influence could vary depending on the given country's legal and political traditions. Research on Europeanisation was popularised by Ladrech, who in 1994 argued²⁴ that the phenomenon of Europeanisation in integration is "an incremental process reorienting the direction and shape of politics to the degree that EC political and economic dynamics become part of the organizational logic of national politics and policy-making".²⁵ In Ladrech's later works, he particularly stressed the "national adaptation" in integration processes. This meant that during adoption of the legal community guidelines, a reorientation of the content of domestic policies took place, subsequently causing the actions taking place at international or supranational level to become a natural component of the member state's internal policies. Caporaso²⁶ produced a model of the mechanism of Europeanisation, much cited in the subject literature, based on the phenomenon of a feedback loop. Rafał Riedel offers a shrewd interpretation of this phenomenon and Caporaso's model of Europeanisation:

This led researchers of Europeanisation to adopt a definition – now regarded as classic – through which we can see Europeanisation as the continuing process of European integration, exerting a kind of pressure on the entities of the integration (member states, their citizens, institutions), which is then subject to mediation from domestic factors and actors, before bringing concrete results in the form of changes in domestic policy. These results (as well as the mediation phase), via the mechanism of the feedback loop, also have an effect on the integration process.²⁷

Riedel illustrates the process as follows: integration – mediation (feedback loops) – result. According to Caporaso, therefore, the essence of Europeanisation is a response to the pressure exerted by supranational forces on domestic forces and a specific domestic change resulting from this pressure, but created via mediation. The change provoked by the mediation influences integration through feedback loops. One might say, somewhat tautologically, that the change "changes" the process of integration. Also important is the fact that the process assumes the activeness (and not passiveness) of the entity on which pressure exerted. Its inclu-

²³ Helen Wallace, "The Impact of the European Communities on national policy-making", [in:] *Government and Opposition*, 1971, no. 4 (6), pp. 520–538.

²⁴ Robert Ladrech, "Europeanisation of domestic politics and institutions: the case of France", [in:], *Journal of Common Market Studies*, no. 32(1), 1994, pp. 69–88.

²⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 69.

²⁶ James Caporaso, "Three words of regional integration theory", [in:] Paolo Graziano, Maarten P. Vink, (eds), *Europeanisation. New Research Agendas*, London 2007, pp. 23–34.

²⁷ Rafał Riedel, "Europeizacja polityk publicznych", [in:] *Wrocławskie Studia Politolologiczne* 18/2015, p. 58.

sion in the process of Europeanisation occurs through a multi-level mediation (Caporaso's feedback loop), meaning negotiation, discussion, and debate.²⁸ In his article "Europeanisation in Public Policy",²⁹ Radaelli mentions four ways in which a member state adapts to the processes of integration. These are: 1) reduction of contestation (a given political area opposes community regulations), 2) inertia (lack of will to adapt, lack of change, torpor, passive resistance); 3) accommodation or absorption (superficial adaptation of structures, entities and the state to the demands of integration), 4) transformation (reshaping of structures, entities and the state at domestic level, profound adaptational change). These four levels create various possibilities of adaptation, which demonstrates that Europeanisation can occur in different ways at various stages. The forms it takes can also vary depending on the type of public policies and time of its application. It may be that in the case of adaptational processes in environmental protection there is a temporary reduction, and then a transformation, while there is a profound direct transformation with regional policy, and accommodation with audiovisual policy.

According to the British researcher Kevin Featherstone,³⁰ the term "Europeanisation" is applied in four separate senses. The first, as with other analysts, is the process of institutional adaptation of EU member states to the obligations resulting from belonging to supranational, European structures, including in the scope of public administration, the work of parliament and political parties, civil society, regional government etc., as well as formal EU regulations. The second area is adaptation of policies and the way of practising politics. The last two areas are characterised by the anthropological-historical dimension. The third one therefore generates questions on cultural identification and the sense of belonging to the right place and time in the historical process. The fourth level of Europeanisation creates the conditions for diffusion of supranational models and cultural norms (including European axiology, human rights, and democratic values). A variant to the definition of Europeanisation was introduced by Scandinavian researchers, especially Johan P. Olsen in his famous essay "Many Faces of Europeanisation" (2002).³¹ Olsen identifies five levels of Europeanisation, the most important of which is created as a result of "Central [top-down] penetration of national systems of governance".³² The others are changes generated under the influence of outside influences (the EU), development of institutions at European level and the result-

²⁸ James Caporaso also repeated this model of Europeanisation in the book: Maria Green Cowles, James Caporaso, Thomas Risse, (eds), *Transforming Europe. Europeanisation and Domestic Change*, Cornell University Press 2001.

²⁹ Claudio Radaelli, "The Europeanization of Public Policy" [in:] Kevin Featherstone and Claudio Radaelli, (eds.), *The Politics of Europeanization*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003, pp. 27–56.

³⁰ Kevin Featherstone and Claudio Radaelli (eds), *The Politics of Europeanisation*, Oxford University Press, 2003.

³¹ Johan P. Olsen, "Many faces of Europeanisation", [in:] *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 2002, no. 40 (5), Arena, University of Oslo, pp. 921–952.

³² *Ibidem*, p. 923.

ant increasing capacity of the EU to govern; as well as export of the logic of integration within the EU and beyond its borders.

Let us pause for a moment to sum up. In my opinion, the main dimension of the concept of Europeanisation is political (related to integration), thus reducing the discourse on values or norms, to which culture is close. In a sense, it is an excluding concept, because, as Marta Lackowska-Madurowicz rightly observes,³³ the discourse on values “does not imply confining the concept to EU structures”. It sets broader horizons. From this point of view, it becomes troublesome to reflect on culture in the context of Europeanisation.

Results of empirical research regarding the concepts of Europeanness, the European Dimension, Europeanisation

I will now test how the concepts discussed above – Europeanness, the “European dimension” and Europeanisation – were interpreted by the Polish cultural operators preparing the seven Polish cities (from seven different regions: Lower Silesia, Lublin Region, Łódź Region, Pomerania, Silesia, Greater Poland and Western Pomerania) for the European Capital of Culture 2016 competition. Let us start with the concept of “Europeanness”. In fact, the respondents interpreted this term in an axionormative context. The interpretations pointed to a sense of identification of contemporary Europeans with the continent’s ancient philosophical traditions and belonging to a common cultural space, created by the European historical process on the basis of similar religious and life experiences.

This model originated on the foundations of Ancient Greek philosophy and Platonic thought. The central role in it is played by beauty and good. (WR08)

There is one common cultural and religious element that unites everything. Even for atheists, the Christian religion is a point of reference. (LU07)

Europeanness is the need for a shared cultural consciousness. According to the respondents, combining particular cultural themes constructed a historical story. After the expansion of the European Union in 2004, it became important for Poles to add the Polish narrative to European transformations of awareness.

It was definitely about being present in the consciousness of Europeans, about Wrocław being present in Europe, proposing a fresh narrative. We know that Wrocław’s problems are similar to the problems of Europeans, and we wanted to come out with that fresh message, and we tried to do that. (WR 04)

³³ Marta Lackowska-Madurowicz, „Europeizacja – ramy koncepcyjne dla badań samorządów?” [in:] *Zarządzanie Publiczne*, no. 1 (15), 2011, p. 40.

The respondents stressed their understanding of Europeaness as a process of “joining” different elements: views, convictions, geopolitical perspectives and intuitions:

Even if European countries differ in terms of language, culture and customs, there is no doubt that something exists that enables us to talk about European unity. (WR08)

Europeaness was perceived as a building block of regional values, with the conviction that there is no such thing as Europeaness as an abstract creation. Europeaness is composed of regionality and localness to the same degree as regionality and localness contain in their makeup – in atomistic and immanent terms – Europeaness. Furthermore, the respondents associated Europeaness with diversity as the opposite of unification, which the European Union is frequently accused of tending towards. They regard the local tradition, customs, habits, material and non-material heritage of many European regions (including Polish ones) as indicating diversifying characteristics (which is not to say antagonising) rather than communitising ones.

For me, something that is very local or regional is also an indicator of Europeaness. Silesia has a local culture which it nurtures, which has been strongly rooted in people for centuries. (KA05)

Europeaness is our place in Europe and our answer to how we see ourselves in the cultural landscape of Europe. Silesian tradition, perceived as local and regional, is important in the European context. Actually every culture has its own regional identification. (KA05)

Europeaness is also a synonym for universality. Europeans interpret literary, artistic and musical messages and experiences similarly, creating a universal (cross-border) message of European culture.

Localness becomes universal when there isn't such rigidity. Take [Witold] Gombrowicz, for example, who was Polish through and through, yet also universal, or [Tadeusz] Kantor too. So when the localness is real and has that depth, it's European, because it's original, it's something that is unique. (PO08)

A very interesting idea in the respondents' statements was the perception of Europeaness as a process of shedding inferiority complexes – the organisers of the Lublin ECOC bid accentuated this angle. Especially in this Polish city, lying on the so-called eastern wall, the region with the lowest level of economic development, the need to make a mark on the European map was of prime significance for the future European Capital of Culture 2016.

Europeanness is a process from closing (focus on tradition) to opening (the desire to build a culture based on elements from outside) while maintaining a healthy balance. (LU06)

The respondents also referred to the multiculturalism that was once important for Poles and today slightly forgotten, as meaning Europeanness. For centuries, it was present in Polish literary tradition:

The Book of Henryków is doubly appealing. Firstly, it contains the first sentence in the Polish language, and secondly, it is remarkably emphatic evidence of the multiculturalism of this region in historical terms, yet translates to contemporary times. It is written by a German monk in Latin, and this monk quotes the first Polish sentence, which a Czech spoke to his Polish wife. (WR10)

Europeanness was also perceived as the need for freedom of artistic expression and civil liberty.

The Free City of Poznań [...], to preserve the city's autonomy, I don't want to use the word liberal, because that has its connotations, but freedom from this pressure, from domination of the state. (PO08)

On the other hand, the respondents referred to practices trivialising the concept of "Europeanness" in the ECOC application process itself. These entailed the ECOC organisers' use of "grand" European rhetoric for conducting a mass event.

In the case of the European capital, some were concerned with prestige, and some with the budget, because money comes with it. I don't know whether the people preparing the ECOC heard the word "European", whether they were concentrating on it. (PO05)

The above statement leads us to the second discourse term, the "European dimension". According to the respondents, this European Commission requirement, to which certain elements of the 2016 ECOC programme had to be adapted, de facto resulted in fudging of the term, or in the appearance of megalomaniac ideas on the part of local government officials regarding the ECOC festival, designed for development of the cities' promotional strategies, rather than for a celebration of European culture. The concept was reduced to entertainment and to a commercial festivity.

The project jurors asked what the European dimension of the project will entail, and the cities usually make something up. (WR04)

The "European dimension" of the ECOC was linked to the mechanism of appropriation of the European project for local political benefits. As a side effect of this

pragmatic approach, local government officials went so far as to demonstrate their disregard for the formal requirements of the competition. Cities favoured easy solutions such as staging celebrity events rather than using the title for developing a long-term strategy for city development.

Europeanness is understood in a simple way. We'll do a programme that will attract crowds from Europe. I've observed very many projects like that. [...] They don't actually get into the European awareness at all. Who knows about Wrocław ECOC in Poland? Those who listen to TOK FM or Polish Radio Three, or watch TVP Kultura? (GD06)

One aspect certainly implemented by the cities as part of the “European dimension” was the need for development of collaboration between cultural operators in the city itself, between Polish cities and with partners abroad.

Łódź is returning to the European network where it once was. (ŁÓ06)

The theory of top-down/bottom-up Europeanisation manifested itself clearly in the empirical material. Both the ECOC organisers and the authors of application forms cited their experiences demonstrating the effects of Europeanisation processes. They explained that the first result of the transfer of knowledge and flow of new information was increased cultural competencies of the organisers of future festivals. Overnight, the people working on preparing the ECOC became a team of experts responsible for international artistic ventures, acquiring expertise in managing a large budget. The sudden accumulation of skills was the result of making use of foreign expert help:

We learnt from them sophistication, the philosophy of the project, finances. Suddenly people from Europe arrived who believed in Lublin, showed us how to develop it, how we could work together and what's important in Europe. How to network. (LU08)

The Polish cultural operators took a crash course in enterprise and knowledge of foreign languages. They learnt modern culture management, project accounts, financial reporting for EU institutions and networking:

It was a kind of thinking that we already had cultural managers here, who are already in the international network, it was a new category, it wasn't there before – cultural manager means people with contacts, knowledge of how to get people to come, they obtain funds, have the kind of knowledge that's lacking in directors of cultural institutions, who wait for a specific grant. (ŁÓ06)

In order to implement the new managerial practices in a city's cultural policy, an urban revolution was necessary. And this was what Polish cities underwent as a result of the preparatory processes for the ECOC competition. Many of the re-

spondents referred to a radical change in the relations between the team preparing the application and the local government authorities. In particular, this meant implementation of deliberative and pro-development mechanisms,³⁴ as well as transparent methods of funding and accounting for cultural institutions.

The approach to cultural institutions has changed. They used to be institutions run in very much an authoritarian fashion, without evaluation. [...] It's standard now that there's a competition and new cultural managers and fresh staff have appeared. (ŁÓ07)

A classic example of bottom-up Europeanisation in the context of ECOC 2016 was the process of persuading the Szczecin city local government to mount a bid. This process was initiated by NGOs and activists, without initial enthusiasm from city authorities. With no let-up in social pressure, however, Szczecin did indeed enter the ECOC 2016 competition.

Perhaps it wasn't an unwanted initiative, but a kind of baby abandoned to the City Council. The mayor couldn't oppose the European Capital of Culture, but I don't imagine it was easy for him. The authorities of our city didn't really have any idea what to do with it. It limped along. (SZ05)

In Katowice, local government officials agreed to conduct the ECOC competition thanks to the work of grassroots movements, city initiatives and artists, who also attempted to persuade officials and the mayor of the values of the European Capital of Culture and its important role in the process of integration of residents and cultural promotion of the city.

[...] there was a complete blockade from the city council but after a lot of discussions we managed to get a lot done. We went through a process from simple activities, aesthetic ones, to harder, critical ones, for example the officials not being worried about a mural being produced by Łukasz Surowiec that would be very critical of the situation with the miners' strikes that were happening, and lots of that kind of activities. So definitely the officials learnt something, and also the mayor, who, to be blunt, was seen as a kind of chief who knows best about everything, had to be open to Marek Zieliński's vision, and it's great that Marek was fully independent then. (KA03)

³⁴ The transformation of the administrative instruments for city policies is described in the publications of Jerzy Hausner and Anna Kerwińska, e.g. in the book *Kultura i rozwój*, NCK, Warszawa 2013. Also important in this context is Stanisław Szultka and Piotr Zbieranek's book *Kultura – polityka – rozwój. O kulturze jako „dźwigni” rozwoju społecznego polskich metropolii i regionów*, Gdańsk, Instytut Badań nad Gospodarką Rynkową, Gdańsk 2012.

As a result of the preparations for the ECOC competition and implementation of Europeanisation mechanisms, the respondents noticed a marked improvement in the city's information policy, internationalisation of cultural contacts and modifications to its image:

Materials in English appeared in galleries, options for foreign tourists, international projects and residencies. (ŁÓ07)

Most festivals and events already have a European character. Events used to be called "nationwide" ... I'm not aware of any nationwide event in Łódź – they're all international and European. (ŁÓ07)

In trying to identify the Europeanisation mechanism, the respondents expounded a futuristic vision of the future of cities. To explain the idea of this phenomenon I call upon Hristova, Dragicević-Sesić and Duxbury's concept of "Europolis".³⁵ I had the distinct impression that the respondents speaking about the Polish urban centres of the future had a certain idealised European metropolis (or "Europolis") in mind. This ideal denoted a dynamic, modern city largely governed by social organisations. The city in question is open, tolerant, and – especially importantly – developing in a sustainable fashion, pro-environment and pro-social.

Katowice will become a European city, meaning that it will be sexy to go into town, and not drive around it in a car, that Katowice's pro-car policy will come to an end. It's awful what they've done to this city in terms of transport. And this treatment of people on foot by officials will come to an end. (KA01)

A European city has to be comfortable to live in and accessible, we're still lacking various things, with various infrastructure: both sporting and cultural, so that people can do lots of different things in their free time. (WR09)

For me, the process of Europeanisation is also a process of general Europeanisation in mental terms and in urban planning, because Europe is currently heading towards ecological city management, sustainable transport, also a participatory model in city management. I think that in this first respect we are very much behind, in the second one we're keeping up. So for me, a European city is an ecological and sustainable city on the one hand, and a participatory and openly managed one on the other. (WR03)

³⁵ Svetlana Hristova, Milena Dragicević-Sesić, Nancy Duxbury (eds), *Culture and Sustainability in European Cities: Imagining Europolis*, Routledge, earthscan, 2015. The concept of "Europolis" is making increasingly expansive incursions into the public discourse as a term for properly developing, ecological, sustainable and intelligently managed European cities. In the competition for the Polish Europolis held by the Batory Foundation in Poland in 2016, Warsaw took first place as a result of its increasing green spaces: parks, greens, woods etc. – as well as increasing investments and relatively high earnings.

Thanks in part to the ECOC competition, Polish cities have begun to aspire to be important European metropolises. They have recognised their place on the EU map, determined their cultural resources and defined their innovative functions in international relations.

The city is becoming increasingly international, people are coming to work from northern Italy and Germany. It's discernible. The number of virtual guides printed in 2016 – there's very much there on Wrocław [...] Before our eyes, Wrocław is being written onto the world map. (WE10)

During the process of preparation for the ECOC 2016, the Polish cities described and redefined their identities, which enabled them to create innovative city narratives. The respondents' statements point to a change in the perspective on the city: not so much from a local/peripheral point of view, but rather a supranational one. This new, pro-European image has gained the acceptance of residents.

Katowice began to search for a new identity, which coincided with a new strategy for promotion of the city, as it was in parallel with the ECOC. There was a new promotion strategy with the slogan "Katowice for a change", which in my opinion is quite clever, as we're turning the page and looking at the city from a completely different side. And thanks to the ECOC, Katowicians have begun to look at the city a little differently, and that's actually great. (KA01)

There's easternness as regionalness, and this urbanness – Lublin-ness. As for Lublin-ness, the main component that I sense here is the fact that we're not a metropolis, but in a sense a province. On the other hand, this is a distinct centre, that's existed for centuries. (LU06)

Conclusions

Let us summarise the above reflections. Poland entered the European Union in 2004. The period in which the Polish competition for the European Capital of Culture took place was characterised by many levels of change in adaptation of the state to EU requirements. Poland was the beneficiary of the first EU structural funds, which reinvigorated the economy and led to the modernisation of roads, buildings and public places. The country found itself in a momentous situation that created hitherto unknown opportunities for development. The EU's principles of free movement of people, goods and services enabled Polish cities to become joined to the European exchange network. This resulted in processes of cultural diffusion offering cities the chance to create social innovations. Without doubt, the advantageous conditions for urban development provided by these circumstances contributed to the remarkable engagement of Polish cultural operators in the ECOC 2016 competition. The fact that as many as 11 cities entered the competition testifies to the ambition and courage of the rivalry. As indicated by the research analysed above, in this period Polish cultural operators were still unprepared

for such a large cultural undertaking. In 2000 Krakow had become the first Polish city to hold the title of European City/Capital of Culture, yet the knowledge of the organisers of this event was not spread further, despite research papers, summaries and reports.³⁶ The failure to learn a lesson from the previous ECOC resulted in 2007 in organisational chaos. This was why the respondents' definitions regarding the terms proposed in the research tended to be intellectually inept. They were used interchangeably and often inaccurately. Nevertheless, the connotations of all the concepts remained common, being Europe or European integration in the broadest terms.

When defining the semantic field of the concept of "Europeanness", the respondents pointed to the ideas of cultural unity. There is no doubt that participation in the ECOC competition instigated a process of understanding the idea of European culture in the context of development of the city and redefinition of regional and local culture. What was important for the inhabitants of Poland as a newcomer to the EU was the need to shed their inferiority complexes behind and attempt to view themselves as fully fledged citizens of Europe with just as valuable a material and non-material culture and artistic achievements as those of "old Europe". Another matter was the need to confirm the idea of creative freedom and independence as typically European attributes of art and literature. Within the European dimension, cities gained from constructing multidimensional, interdisciplinary, international cooperation which was becoming less of a traditional bilateral/multilateral exchange, and more of a partnership between multiple parties, based on mutual learning, exchange of knowhow, and forming and fostering lasting interinstitutional and personal bonds. The cooperation was to lead to the initiation and creation of serious cultural consortia, putting into practice Manuel Castells's idea of the contemporary network society.

As a result of the ECOC competition, the new professional category of cultural manager emerged. Of course, people have been managing culture in Poland for years, but the bidding process exposed its international dimension, bringing the Polish workforce into the international circulation via participation in large-budget European projects. A modern cultural manager understands the contemporary model of collaboration and the European idea of networking. The interviews clearly demonstrate increased ambition in creating city cultural policies. The expectations of people working in culture are also raised regarding the effectiveness of the work of officials, NGOs, cultural institutions and artists themselves. Calls are made for democratic city governance based on a clear division of decisions and budget,

³⁶ Robert Salisz, Bogusław Sonik, *Kraków'2000, Europejskie Miasto Kultury. Raport końcowy*, Biuro Kraków 2000, Kraków 2001; Bożena Gierat-Bieroń, *Europejskie Miasto Kultury/Europejska Stolica Kultury*, Instytut Dziedzictwa/Narodowe Centrum Kultury, Kraków 2009; Bożena Gierat-Bieroń, Bogusław Sonik, *Kraków 2000. Po 10 latach. Kraków 2000. 10 years after*, KBF, Instytut Dziedzictwa, Kraków 2011; Danuta Glondys, *Europejska Stolica Kultury. Miejsce kultury w polityce Unii Europejskiej*, Attyka, Kraków 2010.

transparency, and in particular understanding that the contemporary model of local authority entails not emanation of the society's will, but multi-stranded partnership in actions for the city. As an indirect result of the ECOC process, Polish cities aspire to the idea of "Europolis". The respondents understand Europeanisation above all as standardisation and integration. They situate top-down Europeanisation in the space of city governance and modern cultural policy. As for bottom-up Europeanisation, they treat it rather as cities' grassroots searches for identity, drawing their mental map, "inventing"³⁷ the city. The strongest accent of Europeanisation as the realisation of EU cultural policy in the case of the Polish ECOC competition appears to be the process of adapting cultural institutions as well as the governance of large cities to Western standards, a kind of standardisation of professional practices under the banner of "Poles learn fast". Institutions that have already been on the European map want to stay there – not to return to the margins. The organisers of the ECOC competitions in Poland have begun to realise that EU programmes are geared towards shaping the mechanisms of cooperation, but these mechanisms remain weak in Poland. The observers of theatre life claim³⁸ that Polish cultural institutions have begun to take part in a multi-level organisational structure (via networks and co-productions) and entered into cosmopolitanising processes. Institutions have become open to new ideas from direct contacts and access to foreign expertise. An important effect of the processes of top-down Europeanisation in Poland is therefore internationalisation of cultural institutions, while bottom-up processes have resulted in their local and regional consolidation. Critics sceptical about Europeanisation processes in culture highlight the insufficient preparation of Polish cultural institutions for participation in European programmes. Why? Mental barriers, lack of language proficiency, absence of international experience.³⁹ They see this as the source of failures, i.e. the mediocre presence of Polish institutions in EU programmes suggested by statistics,⁴⁰ and thus also their slow Europeanisation. It seems, however, that regardless of the other EU programmes implemented in Poland, the competition for the European Capital of

³⁷ This term was used by the sociologist Paweł Kubicki in his book *Wynajdywanie miejskości. Polska kwestia miejska z perspektywy długiego trwania* ("Invented Urbanity: the Polish Urban Question in a Longue Durée Perspective", Nomos, Kraków 2016).

³⁸ www.nck.pl/blog-kultura-sie-liczy/316789-decentralizacja-a-europeizacja-przypadek-polskich-teatrow [access: 15 August 2017].

³⁹ Igor Rakowski-Kłos, "Kreatywna Łódź to pomyłka. Miliony poszły w błoto?" [in:] *Gazeta Wyborcza*, Łódź. 9 October 2015, lodz.wyborcza.pl/lodz/1,35153,18994251,kreatywna-lodz-to-pomylka-miliony-poszly-w-blotu-opinia.html [access: 4 July 2017].

⁴⁰ This is best illustrated by the *Interim Evaluation of the Culture Programme 2007-13 Annexes to Support Final Report ECORYS UK on behalf of the European Commission DG Education and Culture*, ECORYS Final Report 2010, which shows that Polish operators avoid positions of project leaders, tending rather to prefer partner positions. Furthermore, Joanna Sanetra-Szeliga, commenting on the evaluation of the Culture 2007-2013 programme, said that Italy is the unquestioned leader of European culture projects in Italy. In: *Culture Programme 2007-2013 in Poland – Analysis and Summary*, Cultural Contact Point, IAM, Warszawa 2013.

Culture 2016 contributed to the rapid Europeanisation of cities, thus eloquently putting into practice the principle of “soft power” as an important, albeit underestimated mechanism of European integration.

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