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### Abstract

This paper describes efforts in creating a new image of the city, on the example of Wrocław in Poland, using the case of its application of European Capital of Culture in 2016. We explore how the idea of multiculturalism, that became a leading theme in Wrocław's application for ECoC 2016, had been crafted in practice in the city that is, in fact, highly homogenous. We also analyze how history is being used in city branding and how it can be creatively used to managed the image of the city among the wide public. We conclude that Wrocław has been successful in creating the image of multiculturalism and constitute an interesting example to study by both theoreticians and practitioners of public management.

### Introduction

The theme of branding a city has received significant attention in existing literature (Moilanen & Rainisto 2009; Parkerson & Saunders 2005). In the contemporary world, cities play an important cultural-creative role and it has been noticed that they become an important policy player on the international level (Bilton 2007, Melissen, Van der Pluijm 2007). At the same time, they are working on creating images, and thus strong city brands. City branding aims to change the image of the city, but also of the region, using concepts and marketing tools, to the advantage of its economy, culture and tourism. The globalization process brings about competition not only among firms, but also among cities. The program of European Capitals of Culture is just one example of such competition, as well as internationalization and empowerment of cities on the international stage. The programme became an intense contest over the last years as it became apparent that culture and creativity could contribute to development of urban areas and provide foundation for long-term competitive advantage (cf. Landry 2008).

Most of current studies about city branding are, performed in stable Western European or US contexts (Anholt 2002, 2006; Greenberg 2009). In fact, we are not aware of a single international publication based on qualitative field research that would delve into the issue of city branding in a volatile environment of transformational change (Sztompka 1999). Our contribution in this paper will be to address this gap by presenting the case study of the city of Wrocław (Poland) that has recently made it to the center of European attention thanks to being elected the European Capital of Culture 2016.

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Multiculturalism is usually applied in description of communities grouping people of various national or ethnic background (mainly immigrants; Kymlicka 1995, 1998, 2002; Smolicz 1998, 1999; Siapera 2010). In this sense Wrocław needed to redefine the word itself, because it is - ethnically – a highly homogeneous city. With over 97% of population being Polish, declared Roman-Catholic, it may be quite surprising that many visitors without doubt eagerly label the city as “multicultural” (Maciejewska 2002, Thum 2005). This only goes to show that the efforts of the city to market itself as “multicultural” have been successful. We describe tools employed in creating such image of Wrocław and present a journey of how such seemingly paradoxical phenomenon become possible and lasting in time. We show how creating an image of modern and international city required creative efforts on the part of the city management team. In our understanding of the term “creativity” we follow Rehn et al. (2011, see also Landry 2008), and we see it as a process in which a city creates a narrative about itself that is constantly being performed to establish a certain image. These efforts in the case of Wrocław - that were concentrated on gaining a presence on the European cultural stage– are captured under the umbrella-term “multiculturalism”. Therefore, we choose to focus on the efforts on redefining/giving new meaning (Czarniawska, 1992; Berger & Luckmann, 1966) to this notion, and we illustrate how Wrocław created its own narrative about “multiculturalism”. It is worth noting that over the last 20 years (after the post-communist transformation of 1990s), Wrocław has come to be perceived as a champion of multicultural approach to managing the city within the country as it has consciously been working on creating an image of an open, multicultural and metropolitan city.

In this paper we point out that in many ways the concept of modern cities and creativity of these cities fits with multicultural policies, concepts and strategies. The study of multiculturalism has focused on the governance of multicultural societies, the protection of civil rights in liberal societies, the relationship between the public and private spheres and the protection of individual freedom<sup>1</sup>. There are various definitions of multiculturalism including those articulated in, for example, Kymlicka (1996, 1998, 2003), Jopke (2003), Van de Vijver (2003), Smolicz (1997) or Szahaj (2004). There exists no uniform policy of multiculturalism pursued by city governments. In this context, it is necessary to take into account the participation of immigrants and minorities in mainstream society, improving their position (social, economic, cultural), establishing equal rights and eliminating discrimination. Different models and policies are recognized in the literature in this domain and in the practical governing: pluralism (the most desirable, and the most difficult to achieve), civic, assimilation and ethnist<sup>2</sup>.

Downing and Husband claim (2005: 196): “Multiculturalism is a generic concept that encapsulates a state’s willingness to recognize ethnic diversity through its policy and practice, is a highly contested phenomenon. Indeed, the definition and practice of multiculturalism have become highly contested political issues”. But recently multiculturalism has become an even more problematic issue due to increase in fears about terrorism, immigration problems. We can

also find many opinions about the crisis of multiculturalism, without any reflections on what kind of version of diversity we are talking about. In recent years many politicians, including government leaders in Germany, France and Great Britain suggested that their projects of creating multicultural communities have failed.

Cities have always been a space where inhabitants must get used to living with diversity. People in cities are different, as regards, for example, the language, the religion, their looks, aspirations or behaviors in public spaces. In this perspective multiculturalism is an inherent characteristic of every city, even the most ethnically and religiously homogenous one. Global cities are major sites for creation of new global culture. Firstly global, multicultural cities are receivers both new migrants and indigenous. Secondly – socio-economic polarization has taken place. Cities have created hybridizations platforms, where globalization and localization constitute and feed each other.

This paper is based on a case study (Yin, 1994) that adopted several complementary approaches in data gathering and analysis. It included archival studies of public documents (produced by the City Council of Wrocław, Polish government and several NGOs) and local, national and international media coverage about efforts of Wrocław to become a European Capital of Culture. Additionally, it is based on 10 formal interviews conducted in Wrocław by one of the Authors in the period of 2008-2009 with Mayor of the City Rafał Dutkiewicz and several journalists, researchers, workers of NGOs in Wrocław, as well as representatives of City Council.

### **European Capital of Culture Program**

Program of European Capital of Culture (previously known as City of Culture) was conceived in 1983 as one of the tools linking European cultural and regional policy (Garcia, 2004). From a rather modest program of promoting culture and drawing communities closer together it grew to a significant vehicle for promoting and supporting the development of cities, reaching in 2000 the budget of 2 million GBP allocated to nine cities in that year (ibid.). The overarching goal of the program is to nurture the feeling of European identity and bringing the Europeans closer together while, at the same time, letting them celebrate richness of local cultures (European Commission 2010). While according to European Union's documents serving as a European Capital of Culture obviously is a privilege and honor for the selected city, some research (for overview see Rehn et al., 2011) has proven that it also improves international recognition and perception of city's brand which then translates into positive impact on local economy. Through these effects ECOC competition become of wider interest to policy makers in cities and countries, as it is seen as an valuable tool in promotional activities and, for example, city diplomacy (Melissen & Van der Pluijm, 2007). Being European Capital of Culture has a symbolic power and it serves as a legitimizing force for a city's potential and prospects for the future. The ECOC program is, however, also subject to growing contestation (Garcia, 2004). First,

there is no formal monitoring process in place that would prove tangible effects for the city picked as a Capital. Second, cities themselves are not willing to share their real opinions as formal reports after a year of ECOC a usually also used as promotional vehicles to celebrate the city's success. In effect, the program of ECOC is surrounded by myths about the value of hosting the title while the information about whether one-year celebration can lead to sustainable surge in the quality of life in the city or in its economy is still lacking (Garcia, 2004).

### **City of Wrocław – basic information**

Wrocław is located in Lower Silesia in the south west of Poland. The city of Wrocław itself is the fourth largest in Poland. It has good communications by train, air and road not only to Warsaw and other Polish cities but also to other European capitals such as Prague and Berlin. It has a highly educated workforce, with a large number of universities and institutions of higher education.

The seemingly simple question – when Wrocław was founded? – is not amenable to any precise answer even today. As many sources suggest, in the year 1000 Wrocław was already a sizeable settlement and this must have been the reason for an episcopate to be located here.

Wrocław was founded according to German law, probably in the Spring of 1241 or 1242. In 1335 the town became a part of the possessions of the Czech crown, wielded at that time by John of Luxembourg. Since the foundation of Wrocław, the town was inhabited by a large proportion of German people but the Polish element enjoyed a powerful and decisive influence for many years to come. After the dynastic agreements made in 1526 Wrocław was submitted to the Habsburg crown. After the Silesian Wars in 1740-1763 Silesia and its capital were taken over by the Prussians.

Wrocław entered the 19th century as a highly fortified and militarized Prussian town – surrounded by moats, walls, and embankments, strengthened by powerful bastions. After the Napoleonic Wars and a period of stagnation that followed them, a new boom in trade industry enlivened the town again, attracting fresh citizens from neighbouring villages and smaller towns, the industry of Wrocław was growing dynamically at that time.

The Great War and a severe crisis into which Germany slid as a result of the defeat slowed down considerably the process of modernization and development of Wrocław.

Just before the Second World War broke out Wrocław had 629 thousand inhabitants. As the war went on, the front-line inexorably approached Wrocław. In the face of oncoming successful Soviet armies, the Nazis made a fatal and ruthless decision to turn the town of Wrocław into a fortress – the Festung Breslau, and it was given an order to fight to the bitter end. The last months of the Second World War were certainly the most tragic in the whole history of Wrocław. This period brought almost complete ruin of the town with 90 per cent of buildings destroyed completely; only the historic Old town suffered losses of 60 per cent of its structures.

Together with first officials of Polish administration, a group of scientists arrived in Wrocław in order to protect and preserve objects and documents of scientific and cultural importance. The group became an embryo of the future scientific and higher education centre. Culture also quickly revived in Wrocław.

Wrocław of the present day is rich not only in architecture and relics of the past. It is one of the largest centres of science, culture, and industry in Poland. Wrocław has the advantage of its particularly opportune location in the west of Poland, which is especially important in the present moment of history, when the whole country opened up towards Western Europe.

### **Image of the city**

The image of the city of Wrocław has two major components. On the one hand, there is historical heritage of mixed Polish, German, and Czech cultures. On the other hand, especially in recent years the initiatives undertaken by local government were decisive in how the city is perceived now. Among these initiatives a prominent place is occupied by international presence of Wrocław (e.g., several times unsuccessfully running for EXPO exhibitions, or recently contesting for European Capital of Culture) and active partnerships with cities from all over the world: Wiesbaden and Dresden (Germany), Lviv (Ukraine), Grodno (Belarus), Hradec Kralove (Czech Republic), Ramat Gan (Israel), Breda (the Netherlands), La Vienne (France), Guadalajara (Mexico) and Charlotte (the United States).

Within Poland there are regional disparities related to the uneven speed of transformation socialism to capitalism. (OECD, 1996, p. 98). Wrocław is regarded as one of most successful regions that benefited from systemic change over the last twenty years, along with other cities such as Gdansk, Poznan and Krakow. These are the cities that demonstrated the highest potential for restructuring and relatively quick adaptation to in the new post-transformation reality (Gorzela, 1996). They are considered leaders of Polish transformation with relatively low unemployment, a well-educated labor force, relatively solid infrastructure, and a concentration of Polish intellectual potential. In these places privatization processes are the most advanced, the inflow of foreign capital the greatest and the growth of the service sector the fastest. Gorzela (1996) points to a central European boomerang-like shape delimited by the following areas: Gdansk-Poznan-Wrocław-Prague-Brno-Bratislava/Vienna Budapest with the eastern wall 'Bridgehead' investments, there to access central becoming the dead end of Central Europe (OECD, 1996; Garztecki, 1998). This relative prosperity of the city over the last twenty years, especially contrasted against difficult decades of post-war history of Wrocław, provided foundation for efforts of the city to establish a branding strategy focused on international and multicultural dimension.

### **Wrocław in the race to become ECOC 2016**

Wrocław first announced its ambitions to become a European Capital of Culture in 2004. It is important to see this decision made official by the Mayor of the City, Rafal Dutkiewicz, in the light of events that immediately preceded the

launch of this initiative. Since 1990s Wrocław was one of most ambitious Polish cities in terms of international presence. It had a consistent program of developing the city brand. Within these policies, a prominent place was taken by city's ambition to host events of international significance. Wrocław is the city where a European Congress of Culture was organized during Poland's presidency of the European Union. In 2012 Wrocław co-hosted the EURO UEFA European Football Championship. Wrocław has also unsuccessfully twice put in bids for Expo. It won the competition to host the European Institute of Technology (EIT). Wrocław will host the World Music Days in 2014, as well as the Theatre Olympics and the Literary Olympics in 2016.

In the race for European Capital of Culture, Wrocław presented itself as a Polish city with cosmopolitan history. The openness of the city has been a constitutive feature of Wrocław throughout its history. The European Capital of Culture event is one of the six programs of Strategy of Wrocław' Culture, adopted by the Mayor of Wrocław's Advisory Committee in 2006. The Strategy includes: (1) Wrocław – a European Center of Culture, (2) Musical Wrocław, (3) Wrocław's Cultural Summer, (4) Weekend in Wrocław, (5) Cultural Education, and (6) A good place to study – Culture of the Youth (Wrocław, 2011). Wrocław's application of ECoC included nine reasons as grounds for application, as illustrated in figure 1.

Wrocław's proposal for the European Capital of Culture 2016 event was built around the following five themes: Opening up Spaces, Beauty in Sight, Intimate Beauty, Beauty in Cyberspace, Forces of Nature – Power of Culture. The themes set out above are the titles of the interdisciplinary and cross-sector artistic programs through which it intends to “create spaces for beauty in Wrocław and Lower Silesia” (Wrocław, 2011, p. 40).. The idea of the application coordinators is that the ideas underlying these themes will be a shared inspiration as well as criteria for selection of initiatives proposed by cultural activists. In particular, they should inspire actions in the following forms (Wrocław, 2011): artistic events, open-air events and concerts, seminars, workshops, and conferences. It is worth noting that many of these programs and projects are to support objectives of the EU in the area of culture, for example: promotion of cultural diversity or promotion of culture as a vital element of the EU's international relations. As a framework and promotional pun in its bid for ECoC 2016 Wrocław used the slogan “Spaces for Beauty”, with the stated aim of the city being “to create friendly spaces that will serve to satisfy the human craving for communion, wit, art and culture. We intend to create spaces within which to restore a sustainable presence of beauty in public life and in daily habits” (Dutkiewicz, 2008). The concept of spaces holds key position in Wrocław's application. Throughout Wrocław's application for ECoS the concept of “democratizing beauty” is being constantly evoked. It is defined as giving wider access to culture to the underprivileged, through support of both the supply and demand sides. On the one hand, a system of incentives is intended to attract people to take part in cultural activities, on the other hand support for cultural institutions is being offered to make them open up for wider public. In addition,

from 2011-2016 numerous cultural facilities in Wrocław are to be restored and there are plans to build new ones, to create new spaces in the literal sense of the word.

*Figure 1. Why Wrocław wants to be a European Capital of Culture? (original English version from the website, unedited)*

The citizens of Wrocław want their city to become a European City of Culture for nine reasons:

***The fabric of our history:*** We want to tell Europe about the fabric of extremely complex history that has been woven by the past and the present inhabitants of the city. More than a thousand years of Wrocław's history is a story of meetings between very different peoples and individuals. These meetings have woven an extremely complex history. It is these meetings that the people of Wrocław want to tell Europe about.

***Building a multiple identity:*** Having created our separate, unique 'multiple identity', we want to take part in building a new multiple identity of a united Europe. We want to share with Europe our experience of dealing with the difficult cultural task set for us by history: building a new identity of the city and of our own.

***The flower and emerald of Europe:*** Wrocław, 'the flower of Europe', wants to be ambassador for the region of Lower Silesia, 'the emerald of Europe', and the Silesian architectural heritage, which urgently needs preserving; we want to restore it to Polish and European culture. Wrocław wants to be ambassador for the region to which it owes its metropolitan position. We want to present our achievements in preserving the Lower Silesian architectural heritage. We also want to draw attention of the European public to the fact that much of this heritage is at risk of irretrievable loss and is in need of rehabilitation. Our goal is to reclaim it for Polish and European culture.

***Unravelling the city's enigma:*** Polish inhabitants of polysemiotic Wrocław desire to overcome the enigmaticity of their city and take up a permanent place in European consciousness as a Polish and European city. Wrocław is seeking designation as European Capital of Culture because it sees it as a unique opportunity to make Wrocław less enigmatic. Its citizens want it to become permanently rooted in contemporary European consciousness as Wrocław – a Polish and a European city

***Culture against exclusion:*** We want to actively combat social exclusion and exclusion from participation in culture, which affect young people, the unemployed, families with many children, seniors, and people with disabilities. We regard active participation in culture as one of the methods for reconnecting the excluded to the shared world. Among the excluded are the young people, the unemployed, families with many children, seniors, and people with disabilities. As a result of various handicaps, they are unable to participate in culture, which impairs their quality of life. We want to propose sustainable solutions serving to increase their participation in culture.

***Against commodification of culture:*** We want to combat the financial barriers that bar democratic access to works of authentic art and deriving joy from getting to know them. We consider access to art to be a right of every individual and a necessary condition of a genuine agency of individuals. Wrocław wants to build open public spaces to promote people's exposure to works of authentic art and to enable them to derive pleasure from them.

***Culture against public agoraphobia:*** The spaces of today's cities often fill their residents with fear – a public agoraphobia; as a result they withdraw to their own privacy or emigrate; we want culture to restore their sense of being authentic co-owners of their cities. Wrocław desires to create friendly spaces that will serve all its citizens. We will give the people of Wrocław a chance to actively create and shape such spaces, so they can once again feel at home in their own city.

***Culture against interpassivity:*** Instead of promoting interactive relationships among people, cutting-edge technology often strips them of their autonomy and individuality and creates a new phenomenon: interpassivity; we want cyberspace to be an ally of free artistic creation. We perceive cyberspace as an important place where to exhibit works of art and culture, interact with them and popular-

ize them, but we believe that it will not replace a tangible presence of beauty in the real spaces of human life.

**Eco-aesthetics in defence of nature:** Wrocław, a modern and innovative city, wants to seek genuinely innovative solutions that will be friendly to the environment. Wrocław wants to raise the consciousness of the citizens of Poland and other European countries to human duties towards nature. We believe that genuine innovations must be environmentally friendly. Man-made pollution that penetrates into the environment does not respect national borders. This fact must be the foundation for a universal agreement for environmental protection. We also want it to become an inspiration for critical reflection on the traditional distinction between the world of culture and the world of nature.

Source: <http://www.wro2016.pl/en/Wroclaw-2016/application-summary/>

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Figure 2 presents a short summary of Wrocław's application for ECoC 2016.

*Figure 2. Wrocław's short presentation in ECOC 2016 contest.*

Wrocław, the capital of Lower Silesia, is one of the oldest and most beautiful Polish cities. It is one of the most rapidly developing cultural centres. Theatres, the opera house, the musical theatre, the concert hall and numerous clubs, museums and art galleries offer a big number of artistic events throughout the year.

The city is renowned for international music festivals, the biggest of which is "WroclaviaCantans".



Wrocław is also the venue of the following events: Jazz on the Odra River Festival, Days of the Music of Old Masters, Singing Actors' Festival, Jazz All Souls' Day, Wrocław Meetings of One-Actor Theatres and Small Theatrical Forms as well as International Theatre Festival Dialog-Wrocław. Opera shows held in Wrocław's Centennial Hall, which are famous throughout Europe, delight with monumental character. Wrocław hosted many international music celebrities playing both popular and classical music, among others Joe Cocker, Anastasia, Sonique, Placido Domingo, Jose Cura and Garou. Thanks to festival Era New Horizons Wrocław became a hot spot on a film festivals' map. In autumn this year a new project of Roman Gutek will commence - "American Film Festival".

We should

We feel responsible for our multicultural heritage. Wrocław's fascinating history reflects the past of the entire Central Europe. One can find traces of the Polish, German, Czech, Austrian and Jewish cultures almost everywhere here. We should do our best to benefit from this historical multiculturalism of our city. That is the reason why we would like to encourage our western and eastern neighbours to join us and engage in projects aimed to reawaken the curiosity that was asleep throughout post-war decades. The European Capital of Culture is a chance not only for Wrocław but for the entire Europe - we should seize the opportunity to deepen integration in this part of our continent, to reconnect what has been apart for years.

We dream

We dream about the culture that will connect nations instead of separating them. We dream about the future with no one deprived of an opportunity to participate in cultural life and with all Europeans participating in culture, regardless of their religion, gender, age or financial situation. Wrocław will become the place of dialogue about the special role of culture in creating Europe without barriers.

We can

Wrocław will be a great capital of culture - our city is already an important point on the cultural map of Poland and Europe. Here international festivals are held and a modern concert hall, one of the most beautiful in Europe, is under construction. But what makes Wrocław strong is its inhabitants' potential and creativity. It is here where absurd used by the Orange Alternative movement helped people to overcome fear and lack of enthusiasm, which were so characteristic of the 1980s. The pictures of dwarves drawn on the walls, which armed militia did not manage to fight, became a symbol of our way of living. What is this way of living characterised by? Enthusiasm, creative energy and joy because of acting together.

We want

As the ECC 2016, Wrocław wants to share with everyone its story about "growing roots". Today Europe is looking for its identity. We can tell a story about the first inhabitants of Wrocław that settled, rebuilt and revived the metropolis after the destruction. It took the next generation a lot of time to get used to it; however, Wrocław's multicultural past was eventually accepted. What we want is an open dialogue about the identity of the new Europe. We do believe that by looking for our local identity as the inhabitants of Wrocław we are looking for Polishness and Europeaness of our city.

Source: <http://www.wro2016.pl/en/why-Wroclaw/>

Wrocław has built its message around the themes of culture and beauty. The specific programs mentioned above, however, are grounded in the wider concept transferred to the public consistently throughout all materials we analyzed for this project: multiculturalism as a founding principle of all endeavors within the city. In the next section we show how the city managed to create and successfully communicate quite original concept of multiculturalism and how it managed to achieve the wide association of “Wrocław” with “multicultural”.

## Wrocław's concept of multiculturalism

Bachmann (2005, p. 1) writes that “Wrocław, instead of scratching the wounds of history, uses it to build its image as a city of common multicultural past”. Multicultural image of Wrocław is constructed mainly on the basis of its rich history. It does not appeal, as traditional concepts of multiculturalism say, to the idea of groups of immigrants and various ethnic groups cohabiting in the city, as Wrocław now is mono-national. Wrocław is, however, using fragments of its history to construct an image of a vibrant, open, and friendly place. It highlights that over the course of years, the city has been under Czech, Austrian, German and Polish administration. Thanks to this policy concept and multicultural myth:

German, French or Dutch tourists come to ‘multicultural Wrocław’ and they do not mind that there is no Chinatown, no equivalent of Berlin’s Kreuzberg, or Paris’ bidonvilles. They look at the architecture, admire the old Market Square, visit the Raclawice Panorama, then walk around the Japanese Garden, the cemetery of Italian soldiers, they wonder at Soviet tanks in the military cemeteries, then they perhaps learn about the Ossolineum library and they nod: well, yes, it truly is a very multicultural city. (Bachmann 2005, p. 2)

The second pillar of modern multicultural identity of Wrocław is the make-up of its contemporary inhabitants. While before the Nazi regime and then Second World War Wrocław was a mix of several nations and religions (Catholics, Calvinists, Lutherans, Jewish; see Davies and Moorhouse, 2002), its population was completely changed after 1945. The city was completely devoid of its Jewish population, still inhabited by Germans, and became a target place for many Poles forced to leave their homes in the former Eastern parts of the country as well as those inhabitants of the central parts of Poland who were seeking improvements of their life and entrepreneurially set out to move to “new” parts of the country. In the years 1945-1948 the population of the city changed almost completely. From being one of the biggest cities of pre-war Germany (with almost 600000 German and Jewish inhabitants) it became a 250000 city with population that came from almost every corner of Poland. And this is precisely what forms the second pillar of today’s much praised multicultural character of the city – the cultural richness and richness of heritage brought by past-war Polish immigrants of Wrocław.

Among the new Wrocławians cultural differences very quickly became visible. They resulted mostly from the variety of regions new citizens came from and variety of experiences they brought with them. There were striking contrasts between immigrants from cities and rural areas, irrespective of where exactly they came from. Meeting of Poles, but from very different geographical locations and from different social classes resulted for many in a cultural shock and conflicts (Thum, 2005). Quite a number of new immigrants came from former Eastern territories of Poland where people were used to peaceful cohabitation of many ethnic groups: Poles, Jews, Belarusians, Ukrainians, Latvians and Russians. Yet, these people were often regarded as backward or ‘barbarian’ by former inhabitants of central parts of Poland. What further exacerbated the cultural shock was the difference in war-time experiences between parts of Wrocław population. People from the eastern borderland suffered from Soviet and German occupation at the same time, and then after the war they were in dramatic circumstances relocated to unknown Western territories (so-called ‘regained territory’; see Thum, 2005). The feeling of uncertainty resulting from all these experiences had a profound impact on the emerging identity of Wrocław’s inhabitants. On the one hand there was mistrust and uncertainty about German citizens still remaining in the city. On the other hand, there was mistrust among very diverse Polish population, as they shared not much more than formal citizenship and the language. Language, however, instead of constituting a bridge among people often was becoming a conflicting issue as immigrants from the Eastern borderland often spoke with a regional accent and therefore there was sometimes raised doubts about the ‘authenticity’ of their Polish identity (Thum, 2005). After these difficult years of coexistence it seems that in subsequent generations this experience became one of cultural advantages of Wrocław among other Polish cities. As research by CBOS (Polish Public Opinion Research Institute) shows contemporary citizens of Wrocław are more open, tolerant and EU-supportive than the average Pole. For example, 76% of people living in Wrocław have noth-

ing against foreign citizens moving into the city, with only 44% of all Poles sharing this opinion.

All inhabitants of post-war Wrocław happen to live in an atmosphere pervaded by the feeling of cultural inconsistencies. On the one hand the authorities were heavily investing in policies that were aimed at establishing and reinforcing the “always-Polish” image of the city and were launching numerous initiatives of writing “the Polish history” of Wrocław. On the other hand, however, Wrocławians frequently encountered remnants of the multicultural heritage of the city in their everyday life in, for example, architecture, or geographical plan of the city that bore witness to its very complex history. After the transformation, in early 1990s the City Council of Wrocław started consistent or better concerted efforts towards promoting Wrocław as a multicultural metropolis, using its history, its traditions, its architecture, and, last but not least, its citizens. Even if there are no characteristic large ethnic communities in Wrocław, the roots of its citizens are very diverse. This cultural richness of Wrocław’s population has now a decisive significance in promoting Wrocław as a multicultural, open and friendly place. Wrocław’s Mayor, Rafal Dutkiewicz, confirms that in an our interview:

Wrocław, being a city of many nations, became – in a historical space - a house for all of us. This is the place where people’s lives and cultural heritages met and sometimes clashed. That all created a completely new quality, a new original spirit. This is something I call our identity. One may say that this multicultural tradition ultimately shaped the character and image of Wrocław. Openness, respect for differences, and eagerness to learn about all newness is what emerged for many years throughout Wrocław’s history. Wrocław to me is like ‘little America’. Its greatness was shaped by immigrants. Today, being aware of this heritage, we are trying to continue on this path of an open and tolerant city in our promotional activities. (Dutkiewicz 2008)

The concept of multiculturalism along with ideas of openness and tolerance, is being consistently applied in the efforts of building the city’s image also on the national level, including the reinforcing of local identity of Wrocław’s modern citizens. In 2005 a campaign of “Wrocław – your climate” was launched (see, for example, figure 3). It was targeted towards young people from Poland to present them with opportunities of studying and living in Wrocław. The main message of the campaign was that “Wrocław is a friendly, open, and young community. The multicultural tradition of the city support courageous and novel initiatives”. There are also numerous projects run under the auspices of the City Council of Wrocław aimed at reinforcing the local identity of the city’s inhabitants (documents of City Council). Among these are contests for high-school and college students, as well as events organized by various ethnic and national minorities living in Wrocław.

Figure 3. Wrocław – your climate campaign



Source: [www.Wroclaw.pl](http://www.Wroclaw.pl)

Multicultural character of the city was conveyed consistently in promotion campaigns undertaken by the local council over recent years. Especially fitted for this task were visual symbols of the city.

Figure 4. The coat of arms of Wrocław



Source: [www.wroclaw.pl](http://www.wroclaw.pl)

One of such symbols is the historic coat of arms of Wrocław, re-introduced by the City Council in the form that was banned by the post-war regime. The original emblem granted to the city of Wrocław in 1530 by the Emperor Karl V includes elements that highlight the multicultural and pan-European heritage of the city. It is divided into quarters. In the centre is the head of John the Baptist, patron saint of the city. The crowned lion rampant in the first (upper left) quarter represents the Kingdom of Bohemia, to which Wrocław belonged to since 1336. In the second (upper right) quarter there is the Silesian eagle which comes from the Silesian Piast eagle. The letter "W" in the third quarter stands for both "Wratislavia" (Latin name of the city) and for the name of the legendary founder of the city Wrocislaw. In the fourth quarter there is St. John the Evangelist.

The leading promotional pun: "Wrocław – the meeting place" became a leitmotif for various cultural initiatives taking place in Wrocław. This slogan fits to the idea of multicultural city Wrocław as a platform of intercultural dialogue. For Wrocławians and other Poles, the critical highlighting of the multicultural character of the city came in 1999, when Pope John Paul II visited Wrocław and

announced it to be a special place located on the intersection of three countries bound together by common history, for better and for worse. He also underlined that Wrocław is the place where the spirits of the West and East of Europe meet and mix. This Pan-European appeal of the city was further reinforced through promotional activities after Poland's accession to the European Union.

According to Mayor of the City of Wrocław Rafal Dutkiewicz:

'Wrocław – the meeting place' is a concise term, for it takes only three words, yet it is very comprehensive and to-the-point. It well reflects the character and specificity of our city. It reflects the richness conveyed through its heritage, the melting pot of cultures, complicated and dramatic history; but at the same time it echoes our modern friendliness for the world, our courage in thinking and acting. That is what Wrocław has always been and I think that is what it remains in the future. Crafting the image and the identity of the city is an ongoing process. This pun 'Wrocław – the meeting place' speaks for itself and it constitutes an important direction for thinking about how we can promote our city. I think that what contemporary Wrocławians share are openness, understanding, and cosmopolitanism. I wonder whether what we are saying now, that Wrocław simply is a good place to live, is not really just repeating something that has been said before? Maybe it has already been said, in a different time, within different national borders, in a different language. I don't know about that, but I am sure that what we now believe to be good and worth-attention of others, has not came out of itself. It did not come from nowhere. (Dutkiewicz, 2008)

## **Multiculturalism redefined**

The story of Wrocław's identity creation efforts that was crowned by official recognition of the city as a European Capital of Culture 2016 illustrates the struggle to redefine its own "fate" and history and redefining the label of multiculturalism.

Wrocław picked the theme of multiculturalism and stuck to it consistently even when it became a contested label in many EU countries. Using it as a lever, not an out-dated buzzword that can even have negative connotation required a creative attitude and an effort to redefine actively the inherent symbolism and meaning this word carries. This was done in concerted long-term efforts coordinated around the theme of creative redefinition of history. To illustrate how original that was one should see that in the 1990s, after the systemic change, most of Polish public opinion was focused on looking at the past and brooding over various misfortunes that the country and the nation had to deal with (that is two World Wars and several decades of Soviet domination afterwards) as well as settling accounts with those who contributed to these hardships. Wrocław, however, chose to give up the dichotomy of fighters/victims typical for many Poles in the 1990s. Instead, it decided to highlight not what the city has lost throughout

the years of suffering under two Great Wars and thereafter, but what has been achieved regardless of all obstacles. This positive frame of a rather difficult history turned out to be powerful both inside (as integrative force for Wrocławians) and outside (as appealing element for international audiences and for other Poles) the city.

## **Conclusion**

In the paper we provide a description of Wrocław's efforts in creating a new image of the city using the case of its application of European Capital of Culture in 2016. It has been a successful journey, as the city won the competition and it will hold the title of ECoC. The materials we analyzed do not authorize us to point at specific sources of this success (this would require research focused more theoretically than this piece). But, after conducting field research, we would like to indicate two intuitions that may guide further inquiry into the foundations of Wrocław's achievements.

On one hand, since 1990s Wrocław has been run by very charismatic mayors, who were consistently re-elected with high support of citizens, which makes the city very special against other places in Poland, where most local governments are a scene of partisan conflicts. Charismatic leadership helped to unite Wrocławians and supported the creations of their local identity. On the other hand, there is the question about long-term strategies employed in creative redefinition of city's image and identity. Where Wrocław stands out from many other cities is that it managed to transform itself over only 20 years from the peripheral and underdeveloped town into a metropolis of international recognition and one of leaders on the cultural scene of Central Europe. This all required vision, motivation, and long-term orientation, which may make it an excellent strategy case.

In this paper we confront different approaches to the subject, rooted in political science, intercultural communication, city diplomacy, city branding and international public relations. The main questions of this article ask what the responses of modern cities to the new intercultural environment are and what the practice of city branding and city managing in the "new" part of Europe is. We present the Wrocław's case illustrating the process of implementing the concept of city diplomacy and how different tools and institutions are used to create the image of multicultural city. This case study is based on project European Capital of Culture, related to the idea of multicultural city. We have also attempted to explain the reasons and, most importantly, the consequences of inventing and implementing, still not well-known concept of city diplomacy and city branding in Poland.

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### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Much literature published last years argues many issues of negative impact of multiculturalism or even that multiculturalism is in crisis. Particularly fundamentalists aspects of Islam is attributed a key role in this negative view on the state of the multicultural society in the Netherlands and many other countries. See also: Van de Vijver et al. 2006.

<sup>2</sup> "Pluralist (immigrants should adopt the public values of the host country, such as commitment to democratic ideals, but have guaranteed individual liberties in personal domains and receive state support for establishing activities aimed at maintaining the ethnic culture). Civic (the same as pluralist, but without the financial support for cultural activities aimed at maintaining the ethnic culture). Assimilation (immigrants are expected to give up their own culture and adopt the culture of the dominant group). Ethnist (there is officially enshrined ideology as to who can and should be the citizens of the state, based on ethnically or religiously exclusive terms, while other immigrant groups face more problems to obtain citizenship (...); there is an increase in pressure put on immigrants by the nation state to adopt the values of the main society and to leave less room for expressions of ethnic culture (Van de Vijver et al., 2006, p. 106).