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Abstract

Large urban regeneration works are a contemporary themes in Poland. Parts of Polish cities are in a state of decay due to historical factors and large amounts of money are invested in revitalisation programs. Furthermore, the holding of large events in the last ten years, such as the European Capital of Culture 2016 in Wrocław and the 2012 European Football Championship, accentuated the need of regeneration. However, those programs aren't spared by critics, especially regarding their lack of integration of local communities in the process. This paper analyses several alternative projects, where local communities were directly included to an artistic regeneration process at the scale of the backyard in Wrocław. Through literature reviews, interviews and field observation, this work identified several factors that influenced the success of those participatory projects. An appropriate budget and time dedication, a follow-up of the project once it is achieved and coherent actions from the municipality regarding those projects are central in the setting-up and successful completion of community based projects, even though the social context of the allotment is also to be taken in account.

Résumé

Les grands travaux de régénération urbaine sont un thème d'actualité en Pologne. Certaines zones des villes polonaises sont fortement dégradées en raison d'évènements historiques et beaucoup d'argent est investi dans les programmes de revitalisation. De plus, la tenue de grands évènements au cours des dix dernières années, comme la Capitale Européenne de la Culture à Wrocław en 2016 ou l'Euro de Football en 2012 ont accentué les besoins en matière de régénération. Cependant, ces programmes ne sont pas épargnés par la critique, notamment en ce qui concerne l'inclusion des communautés locales dans processus. Ce travail analyse plusieurs projets alternatifs dans lesquels les communautés locales ont été incluses dans un travail de régénération artistique à l'échelle de l'arrière-cour à Wrocław. Au travers d'une revue de la littérature, d'entretiens et d'observations menées sur le terrain, plusieurs éléments influant sur le succès des projets ont pu être identifiés pour ces projets. L'allocation d'un budget et d'un laps de temps approprié, un suivi du projet une fois achevé et des actions cohérentes de la part de la municipalité au regard de ces projets sont centraux dans le processus de mise en place et le maintien de projets centrés sur les communautés, bien que le contexte social du lotissement doive également être pris en compte.

Key words : Culture-led urban regeneration | Urban regeneration | Local communities |
European Capital of Culture | Public participation | Wrocław | Poland

Summary

1. Introduction	- 1 -
2. Problematic	- 6 -
2.1. Revitalisation in Wrocław: The case of Nadodrze	- 6 -
2.1.1. Revitalisation or economic regeneration?	- 7 -
2.2. The cultural evolution of Nadodrze	- 10 -
2.3. Public participation	- 11 -
2.3.1. Public consultation in revitalisation programs	- 11 -
2.3.2. Public participation in culture	- 12 -
2.4. Research questions and hypothesis	- 13 -
3. State of the art	- 15 -
3.1. Regenerating cities	- 15 -
3.1.1. Urban regeneration in Wrocław	- 16 -
3.2. The place of the residents in urban development	- 17 -
3.3. The commodification of cities	- 19 -
3.4. Regenerating through culture	- 21 -
3.5. The role of culture in Europe	- 25 -
3.6. Drivers of change: mega-events	- 26 -
3.6.1. The ECOC 2016 in Wrocław	- 27 -
3.7. A historical overview of revitalisation in Wrocław	- 30 -
3.8. Synthesis	- 32 -
4. Methods	- 33 -
4.1. State of the art and historical research	- 33 -
4.2. Semi-directive interviews	- 34 -
4.3. Field work	- 37 -
4.3.1. Observation	- 37 -
4.3.2. Photography	- 38 -
4.4. Synthesis	- 38 -
5. Context	- 40 -

5.1.	<i>Wrocław – Backyard Door</i>	40 -
5.1.1.	A brief history of <i>Kamienica</i> and backyards in Wrocław	40 -
5.1.2.	What is <i>Wrocław – Backyard Door</i> ?	41 -
5.1.3.	Description of the projects	42 -
5.1.4.	The aftermath of the event	44 -
5.2.	Culture as a strategic stake	48 -
5.2.1.	Culture and the 15-minute city	50 -
5.3.	Synthesis	52 -
6.	<i>Analysis</i>	53 -
6.1.	<i>The Urban Botanical Garden on Kręta and Ptasia streets</i>	53 -
6.1.1.	Genesis and conduct of the projects	53 -
6.1.2.	The resident’s expectations.....	55 -
6.1.3.	Outcomes	56 -
6.1.4.	Current state and analysis of their evolution	57 -
6.2.	<i>The Kamienica on Hubska street</i>	62 -
6.2.1.	Genesis and conduct of the project.....	62 -
6.2.2.	Outcomes	64 -
6.2.3.	Current state and analysis of its evolution	65 -
6.3.	<i>The Podwórko – Nasze Atelier and Podwórko – Odkrywanie Sztuki projects</i>	69 -
6.3.1.	Genesis and conduct of the project.....	69 -
6.3.2.	Outcomes	74 -
6.3.3.	Current state and analysis of its evolution	75 -
6.4.	The role of the municipality	76 -
6.4.1.	A need for consistency	76 -
6.4.2.	The market reality	76 -
6.5.	Synthesis	77 -
7.	<i>Discussion</i>	79 -
7.1.	Scope of public participation and ‘cultural regeneration’	79 -
7.2.	Limits	80 -
7.3.	Thinking further	82 -
8.	<i>Conclusion</i>	84 -
9.	<i>References</i>	89 -

10. Annexes	- 96 -
10.1. Interviews.....	- 96 -
10.1.1. Paulina Olejniczak-Brząkała & Maja Zabokrzycka – Urban regeneration and cultural life in Nadodrze - 96 -	
10.1.2. Maja Zaboczycka – Wrocław – <i>Backyard Door</i> project.....	- 112 -
10.1.3. Łukasz Medeksza – Department of Strategy and Development of the City	- 124 -
10.2. Tables	- 127 -

Illustrations

Figure 1 – A new allotment in construction in the district of Przedmieście Oławskie. Photograph: Benjamin Péry, 2021.	- 6 -
Figure 2 – The contrast between regenerated and decayed buildings is clearly visible in some part of the city, in this case, in Nadodrze. Photograph: Benjamin Péry, 2021.....	- 9 -
Figure 3 – The four aspects of culture-led urban regeneration. Source: Fan & Kim, 2019.	- 23 -
Figure 4 – A page of the application’s program describing and illustrating the regeneration work that is to be undertaken in the district of Psie Pole, north of the city centre. Source:(European Capital of Culture, 2010).	- 28 -
Figure 5 – The National Music Forum built on the occasion of the European Capital of Culture 2016 in Wrocław. Photograph: Benjamin Péry, 2021	- 29 -
Figure 6 – ‘Bottom up’ codification process for qualitative data. Source: Saldaña, 2013, p. 13	- 36 -
Figure 7 – The 18 main pillars of the 20-minute neighbourhood strategy of the city of Melbourne, Australia. Source: (Metropolitan Planning Strategy, 2017).	- 51 -
Figure 8 – Pathway where the urban furniture was added during the project Wrocław – Backyard Door on Kręta street. Photograph: Benjamin Péry, 2021	- 55 -
Figure 9 – Initial shape of the project on Ptasia street, in June 2017, before it was removed. Source : (Google Street View, 2017).	- 57 -
Figure 10 – Current shape of the location of the project on Ptasia street, in September 2021. Photograph: Benjamin Péry, 2021.....	- 58 -
Figure 11 – The current state of the urban furniture witnesses a lack of maintenance of the project. Photograph: Benjamin Péry, 2021.....	- 59 -
Figure 12 – The initial plant containers are now mainly used as dustbins. Photograph: Benjamin Péry, 2021.	- 59 -
Figure 13 – Football field at the back of the courtyard with the murals that were painted during the event. Photograph: Benjamin Péry, 2021.	- 60 -
Figure 14 – View of the luxury hotel adjacent to the project Kamienica, on Hubska street. Photograph: Benjamin Péry, 2021.....	- 63 -
Figure 15 – The mural depicting water lilies along the pathway entering the backyard on Hubska 58. Photograph: Benjamin Péry, 2021.....	- 66 -
Figure 16 – The yin and yang pattern in the backyard, decorated with plants and flowers. Photograph: Benjamin Péry, 2021.	- 67 -
Figure 17 – View of the backyard from the street, showing the yin and yang pattern, the bench and the partially painted wall in the background. Photograph: Benjamin Péry, 2021.	- 67 -

Figure 18 – Another view of the backyard on 58 Hubska street. Photograph: Benjamin Péry, 2021. - 68 -

Figure 19 – The mural against the garage's wall, depicting a cheetah's head and the signatures of the participants to the project. Photograph: Benjamin Péry, 2021. - 68 -

Figure 20 – The ground floor murals in the backyard of Franklin Delano Roosevelt street, in Nadodrze, decorated with ceramic work. Photograph: Benjamin Péry, 2021. - 71 -

Figure 21 – The first mural that was created as part of the project Podwórko – Nasze Atelier. Photograph: Benjamin Péry, 2021. - 71 -

Figure 22 – Overview of the project Podwórko – Nasze Atelier. The subjects and themes of the paintings demonstrate the personal aspect of the project. Photograph: Benjamin Péry, 2021. - 72 -

Figure 23 – A mural from the project Podwórko – Odkrywanie Sztuki inspired from an artwork from the Czech artist Alfons Mucha. Photograph: Benjamin Péry, 2021. - 73 -

Figure 24 – An artwork depicting dogs from the neighbourhood. The variations in the drawing style witnesses the personalisation of the murals and the participation of several residents to the project. Photograph: Benjamin Péry, 2021. - 73 -

Figure 25 – Comparison of the state of the facades before and after the project Podwórko – Odkrywanie Sztuki. Source: Kolorowepodworka.pl, 2021. - 74 -

1. Introduction

The process of urban regeneration in Wrocław registers in specific historical, political and economic contexts. Even though human vestiges from the Stone Age were found during archaeological digs, the history of the city of Wrocław as it is known today goes back to the 13th century and was initially more or less confined to the actual district of Stare Miasto. The development of its suburb dates back to the 18th century, but it has been incorporated to the city in 1808, after the demolition of the enclosure walls of the city (Książek & Suszczewicz, 2017). The urban development of Wrocław wasn't linear, as it went through several wars which destroyed it partially (European Capital of Culture, 2010). During the Second World War, 70% of the city of Wrocław was destroyed by bombings, but some districts were partially spared, including the district of Nadodrze, which conserved its typical architecture from the 18th century (European Capital of Culture, 2010; Tomaszewicz & Majczyk, 2019; URBAMECO, 2009). After the war, the communist era had a strong impact on the built landscape, as the buildings suffered from strong degradation due to a lack of investments from the central government, followed by an economic decline in the first decade after the collapse of the Eastern Bloc (Mykhnenko & Turok, 2008). Furthermore, the communist regime in place in Poland, as well as in most other Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries, undertook a vast industrialisation campaign throughout the country in order to answer the needs of the centralised economy. It induced the creation of large industrial parks. Furthermore, the communist regime left the central parts of the city behind and focused their investments in the suburbs, as city centres mainly gathered the centralised institutions. After the collapse of the Eastern Bloc, the transition from an industrial productive economy towards a service-oriented economy, coupled with the privatisation, the delocalisation, and the restructuring of the industrial sector induced the partial abandonment of those large industrial complexes, which naturally started deteriorating. To cope with this rapid change of the economic conditions, the municipality of Wrocław developed urban marketing strategies to initiate and support this transition, by creating preferential fiscal conditions for national and foreign businesses, as well as by specializing a segment of its economy in the Information Technologies (IT) domain and in higher education (Glinka, 2017; Książek & Suszczewicz, 2017). In addition to the economic changes stated previously, the regeneration of central districts of the city also aims to improve its international image, attract cultural capital and develop its touristic sector, which were

growing economic sectors before the pandemic. This background creates a propitious context for urban regeneration.

In the collective imaginary, ‘urban regeneration’ often refers to the physical improvement of the urban landscape in order to enhance its aesthetic state. However, the stake encompassed by this term is broader than simply the upgrade of the physical conditions of an urban area. Roberts (2000, p. 17) defines ‘urban regeneration’ as *“a comprehensive and integrated vision and action which leads to the resolution of urban problems and which seeks to bring about a lasting improvement in the economic, physical, social and environmental condition of an area that has been subject to change.”*. ‘Urban regeneration’ can be understood as a tool to solve urban problems of various nature, including the physical improvement of a delimited area of the city. In Poland, the term drawing near this definition of ‘urban regeneration’ is *‘rewitalizacja’*. In 2017, *‘rewitalizacja’* was defined by the Ministry of Investments and Development as *“a global process of social, economic, spatial and technical changes aiming to bring out the most degraded areas from the state of crisis”* (Ministerstwo Inwestycji i Rozwoju, 2017). In Poland, two main types of urban regeneration are taking place. The first type of regeneration is the regeneration *de facto*, through localised intervention, mainly by private actors, and is often limited to an improvement of the built landscape. This type of regeneration occurs since the 90s all across the country. The second type of urban regeneration is much more specific. Since the adhesion of the country to the European Union, in 2004, several ‘Municipal Revitalisation Programs (MRP)’ (*Gminny Program Rewitalizacji*) were – and still are – undertaken by the municipalities of large Polish cities. In those programs, the definition of ‘revitalisation’ is framed by the law and matches with the definition of the Ministry of Investments and Development of Wrocław. To be eligible for those revitalisation programs, the delimited area must be concerned by a conjunction of precise issues that cannot be solved through targeted actions. In this work, the word ‘regeneration’ shall be understood as defined previously and the term ‘revitalisation program’ refers to the official revitalisation programs as defined by the Polish law.

Since the 1970s, a new form of urban regeneration emerged. This new form of urban regeneration implies culture as a tool to answer the issues stated previously. The role of cities in the development of culture is clear: culture is often confined to cities, especially in city centres and, since several decades, it is also seen as a driver of economic growth (García, 2004). Cities now consider culture as a successful way to be integrated to the

international level, as it can be used as a driver for innovation, the development of high added value business such as the creative industry and for the touristic sector (Miles & Paddison, 2005). The integration of cultural infrastructures in the regeneration process of a neighbourhood contributes to increase its economic attractiveness and quality of life. Culture-led urban regeneration is frequently used to regenerate former industrial areas and waterfront sites, but is also commonly used for the regeneration of city centres (Evans, 2005). However, culture-led urbanisation often requires an adaptation of the sense of culture to aim its target (Miles & Paddison, 2005). This approach of urban regeneration and development through cultural policies is important for CEE cities, as their emergence in the global economy and their transition towards a service economy occurred at a time when culture, as well as tourism, were starting to be considered as important drivers of growth and a mean for former communist countries to promote a positive image to the world. However, the image of the culture produced as a promotion tool to attract investments and improve the country's image often gets in tension with the local culture and opposes to the self-identity of local communities (Hughes & Allen, 2005). Furthermore, this phenomenon of urban regeneration and development through culture also paradoxically participates in an uniformisation of regenerative and strategic practices throughout Europe: despite the fact that Europe is constituted of a number of various cultures, which is an element that the EU relies on for its cultural policies and promotion, the practices regarding the use of culture tend to standardise to impel, in CEE countries, an 'European norm'. These elements emphasise the lack of integration of local communities in the cultural creation process.

In the past years, a new form of democratic action emerged. These actions aim to deeply involve citizens in the decision-making process. One of the latest and greatest examples of the emergence of this new form of participation is the setting-up of the Citizen Convention for Climate in France, between 2019 and 2020, that gathers 150 French citizens from all part of the country and as a representative sample of the socio-economic stratifications of the community. This commission, convened by the Macron administration, held several meetings in order to discuss the future orientation of the country's policies regarding climate changes and to propose motions that would participate in the resolution of the problems. The involvement of 'ordinary people' at this level of the decision-making process is unprecedented in the contemporary politic history. Even though the results of this commission can be discussed, this model represents a turn in the history of Western democracies (Kaplan de Macedo, 2020). Since the emergence

of contemporary democracies, citizens mainly are seen as spectators of the urban metamorphosis since the decision-making process usually is top-down. Citizens elect representatives, whose mission is to run the State's current affairs. Regarding urban planning, in most developed countries, the public consultation phase usually represents one of the first steps of the process. However, in some cases, public consultation limit to information session. In other cases, the inclusion of local communities in the decision-making process is much deeper and consists in a mix of bottom-up and top-down strategies. This way of proceeding is starting to show positive outcomes, especially in regard to social conditions (Bianchi, 2019).

The city of Wrocław struggles with public participation in the urban regeneration process. During the first revitalisation programs, the city council was criticised by citizens and activist for the botching of the public consultation phases. More recently, the municipality was often confronted to the lack of interest of local communities and residents in the decision-making process regarding revitalisation, despite the efforts that were made to increase the participation rate. This pushed the municipality to experiment new forms of urban regeneration and public participation. The election of Wrocław to the title of European Capital of Culture (ECOC) for the year 2016 constituted a great opportunity for the municipality to explore and experiment new forms of public participation in the revitalisation process through the prism of culture, such as *Wrocław – Backyard Door*. *Wrocław – Backyard Door* is a series of projects organised as part of the ECOC 2016 and aimed to integrate local communities to the improvement of their physical or social environment through cultural and artistic interventions. A couple of years before the ECOC, the municipality also supported a project ran by the cultural foundation *OKAP*, which aimed to visually renovate a courtyard by painting large murals with the residents of the allotment.

Through interviews with official and cultural actors of the city, literature review and field observation, this work aims to explore the scope of cultural participatory projects in the wake of urban regeneration and Municipal Revitalisation Programs (MRP) in Wrocław, Poland. To do so, four similar projects are assessed, including two projects that were developed as part of *Wrocław – Backyard Door* and two similar projects that are run by a local cultural foundation, *OKAP*. Through this evaluation, several points were addressed in order to identify the scopes of such projects and some factors of success. This work questions the benefits of those participatory projects for the residents, the

position of those participatory projects towards the MRP and the criteria and parameters of success of participatory projects. It also raises the questions of their role of such actions in the development strategy of the city, and, more generally speaking, in the evolution of cities in the perspective of climate changes, social upheaval and political crisis.

The main hypotheses are that, despite the necessity to modernise the city's infrastructures and to regenerate parts of central districts, the revitalisation programs aren't inclusive enough towards local communities, especially in the neighbourhoods dwelled by mid-lower socio-economic classes. Participatory projects, when the residents have some true action levers to act on their environment, might participate in the improvement of the life quality and might increase the social inclusion of those populations. Regarding the factors of success of those projects, the financial and coaching aspects might play an important role. It also seems that the municipality tries to be more inclusive with the residents regarding the MRP. The setting-up of participatory project where the local community decides and acts on the future of their direct environment, with the help of qualified staff that dedicate their work to a small area, might be seen as a solution to cope with the lack of inclusion of the revitalisation programs and to build a bridge between local communities and the revitalisation process. Finally, this participatory approach also might have a future regarding the significant changes that will take place in the mid- long-term due to the democratic limits and future challenges that countries and cities are and will be facing. The more skills and action levers the population have, the more resilient it is, and this will allow local communities to address the upcoming uncertainties.

2. Problematic

2.1. Revitalisation in Wrocław: The case of Nadodrze

The regeneration process in the city of Wrocław isn't a new phenomenon and is still taking place currently in several parts of the city. The case of revitalisation programs in the districts of Nadodrze, north of the historical city centre gives a good illustration of the factors that are at stake in this context, as it was one of the first district to partially benefit from a Municipal Revitalisation Program (MRP) and therefore can be understood in retrospect. Poland has a very strict legal frame when it comes to the process of revitalisation. To be able to benefit from a MRP, the municipality of Wrocław has to prove that some phenomenon, especially negative phenomenon regarding social, economic, environmental, spatial or technical aspects were taking place in the soon-to-be revitalised area. For example, a high crime rate, degraded infrastructures, high poverty rate, or similar phenomenon could render a neighbourhood eligible for such revitalisation program. The notion of 'revitalisation' is often simplified in common language in Poland: everything that concerns the renovation of the built environment is frequently qualified as revitalisation, which isn't correct, as those projects do not usually fulfil the criteria stated by the law. From a Polish point of view, revitalisation is a very specific process that mainly aims to counteract social issues.



Figure 1 – A new allotment in construction in the district of Przedmieście Olawskie. Photograph: Benjamin Péry, 2021.

The best and most referenced example of urban regeneration in Wrocław is the revitalisation programs of the district of Nadodrze, located north from the city centre, across the Odra river. The district of Nadodrze was the first district to undergo an important revitalisation program. The first step of the revitalisation was the delimitation of the concerned area: this delimitation mainly includes parts of Nadodrze, but is broader than the district. It also spread to some part of the neighbouring district, Oldin. To fulfil the criteria required to implement a revitalisation program, the delimited area was artificially created and didn't match the current limits of the districts. This artificial delimitation can be illustrated by some backyards cut in half, in order to 'concentrate' social and environmental issues in this delimitation. Revitalisation in Wrocław isn't a continuous process, it's divided in phases. In Nadodrze, the preparatory phase of revitalisation began in 2008. The first phase took place from 2009 to 2013 and the second phase from 2016 to 2018. Since 2018, no revitalisation program is effective in Nadodrze, but the authorities began the procedure to start the third phase.

2.1.1. Revitalisation or economic regeneration?

Even though the process of regeneration isn't achieved in Nadodrze, several elements can be noticed as part of revitalisation effects. To this date, the image of Nadodrze profoundly changed. Before revitalisation, the district was commonly tied to negative elements and was mostly considered as a run-down area. Nowadays, this district is globally considered as a nice place to spend free time by Wrocławians. Aside from the changes in the general atmosphere, that has been noticeably improved in the past years, the location of the district constitutes an important aspect of its attractiveness. The central location of the district, sometimes considered as an 'alternative city centre', is a factor of attractiveness for people and for economic activities. However, the new economic activities implemented in the neighbourhood thanks to revitalisation usually do not target the local residents of Nadodrze and the population attracted by this neighbourhood usually comes from other parts of the city. For instance, events like *Noc Nadodrza*, three days per year during which people can visit all sorts of artisanal, artistic and commercial activities from midday to midnight, encounter a great success, but mainly from people from outside the district. It could be assumed that there's a sort of gentrification, not only in the residential structure, but also a 'symbolic gentrification'. The business structure of the neighbourhood changed more than the residential socio-economic structure, with some exceptions. With the public investments in the neighbourhood due to revitalisation

programs, a lot of commercial spaces appeared in a very short period of time. Nadodrze went from hardly any commercial spaces to approximately 80 of them within a few years. This had a strong impact on the neighbourhood. However, changes in the structure of the residents of the neighbourhood are also perceptible, but for other reasons, mainly because of private investors who turned some specific real estate into luxurious residential and commercial spaces. This arrival of upper social classes isn't entirely due to the revitalisation programs, it's also influenced by the central location of the district, which increases its attractiveness, and with the changes in the image of the district: revitalisation mainly affected the visual and aesthetic aspect of Nadodrze. This change in the image was partly impelled by the establishment of small businesses, like craftsmen, trendy restaurants, and so on. The changes in the image of the district also is noticeable through the media. Before the revitalisation programs, Nadodrze was often associated with safety issues. Today, it mostly is presented as a nice place to live and spend some free time (Olejniczak, 2016).

The economic dynamics of the neighbourhood aren't linear through time. At the beginning of revitalisation, a lot of new businesses appeared in the neighbourhood, but most of them closed down shortly after. This phenomenon induced an important rotation in the commercial offer of the district. What's observed today is a gap between the intentions of the municipality in terms of commercial offer in Nadodrze and the companies that are now settled there, like the example of the groceries *Żabka*, which multiplied in the district.

Finally, it's important to remind is that Nadodrze, like the other districts of Wrocław, is not homogeneous in terms of population and built environment. Even though an important amount of money was invested in this part of the city, there still are areas that are untouched. These areas are problematic for the authorities, as they are usually clusters of social housing. Thus, social issues are concentrated in a very limited part of the city. In parallel, there also are some blocks that are totally gentrified, sometimes qualified as 'artistic ghettos'. There are several examples in Wrocław where cuts between completely gentrified and run-down area are clearly visible.



Figure 2 – The contrast between regenerated and decayed buildings is clearly visible in some part of the city, in this case, in Nadodrze. Photograph: Benjamin Péry, 2021.

A feeling that some residents of the district have is that the municipality mainly focused on the economic aspect of revitalisation and left the residents and the social questions behind during this process (Olejniczak, 2016). The municipality’s challenge for the next phases of the revitalisation is to produce more inclusive revitalisation programs, that truly include local communities at a larger scale.

Revitalisation in Wrocław, and in Poland, is a rather new process that needs to be adjusted and adapted to every situation and every city. Each district and area of Polish cities is unique and requires a ‘personalised’ program adapted to its socio-economic conditions. Even though big steps forward were made in the understanding of the process and in public consultations, Polish institutions and authorities still are learning and experimenting this process. It also is important to apprehend revitalisation in the general context of the city. In comparison with some other parts of Europe, where urban regeneration also takes place, one must not to forget that the revitalisation programs in Poland are detached from the business. In a lot of other countries, like in Germany, urban regeneration is a process that relies on a public-private partnership, something that the Polish law doesn’t allow.

2.2. The cultural evolution of Nadodrze

Besides its impacts on the social and economic dynamics in Nadodrze, revitalisation programs also influenced the cultural life and cultural institutions in the neighbourhood. A negative example of revitalisation on a cultural actor is the case of *CRK – Centrum Reanimacji Kultury* (Centre for Cultural Reanimation), which used to be a squat in Nadodrze before the revitalisation programs. This place was known all around Europe for its underground alternative punk scene and its left wing and anarchist activists. During the revitalisation phases, the future of the place was compromised because the building was to be renovated by the municipality, who was the owner of the place. The squat spread over two building, one of which was given to another cultural association, *Kontury Kultury*, after the renovation. The second building also was renovated by the municipality, freezing the activities of the association for several years. The municipality was accused, mainly by the residents of the squat, to try to kill their activities. What is sure is that those events strongly divided the community of *CRK*. On one side, there were people who see these events as a natural process of degradation of the community, that is correlated with the will of some of them to change their way of life, built a family and integrate themselves in the wider society. On the other hand, there still is a core of activists who try to continue their activities as they were before the revitalisation of the place, but in retrospect, their activities are now narrower, and the place lost its international reputation. The group still is active, especially by organising events for kids, but in terms of local participation in culture, the type of activities promoted by *CRK* isn't attractive for local residents.

Beside this example, where revitalisation had negative impact on some cultural activities, those programs allowed the emergence of many cultural associations and institutions in Nadodrze. With the impact on the image of the neighbourhood, the funding available for those associations to renovate premises and the encouragements of the municipality, the cultural life developed a lot and NGOs, like the *Foundation for Sustainable Development* settled in the district. Those NGOs benefited from important funding from the EU to sometimes renovate whole buildings. There also is an association run by ex-homeless people, *MiserArt*, that aims to create jobs and help out people living on the street. They created a shop where homeless people build furniture. This kind of place can be qualified as alternative cultural spots, as the aim of this project is to include as much as possible homeless people in the life of the neighbourhood, and to propose cultural activities beside

their work. There also are some temporary events that took place in the neighbourhood due to revitalisation. The example of *Galeria-U* illustrates how some cultural institutions deal with uncertainty. The gallery was designed only to last a few years, and they knew that the building was supposed to be taken down soon. This situation where the lifetime of premises is counted also can be taken as opportunities for some cultural associations, which mostly organise those kinds of temporary events.

Generally speaking, cultural life in Nadodrze is now pretty developed, but mainly thanks to external actors. However, cultural initiatives impelled and run by artists or residents living in the neighbourhood are rare. The main part of the district's residents isn't really involved in the artistic and cultural life of the neighbourhood. Bottom-up cultural processes are usually impelled by very specific groups of people that aren't representative of the population of the district. *CRK* is a good example of bottom-up cultural association, but it doesn't target a large audience and the type of culture it promotes isn't accessible to everyone. Those bottom-up associations are usually run by young artists promoting their alternative culture, they do not represent the social structure of the neighbourhood. This raises the question of public participation in revitalisation programs and in the cultural life of revitalised neighbourhoods.

2.3. Public participation

2.3.1. Public consultation in revitalisation programs

In Poland, the opening of a new revitalisation phase has to go through a public consultation. This process has evolved since the municipality undertook the first revitalisation program after 2004. The public consultation phases during the first revitalisation programs were strongly criticised, mainly by activists, for it was very shallow. The main element that explains this shallowness of public consultation is the narrowness of the deadlines for the funding demand to the EU. It forced the authorities to speed up the preparative phases, including public consultation. For the next revitalisation programs, this approach changed a lot, and public consultation is now a central phase in the revitalisation process in Wrocław. Broadly speaking, there is a lack of knowledge and interest of the population towards the process. Big efforts were made to make the 2018 public consultation accessible to everyone and inclusive: it was organised in accessible places, with a broad information process and the opportunity for the residents to take part as much as possible in the discussion. Nevertheless, the feedback was small and the involvement of the local communities to this process wasn't as successful as expected.

Another element that surely influenced the response to this phase of public consultation is the fact that the main part of the residents of those neglected and ‘problematic’ neighbourhoods are seniors and people belonging to the lower classes of the society. It turns out that those people are usually technically excluded from this kind of process.

However, in 2018, the area that was planned to be revitalised was very small. It corresponds to approximately 0,5% of the surface of Wrocław and is located in the district of Przedmieście Odrzańskie. What came out of the public consultation for this phase is that there isn’t a public acceptance for the project; people are generally opposed to the revitalisation of this specific area. After that, the municipality decided to organised public surveys that aimed to understand what were the population’s expectations in terms of revitalisation. This revealed the scope of the area that needed to be regenerated according to the citizens. The population wanted a big area to be regenerated, that spreads in Nadodrze and in six other districts. It is to be underlined that the authorities and the residents of Wrocław still are learning a lot about this regeneration process. Those programs are relatively new, less than 20 years, so the process still needs to be adjusted, and the population still needs to fully understand all the aspects at stake in revitalisation.

2.3.2. Public participation in culture

Despite the fact that the culture implemented in Nadodrze since revitalisation mainly doesn’t match with the interests of local communities, there are some projects that aim to increase the participation of locals in culture and therefore create a local culture for locals. Some projects, amongst others, focus on a very specific place, between public and private space: the backyards. In terms of architecture, there are a lot of buildings in Wrocław that have backyards and courtyards. Those places are usually in a state of decay and, even if they are part of the building, they aren’t welcoming at all for the residents despite their potential to be turned into a convivial space. The program of the ECOC included several projects focusing on this particular space. *Wrocław – Backyard Door* is one of those projects and was led by local artists and cultural associations, and aimed to implement cultural projects in degraded courtyards and backyards all around the city in order to activate social dynamics around it. The aim of this event was to turn those courtyards into meeting points for the residents of the allotment and to improve the image of those places (Bieniek, 2021). Even though the reception of the residents to some of those projects were contrasted, there were some successful ones.

Another similar project, not in direct relation to the ECOC this time but registering in the same trend, is a project ran by *OKAP – Ośrodek Kulturalnej Animacji Podwórkowej* (Courtyard Cultural Animation Centre), in Nadodrze. This association is led by an artist collective and undertakes the ‘artistic renovation’ of courtyards with the help of the residents, in collaboration with the corporation that runs the revitalisation process in Wrocław. The aim of this association is to improve the participation of the residents in the renovation of their courtyard by painting, sculpting and decorating the walls of the overlooking buildings. *OKAP* animated workshops for residents to learn and practice their art, and then organised the painting of large murals in the courtyard of the allotment. This operation was a true success and created local dynamics, where neighbours asked the association to do the same in their courtyards. It also soldered the residents of the allotment and created positive social dynamics.

2.4. Research questions and hypothesis

Even though the cultural associations and activities that emerged in Nadodrze aren’t fully inclusive and do not always foster the participation of local communities, there are projects, especially regarding artistic and creative activities, that are emerging in this district and all around the city in areas that sometimes are left behind by revitalisation. Those initiatives that target a maximum inclusion of local residents seem to be beneficial, since they offer a place for everyone’s individual idea and respect personal desires, when possible. The courtyards and backyards seem to be a privileged place to implement those kinds of projects, as they are at the interface of public and private space. It also simplifies the projects, as the scale of the allotment is smaller and more intimate. It eases the creation of relationships between residents in comparison to the street’s or the neighbourhood’s scale. The purpose of this paper is to explore the scope of projects of this kind and raises several questions. What are the benefits of those participatory projects for the residents, and what is their position regarding revitalisation? What are the criteria and parameters that make those projects successful? What is the place of those projects in the city’s development policies? More generally speaking, what future do those kinds of projects and other citizen-based projects have in the evolution of cities? To answer those questions, this work focuses on four specific projects: *The Urban Botanical Gardens on Kreta and Ptasia street* and *The Kamienica*, which were implemented as part of the program *Wrocław – Backyard Door* for the ECOC 2016, and the ‘twin projects’

Podwórko – Nasze Atelier and *Podwórko – Odkrywanie Sztuki* that were organised by OKAP.

The main hypotheses are that the revitalisation programs, even though they are necessary to the modernisation and development of the city, do not always reach the expectations of the citizens, especially in the neighbourhoods dwelled by mid-lower socio-economic classes. It seems that participatory projects, where the residents have some true action levers, participate in the improvement of the life quality in the neighbourhood, and to the social inclusion of those populations. Regarding the success of those projects, the financial aspect and the coaching might play a crucial role and that it is beneficial for the city to integrate the population to the process, as explained previously. It seems that the municipality tries to be more inclusive with the residents regarding the revitalisation programs: the setting-up of participatory project where the local community decides and acts on the future of their direct environment, with the help of qualified staff that dedicate their work on a small area might be a solution to cope with the inclusion issues of revitalisation programs. Finally, the participatory approach also seems to have a future regarding the important changes that will take place in the mid- long-term future due to climate changes and the democratic limits that today's Western countries are facing. The more skills and means of action the population have, the more resilient it is, and this will participate in a better coping with the future's uncertainties.

3. State of the art

This chapter aims to explore the already existing scientific literature covering topics that are linked to the research questions. This state of the develops the theoretical framework of the study.

3.1. Regenerating cities

Urban regeneration is a topic that is broadly explored by specialised literature (Jones & Evans, 2008; Leary, 2013; Rossi & Vanolo, 2012). In terms of definition, the general meaning of the word ‘regeneration’, according to the *Oxford Universal Dictionary*, refers to the upturn of life given to something that is in a state of decay. In other words, urban regeneration induces the reintroduction of vitality in a neighbourhood, district or city that became partially or completely inert through time, due to decline or due to an episode of crisis. ‘Regeneration’ is the antonym of ‘decline’ and ‘crisis’, which presuppose the upcoming state of ‘urban death’ (Leary, 2013). Peter Roberts (2000) defines ‘urban regeneration’ as “*a comprehensive and integrated vision and action which leads to the resolution of urban problems and which seeks to bring about a lasting improvement in the economic, physical, social and environmental condition of an area that has been subject to change.*” (Roberts, 2000, p. 17). Based on this definition, ‘urban regeneration’ can be understood as a tool to solve urban problems of various nature, including the physical improvement of an area. In common language, the term ‘regeneration’, as well as ‘renewal’, ‘revitalisation’ or ‘renovation’, is usually positively connoted in the urban context, even though its benefits are questioned by several authors (McCarthy, 2007; Rossi & Vanolo, 2012).

Since the beginning of deindustrialisation, the decline of medium and small cities happens all around the world, as well as the decline of peripheral areas of megalopolis. Municipalities therefore have to find solution to stem this tendency and give back their attractiveness to cities. This upturn of attractiveness can be impelled by urban regeneration (Hwang, 2014). The history of cities highlights elements which help to apprehend and understand the processes of urban regeneration. During the industrial era, urbanisation rate reached more than 50%, as urban areas provided most of the jobs. During the second half of the 20th century, economic crises and several waves of delocalisation resulted in a demographic decline of the cities and an outflow of capital, which led to a deterioration of built environment in cities. This phenomenon of deterioration has been amplified in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) due to the neglect

of communist regimes towards built environment (European Capital of Culture, 2010). In Poland, urban regeneration occurs since the 90s, after the collapse of the Eastern Bloc. Since then, the renovation of the urban fabric first happened through private actors who invested in real estate. At that point, the State wasn't involved in the process. The involvement of the Polish State in urban regeneration occurs since 2004, after the adhesion of Poland to the European Union. The access to special European funds dedicated to urban regeneration allowed the municipalities of the main Polish cities to benefit from Municipal Revitalisation Programs (MRP).

3.1.1. Urban regeneration in Wrocław

In Poland, MRP refer to a strict urban intervention framed by the law. An area must answer several criteria to access to revitalisation. The municipality has to evaluate the feasibility of standard sectorial measures to resolve a problem. If those measures aren't enough to stem the issues, revitalisation can be undertaken. For example, a high unemployment rate isn't enough to justify this kind of intervention. In that case, other solution, like social structures for a better integration of workers and the setting-up of employment offices can be sufficient to resolve, even partially, this social issue. In the case of multiple issues – degradation of built landscape, air pollution due to old heating system, low economic attractiveness or high poverty – revitalisation can be used as a mitigation solution. The setting-up of a revitalisation program therefore requires the coexistence of several problems, especially social issues that cannot be addressed individually and are related to environmental and technical problems. In accordance with the law, the revitalisation process is divided in two steps: The first step consists in the designation and delimitation of the degraded area that needs to be revitalised. The delimitation of those areas is discussed and decided by the municipality. As stated above, if the problems encountered in the appointed area cannot be fixed by standard targeted actions, revitalisation can be considered. The second step implies the development and adoption of the MRP, which enacts the action that will be undertaken to cope with the identified problems at long-term. The final goal of MRP is to sustainably exit the area from the state of crisis by creating an auspicious environment for its sustainable development (Jadach-Sepiolo et al., 2018). A MRP includes a series of tools that helps to carry out the projects. Among those tools, some can be used to allow a preferential right for the municipality to buy real estate in the area, a possibility to grant subventions for renovation work up to 50% of the amount, a simplified procedure to relocate residents

for the duration of the construction work, and so on. Local revitalisation program, which consists in a specific form of MRP, can be added to the project for a part or the totality of the designated area. In addition to the tools that are bestowed by the MRP, it also allows the municipality to recompose the spatial distribution of buildings, enact specific criteria for the facades of the buildings, detail the layout of public space, etc. A MRP also grants the possibility to accord discounts on the acquisition of buildings that are included in the program. This however needs to be planned in a resolution of the municipal council, which represents a legal act, and require an evaluation of the potential impacts that this measure could have on the MRP. For example, the evaluation must offer a guarantee that this measure will be beneficial for the local community and that it won't generate the departure of the residents and the actual economic activity in the neighbourhood (Jadach-Sepiolo et al., 2018).

A truly effective urban regeneration process cannot be dissociated from public participation. Public consultation is, today, one of the first step, if ever the first step, of urban regeneration in most of the economically developed cities.

3.2. The place of the residents in urban development

Public participation and the inclusion of residents in the development strategy of a neighbourhood is an idea that is, today more than ever, getting more and more considered as a crucial step by the authorities in charge of urban development. In many countries, public consultation is a prerequisite to the setting-up of a regeneration program and is often framed by national laws.

During the last centuries, the role of the States became more and more complex. This complexity tended to raise the costs of governments activities. In parallel, due to several economic crises the world underwent in the past decades, the government's costs are increasing, forcing them to undertake cuts in public finances. In the political sphere, the Right wing generally supports the idea that the State should progressively leave behind some of their initial tasks and reduce social prestation. According to the Right, the contemporary issues that States are facing should be resolved by the private sector through deregulation and privatisation of state activities. On the other side, the Left wing argues that the State plays a crucial role in the enhancement of social parameters such as poverty, unemployment and public health and should therefore be maintained strong. A solution brought by researchers is the Empowered Deliberative Democracy, which includes a strong participation of people in the decisions that affect them daily. The range

of action of this approach is quite vast and could present a viable solution for an important number of social issues, especially in terms of urban regeneration. However, there are a number of institutional problems that the scheme of Empowered Deliberative Democracy can't address, and it shall not be used as a universal strategy (Fung & Wright, 2001).

For decades, the residents of cities were seen as passive spectators of urban changes, while decisions regarding urban planning usually were top-down. This approach of urban actions is changing as authorities tend to include residents in the decision-making process by mixing top-down and bottom-up strategies (Bianchi, 2019). Those strategies, which have been experimented in the past decades, are starting to show interesting outcomes, especially regarding social conditions in cities. The initial aim of those projects is to improve the economic attractiveness and induce social innovation in those neighbourhoods. Social innovation can be defined as a range of practices that aim to answer social issues, like poverty, exclusion, deficit of wellbeing, etc. It induces the intervention of many actors and helps to improve welfare and inclusion through the enhancement of social relationships (Bianchi, 2019). Social innovation can answer issues in several domains regarding life quality, to wit access to resources, empowerment of citizens, improvement in human conditions, and so on (Moulaert et al., 2012). Based on those experiences, it seems that the inclusion of local communities in the regeneration process of may be a beneficial and sustainable way of proceeding. Researches show that the chances of creating a place that make sense for local communities depend on their degree of involvement in the project, and that residents tend to be more connected with the place, and feel more responsible for it, if they participated in its development (Barton et al., 2003; Frey, 1999). It appears that community-led projects tend to be more inclusive than market-oriented strategies because of their socially innovative aspects. It is to be underlined that most European regeneration programs do not present an explicit will to include local communities, but rather create new areas that are destined to people from outside the neighbourhood (Vicari Haddock & Moulaert, 2009).

Theoretically, public participation in urban regeneration represents an important part of the process, as it is a mandatory step of the urban regeneration process in most countries. However, in practice, the interests of local communities are often occulted by the economic reality of Western societies. Thus, urban regeneration is mainly used as a marketing strategy to attract economic capital and to compete in the global economy.

‘Urban marketing’ or ‘city marketing’ draws from conventional marketing strategies used in the private sector and aims to promote the city as a consumption product.

3.3. The commodification of cities

The aims of urban regeneration isn’t only to directly improve the life conditions of the local communities: one of the main targets of this process is the economic development allowed by regeneration through the improvement of economic attractiveness, which can be integrated in urban marketing strategies.

Historically, urban marketing is a strategy that allows coping with the contemporary territorial reality and was induced by decades of crisis during the second half of the 20th century, as well as profound changes regarding economic, technological and demographic parameters, as well as other social changes that occurred in Western societies (Paddison, 1993; Van den Berg & Braun, 1999). These changes led to the decline of the industrial production in Europe. In this context, efforts were made in those left behind areas to attract new forms of capital in order to transform and regenerate the economic activities of these places (Paddison, 1993). Cities started to use common marketing strategies as attraction tools in order to increase their competitiveness at a national and international scale, but also to use these strategies as a new urban management tool (Van den Berg & Braun, 1999). In the European context of market uniformisation (European Economic Area) and the increase in international investments, the competition between cities surged in intensity at the end of the 20th century. The increase in the number of urban areas during the last century, coupled with the fast development of information technologies, transports and communication systems, also participated in the intensification of the competition between cities. This context fostered the setting-up of urban marketing strategies by cities as a mean to attract capital. The definition of ‘city marketing’ or ‘urban marketing’ varies depending on the geographical context. In the United States, ‘city marketing’ specifically refers to the economic development at a local scale, the promotion of an area and the stimulation of private-public partnerships in order to achieve urban regeneration. In Europe, researchers prefer to understand the phenomenon in more inclusive terms, that also induces the enhancement of the societal well-being in the concerned area. This definition includes a social facet in the urban marketing process in order to build a “*harmonious city*” (Paddison, 1993, p. 340). The aim of cities through urban marketing is the setting-up of strategies that develop and preserve the natural, economic and artisanal potential of local communities. These

strategies materialise through the creation of a positive image of local communities and infrastructures, the attraction of prosper companies and a blooming touristic life, that leads to the creation of a brand related to the city. The European continent is divided in approximatively 500 regions that host more than 100'000 communities, who are all competing for limited economic resources; this context induces a strong, sometimes aggressive, competition between European's cities (Stanciulescu, 2009).

Even though the promotion of a specific place in order to attract investments and capital is quite as old as capitalism itself, urban marketing distinguishes itself from older practices by the way this promotion is expressed and by the setting-up of specific marketing forms to improve the development of a positive image. Urban marketing is based on the reconstruction of the city's image in order to target specific economic activities that will participate in the elaboration of the aforesaid image (Paddison, 1993). In the United States, for example, urban marketing has become a multi-billion dollars business with the creation and production of by-products related to specific cities or places (Stanciulescu, 2009). Van den Berg & Braun (1999) identify three categories of urban marketing. The first category includes the advertising of one location or activity in the city. The second category encompasses the promotion of a series of services existing in the city, and the last category includes the city as a whole, even though it does not correspond to a specific product. The example of Glasgow, which adopted a strategy of urban marketing to improve its touristic incomes and overcome economic crisis, shows that its urban marketing strategy reduced the external effects of the economic situation – recession, macroeconomic policies, and so on. It also allowed the city to gain the title of European City of Culture in 1990, which is a major factor of the enhancement of the city's image at an international scale (Paddison, 1993). Another example of urban marketing strategy is the well-known products stamped with the 'I♥NY' logo, that became a brand promoting a city and which has been declined for an important number of other cities around the world (Stanciulescu, 2009).

The main challenge of urban marketing policies lies in the speed of the market's trends. Urban marketing policies tend to have difficulties to follow the real changes of the global market and often fail to respond quickly enough to those changes (Stanciulescu, 2009). Urban marketing depends a lot on the organisational and projective capacities of cities (Stanciulescu, 2009; Van den Berg & Braun, 1999). A successful urban marketing policy

induces the satisfaction of the business community, citizens, tourists and investors (Rein et al., 2002).

However, it wouldn't be correct to assess the impacts of urban marketing strategies only through the prism of the economic situation of a city. Urban marketing practices also impact local communities and their identity. On one hand, the arrival of multinational companies promoting a place worldwide allows people to feel closer to the city itself. On the other hand, cities, who are struggling for their economic sustainability, are willing to attract those kinds of companies in their circus, in order for them to market their image on every level. Through this process, there's a tendency of "*commodification*" (Erickson & Roberts, 1997, p. 35) – standardisation of the identity of places, inescapably leading to a loss of local identity. This situation induces two phenomena: it increases the tensions between global and local scales, and it dissociates the true experience of a place and its image through media. Urban marketing, as Erikson & Roberts (1997) present it, tends to bring forward the aesthetically pleasant part of the city while trying to hide the less attractive area to insure its commercial potential. By doing so, it excludes other potential ways of seeing the place, and it unifies the image of an area in the public's mind. Urban marketing therefore brings forward a tiny piece of a city that is supposed to represent its whole.

Today, especially regarding the major crisis the world is facing, cities have to cope with unstable economic and political contexts. This situation often translates by an increase in the importance of local authorities, as they present a better stability and are closer to the communities. This situation directly results from the rise of the competition between local communities, the decrease in the authorities' budget and a general loss of confidence in the institution (Stanciulescu, 2009). This changes in urban marketing strategies to adapt to contemporary conditions therefore requires rethinking the urban regeneration strategies and find new tools for a more service-oriented urban regeneration. The change in regenerative practices can be witnessed by the rise of culture-led urban regeneration.

3.4. Regenerating through culture

Since the second half of the 80s, especially in economically prosper locations, culture is used to implement urban regeneration project. Culture-led urban regeneration has been – and still is – undertaken on the Northern American continent and Western Europe, but such projects also take place in Asia since the beginning of the 21st century (Lin & Hsing, 2009). This way of approaching urban regeneration through culture was spread by the

sharing of knowledge between countries regarding policies and urban development strategies (Miles & Paddison, 2005). The emergence of culture-led urban regeneration results from the need for cities to change their urban fabric from industrial cities to service-oriented economy.

Historically, cities always played an important cultural role. Since the second half of the 20th century and the changes in the economic basis of Western cities, going from industrial to service-oriented, this role of cultural actors became an economic asset that cities can use as a development tool (García, 2004). Culture represents a tool for cities to work out economic prosperity and social equity; it is therefore possible to lead the economic growth through culture and cultural events. Today, this way of apprehending economic growth is spreading, especially through big cultural events, but it is in the most economically developed countries that this type of urban regeneration mainly takes place (Miles & Paddison, 2005). Despite the potential of such policies and the growing interest of city councils, the development of cultural urban policies has been a rather slow and inconsistent process. Broadly speaking, the big investments made by cities in the cultural field aren't integrated in a long-term development strategy and aren't always coherent regarding the cost-benefits balance (García, 2004). With showcases such as European Capitals of Culture, culture is considered by cities as a prosperous way to evolve on an international level, usually impelling innovation, the development of business sector with high added value (e.g., creative industry) and the improvement of tourism. Not only culture has been and is used as a driver for urban regeneration projects, but the meaning of culture is also adapted to encompass new elements that can be used to answer challenges on political, social and economic levels (Miles & Paddison, 2005).

“Culture is a source of prosperity and cosmopolitanism in the process of international urban competitiveness through hosting international events and centres of excellence, high growth business sector such as creative industries, commercial leisure and tourism, and increasing profile and name recognition” (Miles & Paddison, 2005, p. 835)

This type of urban regeneration became a common strategy to bring back to life former industrial and waterfront sites, as well as city centres. The implementation of cultural infrastructures during the regeneration of a neighbourhood was proved to increase the quality of life and to benefit the economy (Evans, 2005).

As explained above, culture-led urban regeneration doesn't confine itself to the European and North American continent, it also spreads throughout some Asian cities. Hwang (2014), through his case analysis of culture-led urban regeneration in South Korea, introduces the notion of growth and decline cycles in the approach of culture-led urban regeneration. This pattern of growth and decline was also seen in CEE cities (Adamiczka, 2016; Mykhnenko & Turok, 2008). Culture-led urban regeneration, if it reflects the local identity, can be used to overcome the decline of a city sustainably. This therefore requires a resort to citizen-oriented policies and bottom-up impulsion for culture-led urban regeneration (Hwang, 2014). Hwang (2014) introduces a five phases process of culture-led urban regeneration. The first phase consists in a diagnosis of decline, that is proved by several indicators: socio-demographic indicators, such as population growth rate, ageing rate, net migration rate, economic and industrial indicators, such as employment rate, manufacture rate, local tax rate, etc. The second phase consists in understanding the reason of this decline and the identification of the local characteristics. The third phase encompasses the elaboration of a database and the determination of a direction that urban regeneration needs to follow. Phase four consists in the application of various techniques that allow orienting of the development identified in phase three. Finally, the fifth phase of culture-led urban regeneration is the setting-up of the strategy followed by a monitoring and feedback phase (Hwang, 2014).



Figure 3 – The four aspects of culture-led urban regeneration.

Source: Fan & Kim, 2019.

Fan & Kim (2019) identify four main aspects of culture-led urban regeneration: the first aspect is the restoration of cultural elements, such as architecture, artwork, nature, etc. The second aspect of urban regeneration through culture is the development of cultural spaces, like museum, theatre, galleries, and so on. The third aspect is the maintenance of the cultural life through tourism and, finally, the culture-led urban regeneration also develops itself through the participation

of the local community (education, public activities, etc.). These four aspects of culture-led urban regeneration can be applied as a continuous process, the setting-up of each

aspect one after the other or combined. The most spread aspects quoted above are the development of tourism, the regeneration, and creation of cultural spaces and the metamorphosis of former industrial areas (Fan & Kim, 2019).

Culture-led urban regeneration can also be apprehended through the relationships between the physical environment and the daily experiences of residents. Vickery (2007) apprehends culture-led urban regeneration through the prism of socio-cultural distinctiveness of an urban area. This distinctiveness is determined by multiple physical factors, such as architecture, road planning, distribution of nature, etc. The physical infrastructures of a neighbourhood or a city sets up the 'experience' that people have from a place, which consists in a combination of the quality of life and the qualities of the physical environment. Policies around urban regeneration now are centred on the improvement of the 'quality of life': the discourse around the improvement of the quality of life covers multiple national urban and social policies, as well as local strategies and many other fields (Vickery, 2007).

Finally, regarding the application of culture policies in urban regeneration, García (2004) identified five points that need to be considered by urban actors when setting up such strategies. The first point is to make sure to plan the investments and building projects in the long run. Secondly, it is important that all levels of local communities are involved in the project, to avoid inequities in the decision-making process. The aspect regarding what culture is being developed is also significant: it is essential that the investments allow the development of the genuine and local culture for a local consumption and then, in second place, for export. Investing in the built environment isn't enough to initiate a sustainable cultural policy, there is a need for investment in the local communities themselves, so they can cope with the changes in their direct environment and follow the mutation process. The last point that needs to be addressed when setting up cultural policies is the follow-up of the evolutions and changes impelled by the policies, as well as their monitoring, to ensure a good application of the formula. As explained previously, culture has a real potential regarding urban regeneration and as a tool for the economic development of cities. The real challenge regarding culture-led urban regeneration and cultural policies is to target the long-term effects of the process and place culture in the centre of the interests. It shall not only be seen as a tool to achieve development and economic goals (García, 2004).

As explained previously, culture-led urban regeneration is a powerful tool to answer challenges of multiple nature, from the improvement and development of the economic basis of a city to the resolution of social issues in difficult neighbourhoods. However, culture also can be used as a mean to legitimate and strengthen the power of a political entity. The role of culture in Europe, especially for the European Union (EU), is therefore an important lever to address the crisis that the institution is facing.

3.5. The role of culture in Europe

In Western Europe, cultural policies are used in regeneration programs since the first half of the 70s. Since then, culture is known to be a powerful tool in urban regeneration (Bianchini & Parkinson, 1993). However, the use of culture doesn't confine to the improvement of the urban conditions. The creation of European Capitals of Culture, formerly European Cities of Culture from 1985 to 1999, along with other European cultural policies, can be seen as an attempt from what would become the EU to remedy the lack of *"cultural legitimacy"* (Patel, 2017, p. 2). It is, in other words, a way for the EU to increase its power and to conquer the public opinion. The European Agenda for Culture, published by the European Commission in 2007, states that the EU is not only an organism that eases trade and international relationships, but it also is a social project that has a successful cultural program. The European Capitals of Cultures can be seen as *"laboratories where European cultural policies meet local, regional, national and global needs, with EU officials, city managers, cultural impresarios, transnational experts, but also normal urban dwellers, or tourists straddling the divide between questions of European history and heritage, issues of belonging and identity, as well as political, social and economic concerns"* (Patel, 2017, p. 2).

Several studies on other editions of the ECOC (Liverpool '08 and Stavanger '08) have emphasised effects of such events on local culture, social inclusion, economic development and cultural and urban regeneration (Fitjar et al., 2013; Liu, 2016). Many positive effects have been attributed to the ECOC 08 in Liverpool, United Kingdom. First, the ECOC 08 in Liverpool have attracted an important number of tourists, including a high proportion of people that visited Liverpool for the first time on this occasion. The main long-term effect created by this event is the regeneration of the image of the city, which was rather negative due to its highly industrial past. The ECOC 08 also influenced residents' participation in cultural activities in Liverpool and increased the demand in this domain, even after the events. However, the surveys also underline that citizens thought

that people living in the city centre were able to take better advantage of the events than residents of the peripheral areas (Liu, 2016). Liu (2016) emphasises the importance of a long-term planning of the events to create a sustainable cultural and economic environment. The second ECOC 08 took place in Stavanger, Norway. What came out of this edition is the important socio-economic diversity of participants. This might however not be representative of every edition of ECOC, as Stavanger has a rather homogeneous population with less socio-economic disparity than other European capitals, but it proved that these events can gather a vast panel of participants, with diverse socio-economic characteristics (Fitjar et al., 2013).

The participation of a city to a major sport or cultural event is often a catalyst to important changes in the urban fabric and cities' infrastructures. The preparation of such events often consists of vast infrastructural renovation campaigns, and whole neighbourhoods are usually regenerated in order to create a positive image of the city that the event will spread. Furthermore, major cultural events represent an opportunity for the local authorities to experiment new cultural policies (Patel, 2017).

3.6. Drivers of change: mega-events

For a better understanding of the processes at stake in the case of the ECOC 2016 in Wrocław, it is important to lean on the theory around mega events, as they often conduct to major urban transformations in order to prepare the city to the circumstances. Mega events, like Olympic Games, sports championships, or major cultural events, such as the ECOC, have an important impact on the host city. The holding of such events has multiple impacts on the local life: it impacts the local labour market and employment, the local business, the housing and real estate market, the transports network, the local fiscality and budget, etc. This kind of events are often perceived as something that will participate in the automatic resolution of the society's problem, but it never does. However, it usually opens the dialogue between the public and private sector and with a fringe of the society around the most urgent problems of a city (Silvestre, 2008). Furthermore, in the context of CEE countries, these events and the way cities manage them illustrate the urge of CEE cities to show to the world how they overcame the situation in which they were after the collapse of the former Eastern Bloc and prove their integration into the globalised world (Müller & Pickles, 2015). The collapse of the Eastern Bloc impacted the CEE countries in two different ways: first, in comparison to Western Europe and Northern America, their urban models and urbanisation strategies were obsolete. Secondly, they had delay in

the integration of a new paradigm, where attention from the world is a generator of value. In this context, mega-events provide to these countries a worldwide visibility and give them an opportunity to make their cities compliant to the Western urbanism trends (Cope, 2015). Mega-events therefore became an important tool for CEE countries to integrate themselves in the international competition and enter the global field (Brenner, 2004; Cope, 2015). However, events like the Euro 2012, that took place in Ukraine and Poland, also tend to underline and expose important dysfunctions in terms of governance and budget management, as mega-events usually participate in the exacerbation of underlying social, governmental and financial issues (Cope, 2015).

3.6.1. The ECOC 2016 in Wrocław

Even though the regeneration process in Wrocław started before the nomination of Wrocław to the title of ECOC 2016, this event, coupled with the European Football Championship of 2012, impacted the process of regeneration by speeding it up. Initially, the city of Wrocław contested for the nomination of ECOC 2016 against 10 others Polish cities: Białystok, Bydgoszcz, Gdańsk, Katowice, Lublin, Łódź, Poznań, Szczecin, Toruń and Warszawa. A final selection took place between the cities of Gdańsk, Katowice, Lublin, Warszawa and Wrocław. The selection comity elected the city of Wrocław by “*a large majority*” (Europejska Stolica Kultury, 2011, p. 7) as it best met the expectations and criteria of the Selection Panel. What came out of Wrocław’s program was a good understanding of ECOC’s topics, to wit ‘European’, ‘The City’ and ‘The Citizens’, an integration of diverse socio-cultural groups to the project, especially the excluded ones, the setting-up of a dialogue around the quality of life shared between aesthetics and ethics, as well as a novel apprehension of ecology (Europejska Stolica Kultury, 2010).

The city of Wrocław undertook a number of projects to make the city match with what was expected for the events. These projects were divided in two categories: regeneration projects, that include the renovation of degraded areas in most of the cities’ districts and main cultural projects, which consist in the construction or the modernisation of the main cultural infrastructures of the city. In its application document, the city unveiled the details of its program: *Spaces for Beauty*. Regarding transports, Wrocław modernised its regional and international network for the occasion. The city undertook the construction of an inner ring road and a highway bypass in order to ease the traffic in town. The main railway station was completely renovated, and a new terminal was built at the Copernicus International Airport. Wrocław also implemented green infrastructures regarding

mobility: it created a bike rental network and planned to expend it to the whole Lower Silesia Voivodeship. Wrocław also undertook the construction of several hotels to absorb the touristic flow, even though part of those infrastructures were planned for the Euro 2012. In terms of public places, the city initiated the renovation of the Centennial Hall and Szczytnicki Park, a major historical monument of the city, listed on the UNESCO World Heritage List. Several districts of the city, for instance the Four Temples district, the old town (Rynek and surrounding), the Psie Pole district and Przedmieście Odrzańskie district in which the neighbourhood of Nadodrze is located, were part of the revitalisation program. The Odra's banks were arranged to offer a recreational and cultural space. The ECOC 2016 application's program also included regeneration projects outside the city's boundaries, in the Lower Silesia voivodeship : the Jelenia Góra Valley Cultural Park, with the renovation of the Gardens and Castle of Jelenia Góra, approximately 100 km west from Wrocław, next to the Czech border also was a flagship for the ECOC 2016 (European Capital of Culture, 2010).

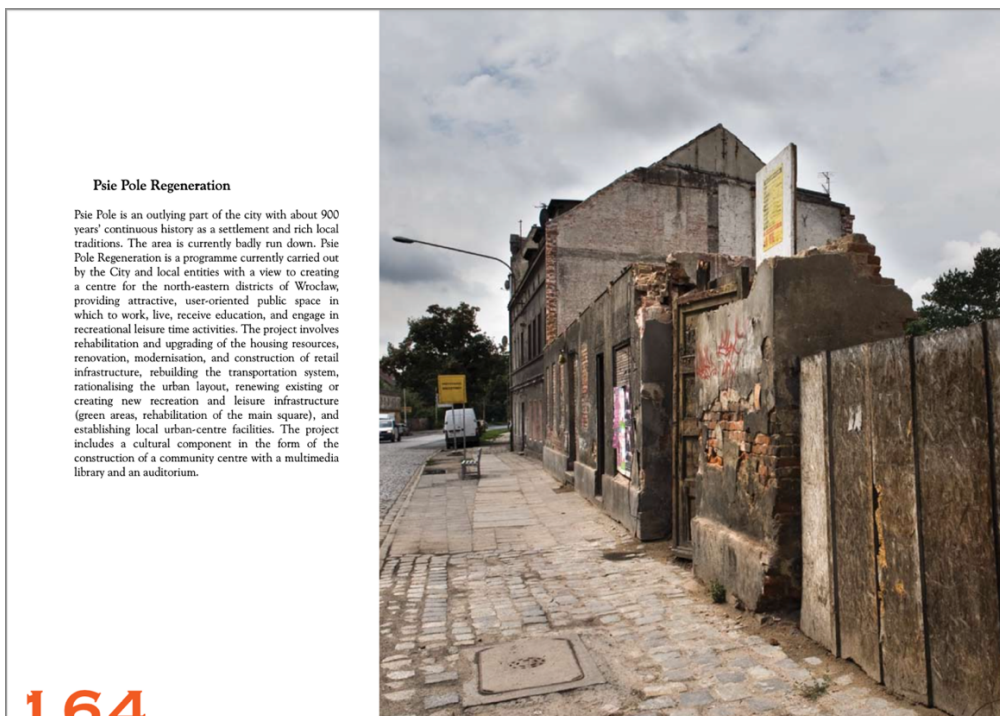


Figure 4 – A page of the application's program describing and illustrating the regeneration work that is to be undertaken in the district of Psie Pole, north of the city centre. Source: (European Capital of Culture, 2010).

In terms of cultural infrastructures, the city of Wrocław planned to recreate the 'Living and Workspace Exhibition' (WUWA) that took place in 1929. This architectural exhibition consists in the construction of a subdivision designed by German architects back at the beginning of the 20th century. The aim of this project was to recreate this

exhibition as close as possible to the original project. The city of Wrocław also planned the renovation of the Wrocław Modern Museum, famous for its ‘Train to Heaven’, and the construction of the National Music Forum. The program also emphasis educational infrastructures: the construction of the New University of Wrocław Library and other cultural and educational infrastructures are listed in the ECOC 2016. Finally, the upgrade of the Capitol Music Theatre ends the list of the cultural infrastructures’ regeneration projects undertook by the city of ECOC 2016 (European Capital of Culture, 2010).



Figure 5 – The National Music Forum built on the occasion of the European Capital of Culture 2016 in Wrocław. Photograph: Benjamin Péry, 2021

The ECOC 2016, as well as the European Football Championship, that partly took place in Poland in the 2012, were important drivers for local tourism and surely impelled the regeneration of some districts and monuments. However, these events only are a part of the drivers of the regeneration process, as the question of the revitalisation of Wrocław was discussed prior to those events.

In order to fully understand the emergence of the need of urban regeneration and revitalisation programs in Wrocław, it is important to dwell on the historical, political and economic context of this part of the world and of the city, as Poland and other CEE countries underwent political and economic shocks throughout their recent history.

3.7. A historical overview of revitalisation in Wrocław

As introduced previously, the process of urban deterioration took place in most former industrial cities, but wasn't only impelled by changes related to the economy of cities: it also was influenced by the historical and political context. CEE countries followed a different historical and political path from the Western European countries. The advent of communist regimes as part of the Eastern Bloc during the 20th century had a strong impact on the built landscapes of CEE cities. At the beginning of the communist era, cities underwent an important phase of industrialisation in order to answer the needs of the centralised economies (Książek & Suszczewicz, 2017). In addition to this, the political regimes that were in place during the second half of the 20th century in CEE can also be seen as a factor of the decline of city centres: central governments focused investments on the peripheral areas, leaving the city centres behind, as they mainly gathered the centralised institutions. The opening of the Iron Curtain in 1989 urged CEE cities to change their economic basis in order to adapt to the western economic model, which already had initiated their transition towards a service-oriented economy. This turn induced the beginning of deindustrialisation and privatisation. The example of Prague, the former capital city of Czechoslovakia, illustrates this steep change in the economy of the country, with a 36% decrease in the number of employees of the industrial sector between 1992 and 1996. In the meantime, the number of employees of the financial sector doubled. The main element that allowed this rapid metamorphosis of the economic system in CEE is the massive investments of foreign companies in the national economies through privatisation (Sýkora, 1999). Deindustrialisation and the opening of CEE to the worldwide concurrency forced cities to develop new methods to attract residents, tourists and economic capital, such as urban marketing (Paddison, 1993; Van den Berg & Braun, 1999). This context of depredation of the urban fabric in central areas during the communist era created a fertile ground for large regeneration programs, for there is an economic interest to increase the attractiveness of those areas. Furthermore, in the case of former CEE countries that now are integrated in the European Union (EU), like Poland, the accession to the EU allowed those countries to benefit from European funds allocated to the regeneration of cities, which strongly accelerated the process.

The situation of Wrocław is slightly different in comparison to other CEE cities, as the city was bound to Germany until 1945. Before World War II, Wrocław already had a rather service-oriented economy. It's only at the beginning of the communist era, once

the city was reattached to Poland, that Wrocław undertook its industrialisation. Amongst other, the city had specialised industries in rolling stocks for railways (Pafawag), in the manufacturing of washing machines (Polar), or in the production of bandages (Viscoplast). After 1989, the integration of the economy of Wrocław to the global economy in the 1990s was quite strenuous. Most of the industries developed during socialism were bought by foreign investors. For instance, the firm Pafawag was bought by the Canadian firm Bombardier Transportation. To attract foreign companies, Wrocław defined “*Special Economic Zones*” (Książek & Suszczewicz, 2017, p. 57) in which companies would have preferential condition to run their business, such fiscal advantages. Wrocław also benefited from the advent of Information Technologies (IT) at the turn of the 21st century. The city hosts divisions of some major IT companies, such as Google, Hewlett Packard (HP) and IBM. Between 2005 and 2013, the employment sector ‘Information and communication’ is the economic sector that witnessed the most important growth in terms of number of employees, growing from about 6’000 employees in 2005 to more than 15’000 employees in 2013. Back then, the IT sector represented approximately 6% of the total share of employment in Wrocław (Książek & Suszczewicz, 2017). The IT domain clearly represents an important element in the economic transition strategy of the city. Higher education also is part of this strategy, as Wrocław hosts some of the most renowned universities of the country (Glinka, 2017).

Geographically, Wrocław is located halfway between Berlin, Warsaw, Prague, Bratislava and Vienna, which makes it a central city at the forefront of Eastern Europe. Through its history, Wrocław sheltered many communities as the city passed from a one hand to another. Through the centuries, the city was integrated in the Kingdom of Bohemia, the Prussian Empire and Germany (Książek & Suszczewicz, 2017). After the Second World War, the German city of Breslau was integrated in Poland and was officially renamed Wrocław. The redrawing of the CEE borders induced the expulsion of the Polish communities from the former Polish cities of Lviv and Vilnius, which today respectively belong to Ukraine and Lithuania. The de-Germanification that took place in Wrocław allowed these Polish migrants to settle and therefore participated in the cultural mix (European Capital of Culture, 2010). The historical background and economic evolution stated previously strongly impacted the urban fabric of the city, as the communist regime neglected whole parts of the city and as the economic transition left former industrial areas behind. This situation induced a growing need for urban regeneration, as the municipality aims to make those central areas attractive again.

3.8. Synthesis

This literature review highlights the complexity and the plurality of fields related to urban regeneration, culture and public participation. This complexity renders the exact prevision of the outcomes of urban regeneration and citizen-oriented projects hard to establish. The plurality of municipalities' interests, pulled between the wellbeing of its citizens, the will to promote local culture and the urge to answer economic goals can lead to the emergence of contradiction between the economic and cultural policies.

4. Methods

This work relies on several methods allowing the production of primary and secondary data. The first method, as developed previously, consists in the elaboration of a state of the art on all the fields gravitating around the topics in relation to the problematic. This first step allows a good general understanding of the situation and the deepening of the subject that helps to specify the research questions (Flowerdew, 2008; Healy & Healy, 2010). Once the problematic is established, a methodology was developed in order to answer the research questions and to test the hypothesis: this work relies on semi-directive interviews and discussions were done with sociologists, actors of the ECOC 2016 and of cultural associations in Wrocław, as well as administration's officials. Due to the sanitary conditions and the uncertainty around the fieldwork, the interviews were conducted before the fieldwork, through videoconference. Then, the observation of the built environment and of the projects studied in this work were undertaken during a 6 days fieldwork in September 2021. The information gathered on the field are enriched by personal photographs. The use of several methods, which all give different perspectives on the topic, allows the triangulation of sources (Jick, 1979; Valentine, 2008). The multi-method strategy permits the emergence of new or complementary research questions during the data collection, here, the fieldwork and the interviews (Sporton, 1999).

Urban regeneration and cultural events mostly take place in the public space. The resulting changes are therefore visible within the city, which is why field observations represent an important way to produce data. This work relies on a 6 days field trip that took place between the 30th of August to the 4th of September 2021.

4.1. State of the art and historical research

Establishing a state of the art consists in the exploration of already published literature on topics encompassing the research questions (Flowerdew, 2008; Healy & Healy, 2010; Longhurst, 2010). To do so, several types of publications, including books, scientific journal articles, websites content, evaluation reports of the ECOC 2016, applications paper and reports by Polish cities and European Commission for the title of ECOC were read and analysed. The state of the art is divided in seven main chapters and two sub-topics that explore urban regeneration (including the revitalisation process in Wrocław), public participation, urban marketing strategies, culture-led urban regeneration, European cultural policies, mega events (including the setting-up of the ECOC 2016 in Wrocław) and the historical background of the city. The state of the art represents an important basis

for the development of questions for the semi-directive interviews. Having this theoretical basis allows a better targeting of the topics explored during the interviews, and also grants the possibility to develop ‘new’ questions based on the answers of the interviewees. It also avoids working on a topic that already was explored by other researchers. Finally, the state of the art provides the possibility to explore the methods used by the scientific community to achieve an academic work (Healy & Healy, 2010).

In this work, the state of the art helped to assess the issues and challenges regarding urban regeneration, culture-led urban regeneration, public participation and what’s at stake with cities’ current situation. This step also allowed the delimitation of the problematic and the formulation of hypothesis that framed the work.

4.2. Semi-directive interviews

The main data collection method of this work relies on semi-directive interviews and discussions with a sociologist and an actor that participated in the projects analysed in this work, as well as with an official from the municipality of Wrocław. Semi-directive interview is the type of interview that is the most widespread in social studies (Chevalier & Meyer, 2018). The interviews are conducted on the basis of a question grid composed of opened questions prepared before the interview (see chapter 10.1: Interviews). This grid, divided in several topics, constitutes a memory aid that helps to structure the interview while offering a flexible frame. It grants a good understanding of how the interviewee perceives the situation linked to the research question through his own experience. Dialogues undertaken with semi-directive interviews therefore represent a bridge between theory and field. The main characteristics of semi-directive interview is that it concedes the possibility to understand a phenomenon through personal experience. In comparison with directive interviews, semi-directive interviews offer some flexibility in the course of the interview, as the questions are opened and some unplanned topics brought by the interviewee can be developed (Chevalier & Meyer, 2018).

As explained previously, the sanitary context that generates uncertainties about the fieldwork requires the conduct of online interviews. Interviewing through a videoconference software, even though it complicates the establishment of human contact, opens the possibility to interview a larger number of people and considerably reduce the travelling expenses (Chevalier & Meyer, 2018). In the case of this work, this interview method also allowed devoting more time to field observation.

The interviews are led on the basis of a contact list, provided by Prof. Katarzyna Kajdanek, from the Department of Urban and Rural sociology at the University of Wrocław. The actors who accepted participating to this study are the following:

Dr. Paulina Olejniczak-Brząkała, from the Institute of Sociology of the University of Wrocław, who focused her research on the regenerations program in the district of Nadodrze and their impacts on local communities.

Maja Zabokrzycka, who works at the *Fundacja Dom Pokoju* and *Łokietka 5 – Infopunkt Nadodrze*. *Fundacja Dom Pokoju* is a foundation specialised in the resolution of conflicts and mediation. *Łokietka 5 – Infopunkt Nadodrze* is a centre that accompanies development and revitalisation in the district of Nadodrze since 2010. It sets up social and cultural projects aiming to ease social integration, meetings and cultural education. It also ensures the contact between the authorities and the residents. Maja Zabokrzycka participated in the project *Wrocław – Backyard Doors*. Her team worked in two backyards located in the district of Nadodrze (Bieniek, 2016; Łokietka 5, 2021).

Dr. Łukasz Medeksza, who works as a deputy director of the Department of Strategy and Development of the city. The Department of Strategy and Development of the city of Wrocław manages various tasks, such as the development and spatial planning, architecture, economic development, etc. (Wrocław, 2021).

Contacts were taken with Dr. Dominika Kawalerowicz, executive director of the European Capital of Culture in Wrocław, Dr. Dawid Krysiński, from the Institute of Sociology of the University of Wrocław and co-author of the evaluation report of the program *Wrocław – Backyard Door*, Bartłomiej Świerczewski and Dr. Jacek Pluta, respectively director and deputy director of the Department of Social Affairs of Wrocław and Jan Mikołajek, co-founder of the foundation *OKAP*, but they didn't take part to the interviews.

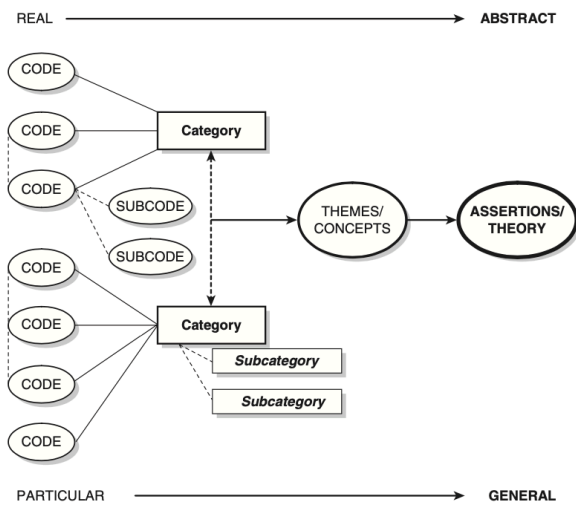


Figure 6 – ‘Bottom up’ codification process for qualitative data. Source: Saldaña, 2013, p. 13

The data produced through interviews was then analysed. Several methods allow the deepening of the analysis of qualitative data. The first method that is used to analyse the content of the interviews is the thematic analysis through codification, which represents a flexible way to analyse the data produced by interviews (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Paillé & Mucchielli, 2012; Point, 2018). This method aims to encompass the main themes and ideas of

the interviews through the reduction and the categorisation of the elements, leading to the simplification of the data. The simplified data can then be used to create a model or a theory. The aim of codification is to simplify the primary data obtained through the interviews in order to create links with the theoretical data found in the state of the art and the field observations (Point, 2018). The ‘bottom up’ codification method consists in the creation of categories through the analysis of the main elements encountered during the interviews, in opposition to the ‘top down’ method that induces the creation of categories to which the coded data is linked. The codification method is completed by the redaction of ‘memos’, which consists in a reflexive report based on the elements that comes out of codification. This redactional process allows the improvement of the researcher’s reflexion (Point, 2018; Saldaña, 2013). This analysis method constitutes the reading and interpretation keys for the data produced through interviews in this work.

The semi-directive interviews lead for this work allowed the gathering of important elements of context, as well as the experiences of actors that were directly involved in the studied cases. The analysis of the interviews created an overview of the events and allowed underlying several elements that participated in some issues encountered during the project or to its success. Those interviews, especially the first ones, also helped to give the work a specific direction and to sharpen the problematic and research questions.

4.3. Field work

4.3.1. Observation

The observation on the field is an efficient way to create data that complete the data gathered through the interviews and the state of the art (Chevalier & Stenger, 2018). Unlike interviews, which mainly rely on listening, observation requires all the senses of the researcher and allows the self-understanding of a situation through the lecture of the landscape (Chevalier & Stenger, 2018; Duncan & Duncan, 2001). Field observations can be used to test or create theories. The main benefit of observation is that it enables the creation of primary data that doesn't pass through the eyes and interpretation of another person and allows apprehending elements that might be difficult to accede in another way (Chevalier & Stenger, 2018).

The observation process has to be structured and guided. To do so, an observation grid helps to census and orient the observation. This thematic grid has one main function: it tells the reader on which criteria the observation focused. The difficulty in the elaboration of an efficient observation grid is to give a good structure to the observation, but that also allows the observation of unpredicted elements (Chevalier & Stenger, 2018).

Table 1 – Observation grid used during the fieldwork.

Observation Grid					
Themes	Day	Time	Object-s	Photograph-s	Description & notes
Urban regeneration programs					
Cultural elements in regeneration, personal contributions in urban regeneration or visible grassroots projects					
Urban Botanical Gardens on Kreta street					
Urban Botanical Gardens Door on Ptasia street					
The Kamienica on Hubska					
Podwórko – Nasze Atelier & Podwórko – Odkrywanie Sztuki on Franklin Delano Roosevelt street					

The observation obtained on the basis of this grid are listed in a 'field journal', that contains the important elements encountered in the field (Chevalier & Stenger, 2018).

The analysis of visual material like notes from field observation or photography can also be done through several methods. A method that can be applied in urban studies is called *visual quantification*. It induces the development of a table that census the occurrence of various visual elements. This analysis method can be done through the description of objects with specific criteria like colour, shape, visual aspect (positive/negative), and so on (Liarte & Maire, 2018). Visual content can also be analysed through codification and thematic analysis, just like qualitative material provided by interviews (Point, 2018). The thematic analysis of field notes allows the simplification and the structuration of the elements encountered in the field and completes the data obtained through interviews.

These observations allowed the assessment of the evolution of the projects through time, which gives an idea of its good implementation. Based on the initial state of the project and its current state, hypothesis regarding the reasons of its evolution were made.

4.3.2. Photography

As explained above, urban metamorphosis and culture in public space is a highly visual topic. Photography is a tool that helps to illustrate the statements made in this work. The use of photography in human science isn't a new thing (Liarte & Maire, 2018). Krase (2007) used photography and visual sociology to illustrate changes in an urban neighbourhood, and social phenomenon, like gentrification. This method helped to contextualise and understand the projects studied in this work. It allows a better representation than a written description. The use of photographs also allowed the comparison of a project back then and currently. This illustrates the evolution of a project through time.

4.4. Synthesis

The following table summarises the methods used for this work and how the produced data has been analysed. It is important to underline that these methods were not taken and applied separately but are complementary to each other.

Table 2 – Summary of the methods used for the gathering and analysis of the data.

Methodology					
Method	Proceeding	Source/academic reference	Contribution to the research question	Type of the produced data	Analysis method
State of the art	Exploration of the existing specialized literature of the topics gravitating around the research questions and hypothesis	Flowerdew, 2008; Healy & Healy, 2010; Longhurst, 2010	Allows a contextualization of the research questions and hypothesis; helps understand the explored phenomenon; gives reflexion angle to the analysis	Qualitative	Codification; triangulation
Interviews	Elaboration of a interview guide on the basis of the literature review; selection of contacts (e.g. contact list); interview (if possible with audio recording); retranscription of the content of the interview; analysis of the content; creation of a contact network ('Snowball effect')	Braun & Clarke, 2006; Chevalier & Meyer, 2018; Flowerdew, 2008; Longhurst, 2010; Paillé & Mucchielli, 2012; Point, 2018; Saldaña, 2013	Better understanding of the local situation; comprehension of the events through various points of views	Qualitative data	Retranscription; codification; thematical analysis
Field observation	Inventory of the situation; "reading of the landscape" (Duncan & Duncanm, 2001); observation of elements underlined during the interviews	Chevalier & Stenger, 2018; Duncan & Duncan, 2001; Liarte & Maire, 2018	Offers a better understanding of the local situation	Qualitative data; visual data	Visual quantification; semiotics and symbolic analysis
Research/reflective diary	Writing down field experience and noting observations and atmosphere; having a trace of how the field was perceived without recoil;	Chevalier & Stenger, 2018	Allows to keep a trace of how the field was perceived without recoil; helps memorizing details; inventories feelings and atmosphere of the field	Qualitative data	
Photography	Picturing of elements met on the field that illustrate the statements written in the research diary and approached during the interviews	Crang, 2008; Krase, 2007; Liarte & Maire, 2018	Illustrates the examples treated in the study; helps the visualization and contextualization of the elements encountered during the fieldwork by the reader; "An image is worth a thousand words – Confucius"	Visual data	

5. Context

Urban regeneration doesn't only take place at large scale through big infrastructural project. Some targeted artistic projects aims to modify and renovate public spaces with the help of local communities. This is the aim of projects like *Wrocław – Backyard Door* and of the work undertaken by *OKAP* (Bieniek, 2016, 2021; Rut, 2017; Wrocław.pl, 2021).

5.1. *Wrocław – Backyard Door*

5.1.1. A brief history of *Kamienica* and backyards in Wrocław

Courtyards are part of the typical architecture of tenement houses (*kamienica*) that were built in Wrocław during the 19th century. Although those buildings are now classified as historical monuments, tenement houses strongly suffered from depredation during the last century (Bieniek, 2016). In the first place, the city of Wrocław suffered from the war. The Second World War caused the destruction of about 70% of the city (Europejska Stolica Kultury, 2010; Książek & Suszczewicz, 2017). Tenement houses that were spread from destruction during the Second World War then suffered from the communist period, when the *kamienica* became state properties. This nationalisation of tenement houses induced the loss of their caregiver, and the renovation of old central area wasn't economically interesting according to the government's calculations. In parallel, during this period, the modernist school of thought emerged, and the State invested largely in residential blocks in the city's suburbs, leaving central areas behind. This situation led to an important depredation of central districts in the main Polish cities and is part of the reason that urges today's Polish authorities to undertake regeneration of central areas. Despite privatisation that took place in the 90s, this situation didn't evolve consistently in the last decades due to a lack of understanding of tenement houses' historical importance and due to the lack of public understanding regarding urban regeneration (Bieniek, 2016).

Until the second half of the 20th century, courtyards were important meeting points for children and elderly people living in the surrounding allotments. There were playgrounds for the kids, residents sometimes even shared meals outdoors or organised dancing evenings (Bieniek, 2016). In some cases, courtyards were used by manufacturers and entrepreneurs as a dedicated place for craft, small production lines, or even as horse stables, before the emergence of motorised transportation. The use of this space as a production place, especially for agricultural activities, is due to the fact that during the 20th century, a significant part of the neighbouring rural population moved to the city and

made this kind of use of this space. During and after the Second World War, many of those places were totally destroyed, either by bombings during the war or by Polish residents themselves: after the War, Poland entered a transition period known as ‘de-Germanification’. The country got rid of everything that reminded the past presence of Germans on its soil, which also induced an important material destruction that participated in the degradation of backyards. During the following decades, those backyards hardly were maintained, which accentuated their state of decay.

Today, this space that once gathered various activities is often filled with parking spots, as people more and more rely on individual transportation for their daily journeys. This increase in individual transportation induced the disappearance of the greenery that once was the main element giving life to courtyards, and completed the killing of social activities in backyards. Furthermore, the increase in the use of car enhanced the depredation rate of tenement houses due to pollutant emissions. Today, there is a need to reintroduce life in those left behind areas, which is the aim of *Wrocław – Backyard Door* (Bieniek, 2016).

5.1.2. What is *Wrocław – Backyard Door*?

The project *Wrocław – Backyard Door* is part of the ECOC 2016’s program and is based on *Wrocław – Entrance from the Courtyard*. *Wrocław – Entrance from the Courtyard* was created by Wrocław’s Academy of Fine Arts, especially by its Department of Art Mediation. This project, created in 2013, aimed to mandate professional artists to implement artistic intervention in some degraded courtyards of Wrocław. The essence of the project was for the artist to closely collaborate with local residents and create an artistic project or run activities with them. Another similar project, organised by OKAP in 2013 in a courtyard of Nadodrze and called *Podwórko – Nasze Atelier* (Backyard – Our Atelier), also inspired the setting-up of *Wrocław – Backyard Door*. Courtyards and backyards are special places, at the interface of public and private sphere, and the program only can be successful if local communities are fully involved in it. This project is based on a negotiation process between the artist and local residents and aims to sensitise the residents to their direct environment and give them tools to act on it. It also seeks to create social dynamics within the neighbourhood: most of the people in these residential buildings don’t really know each other, and this project aims to create a place of socialisation. *Wrocław – Backyard Door* entirely relies on the involvement of local communities. It is based on the collaboration between artists, the municipal cultural

institution, NGOs and the residents. The experience of *Wrocław – Entrance from the Courtyard* has shown that residents show a growing interest in those kinds of activities. It targets the increase in the participation of locals to art and culture, which constitute an important aspect of the application of Wrocław to the title of ECOC. *Wrocław – Backyard Door* is divided in two parts: the first part, composed of twelve permanent and temporary projects, took place between July and December 2015 in sight of the ECOC. The second part includes 17 projects that were created and developed during the ECOC (Bieniek, 2016).

Wrocław – Backyard Door relies on four main key concepts: negotiation, participation, co-determination and co-operation. It aims to intervene in Wrocław's neglected backyards and courtyards and implement culture outside the city centre. In Poland, as in most cities, culture is often confined to the centre, and peripheral areas usually don't host a lot of cultural activities. Even though revitalisation programs aim to enhance the life quality in degraded areas, local communities do not usually feel concerned or feel helpless in front of such important changes. Furthermore, as explained previously, those programs rarely meet the expectations and needs of local communities, as they are often very general and focused on the economic regeneration. Residents of these areas hardly know anything about those processes unless changes are visible in the neighbourhood, and there generally is a lack of confidence of the population towards the authorities in charge of the process. The second aim of this project, beside introducing culture in peripheral area of the city, is to change the status of the population from a spectator of the changes to an actor of the revitalisation through small specific artistic interventions (Bieniek, 2016; Rut, 2017).

5.1.3. Description of the projects

The projects developed as part of *Wrocław – Backyard Door* are various in nature, from audio-visual performance to architectural infrastructures and urban furniture, and have a different degree of integration of the local community. For instance, the project *Pracownia Komuny Paryskiej 45*, by Kamila Wolszczak and Krzysztof Bryła, took place for between 2015 and 2016 and consisted in the setting-up of art workshops and events for the residents of the Przedmieście Oławskie district, usually between Tuesday and Saturday. The activities organised as part of these workshops ranged from concerts or painting workshops for kids to film projection and exhibitions. Some activities were specifically dedicated to kids or adults, and some were dedicated to the whole

generational panel of the community. The project *KTO TAM*, by Karolina Breguła, took place between July and August 2016 and consisted in the creation of a TV series in which the residents of an allotment in the district of Ołbin were the main protagonists. Each episode was produced within three days and a projection was organised every Wednesdays and Saturdays in an open-air cinema located in the courtyard (Bieniek, 2016). A last example of activity organised as part of *Wrocław – Backyard Door* is *Jeż*, a project ran by Iza Rutkowska in the district of Przedmieście Oławskie in August 2015. The project met a great success, especially towards the children of the neighbourhood. The artist asked local residents what animal they most related to and got ‘the hedgehog’ as an answer. She decided to create a seven meters large inflatable colourful hedgehog with sustainable fabrics, on which kids could play. This hedgehog was created with the children of the allotment and was then disposed in the courtyard, so the children could develop a relationship with it. The project met so much success that the artist decided to organise a week at the Hedgehog Rehabilitation Centre, in Kłodzko, with the kids of the allotment (Bieniek, 2016; Rut, 2017; Rutkowska, 2021).

This work focuses on two specific projects included in *Wrocław – Backyard Door: Urban Botanical Gardens on Ptasia and Kręta streets* and *Kamienica*. Those two projects consisted in physical improvements of the backyards by the creation of urban furniture, the planting of bushes and trees and the visual improvement of the courtyard. These projects were chosen for they can be considered as interventions that aim to regenerate the urban environment at the scale of the courtyard. *The Urban Botanical Gardens on Ptasia and Kręta streets* was led by *Dom Pokoju*, a foundation implanted in Nadodrze that is specialised in mediation and resolution of conflicts in the neighbourhood. The idea of the project emerged after the two architects responsible for the project saw an inscription on a wall of a courtyard on Kręta street: tiny urban botanical garden. The team implemented two similar projects in different locations in the district of Nadodrze. Those projects were composed of several phases: first, a picnic was organised in the courtyards to allow the artists to meet with residents and engage the discussion about the project. This event met a relative success with up to 30 participants on Kręta street. In both locations, the main demand of the residents was to increase the amount of greenery in the courtyard, particularly plants that could climb up the walls and hide the degraded facades. They also wanted the creation of a playground and a sport field properly separated from the parking spots, on which children could play safely. The second phase consisted in the realisation of some of their wishes, to wit the replacement of some parking spots by

benches and flowerpots made by the residents, the plantation of a hedge that clearly separated the parking spots from the playground, the creation of a basketball court, the enlarging of the existing urban botanical garden and the refecton of some walls, including the plantation of climbing plants, and a small mural representing the colour of Wrocław's football team (Bieniek, 2016; Rut, 2017).

The *Kamienica* took place in the backyard of the 58 Hubska street, in the district of Huby, and was planned in the same optic as the *Urban Botanical Gardens*. It targeted the improvement of the aesthetics of a degraded courtyard and of the visual aspect of the typical townhouse from the 19th, located next to a luxury hotel. The artist, Jacek Zachodny, and the residents transformed the courtyard into a green area by planting over 120 plants, changing the water paths and filling up the holes. Murals were also made to embellish the walls of the building (Bieniek, 2016).

Generally speaking, *Wrocław – Backyard Door* is diverse in regard to the nature of the projects themselves, the degree of inclusion of the local communities and the temporality of the projects. Some projects are the result of a tight collaboration between artists and residents, while some other projects are less inclusive. The temporality also varies between the projects: some are meant to last, others are temporary and focus more on the relationships that are established and the dynamics that it creates within the local communities than on the physical and material aspect of the courtyard. This diversity between the different projects is due to the freedom given to the artists and the expectation and ideas of the residents and people involved in its elaboration. Despite the good intentions and the efforts undertaken by the artists and organisers, the general reception of those projects was mitigated, and some artwork even created a controversy and protestations from the local community.

5.1.4. The aftermath of the event

The event took place between July 2015 and December 2016 and ended with the achievement of the ECOC in Wrocław. During the events, sociologists were mandated to assess the successes and issues of the program and to draw conclusions through an evaluation report. For the organisers, two aspects of this event were central: the local community had to be involved in the creation and/or the setting-up of the artwork and this setting-up didn't have to be above the executive capacity of the population concerned. Another target of this program was to arise the problem of the state of backyards and courtyards to the authorities, as it is almost impossible to answer all the needs of the

residents through these projects. An indisputable effect of the program *Wrocław – Backyard Door* is the discussion and debate that it generated, raising the question of the relevance of some artworks in regard to the general targets of the event. Through the evaluation report, Krysiński & Banaś (2017) analysed the general strength and weaknesses of the projects of *Wrocław – Backyard Door* based on observations and discussions with organisers and with residents.

The first element observed is that the main part of artists involved in the project answered the main objectives of the project, to wit, stimulate local participation and involvement in cultural activities in the neighbourhood. The variety of activities undertaken testifies the will of artists to adapt their art and craft to the context of the place. The artists were invited to use local elements and resources and compose with the wills and wishes of residents, which would influence the final render of the artwork. It appears that the degree of identification of the local community's needs is a determinant factor regarding the success of the project. Another important point that defined the success of those projects is the understanding of the local context by the artist. When this criterion was fulfilled, the artwork proposed got a much more understandable by the local communities, which also induced a better acceptance. The organisers disposed explicative panels next to the artwork to improve the comprehension of the works. Even with those elements aiming to facilitate their understanding, some projects were hardly understandable for the local communities and some were even strongly criticised by residents. One of the main positive point of this project is its experimental aspect. The diversity of the projects undertaken for the program allowed assessing which kind of project is the most efficient regarding the objectives of *Wrocław – Backyard Door* (Krysiński & Banaś, 2017).

Several elements impacted positively the execution of the project and its public acceptance. The first element fostering the acceptance of a project is its functionality: in most of the cases, a project that was useful for the residents induced a greater approval and fostered its appropriation by the public. The fact that the artwork presents a utility for the residents increase the chance for them to appropriate it, which leads to a better acceptance. An important aspect that those functional structures brought to the local community is a better organisation of the space, which diminish the sometimes anarchic and disorderly state of the courtyards. The second element fostering the acceptance of a project is the creation of immaterial activities when the expectations of the local community in terms of material installations can't be reached for technical or financial

reasons. Some artists, seeing that their resources aren't sufficient to fully answer the material needs of the residents, decided to focus on the social aspect of the project. This allowed positive results and avoided frustration, which can sometimes be the case when effort is invested in something that don't fulfil the resident's expectations. The third aspect of the success of some projects is the durability of the social links generated by the artwork or activity. Residents, who met during the projects, maintained relationships after the end of the event. This aspect is more present in the immaterial projects, where the attention of the participants was focused on themselves instead of on a piece of infrastructure. The fourth positive aspect of the event is that it presented an opportunity for the local communities to undertake something new. This aspect increased the curiosity of the residents in a project and helps to maintain their involvement in this task. It is therefore important that the artist invites the residents to endorse a role that is attractive in their point of view. The fifth positive aspect of some of those projects is the use and emphasizing of local values by using the historical aspect of the place and/or collective memories. This allows a better identification of the residents to the project, and it gives them the capacity of appropriation. The sixth aspect that allows a good implementation of such projects is the mind openness of the artist. To be able to successfully run and complete this kind of project, the artist needs to get rid of his prejudices regarding the area he's working on. This element will also allow the artist to completely adapt and answer the residents' requests in terms of activities or infrastructures. The seventh and last positive aspect identified in some projects presented in *Wrocław – Backyard Door* is the ability of the project to arise awareness of local residents of their role and abilities in the process of regeneration through art and culture, especially the role of pioneer. In case of the success of the project, it encourages residents to pursue the work on their own, by sometimes creating a movement and organising meetings. Generally speaking, the more a project cumulates the elements explained above, the more it might meet success within the local community (Krysiński & Banaś, 2017).

Wrocław – Backyard Door also contained elements that limited the success of the event. Several issues that need to be avoided in the setting-up of such projects were identified. The first issue of the project concerns a general problem in connexion with the advertising campaign of *Wrocław – Backyard Door*, which is the stigmatisation of the communities targeted by the event. The fact that this project aims to stimulate and act in 'sensitive' neighbourhoods induces the fact that there are deficiencies in those areas. Despite the good intentions of the event and the fact that those projects indeed fall within the left

behind area, it sometimes led to tensions between local communities and organisers. The way the artists perceived the place sometimes induced oppositions from some residents. This situation can create a counterproductive effect where local communities distance themselves from the project instead of trying to participate. It can also increase the level of mistrust of the local communities towards the authorities and the organisers. This element requires a certain sensitivity from the organisers and artists to approach the neighbourhood and its residents in a way that won't be considered as offensive. Krysiński & Banaś (2017, p. 33) even suggest leaving behind the aspect of “*shortage perspective*” in those communities and to apprehend the situation through the angle of material and immaterial resources. The second aspect that negatively impacted the event is the fact that some artists didn't fully understand the context in which their artwork would take place. Consequently, the artworks didn't reach the expectations of the local community. In other words, some artworks were meant to answer needs that were above the basic needs that were missing in some neighbourhoods, creating a gap between the expectations of local communities and what artists could offer them. This led the community to feel that public money wasn't correctly managed and that their fate didn't interest the authorities. This aspect had an important media coverage and the accuracy of the project have been debated in the public spheres. The example of the project *I Love and Adore* provides a good illustration to this controversy. The setting-up of this project created a strong mobilisation of residents to protest against an artwork that, according to them, wasn't appropriate at all regarding the physical conditions of their backyard and that public money was spent without consideration. The mobilisation of residents was so important, that the municipality had to act in order to rectify the situation: in the end, the municipality undertook the renovation of the whole courtyard in order to answer the requests of the local community. The third element lays in the difference of cultural capital between artists and residents. The fact that some artworks were created in a conceptual way might have distanced the artist and the local community and ended with mitigated results. This doesn't come from a bad intention from the artists or organisers, but rather from a gap between each other's knowledge in terms of art. The misunderstanding of a project doesn't automatically lead to the rejection of the artwork by the residents, but this difficulty also is the result of the big diversity of the project proposed. The fourth issue identified in some projects is the symbolic, sometimes politically orientated, message passed through the artworks. Even though the use of historical events and common memories can be a factor of success, it is mandatory to

avoid some difficult or controversial historical events. Some projects contained elements reminding of traumatic experiences, such as the 2010 floods or the Second World War and the Holocaust. Including such historical events in this kind of project can be problematic for two main reasons. First, the implementation of such thematic inside a project can generate tensions because of the difference of perception of the events between the artists and the communities. The perception of historical events depends on personal values and induces a gap in the understanding and in the perception of the events. It can therefore increase the distance between local communities and the artists if their point of view is diverging. Same thing regarding political messages: the difference of opinion between artists and residents can carry the exercise away from its initial objective, to wit a collaboration between artists and residents. Those elements aren't appropriate for the social activation that the project aims to generate. Secondly, the reactivation of painful memories through art also can degrade the confidence of the residents towards the artist and take away their will to participate, which totally goes against the targets of the project, and tends to accentuate the existing problem in some areas. It is therefore understandable that, in regard to the diversity of the projects and the variety of the art used, some projects better met the expectations than others (Krysiński & Banaś, 2017).

The setting-up of participatory projects, such as *Wrocław – Backyard Door* also translates a will of the municipality to implement culture beyond the city centre. The development of cultural events in outlying districts even is integrated to a vision of strategic territorial development.

5.2. Culture as a strategic stake

The city of Wrocław has a strong cultural background. The city historically hosted an important multiculturalism through the fact that Wrocław sheltered large communities of various religions and passed from an administration to another. Through the years 1950s and 1960s, several large cultural projects emerged in Wrocław, and some say that the city already was an informal capital of culture since the middle of the 20th century. For the city, this was the basis of the application to the title of ECOC. The main role of the ECOC was to strengthen the existing processes, the communities, and the cooperation that already were taking place within the cultural life of the city. The main sign that underlines the importance and strong presence of culture within the city of Wrocław is the attribution, in 2018, of the Nobel Prize of Literature to Olga Tokarczuk, a Wrocławian author who collaborated in the preparation and setting-up of the ECOC 2016. According

to Łukasz Medeksza, deputy director of the Department of Strategy and Development of the city of Wrocław, the setting-up of the ECOC also might have targeted the consolidation and increase of the cultural production as well as the consolidation of the social fabric.

Another point of the strategy of the city of Wrocław regarding culture is the renovation and construction of highly cultural places. The election of Wrocław to the title of ECOC speeded up this process. The best example is the construction of the National Forum of Music. Furthermore, as explained above (see. Chapter 3.6.1), the ECOC benefited from a series of infrastructural renovation and the regeneration of several neighbourhoods throughout the city. It is however important to state that those regeneration and renovation programs didn't emerge only thanks to the ECOC. It is the result of a long process of modernisation that started shortly after the collapse of the Eastern Bloc and was boosted by the adhesion of Poland to the European Union, which allowed the country to benefit from large amounts dedicated to those specific projects. In terms of budget dedicated to urban regeneration and renovation of infrastructures, the city of Wrocław has the second-highest budget of the country, after the city of Warsaw. Furthermore, the main infrastructural renovations and constructions, to wit the central railway station, the new airport terminal, the renovation, and development of the road network, etc. also were part of the modernisation program preceding the European Football Championship in 2012 which was hosted by Poland and Ukraine. These infrastructures are usually considered as the 'visit cards' of a city regarding touristic activities, and are broadly considered as strategic elements for the development of the city.

Aesthetics play an important part of the development strategy of the city, especially through renovation and regeneration. It is however important to specify that there are several types of regeneration. The first type of regeneration that is taken in account in the city's strategy is the official revitalisation program, that has been taking place in the last fifteen years. This type of regeneration is divided in phases for a specified period and aims to answer very specific objective in very specific areas. The second type of regeneration is the regeneration *de facto*. This type of regeneration, mostly defined by the renovation of single buildings, allotments or public infrastructure, happens on a much smaller scale and is spread all around the city and even outside the city's boundaries. This renovation process was always present at some points, perhaps not as spread as today, but it also is taken in account in the city's development strategy. Sometimes, this type of

regeneration has a strong impact on the city and even has an outreach on a bigger territorial scale. A good example is the renovation of the Wrocław's marketplace in the central district (Stare Miasto). This large historical marketplace located in the city centre was renovated at the end of the 20th century and this project was a great inspiration for the upcoming revitalisation programs and other renovation projects. This marketplace is a big symbol for the city, and a wave of renovation of marketplaces began to spread all across the voivodeship. This kind of 'flagship' renovation represent a structural element is the development policy of the city. The current challenge for the city regarding revitalisation is the renovation of the *Kamienica*, the 19th century's tenement houses, which represent an important architectural heritage for the city and are usually in a state of decay.

5.2.1. Culture and the 15-minute city

According to Łukasz Medeksza, the ECOC in Wrocław had fallouts, especially regarding the orientation of the cultural policies. After the ECOC, the cultural strategy of the city changed towards a more socially oriented strategy. With this strategy, culture represents as a tool to answer three main targets: improve the life quality throughout the city, decentralise culture and increase empowerment of citizen. One of the main projects of the city is to introduce renovation through culture in rather difficult neighbourhoods. This new cultural strategy falls within a more global strategy that promotes polycentrism and that can be explained through the prism of the '15/20-minute city/neighbourhood'.

The polycentric governance model emerged in the 1960s and was conceptualised by Elinor and Vincent Ostrom, through their works about common goods (Carlisle & Gruby, 2019; Ostrom et al., 1961). The main idea of this type of governance is to create several centres that are semi-autonomous in terms of decision-making, while cooperating and competing. In this theoretical model, the choice given to the citizen increases, and they can choose the municipality that offers services that are the most adapted to their needs. On the other hand, this polycentric model presents better adaptation abilities, a greater ability to supply institutional services in accordance with local natural resources and a diminution of risks linked to the multiplicity, to governance actors and to institutions (Carlisle & Gruby, 2019). More recently, this theoretical model gained in popularity in a context of climate changes and with the COVID-19 pandemic, through the 15/20-minute city/neighbourhood concept. Despite its recent emergence in the public debate, this concept is quite old and was introduced at the end of the 1920s by Clarence Perry. It

basically induces to think the city at the scale of the neighbourhood. This theory states that, in the ideal city, every citizen should have basic urban amenities like schools, shops, and other commercial services, green areas, main communication axis and qualitative public spaces within an area that does not exceed a 15/20 minutes radius from the residence location. The 15-minute city concept is already included in several cities' strategic plan, like Portland (Oregon), Paris (France) and Melbourne (Australia) (Pozoukidou & Chatziyiannaki, 2021).

The 20-minute neighbourhood

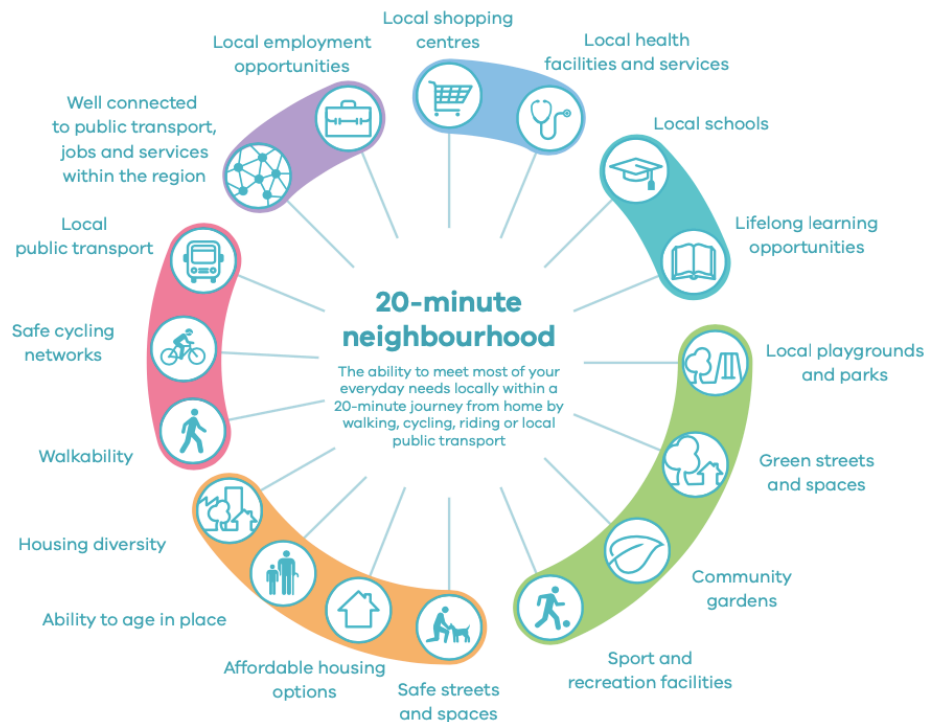


Figure 7 – The 18 main pillars of the 20-minute neighbourhood strategy of the city of Melbourne, Australia. Source: (Metropolitan Planning Strategy, 2017).

Pozoukidou & Chatziyiannaki (2021) assessed the range of strategic plan of those cities. They base the evaluation of those three strategic plans on three main pillars (inclusion, health, and safety) divided in several criteria, from housing attributes to proximity to health infrastructure, fresh food, cultural amenities and include participatory practices, mobility, or land use mix. In all the listed cities' strategic plans, the will of increasing the participatory practice's aspect is explicitly stated, which emphasises the importance of such practices as a tool in the setting-up of the 15-minute city. Furthermore, each of those cities also formulate the will to increase the interactions between citizens through cultural and recreational activities (Pozoukidou & Chatziyiannaki, 2021).

Given those elements, *Wrocław – Backyard Door*, besides being part of the official program of the ECOC 2016, clearly has an experimental purpose for the future development of the city of Wrocław and its underlying strategy. The dissemination of culture and cultural amenities outside the city centre aims to answer two challenges: to use culture as a tool to increase the life quality in those areas and to orient the development of the city towards a model close to the ‘15/20-minute city/neighbourhood’.

5.3. Synthesis

These elements give a good idea of what’s at stake in the setting-up of participatory projects and already give several prerequisites for a good conduct of activities that rely on public participation. The evaluation rapport also presents an overview of the whole event. The next chapter aims to assess the evolution and the factors of success of four projects based on public participation and aiming the activation of the local community: *The Kamienica* and the *Urban botanical gardens on Ptasia and Kręta streets*, that were included in the first phase of the program *Wrocław – Backyard Door*, in 2015, and the twin projects ran by *OKAP* in courtyards of Nadodrze, *Podwórko – Nasze Atelier* and *Podwórko – Odkrywanie Sztuki*.

6. Analysis

This chapter describes the projects and aims to assess their evolution over time. In this chapter, the notion of ‘success’ of a project is often referred to. The success of a project can be assessed by several criteria: the level of interest and participation of the neighbourhood to its setting-up, the level of matching of the project to the desires of the local community and the functional and aesthetic evolution of the project through time (does it still fulfil its initial aim after several years? Is it still usable for its initial purpose?). These assessments were obtained through the consultation of official documents, websites and blogs (for the projects *Kamienica* and both projects of *OKAP*) and through semi-directive interviews with an organiser (for the project *Urban Botanical Garden*). Observations and photographs were also made on the field to compare the initial state of the projects and its current state in order to assess their evolution.

6.1. The Urban Botanical Garden on Kręta and Ptasia streets

6.1.1. Genesis and conduct of the projects

This project was set up during the first phase of the program *Wrocław – Backyard Door* for the ECOC and took place during the second half of the year 2015, before the official event. This project was run Maja Zabokrzycka, from the *Fundacja Dom* and two architects/designer: Agnieszka Bocheńska and Tomasz Bojęc. The foundation is specialised in local development, mediation, and conflict resolution in the district. Since 2009, *Fundacja Dom Pokoju* also runs *Łokietka 5 – Infopunkt Nadodrze* which accompanies the revitalisation process in the district of Nadodrze by supporting local artists and artisans, as well as helping local residents through revitalisation. The foundation was contacted by the organism in charge of the organisation of all the festivities in connection with this edition of the ECOC, *Strefa Kultury Wrocław*, which took the name of *Impart 2016* between 2012 and 2017, for the ECOC. *Impart 2016*, through the coordinator of the project, Natalia Romaszkan, asked the foundation to participate in this project, as they already were experimented with the development of this kind of activities and were familiar with the local communities. As explained above, the concept of the project was basically either to run animation or to create artistic installation in Wrocław’s backyards, mainly in some rather difficult areas close to the city centre. One of the main ideas was to generate an activation process regarding the local communities that aims to improve the local life conditions. *Fundacja Dom Pokoju* was given a budget of about 30’000 zloty (~7’500€), which aimed to cover the personal costs

as well as the materials and tools required for the project. The organisers were responsible for choosing the location and entering in contact with the residents to set it up. The aim of the project was, in a sense, to give the ownership of those courtyards back to the residents. After a couple of weeks of research, the first spot that caught their attention was located in a backyard on Kręta street, in Nadodrze, where some residents already had created a so-called ‘tiny urban botanical garden’. The backyard was neglected, but its state was generally fine and suitable for this project. The already existing botanical garden was construed as a sign that the residents of the allotment were using this space and were interested in improving the backyard. The second spot chosen was also located in the district of Nadodrze. This location was chosen because of its proximity to an association called *MiserArt*. It turned out that the residents weren’t interested in working with this association, as their work wasn’t matching the interests of the local community. Leading a project (urban furniture, plants, etc.) in this location turned out to be more problematic, as the local residents weren’t interested in small interventions in the backyard. They had been promised by the municipality that their backyard, which was in a state of decay, would be entirely renovated, but the municipality’s promises weren’t fulfilled yet. The residents therefore didn’t see the point of doing such small intervention in a backyard that will in any case be renovated. This situation made the residents quite aggressive towards the team, so they decided not to implement the project in this courtyard. Instead, another location was chosen on a tiny square on Ptasia street. The contact and implementation of the project on this second spot and the setting-up of the project also was problematic, as the residents didn’t feel like they owned the place and therefore didn’t see the point of the project.

In both cases, the organisers started by setting up a public consultation: they put tables in the backyard and invited the residents to come down and have a conversation with some catering, in order to know their expectations about the project. A plan of the work that needed to be done was then established with the residents and the work started. The idea was to build urban furniture with some plants, in order for the residents to have a place outside where they could spend time and that would help them appropriate the place.

6.1.2. The resident's expectations

On Kręta street, the residents expressed their will to manage an area of the backyard that would be safe for children. Back then, the playground was close to the parking spots and cars would often drive on the grass next to the playground, which could be dangerous for the kids. The residents agreed to replace a couple of parking spots by benches and plant containers in order to make the place safer and to gain a bit of space. A piece of urban furniture was also built in the backyard for the residents to have a place to sit and that could provide shadow. Some residents, who were big fans of the local football team *Śląsk*, asked to build a goal frame, but the limitation of the budget made it impossible. Instead, they painted the frame of a goal on one of the backyard's walls, with a mural painted in the colour of the football team.



Figure 8 – Pathway where the urban furniture was added during the project Wrocław – Backyard Door on Kręta street. Photograph: Benjamin Péry, 2021

On Ptasia street, things were more complicated. The organisers ran the same type of public consultation than on Kręta street to assess the needs of the local residents. The residents took part in this public consultation, but their involvement in the project didn't go further. It was decided to build urban furniture such as a wooden structure with benches and plants, in order to create a spot in the backyard where the residents could spend some time and that could provide shadow. However, the residents didn't get involved in the construction process.

6.1.3. Outcomes

During the project, several elements didn't go as planned or as expected. Most of the unexpected elements regarding this project occurred during the project on Ptasia street. The first surprise was the level of non-appropriation of the project by the residents, especially in the backyard next to *MiserArt* and on Ptasia street. The organisers were confronted to a population that were not interested in the project at all. During the public consultation, the organisers gathered the suggestions of the residents, but on Ptasia street the inhabitants didn't get involved in the construction process, which was a significant part of the project. Furthermore, after the end of the project, depredations occurred on the structure (tags), the plants died, etc. On the administrative point of view, every single intervention – such as the painting of a wall or the placement of urban furniture – required an authorisation from the authorities, which considerably complicated the process, especially with a such small period of time. The fact that this specific project was run by a foundation that is used to run similar activities with residents of the neighbourhood perhaps induced this uncomfortable situation: the organisers in charge of *Wrocław – Backyard Door* might have thought that, as the foundation was used to cooperate with the authorities for their projects, the administrative aspect might not be an obstacle for them. It is to be stressed that the organisers of the event were responsible for the administrative aspect in the other backyards. This experience also revealed the lack of horizontal communication between the different departments of the city, which added to the already existing barriers to the project. It turned out that this experience was so complicated for the team that they decided not to reiterate this kind of project in the future. Finally, the last element that went wrong occurred a few years after the setting-up of the project on Ptasia street. The organisers were contacted by the municipality and were asked to get rid of the structure they built a few years ago because the parcel on which the project was built was to be sold. After some negotiation, the team managed to move the structure to another location and avoided it being destroyed. However, it induced a loss of sense to the project, as it was meant to be created with the help of the residents of the surrounding area.

Despite some unexpected negative points, this project also included positive elements. The commitment of the residents on Kręta street was good, and the team was surprised of their positive reactions to the project. Their feedbacks were very positive, and they took care of the installation after the end of the project, at least during the following

months. According to Maja Zabokrzycka, it also had positive effects on the relationships between the residents. The association got demands from other residents of the area for helping them implement the same kind of urban furniture in their own backyards, but unfortunately, they couldn't and didn't want to get involved in this kind of project again. However, they shared their knowledge with the people that were interested. Those elements translate a will of some residents to get involved in the improvement of the conditions of their backyard and living place. A florist also asked the team advice as they wanted to try the same kind of project in their backyard next to their shop and involve the residents in the process, but it unfortunately didn't work out.

6.1.4. Current state and analysis of their evolution

The fieldwork only allowed assessing the current state of the project on Kręta street, as the project on Ptasia street was displaced, and it was impossible to find its current location. However, a comparison of the surroundings of the project on Ptasia street before the removal of the project and its current situation reveals that nothing is currently undertaken at this precise location. Through Google Street View, it is possible to get an idea of the situation of the place back in June 2017, at a time when the structure still was standing there (Google Street View, 2017). Even though the place was sold several years ago, no project is currently developed on the site and the place was turned into an informal parking spot. Beside the ongoing real estate project in the vicinity of the location, the surroundings of the former location of the project is mainly composed of wastelands.



Figure 9 – Initial shape of the project on Ptasia street, in June 2017, before it was removed. Source : (Google Street View, 2017).



Figure 10 – Current shape of the location of the project on Ptasia street, in September 2021. Photograph: Benjamin Péry, 2021.

The evolution and current state of the project ran by *Fundacja Dom Pokoju* in a backyard on Kręta street reveals some difficulties in the maintenance of the urban furniture created on the occasion of *Wrocław – Backyard Door*. After six years, the containers for the plants that were installed along the pathway leading to the back of the courtyard and the playground do not contain plants and aren't maintained anymore: it currently doesn't fulfil its initial aim. Some parts of the structure are even broken, and the container dedicated to the plants are mainly used as dustbins for cigarette butts and beer caps. However, despite the lack of maintenance and the fact that most of the urban furniture built during the project is in a state of decay, the plants containers still seem to be used as a bench by some residents. Men could be seen smoking, drinking beers, and having a chat on those plants containers, which shows that the urban furniture is used, but perhaps not as it is meant to be.



Figure 11 – The current state of the urban furniture witnesses a lack of maintenance of the project. Photograph: Benjamin Péry, 2021.



Figure 12 – The initial plant containers are now mainly used as dustbins. Photograph: Benjamin Péry, 2021.

The mural at the back of the courtyard is quite well-preserved. In the meantime, the playground was renovated, presumably by the municipality, and is surrounded by a fence, which improves the safety of the kids.



Figure 13 – Football field at the back of the courtyard with the murals that were painted during the event. Photograph: Benjamin Péry, 2021.

The way this project evolved through time can be explained by several factors. First, the time and budgetary limitation that the organisers came across during the setting-up can be a reason of its current state. The small budget allocated to the organisers (~7'500€) didn't allow answering the needs of the residents and made it impossible to completely fulfil their wishes. The time dedication to the project also was limited. The implementation of such projects require an important dedication of time from the organisers. The project lasted 6 months, between the first public consultation and its achievement. In addition to this already tight timetable, the encounter of some administrative obstacle, like the requirement of a permit even for small interventions in the courtyard or the negotiations with the fire station, owner of the wall at the back of the courtyard, for the murals. It complexified of project, and prevented the organisers from focusing on the work itself. Furthermore, the time and budget were dedicated to two distinct location, one on Ptasia street and the other on Kręta street, which reduced the time and money available for each project. The fact that these two projects were run by *Fundacja Dom Pokoju*, which is an association that is used to organise social activities, perhaps induced the fact that the organisers of the event relied more on them. According to Maja Zabokrzycka, all the administrative constraints that they encountered (authorisations, negotiations with landlords, and so on) were usually overseen by the

organisers of the ECOC when they occurred in some other project. The organisers of the ECOC perhaps thought that, as a professional association, it would represent an obstacle for them.

Another factor that could have affected the evolution of the project is the internal changes in the local community. One of the main element that made the organising team chose the location on Kręta street was the presence of an already existing project, set up by some residents, including a ‘tiny urban botanical garden’ in the backyard. The social dynamics in the local community can be changed by the departure or arrival of one or several residents. It can have an impact on the care given to the existing project. The resident that created the ‘tiny urban botanical garden’ moved out shortly after the end of the project. The changes of the residents inside the local community of the allotment can be the reason of a diminution of the care brought to the project, and potentially participated in its degradation through time. This therefore emphasises the importance of the following factor.

The next element that can explain the current state of the project arises from the second factor explained previously and is the importance of the follow-up of this kind of project. Unlike some other projects of that kind, like the galleries of murals managed by *OKAP, Wrocław – Backyard Door* didn’t provide any follow-up of the project. The artists and collaborators involved in this program were asked to create artistic or functional projects in backyards with the local communities, but once the event was over, no follow-up was planned. As local communities usually evolves through time, it is important that the projects evolves with them in order to maintain the level of appropriation and identification to the project. The aim of *Wrocław – Backyard Door* was to implement projects in the city’s backyards that could match the image of the local community. If this community evolves, the initial project won’t answer the needs of the new residents anymore. Furthermore, the needs of local communities also can evolve through time, even without major changes within the community. The projects ran as part of *Wrocław – Backyard Door* are designed to answer the needs of the local community at a specific point in time. Those needs can evolve, and the project therefore needs to be adapted. This underlines the importance of the follow-up for those projects, in order to integrate them lastingly in the local landscape and community. The importance of the follow-up and monitoring for projects of this kind can also be found in the specialised literature (García, 2004).

Finally, some technical aspects of the allotments, especially regarding water or power supply, can also play a role in the evolution of the projects. After the setting-up of the *Urban Botanical Garden*, tensions appeared around the water supply for the plants, and the residents finally decided to split the water supply between two buildings to share the water fees. The economic aspects of the maintenance needs to be taken in account and to be planned during the setting-up of the project. The organisation of those aspects as an integral part of the project can reduce the risk of conflicts and allow a better chance of success. A solution to that problem would be to allocate a small but regular budget dedicated to the maintenance, or to assign the maintenance to a resident in exchange for a small amount of money. This solution also is recommended by García (2004), who states that, in addition to the investment in a local culture that matches local values and that intends a local consumption, there also is a need for investment in the local communities themselves, so they can cope with the changes in their direct environment and follow the mutation process. However, the difficulty would be to ensure that this budget is indeed spent for the project and not for private use. In that case, regarding the time constraint with which the organisers were confronted, it is hard to consider that this organisational aspect could have been taken in account. This emphasises the importance of the temporal aspect, of a mid-long term follow-up, and monitoring of this kind of projects.

This example underlines some difficulties regarding the setting-up and the evolution of the project. However, some identical initiatives evolved in a more positive way, like the project *Kamienica* on 58 Hubska street, that also was implemented as part of *Wrocław – Backyard Door*.

6.2. The *Kamienica* on Hubska street

6.2.1. Genesis and conduct of the project

The project *Kamienica* benefited from a similar approach in comparison to the *Urban Botanical Garden* presented above, and also took place during the first phase of *Wrocław – Backyard Door*, in 2015. This project was run by Jacek Zachodny in a backyard located at 58 Hubska street, in the district of Huby, south-east of the city centre. Jacek Zachodny is a Wrocławian artist graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts of Wrocław and who also studied archaeology at the University of Wrocław. The project *Kamienica* took place in a depreciated backyard that recently witnessed the construction of a luxury hotel in its vicinity. According to Tomasz Opania, an organiser of this project, the backyard was

filled with old coal cells and garages. There was an old, abandoned outhouse that burned down in 2013 in suspicious circumstances. In front of the building, there was a large parcel of wasteland filled with a dense vegetation. Since 2013, this area was studied by the Department of Artistic Mediation of Wrocław's Academy of Fine Arts and by the Polytechnic University of Silesia for its social issues. Several other problems were diagnosed, such as the uncertainties regarding the future of the building on Hubska 58 – all the surrounding buildings had been renovated –, the feeling of powerlessness shared by the inhabitants, intern conflicts between the residents and so on (Zachodny, 2021).



Figure 14 – View of the luxury hotel adjacent to the project Kamienica, on Hubska street. Photograph: Benjamin Péry, 2021.

This project implied the participation of an important part of the residents of the building on Hubska 58, as well as some volunteers from the surrounding buildings and from the neighbourhood. The artist contacted the residents through a note on the main doors of the building and organised several meetings with them to assess their needs regarding the renovation of the backyard between July and August 2015. The work started in August with the cleaning of the backyard, the brushing of the wild plants, and the cutting of trees and bushes. The residents and volunteers progressively joined Jacek Zachodny in the project. In September, they levelled the land in order to plant grass and marked the contour of a large yin & yang sign in the backyard. This sign will then be filled with stone and grass, to create a contrast of colours. In October, a truck brought some soil and other

materials for the plants. The residents planted several shrubs and bushes around the yin and yang sign, as well as fruit trees in the courtyard, and created a small stony path through the grass. In November, several murals were made with the kids of the surroundings and some walls were renovated. Finally, the last step of the project consisted in the finishing touches of all the previous work and the construction of a bench in the middle of the backyard. During the setting-up of the project, the artist parked a truck in the backyard that was set as a stage for concerts. The official project ended on December 12 with a small event in the backyard where residents and neighbour could share a drink and a snack and have a convivial time. In June 2016, during the ECOC, six months after the end of the project, the artist organised a barbecue in the backyard with the residents and neighbours. During the project, several officials of the city, of the ECOC and of Wrocław's cultural institutions, such as the conservator of visual arts of the ECOC Michał Bieniek, the senator Jarosław Obremski, Wioletta and Piotr Krajewski, from the WRO Art Centre, and Paweł Jodówki, from the gallery *Awangarda*, visited the place (Zachodny, 2021).

6.2.2. Outcomes

All the process, from the contact with the residents to the setting-up and creation of the project, went quite well. The major problem occurred at the end of the year 2016, during the ECOC, and was also faced by *Fundacja Dom Pokoju* with their project *Urban Botanical Garden*. The municipality decided to sell the backyard, precisely where the project stood, through an auction on the 15th of December 2016. The nearby luxury hotel wanted to purchase this parcel in order to extend its surface (Cziszewska & Gawryszewska, 2017). Furthermore, according to Jacek Zachodny, the residents hardly got any information or communications from the municipality regarding the situation of their backyard and the deadline that could allow a formal opposition from the residents was short. On the 22nd of November 2016, Jacek Zachodny wrote to the president of Wrocław, Rafał Dutkiewicz, to postpone the auction (Zachodny, 2021). Finally, the implementation of the project on this parcel dissuaded the municipality to complete the auction (Cziszewska & Gawryszewska, 2017).

As part of the ECOC program, this place was visited by many people during the year 2016. This flow of people induced an opening-up of the place, which helped to solve one of the main issues in the area before the project: enclosing. This opening-up can be supported by the fact that the backyard became a place that isn't only used by the residents

of Hubska 58, but also by the clients of the neighbouring hotel and by the residents of other surrounding allotments. Furthermore, the regeneration of the backyard diminished the visual contrast between the neighbouring luxury hotel and the building on 58 Hubska street, which participated in the reduction of the feeling of stigmatisation. The project seems to have been appreciated by the residents and surely had positive outcomes on the social dynamics, which helped to solve some conflicts. The residents got involved not only in the setting-up and creation of the project, but also in its maintenance. After the end of the official project, in December 2015, the residents took care of the installations and even developed it on their own by planting new plants or installing a second bench. Finally, the project also was included in an international art festival called *Expanded City*, which was run by WRO Centre New Media Art Foundation. A meeting was organised in the backyard of Hubska 58 around the theme *Kamienica Hubska rok po* (*Kamienica on Hubska: a year after*), where the residents were invited to join and talk about their experiences in relation to the project (Zachodny, 2021).

6.2.3. Current state and analysis of its evolution

The observations of the project *Kamienica* revealed a much better evolution on the mid-long term than the *Urban Botanical Garden* on Kręta street. The project kept its initial shape and seems to be well maintained. The plants grew well, the grass is in good shape and there are no significant depredations on the murals, nor on the urban furniture. Even though the access path to the courtyard used by cars is in bad shape and the Hubska 58 building still is in the same cosmetic conditions than in 2015, the project clearly embellishes the area.



Figure 15 – The mural depicting water lilies along the pathway entering the backyard on Hubska 58. Photograph: Benjamin Péry, 2021.

Currently, the project *Kamienica* is in the same shape as it was in 2016, according to a comparison with the photographs on Jacek Zachodny’s website: on the wall next to the path from the street to the courtyard, murals depicting water lilies are painted on a blue and white background. Inside the courtyard, a stone path expands from the courtyard’s parking to the yin and yang pattern in the grass. The yin and yang pattern is made with grass and gravel, and the delimitation between the two surfaces is drawn with white stones.



Figure 16 – The yin and yang pattern in the backyard, decorated with plants and flowers. Photograph: Benjamin Péry, 2021.



Figure 17 – View of the backyard from the street, showing the yin and yang pattern, the bench and the partially painted wall in the background. Photograph: Benjamin Péry, 2021.

In the middle of the symbol and around it, the plants that were planted during the project still are there and in good shape. In front of the wall at the back of the yard, a row of trees stands and the wall is partially painted. On the garage facing the yard, a wall is painted with a big tiger's head and the signature of the people that participated in the project.



Figure 18 – Another view of the backyard on 58 Hubska street. Photograph: Benjamin Péry, 2021.



Figure 19 – The mural against the garage's wall, depicting a cheetah's head and the signatures of the participants to the project. Photograph: Benjamin Péry, 2021.

In direct comparison to the *Urban Botanical Garden* on Kręta street, this project seems to have evolved in a better way. The care brought to the project is obvious and, in comparison to the initial state of the project, in 2016, nothing significant seems to have changed.

Based on the photographic documents shared by Jacek Zachodny on his personal website, it seems that the main part of the residents of the building participated in the project. A high participation rate to this kind of project can also be a factor of success, as everyone,

through their participation, will develop affection for the work done and the result of the project. The appropriation of the space and identification to the place are parameters that need to be taken in account during the elaboration. The more the residents feel that the project belong to them and that they have decision and action capacities, the more it might fit them, and they will care more about its maintenance.

The factors that explain the evolution of the *Urban Botanical Garden* can also be applied in this case. Here, the budget allocated to this specific project seems higher than what was invested in the project on Kręta street: the material and the logistic deployed for this project (grass rolls, truck, tools, etc.) might have participated in the fact that it better suited the expectations and needs of the local community and extended the possibilities. This can be explained by the fact that the organiser focused his work on this single courtyard, unlike the team that work on the *Urban Botanical Garden*. They organised two similar project in different locations that were also quite distant from one another (approximately 1 kilometre). The fact that Jacek Zachodny dedicated the entirety of his time and budget to the project on Hubska 58 also expanded the range of possibilities for the project. These observations support the fact that the time dedication is an element that increases the chances of success of such project, as well as the importance of the budget. The fact that Jacek Zachodny often came back to the backyard and organised several events with the residents after the end of the project can be seen as part of a follow-up and emphasises its importance.

In that case, social parameters of the community surely are different in comparison to the first project. Factors like the initial relationships between neighbours, the age distribution of the residents could have influenced the level of participation in the project, and on its evolution.

6.3. The *Podwórko – Nasze Atelier* and *Podwórko – Odkrywanie Sztuki* projects

6.3.1. Genesis and conduct of the project

The foundation *OKAP (Ośrodek Kulturalnej Animacji Podwórkowej)* is located on Franklin Delano Roosevelt street, in the district of Nadodrze. This foundation has its offices in the centre of a backyard and runs cultural and artistic activities in the nearby area. The association was founded in 2012 by Mariusz Mikołajek and Witold Liszkowski. The main aim of this foundation is to propose inclusive artistic activities that will foster the development of relationships between the residents. Their will is to promote art as a tool for the development of human interaction and to induce an evolution within human

communities. The foundation was created in 2013, as part of the revitalisation program of the neighbourhood, and aims to run a cultural animation centre in the courtyard in which the projects *Podwórko – Nasze Atelier* (Backyard – Our Atelier) stands. A similar project in the neighbouring courtyard, *Podwórko – Odkrywanie Sztuki* (Backyard – Discovering Art), was developed a few years later. The genesis of *OKAP* starts in September 2013, when Mariusz Mikołajek, Witold Liszkowski and Jan Mikołajek decided to decorate the backyard in which their offices are located, on Franklin Delano Roosevelt street, with the help of the residents.

This foundation, which is supported by the municipality of Wrocław, started the first project in 2013: *Podwórko – Nasze Atelier*. Several artists were invited to the events. The first phase of the project consisted in the setting-up of several outdoors art workshops for the kids of the allotment, which constituted the first contacts between the artists and the residents. The fact that those workshops happened in the backyard allowed the other residents to watch and join at will, without any pressure. The artists then organised thematic workshops through the year for Christmas, Easter or Children's Day, and explored several art techniques with the residents, such as painting, drawing, photography, ceramics, etc. Those activities, besides their artistic aspect, aimed to unite the residents around a common project and to build and strengthened their relationship in order to create a positive social dynamic in the allotment. In parallel to those workshops, in 2014, the foundation prepared the backyard for the project of murals, and partially renovated the walls of the ground floor and painted a first undercoat that served as background. In Spring 2015, the paint job started in several spots in the backyard (Kolorowepodworka.pl, 2021).



Figure 20 – The ground floor murals in the backyard of Franklin Delano Roosevelt street, in Nadodrze, decorated with ceramic work. Photograph: Benjamin Péry, 2021.

The creation of those murals constitutes the continuity of the workshops, where the residents could share their feelings and wishes about the artwork. The first mural had for theme the ocean, and was impelled by a group of children. Other thematic appeared then, such as murals dedicated to the local football team *WKS Śląsk*, pets, dinosaurs, landscapes, portraits of the residents, etc. (Kolorowepodwórka.pl, 2021).



Figure 21 – The first mural that was created as part of the project *Podwórko – Nasze Atelier*. Photograph: Benjamin Péry, 2021.



Figure 22 – Overview of the project *Podwórko – Nasze Atelier*. The subjects and themes of the paintings demonstrate the personal aspect of the project. Photograph: Benjamin Péry, 2021.

The participation in the project was free. Residents could join or leave whenever they felt the need to, and no long term commitment was required. Once this project was achieved, the residents of the allotment across the street gathered more than 200 signatures in a petition asking *OKAP* to run the same project in their backyard. This project, that took place between 2016 and 2017, is called *Podwórko – Odkrywanie Sztuki* (Backyard – Discovering Art). The murals on this part of the street also are diverse, with parts representing pets and support to the *WKS Śląsk*, but also paying tribute to the ancient Egyptian culture, cave art or to some more recent artists such as Vincent van Gogh, Mark Chagall or Alfons Mucha. This project even benefited from the participation of a class of student from Naples, that painted an entry leading to the courtyard during an exchange with Wrocławian students (Kolorowepodwórka.pl, 2021).



Figure 23 – A mural from the project Podwórko – Odkrywanie Sztuki inspired from an artwork from the Czech artist Alfons Mucha. Photograph: Benjamin Péry, 2021.



Figure 24 – An artwork depicting dogs from the neighbourhood. The variations in the drawing style witnesses the personalisation of the murals and the participation of several residents to the project. Photograph: Benjamin Péry, 2021.

In 2017, the foundation created a non-profitable gallery on 73 Jedności Narodowej street in which the foundation exposes the work they undertake in the neighbourhood, with the residents. In 2018, the foundation received the Prize of the President of the City of Wrocław for their work (Fundacjaokart.pl, 2021; Wrocław.pl, 2021). The final result of those two projects is about 1200 m² of murals as part of *Podwórko – Nasze Atelier* and about 2000 m² of murals for *Podwórko – Odkrywanie Sztuki* (Kolorowepodworka.pl, 2021).

6.3.2. Outcomes

As explained previously, the success of these projects is obvious. The effects on the backyard are multiple: the aesthetic contribution of the murals to the global visual aspect of the backyard is clear. Even though the buildings surrounding the backyards are quite old-looking, the fact that the main visible part of those buildings, to wit the ground floors and entrances to the courtyard, are fully decorated and aesthetically pleasant focuses the attention on this part of the buildings, which makes the rest of the buildings hard to notice.



Figure 25 – Comparison of the state of the facades before and after the project *Podwórko – Odkrywanie Sztuki*.
Source: *Kolorowepodworka.pl*, 2021.

The diversity of murals, forms and colours attracts the eyes and creates a whole new visual atmosphere in the backyard. Furthermore, like for the project *Kamienica*, these projects induced an opening-up of the backyard. As it is quite unique in the area, these backyards attract tourists. The place is often visited by many people from Wrocław, Poland or even international tourists. This aspect participates in the visibility of the place, and the flow of visitors induces an opening-up of the courtyards. Finally, according to the creators of the project, the activities organised for the creation of those mural created social dynamics that improved the social conditions of the neighbourhood. The relationships between the residents were strengthened by those activities and it improved

the global life quality of the neighbourhood. The main element that witnesses the success of the project is the petition that was signed by more than 200 residents of the neighbouring courtyard for the implementation of the same kind of project in the backyard of their buildings (Kolorowepodworka.pl, 2021). This translates a need of the residents of these neighbourhoods for such activities and a strong will to get involved in the improvement of their direct environment.

6.3.3. Current state and analysis of its evolution

It is to be underlined that, based on the elements analysed for the two first projects, these projects reunites several factors that were identified as ‘factors of success’: a rigorous follow-up of the project, an important dedication of time and budget and the creation of positive social dynamics through the creation of art workshops. Therefore, the current state of the project is, without any surprise, in good shape. There are hardly any depredation on the murals, except some caused by time and sunlight, like the tarnishing of colours. However, the maintenance of the artworks is assured by the foundation and several people could be seen working on the murals. The diversity of colours, subjects or shapes and the personal aspect of the murals establishes a warm atmosphere and give life to the backyards. The opening-up aspect of the project is one of the biggest success. This backyard became an open-sky art gallery that is visited by tourists every year (Kolorowepodworka.pl, 2021).

This project testifies the wide potential of art and public participation in urban regeneration. This project allowed the local community to meet, build relationships and improve the social condition in the allotment, to build something that aesthetically improved their environment, and to reduce the enclosing of their backyard with the flow of visitors. The success of this project also relies on the frame that the foundation provided to the residents, and on the freedom that the local community had to join and leave the project at any time. The follow-up of the projects by the association is undeniably a crucial aspect of the success of the project, and the workshops organised upstream for the residents gave them tools to create artworks at their image and act on the visual aspect of the courtyard. The preliminary phase with the setting-up of those art workshops is as important as the painting of the murals themselves, as they allowed the local community to meet and develop relationships and skills together before creating the murals. The fact that the foundation focused on the communitarian and social aspects of the project participates in its inclusivity, which is a point that is often missing in the revitalisation

programs undertaken by the municipality. However, the support of the municipality also needs to be considered as a facilitating element in the setting-up of the projects.

6.4. The role of the municipality

6.4.1. A need for consistency

The development of this kind of projects registers in a global strategy of the municipality, as explained in chapter 5.2. The aim of the municipality is to develop a cultural policy that is more socially oriented and the project *Wroclaw – Backyard Door*, as well as the gallery of murals and art workshops run by *OKAP* and the residents of Franklin Delano Roosevelt street, register in this optic. The implementation of cultural projects outside the city centre also aims to gear the spatial model of the city into being more polycentric.

The facilitating role of the city is undeniable regarding the authorisation requests for interventions in the backyards and in other area owned by the municipality. In the case of *Wroclaw – Backyard Door*, especially regarding the project *Urban Botanical Gardens*, the requirement of authorisations from the municipality revealed being problematic. On one hand, the project registers in a will of the municipality to implant art and culture in fringe locations and to activate local communities, but on the other hand, the authorities impose the necessity to get an authorisation for the projects that the municipality itself is promoting. This situation represented a waste of time for the organisers, who already were pushed by time, especially regarding *Wroclaw – Backyard Door*, and surely impacted the final result of the projects. This contradiction between the willingness of the municipality to implement and encourage projects like those ones and the constraints of the authorisation perhaps reveals difficulties in the communication between the municipality's departments. A better communication between the department in charge of the culture and the one in charge of the territory management and urban development might be beneficial for the implementation of such projects.

6.4.2. The market reality

This analysis also underlines another problem that the organisers of the *Urban Botanical Gardens* and the *Kamienica* encountered after the setting-up of their respective projects. There is an obvious contradiction between the will of the municipality to develop art and culture outside the city centre and to involve local communities in the artistic and regenerative process, and the urge of the municipality to fructify its parcels by selling them to private investors. For the project *Urban Botanical Gardens*, the organisers were contacted by the municipality a couple of years after the project, and were asked to

remove the structures they designed with the residents so that the parcel could be sold to private investors. They finally managed to move it into another backyard, but this situation contradicts the initial aim of the project, which was to organise and build a project in backyards with the residents and to involve them into the whole process. Furthermore, it appears that this parcel was turned into a wasteland and an informal parking spot, which raises the question of the pertinence of the auction. In the case of the project *Kamienica*, the parcel on which the project took place was to be auctioned even before the end of the ECOC, in December 2016. The organiser wrote to the city mayor and encouraged the residents to defend their project against the auction. This mobilisation finally revealed being effective. Those elements also underline the incoherence between the different objectives of the municipality in terms of cultural policies and regarding its territory management. It reveals conflicts of interest and the complexity regarding the conciliation of cultural policies and the reality of the real estate market. These aspects strongly impact the success of the participatory approach experimented in *Wrocław – Backyard Door*. It seems clear that, if these kinds of projects are perceived as positive by the municipality, there's an urge to find solutions to ease their setting-up and to ensure their survival against the real estate projects that are blooming in the whole city.

6.5. Synthesis

The results of the interviews, the fieldwork and of the exploration of literature highlight several important elements that testify the potential of such urban practices and some guiding lines for their implementation. The main elements highlighted by this work is that the potential of those projects is real, and that there globally is a need and some willingness from the residents to implement those artistic projects in the backyards. However, regarding the good completion of those projects and events, basic parameters are required: an appropriate time dedication and budget and a tight follow-up of its evolution after its setting-up in order to adjust and modify the project to the evolution of the community. This aspect allows a better identification of the local community to the project, and participates in its conservation through time. Those projects also register themselves in a general strategy of the city. The municipality of Wrocław, through its support to those projects, is willing to orientate the development policy towards a polycentric model. This polycentric model consists, amongst other, in the spreading of art and culture outside the city centre, in peripheral parts of the city. However, the city's strategy regarding the cultural policies often enters into contradiction with the reality of



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the territorial development policies of the city and the real estate market, which is massively developing in Wrocław.

7. Discussion

This work highlights the complexity of the transformation of the urban landscape and its multiple parameters. This complexity is not only present on the official and institutional side, within the revitalisation programs, it also appears at a smaller scale, when the residents themselves get involved in the process.

7.1. Scope of public participation and ‘cultural regeneration’

This study identified several aspects that represent an issue for the citizens regarding the official revitalisation programs undertaken by the municipality. Foremost, it seems that the revitalisation programs focus on an economic aspect: the city revitalises neighbourhoods to generate an increase in private investments in order to benefit from tax revenues due to the arrival of private actors in the area. This aspect isn’t always negative for residents, as it participates in the economic development of an area, but local communities are often ‘collateral victims’ and ‘passive spectators’ of the regeneration. The process, through the renovation of the infrastructures and of the housing stock, also generates a displacement of the lower social classes of the society that lived in neglected and affordable neighbourhoods to the suburbs or even outside the city. This phenomenon is known as gentrification and takes place in most of the medium-large cities of developed countries. Furthermore, citizens frequently consider themselves as spectators of the regeneration process. Including them into the process and involving them in the evolution of the neighbourhood with an appropriate support might ease their coping to these changes. However, it wouldn’t be correct to state that revitalisation programs wilfully avoid including local communities in the process. In the last decade, efforts were made by the municipality of Wrocław to include local communities in the process and to bring them in the debate. Nevertheless, up to now, this inclusion isn’t truly effective and local communities don’t really get involved in the process. This work therefore focuses on projects that could be qualified as the ‘missing link’ between local communities and revitalisation programs. Through the study of several projects that aimed to involve local communities in the improvement of their direct urban environment through art and culture, several aspects on which the success of such citizen-oriented projects relies were identified: the importance of the attachment and identification of the local community to the project and to their environment, a sufficient financial investment and time allocation that will allow the fulfilment of their expectations, a correct and rigorous follow-up of the

project through time, even once the setting-up is over and a better coherence in the local governance.

The municipality of Wrocław is conscious of these aspects: they are financing some NGOs, like *Łokietka 5 – Infopunkt Nadodrze* or *OKAP* to accompany local communities through the regeneration process and to help them cope with the changes induced by revitalisation. But this support, apart from *OKAP*, doesn't involve the local communities in the revitalisation process, it mainly seems to deal with fixing issues generated by revitalisation. Giving the local communities the power to act on their direct urban environment represents a step forward in the involvement of local residents in the regeneration of the city. It is to be underlined that the activities undertaken during *Wrocław – Backyard Door* or by *OKAP* cannot – and must not – replace the revitalisation programs undertaken by the city. There is a real need for the regeneration of infrastructures, especially regarding the energetic sanitation of the buildings. The main part of the energy and heat consumed by in Poland still is produced by coal, and it is obvious that there is an urgent need to change the energy supply and the way of consumption. Poland, mainly in large cities like Wrocław, is facing issue regarding the air quality, especially in winter due to coal stoves emissions, and this has become a public health concern in the last decades (Löfstedt, 1998; Vasev, 2017). The revitalisation programs are therefore mandatory to overcome those issues. Furthermore, the range of the need to regenerate clearly surpasses the neighbourhood or the backyard scale and urban regeneration needs to be thought at the scale of the city, in order to create a coherent process. The knowledge and the overview required to answer the current and future challenges of cities, especially regarding infrastructures and coping strategies, shall not rely on local communities. However, the question of the pertinence of the targets of current official revitalisation programs can be raised. Do they really addresses those urgent issues? This question still is opened, but either way, the community-based urban projects surely comes as a valuable complement to the revitalisation programs.

7.2. Limits

Several elements limited the research and impacted the progress of this work. Regarding the methods, this work focuses on the instigators and organisers of those communitarian artistic urban projects. This element can be explained by the ease to contact the organisers and by the fact that they have a good overview of the whole project end to end. The ECOC 2016's program and *Wrocław – Backyard Door* is referenced and monitored, mainly in

English, which eases the apprehension of the effects of those projects from the point of view of organisers and external observers. The sanitary situation also had a rather strong impact on the calendar and required the postponement of the fieldwork. The initial fieldwork was planned for April 2021, but the sanitary conditions made the borders hard to cross and induced the impossibility to go on the field. The fieldwork therefore took place during the first week of September, which matches with the back-to-school time in Poland. This perhaps impacted the availability and the timetable of some actors, as this period usually is quite busy and might have induced the impossibility to meet some actors on the field. However, this effect might be limited as those actors already were interviewed on Zoom during the remote phase of the fieldwork.

Beside those practical aspects, the language barrier surely was a major obstacle while running this work. Some official documents only were written in Polish, which sometimes made their comprehension difficult, even with the use of an online translator. Luckily, in most cases, Google Translate gave an accurate and understandable translation of the documents, which still made them exploitable for this work. The opinion of the residents of those neighbourhoods and of the residents that took part in these kinds of projects would have contained interesting elements for this study and would have provided a broader vision of the situation and of the reach of the projects. The residents' and local communities' points of view represent an important aspect for the assessment and the analysis of the projects studied in this paper. This specific aspect still is to be explored and is as important as the organisers' perspective, because residents are the ones that are directly affected by those programs and are the main actors of the project described in this work. Those projects usually take place in rather difficult neighbourhoods, mainly inhabited by elderly and lower socio-economic classes. The use of English for interviews could have constituted an obstacle for the interviewer and the interviewee and would have diminished the precision of the answer and, therefore, of the data collection. It is also possible that the use of English for the interviews discouraged some officials or organisers to participate in the study.

Elements stated in the results, such as the role of the social parameters of a neighbourhood as a factor of success of community-based projects like the ones studied in this work, are based on speculations and couldn't clearly be demonstrated. The verification of those speculations represents a step forward and is would require to work directly with the local communities. This part of the research was made impossible by the language barrier, as

explained previously, and could be the matter of another study. However, it is highly conceivable that the social factors within the local community have a strong impact on the setting-up and the evolution of the projects through time.

7.3. Thinking further

By giving local communities opportunities to get involved in the regeneration process, even at a small scale through art and through the construction and development of relationships, this work shows that, when those artistic projects reunite basic criteria, they have undeniable beneficial effects on the residents and on the built landscape. In today's regeneration's policies, residents still are often seen as opinion-sharer rather than actors with the ability to truly impact and participate in the revitalisation programs. The inclusion of local communities in the regenerative work as well as in the planning process can bring a big improvement to revitalisation programs, as they are often criticised for their lack of inclusion. However, it requires some investments and a qualified workforce for the organisation, the setting-up and the follow-up of projects in which the residents directly and concretely participate in the evolution of their surroundings. Furthermore, the future of cities and of their citizens seems more than ever uncertain due to environmental changes, that will surely induce social and political upheavals. Those times of uncertainty will require cities to constantly adapt, and the involvement of all every layer of the society into this effort will be beneficial.

From a personal point of view and through these observations, this inclusive approach participates in the increase of the global resilience of a population in view of the upcoming changes through empowerment. The involvement of a broad portion of the population in the evolution of the city and its qualification to do so can generate a more inclusive, progressive and resilient evolutive process. This work shows that, by working together on a common project, communities tend to tighten their relationships, learn how to deal with conflicts and develop skills that are beneficial to the whole community: it participates in the proper functioning of a society.

Today, most of the time of the average citizen is dedicated to an economic activity. This model, coupled with the increase of specialisation of most professions, reduces the ability of each citizen to cope with challenges and shocks that might appear in the future, as their global abilities diminish. A social model pushing for a diversification in the citizen's activities and knowledge might be part of the solution to increase the resilience of communities, and the participatory model could be a key. Perhaps the democratic model

that we know has also come to a turn, where the citizen's duty will not only be to elect representatives in order for them to take decisions and lead, but to directly participate in the construction and the evolution of the community: participation in the decision-making process, for instance through citizens' assemblies, participation in the food production system, like community gardens, citizen-based food production initiatives or urban agriculture, and participation in the improvement of the built landscape, through projects like the ones described in this work, could represent a positive evolution to the current model. This evolution would also induce a better transparency in the decision-making and production processes, in addition to a better integration and development of short economic circuits. However, the main limit to this model is that it cannot be set up without major changes in our productive and economic model. It is incompatible with the perpetual quest for profit and the model of infinite growth that our contemporary world is in. This incompatibility is illustrated in this work: for some projects included in *Wrocław – Backyard Door*, the authorities seem divided between the will for social experimentation that those projects represent and the need to make their land economically fruitful by selling the parcels to private companies in order to make profits. The case of the second project of the *Urban Botanical Gardens* shows that, in some case, the economic interests win, but the case of *The Kamiénica* also illustrates that the mobilisation and the influence of the local community against those practices can be effective and can return the situation.

8. Conclusion

This work aims to explore the range of alternative practices regarding urban regeneration, especially through culture, art and public participation. Today, cities are facing several crises: the need to regenerate city centres in order to gain in attractiveness and competitiveness, but also the need to gain in equity and answer social issues by improving the life quality of degraded neighbourhoods. On the other hand, cities also need to prepare their adaptation to the upcoming climate and social changes. The fact that our current way of life will not be compatible with the evolution of the world in a mid- to long-term future requires an adaptation of cities, and also requires to re-think the way decisions are taken.

Regarding the city of Wrocław, numerous historical events made the city suitable for vast regeneration campaigns that still take place today. First, 70% of the city was destroyed by the bombings during World War II. Only a minor part of the city was preserved, including some historical parts of the city centre composed of *Kamienica*, typical tenement houses from the 18th century which today represent an important architectural heritage for the city. The city was rebuilt after the war and entered another phase of its history: communism. As part of the Eastern Bloc, Polish cities witnessed a reduction of the maintenance of their city centre (Książek & Suszczewicz, 2017). During this period, the administrations mainly invested in the peripheral areas and the city centres started to degrade due to a lack of investments in the infrastructures. At the end of the 20th century and with the collapse of the Eastern Bloc, Polish cities started a process of revitalisation in order to improve the life quality of their citizens and to integrate themselves in the global market. In the 90s, Poland started to invest in the renovation of the cities' infrastructure, but at a slow rhythm due to the economic crisis the country was facing back then. The main event that speeded up the revitalisation of the city was the adhesion of Poland to the European Union in 2004. This allowed the country to benefit from funds provided by the EU and specially dedicated to the regeneration of cities. This period represents the beginning of large revitalisation programs that took place in every main cities of the country (European Capital of Culture, 2010). In addition to this, the city of Wrocław hosted several international events that also participated in the setting-up of the revitalisation process: mega-events, such as large sports championships or major cultural events usually impel the regeneration, construction and modernisation of the main infrastructures of a city and offer an occasion to the host country to shine worldwide, especially in CEE countries, due to their political past (Müller & Pickles, 2015). In 2012,

Poland and Ukraine hosted the European Football Championship. In addition to this, the city of Wrocław was elected ECOC for the year 2016. Those two events impelled the renovation of the main infrastructures of the city, to wit the airport, the main railway station, the tram network, the development of highways, the renovation of the main monuments of the city, and so on.

However, those programs were criticised by the citizens for their lack of inclusion, especially of the lower socio-economic classes that often live in the area that are renovated. Thus, the ECOC was an occasion for the municipality of Wrocław to experiment a complement to revitalisation that aimed to be more inclusive. *Wrocław – Backyard Door* was designed for the ECOC and targeted the activation of local communities through the settlement of art and culture in the backyard of their allotment. Artists or foundations were mandated to develop cultural projects with the local communities in the backyards all around the city, especially in deprived and disadvantaged area. This event also had an experimental aspect for the municipality, willing to import culture in peripheral areas of the city. This strategy registers in a will to orientate the development of the city towards a polycentric model, where the cultural life isn't only confined to the centre, but spreads all around the city. This work focused on two projects developed for *Wrocław – Backyard Door*: the first one, the *Urban Botanical Gardens* was run by the foundation *Dom Pokoju* in the district of Nadodrze, on Kreta and Ptasia street. The organisers discussed with the residents and built some urban furniture in order to enhance the state of their backyard and turn them into more functional places. The second project, *Kamienica*, was run by Jacek Zachodny in the district of Huby, on 58 Hubska street. This project registers in the same approach as the *Urban Botanical Gardens*. The organiser assessed the needs of the residents through a public consultation and turned the neglected backyard into a pleasant garden with tiny urban furniture and murals. Another project of the same kind was also developed in Wrocław by *OKAP*, before the ECOC, and consisted in the painting of large murals in the backyard of an allotment of the Franklin Delano Roosevelt street, in Nadodrze. This project also included several art workshops for the local community before the creation of the murals in order for them to create social links and develop relationships with one another.

The aim of this work is to assess the range and the potential of such socially oriented practices in a context of urban regeneration and to enact a non-exhaustive list of practices that participates in the success of this kind of projects. Through interviews, literature

review and field observations, several elements were identified as important points for the development of successful citizen-based projects regarding urban regeneration through art. This study, by reviewing those three projects, underlines some aspects that participate in the success, the inclusivity and viability of those actions. The two first elements allowing the development of successful and efficient projects are the time and budget allocation. These projects require an appropriate time dedication from the organisers and a sufficient duration to correctly develop the project. An appropriate budget allows the project to better fulfil the expectations of the community, which will induce a better appropriation of the project by the protagonists and increase the chances that the community will maintain it. The second element that allows a good implementation of the project through time is a follow-up by the organisers. One of the elements that seems to reduce the chances of success of a project is the changes within the local community, for instance the departure or arrival of new residents in the allotment. These changes require an adaptation of the project to the evolution of the needs of the community, hence the need for a tight follow-up of the projects. Finally, the authorities play an important role in the development and conservation of those projects by simplifying the official procedures to intervene on the urban environment and by preserving the parcels from urban development and private investments. The authorities also can act on the economic aspect of the projects by financing and supporting those initiatives.

The complexity of the subject and the multiplicity of the situations would require to push the research forwards. The main element missing in this study is the point of view of the residents. Due to the language barrier and the complexity of such approach in a foreign city, this work is only based on the organisers' and on the municipality's points of view. A complement of this work based on the experiences of the local communities involved in such projects would bring a greater objectivity. Furthermore, this work focuses on four specific cases. This allowed drawing several conclusions, but for some more exhaustive results, it would be required to run a broader study on more cases and in different cities. This would allow the identification of more factors that contributes to the good conduct of those projects, and it would also allow taking in account the different urban governmental contexts in which those projects take place.

The scope of those practices in the process of urban regeneration is interesting. These projects allow focusing the regeneration process on the local community and on the social

dynamics that take place in a neighbourhood rather than to focus on economic aspects, as it's the case in the official revitalisation programs. When the projects regroup some basic criteria, this community-based regeneration can be a good complement to the official revitalisation programs undertaken by cities and can be considered as the 'missing chain' that link the official revitalisation programs and the citizens. However, this type of regenerative works isn't sufficient to answer the challenges cities are facing. There's an urgent need, especially in Poland where the energy mix is mainly based on coal, to update the infrastructures and impel an energetic transition (Löfstedt, 1998; Vasev, 2017). This transition goes through, among other, the modernisation of the housing stock and transport infrastructures, which require a real intervention from the authorities and significant works on the built environment.

The results obtained during the interviews and what came out of the field observation allows answering the problematic and research questions raised in chapter 2.4. Foremost, regarding the benefits of those community-based projects, it seems that those projects bring a real added value to the revitalisation programs. Those practices allow centring the work on the needs of the local communities: by working directly with the residents and at the scale of the allotment, the real expectations and needs of the local communities can be assessed in a better way than through the conventional public consultation. This approach could partly answer the critics of the population regarding the public consultation set up by the municipality as part of the revitalisation programs. Those participatory projects can be seen as a link between the local communities and the revitalisation programs, but it cannot be seen as a viable alternative to those official programs. It should rather be considered as a way to integrate the local communities in the revitalisation process by working at the scale of the allotment. The case of *OKAP* and their murals projects on Franklin Delano Roosevelt street, in Nadodrze, shows that there obviously is a demand for such intervention. The petition signed by more than 200 residents of the neighbouring allotment asking the foundation to run an identical project in their backyard supports this statement. The setting-up of such projects however needs to answer several criteria, to wit an appropriate time dedication, an appropriate budget and financial support and a good follow-up of the project after its setting-up. Some other criteria might also need to be taken in account, but they couldn't be identified in this work. The identification of an exhaustive list of factors of success would require a broader study of participatory project of this kind and in other cities. This work also reveals that those participatory projects and the implementation of culture in peripheral area translates

the development and cultural policy of the municipality in order to export culture outside the city centre. *Wrocław – Backyard Door* and the projects led by *OKAP* register themselves in a will of the municipality to develop a more polycentric model. This aspect of the project also supports the allegations of Kiran Klaus Patel (2017), for whom the large cultural events, such as the European Capitals of Culture, can be seen as “laboratories” (Patel, 2017, p. 2), where the authorities experiment new social and cultural policies. The example of the cultural strategy of the municipality of Wrocław and the program *Wrocław – Backyard Door* organised as part of the ECOC 2016 shows the importance of mega-events for the development and experimentation of the cities. Finally, regarding the future of such community-based practices, it seems that the implementation of such projects could represent an interesting policy regarding the evolutions of the cities. Through the empowerment of the local communities by giving them tools to express themselves and have a real effect on their environment and by giving them the keys and a favourable context in which they can sort their issues by themselves, it could participate in the increase the resilience of local communities and help them cope with the upcoming changes that the world will face in a rather close future.

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10. Annexes

10.1. Interviews

10.1.1. Paulina Olejniczak-Brząkała & Maja Zabokrzycka – Urban regeneration and cultural life in Nadodrze

Benjamin Péry: *Let's start with a few questions regarding the revitalisation programs themselves. Paulina, I've been told that you did your Ph.D. on questions around regeneration programs in Nadodrze so you're quite an expert. Could you perhaps sum up the context in which those regeneration programs took place in Nadodrze?*

Paulina Olejniczak-Brząkała: First of all, I would like to say that my thesis wasn't connected with revitalisation as a process, but more with Nadodrze as a district that was revitalised for a few years now. To be honest, I was more focused on the social practices than revitalisation as a process. The other thing is that, generally, process of revitalisation in Poland is strictly connected with the law, so if you want to say that some districts or area are revitalised, this means that the municipality has a special regulation and special documents which describes all this process. You need to know that, for example, a municipality would like to establish a run-down area that needs to be revitalised needs to reveal some phenomenon, especially some negative phenomenon connected with social, economic, environmental, technical or spatial aspects. It's very strict. In Wrocław, we have a few documents which were connected with process of revitalisation. Generally, we could say that Nadodrze was one of the main districts which was revitalised in Wrocław. We spend quite a lot of money for this process, it was something around 150 million zlotys. Those programs were co-founded by UE, but you have to know that a lot of this money have been spent on social processes, only 25% of this amount could be spent on things which are connected with, for example, renovation of tenement houses, etc., so not the main part of this money. Regarding revitalisation, the municipality undertook the revitalisation of parcels, back yards, tenement house, schools and we've created also some places for social practices, which are coordinated for some artists, like for example art galleries. I also should say that we created some ideas for these processes. For example, "multi-generation" houses. We created also some ideas and projects that aren't implemented in Nadodrze, but still, I think that the more interesting for you could be the project called *Everyone's backyard*, I don't know if you know this project. I know a person who's involved in this project and I think that she has her own website in English, but it's not in Nadodrze.

B. P.: *But is it also in an area that is concerned by a revitalisation project?*

P. O.-B.: Yes, in the future.

B. P.: *So, revitalisation in Poland is seen as a tool that aims to improve social conditions in a neighbourhood?*

P. O.-B.: Yes, especially social conditions, that's the main part of revitalisation. But to be honest, many people doesn't know what revitalisation is, and they name almost everything as "Revitalisation", which is wrong, because you have to focus on a place: you have to know if an area is "revitalizable". The key element is those changes in the social aspects of the neighbourhood.

B. P.: *If I understand it correctly, the place has to match a series of criteria to benefit from a revitalisation program and if it doesn't answer these criteria, you have to undertake focused actions?*

P. B.-O.: Generally, yes, that's right.

Maja Zabokrzycka: If I may add something, because you touched an important subject: there are several criteria that you need to fulfil to start a process of revitalisation. The history of revitalisation in Wrocław began in 2004, but, in fact, the specific preparation for renovation of Nadodrze started in 2008. That was the moment when the so called "delimitation area" in Wrocław has been chosen. It's part of Nadodrze, but it's broader than Nadodrze. There's a part of Ołdin, which is a neighbour district, and the border between those districts has been created in a very artificial way, to fulfil those criteria. And it's a rather artificial situation, it's cutting back yards in half for example. But this process is very complicated. This was the beginning, for the years 2009–2013 and the next part of the revitalisation program was from 2016 to 2018.

P. B.-O.: And I think that 2018 is a very interesting moment in terms of revitalisation in Wrocław, because it's the time when the last revitalisation program expired, so after that, the institutions which were responsible for the process of revitalisation organised public consultations about the next steps of revitalisation in Wrocław. It was important because they created very small areas which should be revitalised in their opinion, it was half a percent of the area of Wrocław in the Przedmieście Odrzańskie district and they noticed that there wasn't a public acceptance for it. There was a quite big public opposition to this idea. Now we are in a very specific situation in Nadodrze, because we don't have a program which can be described as a revitalisation program. In 2018, we also organised a new public consultation which showed what kind of areas should be revitalised in

Wrocław, in the public opinion. And it's a quite big area because it's not only Nadodrze but also 6 other districts in Wrocław.

B. P.: *In 2018, was it the first time that the institution organised a public consultation, or did they had to do it every time?*

P. O.-B.: No, it wasn't the first time, because they had to organise a public consultation every time, they plan anything that is connected with the process of revitalisation.

M. Z.: The question of how deep these consultations were can be raised, at least at the very beginning of the process. That was something that was strongly criticised, mainly by activists, people who observed the process, as it was a very shallow process. The thing was that there was a consultation that has been ran during some picnic park event, with no condition of deepening the question with the population. That was the only thing that has been done at the beginning of the process. The thing was that, of course, specific criteria and perspectives needed to be fulfilled for the European money and the deadline was so tight that there was no time to implement good participatory tools and check mechanism, how to involve people in decision-making process. It changed a lot during the whole process it was deepened several times. In fact, now, it's the moment where those things are again deeply negotiated.

B. P.: *Right now, there are some public consultations to plan the next phases of the regeneration program in Nadodrze?*

P. O.-B.: Not only in Nadodrze, but yes. It is a very important asset in the revitalisation process, but on the other hand, we should notice that not only the municipality but also residents, generally, we are learning this process. We should also underline that a lot of people don't know what revitalisation really is. I think that it's maybe more connected with public participation in general, because a lot of people don't have time, don't know or do not want to take part to these meetings.

B. P.: *For example, for the documentation that precise the context of those regeneration plan, are they easy to get as a citizen or is it really complicated to access those documents and to this knowledge?*

P. O.-B.: I don't think it's very hard to get, they are public documents, you can ask for those documents, it's not a secret. But still, I think that a lot of people don't know that they could ask for these documents, maybe that the problem.

M. Z.: Now the situation has changed a lot, because as Paulina mentioned, a big public consultation began in 2018 and it was designed in a very inclusive way, so it was planned

in easily accessible place with a very broad process of information for the inhabitants to really give them the possibility to take part in this discussion. But still, the feedback is small and it's really difficult to involve people in such processes. Perhaps it would have to be designed in a really attractive way, like outside, in the backyards in several spots so it would have to be a really long process with huge investments in fact, to run it properly. And even if the situation was run by several NGOs which do it professionally and they had budget also to include local partners from these neighbourhoods, it would not be very popular. Each of the meetings which were prepared with workshop methods, working with maps and with very simple methodology were unpopular. And I would guess that it's a general thing about participation that is still a very big challenge in Poland. And with this neighbourhoods, the thing is also that the social structure is mainly composed of elderly people or people who represent other lower classes with quite low education level and so on. They are naturally excluded technically from these kinds of processes so, even though it's transparent and everything is easy to find, it's easy to find for a person who has education and the background that allows it.

P. O.-B.: Another problem is this Covid situation, because it's hard to organise some meetings when we are in very specific times like these.

B. P.: *I understood that this process is not achieved at all, but from what have been done until now, what changes have been observed in terms of socio-economic status of the residents of the neighbourhood, linked with these regeneration programs?*

P. O.-B.: I think that we could observe that there are some changes which are connected with the image of the place, because, in my opinion, a few years ago, we could observe that Nadodrze was almost connected only with problems and a lot of people thought it's a run-down area and no one would have wanted to spend their free time there. Nowadays, a lot of people consider this district as a nice place to live. For example, a lot of people could notice that the localisation of Nadodrze is very attractive. There are quite a lot of places, nice places, where you can spend your free time, especially some restaurants, pubs. There's not a lot of those ones, but still, they're quite nice places to spend some free time.

B. P.: *So, did it also attract economic activities that made the neighbourhood more interesting for people?*

P. O.-B.: More interesting, totally. But I think that the important issue connected with it, is that those activities aren't that attractive for residents, but for people from other parts

of Wrocław. They could consider Nadodrze as an alternative city centre. I'm not sure, to be honest, but in my opinion, a lot of people who spend their free time in this "new places" [revitalised Nadodrze] aren't from Nadodrze. They aren't residents of the neighbourhood. There are some events, like *Noc Nadodrze*, during which you could observe that a lot of people who are interested in murals, old areas and these specific places are interested to spend their free time in Nadodrze.

B. P.: *Could we therefore say that there's a sort of underground culture that is established in Nadodrze?*

M. Z.: Not underground anymore. It used to be underground before the revitalisation, now it's "above the ground". As Paulina mentioned it, there has been some new places that were created with public funding and they created new spots for cultural activities, but also plenty of businesses started there, like creative works. So, there's like 80 of those kinds of spots existing. From none to 80. The change is enormous on this level. It strongly affected the image of the neighbourhood, and it got to be popular amongst some creative people, artists, people who deal with some sort of crafts and so on, because there was a long process that stimulated them and there were very low rents offered by the municipality for those spots in the neighbourhood. It affected strongly the establishment of those businesses. I would say that some sort of gentrification is visible.

P. O.-B.: In my opinion, there's a specific gentrification, if we can call it like this. It's more symbolic gentrification, more connected with the places, with culture and with these spots, not with the residents.

M. Z.: It's changing the business structure of the neighbourhood more than the resident's structure. The inhabitant's structure has changed a lot also, but for different reasons: because of the loads of investments that were brought here, especially private investors. The urban structure of this place has plenty of holes in it, so there are areas that are really attractive for the investors and they sell very expensive parcels and flats. So, there's this totally new social group that appeared in Nadodrze, but it's not fully part of the revitalisation process. It's simply the fact that they are selling attractive spot really close to the city centre.

B. P.: *Those people are more interested by the location of the neighbourhood than by its ambiance and environment?*

P. O.-B.: Generally, we could say that we could observe a specific group of people. On one hand you could observe that there are a lot of inhabitants, but also new residents, so

people who haven't been living in Nadodrze before the process of revitalisation, but also "visitors": people who work and spend their free time in Nadodrze, but they don't actually live there.

M. Z.: I think that it's a very complex subject. We could observe that some people bought flats in these tenement houses, which have a beautiful shape and are very neglected, so several years ago, it was pretty cheap to buy flats here and renovate it in a "loft style", beautiful architecture. So that's also a new group that appeared here and it's a little bit connected with the revitalisation process. It's connected with the change of image of the neighbourhood, the renovation of the tenement houses. The visual aspect of the neighbourhood has changed a lot these years. These changes are really enormous for everyone in Wrocław. It used to be such "favella" area that no one wanted to enter fifteen or twenty years ago. Now the situation really has changed.

B. P.: *What about the perception of the neighbourhood by the other Wrocławians. Did this revitalisation process change the way the people of Wrocław perceive Nadodrze?*

P. O.-B.: I think that could be true. Generally, we could observe some craftsmen establishing here, restaurant and new places opening. That's also very important when we think about the image of this place.

B. P.: *You said that there was a lot of new business there, so it modified the human and economic flows? How did it change the dynamics of the city?*

M. Z.: It's a tough question, because it's hard to answer without having the data. I can give you some estimation, I can guess... It's easier to measure the level of image changes, how the area got to be attractive for tourists, and so on, but it's difficult to measure it in such economical way, because no one does collect those kinds of data in Wrocław on such scale. What we can say from our work and from what is happening, is that at first, this movement of businesses was very dynamic, so plenty of new spots appeared and they closed down pretty soon. There was a big rotation, because either they didn't diagnose the market well enough, or they expected that the fact that Nadodrze was an attractive neighbourhood was pretty enough to open a cafe and it will work. I remember some spots that, if they appeared now, they would be very trendy. Back then, it was almost impossible to start these kinds of business in this neighbourhood. It would be actually very interesting to make this kind of analysis: what kind of economic changes in this specific location happened. It might have been for a short time a "hipster café", after two years it was closed down so there was a very cheap Chinese restaurant, and now there's a shop called

Żabka, which is a plague, we have it everywhere. This also could be understood as a very specific gentrification, because this goes in the other direction that expected.

B. P.: *Does this example of Żabka illustrates the gap between what was planned with those revitalisation programs and the reality of the field?*

M. Z.: Yes, definitely.

B. P.: *How the image of the neighbourhood changed through the media?*

P. O.-B.: This is also a hard question, but still, I think that we could observe some changes. In my opinion, now we can observe in the media that Nadodrze is a quite nice area to live in and to spend free time in. I'm not sure that a lot of people noticed, for example, that now, we don't focus on safety issues because it was obvious that in run-down area, we couldn't feel so safe, and we don't like to spend our time there. Nowadays, I'm not sure that we perceive Nadodrze in this way anymore. It's still not the best area and not the safest to spend the evening there, but when I compare Nadodrze to other districts I don't see much difference now.

B. P.: *One of the criterion that allowed Nadodrze to benefit from a revitalisation program was its high crime rate. From what you are saying, this element has been significantly improved in the neighbourhood. To what extend did the revitalisation program played a role in the improvement of this indicator? Could we call it a success on this aspect?*

M. Z.: It's hard to tell. Statistics show that there's a lower crime rate, I don't have the data now, but it was compared and it's visible. Still, this district is not homogeneous. Even though this big amount of money has been invested, there are some parts of this neighbourhood that are untouched. What's very odd, is that most of these untouched areas are those that are the most problematic. For example, there are big groups of social flats, those which are offered for free or for a very low rent for people in need. Those social issues are put all together in the neighbourhood. That's generally a large-scale problem for the whole city and this housing policy that Wrocław had. It's difficult to change it quickly, and now the attitude is slightly different, but it used to be organised in such a way that plenty of these social flats were gather in these up-town area, like Nadodrze and neighbour districts. In fact, I live in Nadodrze and I live in such spot that if you want to write about Nadodrze, it's worth seeing it because I rent a flat in a totally gentrified tenement house that is famous in Wrocław. It's a kind of artistic ghetto cut out of the neglected backyards in a "dangerous" (of course it's a short cut) neighbourhood, so once you cross the gate outside of this refurbished and renovated budling, it's another word. I

rent a flat here for a very short time, but I know that people who used to live here longer before me were said that they lived in such “artistic ghetto”. There are several examples like that and very sharp cut between such neglected and very difficult neighbourhood and those inhabited by totally different social classes. These kind of housing in which I live are very unique, because that wasn’t the global policy of the municipality to sell out all the tenement houses. In fact, this factor prevents a large-scale gentrification in the neighbourhood. If the municipal ownership is sold, it will rather be single flats and to those people who have been long time renters of it. It’s not like you would see 20 buildings sold here, the municipality is keeping those ownership as much as possible.

B. P.: *Alright, now I’ll have a few questions on cultural amenities. Maja, you work in Lokietka 5 – Infopunkt Nadodrze. Is it there that you work with cultural institutions? Could you rapidly sum up your activities?*

M. Z.: It was in fact created as part of the revitalisation process as well. So, we were one of the first spot created in the neighbourhood and in the very first years, from 2009 to 2012, the aim was also to simply organise an inspiration point, an organisation that would be in between the municipality and the inhabitants, in order to give explanations regarding the process of revitalisation. On this small scale, because it’s difficult to reach 35’000 people, there was this idea to create spot that informs clearly about the program. We had all of the maps, all of the projects available and the inhabitants that were interested were always informed about what was going to happen. The thing is that we also had the budget from the department of economic development of Wrocław, so the impact was always put on the small entrepreneurs who either would like to start their businesses up and those who have more traditional spots in the neighbourhood, like craftsmen and all the people who decided to run their businesses here. That was the main aim. Beside that we always applied for some other budgets from the other resources. We have had several projects around the elderly people in Nadodrze, we decided several years ago, to create a council of elderly and seniors of Nadodrze to involve them directly in the process. This aimed to give them a chance to get to understand it much better, to be part of the decision-making processes and involve them in some changes directly. They were diagnosing the problems and the areas that needed some attention and with our support, we dealt with it with the municipality to somehow fulfil the needs and answer those situations. We also were giving them tools to do that on their own. Finally, for example, those elderly inhabitants decided to start up their own association as a continuation of what we started. This was

this kind of impulse. We also tried to reach out all of the new institutions and local businesses that appeared thanks to the revitalisation and this *Noc Nadodrze* that Paulina mentioned, amongst the other kinds of festival that we organised to animate the life in the neighbourhood. It was always our aim and it's very important for us to try to build some sort of balance and not only bring inhabitants from outside the neighbourhood but also to involve local residents. But these funding and the kind of decisions were made in order to encourage the entrepreneurs to rent here in Nadodrze. What we noticed is that the biggest impact is to create lively places and to generate a positive image outside of the neighbourhood. We were always a knot for all the businesses and some other social initiative that appeared here. We built different kinds of partnerships in order to cooperate closer, we are also part of a big partnership with social services, the police, and so on, in order really to know what's happening in the neighbourhood and what kind of problem it's facing. This is a quite close cooperation.

B. P.: *Your mission was to anchor the residents, local activities and all those social elements in the neighbourhood regarding these regenerations program?*

M. Z.: In a way, yes. Not strongly anymore now because the regeneration process is interrupted for now. We always were an accessible and open place for the inhabitants and for their own initiative, but especially in the very beginning of the process we were having a very strong impact on this, by promoting the revitalisation process and encouraging inhabitants to be part of it.

B. P.: *To what extent are you involved with cultural associations or companies like these?*

M. Z.: We can say that, in fact, a part of what we do are cultural activities. Infopunkt is ran by foundations so we have organisations that deal with plenty of different projects, but it's a separate story. From the beginning, once we appeared, we were cooperating closely with all the cultural institutions that either were there before or appeared thanks to the regeneration process.

B. P.: *So, as you are quite familiar with the cultural life in Nadodrze, how would you say that cultural life evolved regarding those regeneration programs?*

M. Z.: That's again a quite complex situation. You mentioned by mail a cultural institution called *CRK, Centrum Reanimacji Kultury, the Centre for Reanimation of Culture*, this used to be, a long time ago, an illegal squat and it was then transformed into a "more legal" – semi legal – institution and they started their own association in order to

cheaply rent the space from the municipality. It was and still is a very famous underground institution in Wrocław. It used to be really famous all-around Europe, in fact, with this alternative, mainly punk music scene. It also was, and in a way, is now, a spot that was gathering plenty of left-wing activists, anarchists and so on, really rooted down and initiated by people who represented this kind of alternative and anarchist scene in Wrocław. They were in difficulty because of the revitalisations. The impact was pretty big because they firstly took over the whole building that was in the middle of a backyard and because of revitalisation and the concept of the municipality, part of it was taken back to the municipality and was renovated. Finally, in this renovated building, there was a new institution of culture called *Kontury Kultury* that is another spot ran by an NGO. It was like an open competition to find an operator for that spot, so it's an institution that was outside of the neighbourhood, so it's not rooted down in anyway. This renovation process and this situation has frozen *CRK* for a pretty long time, like two years at least. Firstly, after this process, the municipality was really strongly criticised, mainly by those anarchists who ran that spot. They said that this process has killed them, that the municipality made it impossible for them to function. Let's say that this perspective has been changing since then, now we would find totally different opinions. It divided them strongly, to be honest. Some who are now out of *CRK* would say "Well, yes it was very difficult, but in a way, it was also a natural process of degradation of this kind of community, which was like non-hierarchical, no rules and living together. Now some of us want to start up a family and live elsewhere". So that was this natural process of "degradation" of the community and it never rose back to a strong organisation afterwards. Now, there's a very small group of people who fight to continue what they've been doing, but it's much smaller. In this first period, they were involved in arranging the social life for inhabitants in a way, as well. *Food, not Bombs* is one of their projects ran now, but they also had open door for any inhabitants, especially children. In fact, they once decided to organise these cultural activities for children and organise free time for them. They are not funded for that. It was their commitment to the community and answering the needs of this community. This was the time where there was nothing in Nadodrze beside *CRK*. This is a very important actor, I would say. They changed through the years.

Thanks to the revitalisation, there are plenty of institutions that appeared, they are funded and stimulated by the municipality, but also some of them simply took advantage of the situation. They knew that, thanks to revitalisation, it's possible to find good locations and

funding here to make renovations. So, for example, a very big organisation that is called *Foundation of Sustainable Development* which is an ecological organisation. With some small support of the municipality, they took pretty big buildings and, on their own, they applied for very big funding from the EU and they now are part of the neighbourhood. There's also a spot that's called *Miser Art*. It's a very interesting and very unique place that is addressing the needs of homeless people, but not in a "missionary" way where they just help them and feed them, (they of course also do that), but it is a sort of meeting of people who were living on the street for a very long time. They are now reintegrated to the community and they have their space that ran by them, for them in such cultural way. I talked with [the responsible] yesterday and he told me that he's now starting a school that will be called *Socio-eco Bauhaus School*, because they're designing beautiful furniture. It's a beautiful and unique design. This was also a place that would be totally called an "alternative culture spot" in Wrocław, because they host plenty of initiatives like theatre, they try to make it in such a way that those people, who used to be living on the street are now part of it and they co-create this space and artistic exhibition together. So, this association helps homeless people out, but they do it in a very inclusive way and they run the place all together.

I would say that generally, there's much more cultural activities in Nadodrze, but not those rooted down and started up by local artists and people who used to live here in the neighbourhood and chose to work here. There are also ephemeral spots. A very unusual and interesting one is the *Galeria U*, and it was, in fact, designed to be a temporary spot, because they knew from the very beginning that the building that they took over would be demolished and they would have to move out. They were running their activities for three years and were more or less the same people from *CRK*. Now the place is demolished, they had to move and there's a new investor building at this location.

B. P.: *Did they keep their cultural activity in another location?*

M. Z.: The people who created it continue to work either on their own or in associations and they run some kind of ephemeral spots that appear and disappear in Wrocław. I can send you some material that was called *Parallel Structures*. It was written and designed by Ewa Głowacka, who is an artist connected with both of those spots and she wrote it during the European Capital of Culture, so it speaks about *Galeria U*, *CRK* and, in fact, *Wyspa Słodowa 7*.

B. P.: *So, these kinds of cultural project are rather bottom up, impulse by people and I also read a paper that you sent me about the projects that took place for the European Capital of Culture. In this paper, there was this project on which you worked, Maja, called the Urban Gardens. If I got it right, the residents of this building came to you and suggested this project?*

M. Z.: Not exactly. Just coming back to *CRK* and *Galeria U*, this could totally be understood as a bottom-up process, but it's ran by very specific social groups, like young artists promoting this alternative culture, and that's not totally representative of the neighbourhood structure. For their "subculture" style, they are very hermetic. They are opening for the community, especially children, but this is not exactly an inviting style and culture in a way that it would be like hardcore punk-rock music and so on. Even though they make efforts and are totally opened mentally, it's not inviting for all the inhabitants because of the image that they created. And now I forgot what the initial question was...

B. P.: *About the Urban Garden project. You said that it wasn't really the people who came to you with this idea?*

M. Z.: It was rather us who looked for them, so generally, this program for the ECOG was part of a program called *Entrance from the Backyard*. The concept was to design some sort of artistic installation which would change the backyard, the perception and how people function in those backyards. But the social reactions to the project were very difficult. That was not the case of our specific project, because our concept was really to find out what are the needs of the people of the neighbourhood. They had their tiny "botanical garden", as they called them, so we have developed that idea and thanks to the funding, we simply organised the creation of a more attractive space in this backyard and designed tiny murals, a playground for children and so on. That was our idea, it was not totally initiated by the residents, but we chose a neighbourhood where we had seen these kinds of initiatives that could be developed, and we worked directly with the inhabitants. It was them who presented ideas and we helped realizing them. But, coming back for a second to this *Entrance from the Backyard* project, some of the installations were very controversial. There was this legendary bench on which "I love you" was written, which costed... I don't know... Like 40'000 zlotys or something like that. It was installed in the middle of a muddy, holed, disgusting backyard. The inhabitants got so pissed off with this, they protested, and it was very strongly criticised. Several ideas were totally different

and much more rooted down. The one that Paulina has mentioned, the project called *Everyone's Backyard*, started thanks to this project with tiny initiatives. Some of the projects were aiming to really animate these backyards, but some of them were very controversial. I think it was rather a concept of artists that didn't know the context very well and didn't have a good knowledge and preparation from the organisers of the project, like what kind of neighbourhood he's entering and what kind of impact it can have.

B. P.: *So, this specific project had not been created with the residents...*

P. O.-B.: We also should underline that it's a run-down area, so that was quite shocking for these people that the municipality or whoever spent a lot of money for a bench while they don't have enough money for basic stuff. They didn't understand this.

M. Z.: In fact, the funny story is that they were so pissed off, they were attacking the municipality from so many sides that they got their backyard renovated. The bench is still there I think, I'm not sure, but the final effect was that it started such a strong conflict that the municipality said "OK, we now have to somehow correct the mistake. Let's renovate this backyard". So, finally, they got a "good result" from this bench, but the amount of anger was enormous.

B. P.: *And have you noticed like an increase in the participation of the residents to cultural activities like those one? How did it influence this participation?*

M. Z.: Well, definitely in those spots that have been created thanks to funding from EU. These spots that I mentioned before, like *Kontury Kultury*, or another one called *OKAP*, These spots, especially the second one, really are focused on working with the inhabitants from those backyards. They designed enormous mural paintings that cover the interior of the whole backyard, it's a pretty spectacular thing and, in such way that people really were part of this artistic project. It was not only done by artists; it was in a very tight cooperation with the inhabitants. For example, on these murals, there are portraits of the inhabitants and of their dogs, and so on. In fact, it bonded this community very strongly. With the spot that they created but also with themselves and with the backyard. And when tourists or other people want to take picture of this backyard, they guide the tourists and are totally involved.

B. P.: *Did it create like small dynamics next to those projects?*

M. Z.: Yes, in this case, definitely. I would say that this is a really good example. The neighbouring backyards, when they noticed these mural paintings, they said "We want

the same”. It’s spreading to the neighbouring backyards. I would say that people got slightly jealous, and they want to do the same.

B. P.: *And how did the number of projects like this one evolved? Have you noticed an increase in these kinds of “residents impulse projects”?*

M. Z.: It’s difficult to measure. I wouldn’t say so, but I’d rather say that a lot of those places appeared, mainly with commercial objectives. For example, there’s the *Hostel Hart*, that is ran by a person who lives in and is an activist for the neighbourhood: Izabela Duchnowska. She does enormous work for the neighbourhood. She gathered plenty of inhabitants around her, so they did a lot altogether, they created a project that’s a fridge for food sharing and several initiatives like flea market and so on. She also organises concerts, theatre, artistic performances, etc. There’s a lot of people like her, who are rooted down in the neighbourhood, who have been living here for a very long time and they also got some groups of residents around them.

B. P.: *So, it’s more like a few people who impulse some projects rather than the base of the population who’s generally more involved.*

M. Z.: Yeah, totally.

B. P.: *And what could you say about the perception of the neighbourhood by cultural actors? You seemed to state that the regeneration attracted some cultural institutions so we could assume that they have a better perception of the neighbourhood than before those programs?*

M. Z.: Surely, yes, but it’s slowing down now as one the effect of this huge interest of artistic businesses in the neighbourhood is an important increase in the rents. It’s now difficult to find cheap spots for a gallery or any kind of artistic spot. And the cultural activities who are now interested by those spots are quite often businesses. So, they mainly have commercial intentions, but pretty often, they try to integrate local residents by proposing them activities that are totally free. That has a pretty big impact on the cultural life of the neighbourhood. Those businesses are, for example *Hostel Hart* or *Macondo*, which is like a tiny gallery ran by a foundation. The people who get involved in these kind structures treat themselves as a community, in a way. It’s also part of our work, we try to build this kind of network that we call *Artistic Nadodrze* simply. So, any kind of creative business or interesting “hipster café” and so on, is joining this network and they support each other. It’s functioning in such strict cooperation.

B. P.: *The last question I wanted to ask was about Wyspa Słodowa 7. You told me that you worked on a report?*

M. Z.: Yes, I work on the evaluation report.

B. P.: *I read that there was a disagreement between a grassroots cultural movement that wanted to turn this building in a socio-cultural centre and the municipality, which owned the building and wanted to sell it. Is it a recurrent situation in this context of regeneration? To what extent does it illustrate the relationship between cultural actors and the authorities?*

M. Z.: I would say it's a single case but who was very loud. It's not connected with the revitalisation at all because it's in a totally different location, even though it's very close to Nadodrze geographically. It's part of a separate neighbourhood and it never have been part of a revitalised area. That's why it can't be treated as representative to the process. I actually read this evaluation report to remember the situation because it was a pretty long time ago, from 2015 to 2017. It's rather an issue of how we decide about common space, how we decide about public spaces, who's "dictating" the future. This is a very good parcel in a very central location, and the interest of the activist was enormous, and the discussion was very loud and interesting. In fact, there were moments in the process where the former "major" Rafał Dutkiewicz announced "OK, we're giving it to the social side, we're offering this building for the activists to have it" and, of course, it had no formal elements, there was no legal, official decision about it, but it provoked huge passions, involvement and a lot of energy on the social side. So, going through this process is a very interesting subject for some sort of research, that's clear. We made the evaluation of a small part of it because we weren't able to reach all the actors involved in this process, but it also shows some difficulties in the functioning of the municipality, like a lack of communication between departments.

B. P.: *So, it's not really representative of the relationship of, for example, grassroots movements and the municipality but it rather reveals a lack of communication within the municipality?*

M. Z.: Yes, a lack of communication. We diagnosed in this evaluation report that there was a lack of leader on the municipality's side. There were several officials involved, one of them was shown in the media as a side of the conflict, but he wasn't in a position to responsibly take decision on his own and it was plenty of communication mistakes like

this one and a lack of understanding on both sides. The understanding of the process in the municipality was different than on the activist's side, in a very simplified way.

B. P.: *OK I think we went around all my questions. Are there any other topics that you think is important to be discusses?*

M. Z.: For now, I don't. Perhaps if you decide to go with this subject, there will be some chances to talk again.

P. O.-B.: I will maybe add that for the result of this revitalisation's process, it's very important not to look at areas like Nadodrze only from the point of view of, for example, authorities or inhabitants, without thinking about the general context of the situation. If we do so, we could build a false image of this place, we could consider Nadodrze as an "urban oasis" where everyone is satisfied by their quality of life and become a member of the middle class, but as Maja knows, it's not true. So, it's still a process.

B. P.: *And this process also has to be included in the dynamic of the city as a whole.*

M. Z.: Yes, but the changes in Nadodrze are clearly visible and let's say it openly, there have been plenty of mistakes that have been done in the process and I guess that now, in the next phases of the process, the impacts will be located in slightly different area and efforts might be made to more strongly involve inhabitants in the process. From my judgement, some of the institutions that have been created thanks to the revitalisation programs are detached from the neighbourhood, in a way. So, even though, on the paper, the revitalisation program in Nadodrze was shown as something that strongly involves the residents, the activities created by this process doesn't address to those residents, but rather to people from other parts of the city. Their designed in such a way that it's not inviting for the residents and those activities are not really opened to them. It's not strongly encouraging them to participate. These are strong mistakes.

P. O.-B.: Yes, that's right. And also, inhabitants are more aware of what this revitalisation's process is all about. Nadodrze was the first district of Wrocław to benefit from this kind of program, and everyone was learning this process, the municipality and residents. Now, we know that people are more aware and know better what they would like to achieve during this process.

B. P.: *I think it's important to underline that this process is relatively new in Poland and in Central and Eastern Europe.*

P. O.-B.: It's quite new and it's strongly connected with the law. In my opinion, it's now a very difficult process, because of this Covid situation and it's strongly conditioned by finances and this will have a huge impact on this process.

M. Z.: The thing also is that, in Poland, this model is detached from the business. In Western Europe, especially in Germany, this usually is a public-private collaboration and common investments, and the construction of Polish law doesn't allow to run it this way. So, even though the investments are enormous, 150'000'000 zlotys invested in small neighbourhoods, it's still the top of the iceberg. The scale of investments needed would perhaps be four or five times this amount.

B. P.: *Well, that was truly interesting, thanks a lot for your time and for sharing your knowledge.*

10.1.2. Maja Zaboczycycka – Wrocław – Backyard Door project

Benjamin Péry: *My first question concerns the context of the project. Could you sum it up and explain how you proceeded for the organisation?*

Maja Zabokrzycka: The project was run by Impart2016, that was the name of the institution back then. Generally, it was the institution that was responsible for the organisation of all of the festivities connected with the European Capital of Culture 2016. That was a separate institution created specially to manage all of the festivals, events and so on. This project was part of a program that was called *Entrance from the Backyard* and, in fact, as far as I remember, we did our project in 2015, not in 2016. So, it was even before the European Capital of Culture. The concept of the project was to either run some animations or some artistic installation in the backyards of the city of Wrocław. It wasn't spread all around the city, but it aimed to take place in neglected neighbourhoods which were located close to the city centre. One of the ideas was to strengthen up the area and introduce a process of urban renovation. I was contacted by the coordinator of the project, Natalia Romaszkan, who asked us if we would be interested to do some sort of social project in chosen locations, as they knew we had a lot of experience with animations that included inhabitants. It was our job to find out which location, which backyard would be suitable. We had a very small budget for it: in total, it was around 30'000 zlotys for two locations, which represents about 7'500€. This was the amount that was dedicated to cover our personal costs, but also to buy plants, construction materials, etc. So, that's more or less the context on the formal side.

B. P.: *And how did you choose the sites? What made you choose those sites in particular? Have you already been working there before?*

M. Z.: No, we haven't been working there, but after a couple of weeks of research, we chose locations that, from our opinion, would function well. One of them was a backyard that was rather neglected but still was in a correct shape, it wasn't totally muddy and desert, and we had observed that the inhabitants themselves started a sort of tiny botanical garden in the backyard. That was a signal for us that they liked to use the space, they planted stuff themselves and that there's an interest in taking care of the common space. That's for the first place. For the other one, it was very problematic. We had chosen a backyard that seemed to be the perfect place because there was a cultural institution called *MiserArt* next to it. It's a spot created and ran and created by homeless people, I think we talked about it last time. We decided that it would be perfect, because the association could take care of it, use it and animate it. We were prognosing that it could function well and that there would be someone to continue the project afterward. But, in both situations, before entering the location, we organised a social consultation. That's not a typical thing with such small interventions, but we decided that whatever we would start there, we had to build a relationship with the inhabitants. So, in the first location, the one with the botanical garden, it went very well, but with the second one, we found out that there were huge conflicts around this backyard and that the residents were promised that the whole backyard would be renovated, so they weren't interested in any partial renovation. For them, it was rather "ok you will do it and then what? We've been promised that this backyard would be renovated so this project will not be any useful". They were very aggressive towards us, and we decided that with such small budget, we were not able to answer their needs and the situation in the backyard was very complicated on many levels: social issues, conflicts within the inhabitants, and so. And also, it occurred that they were not using or interested in this *MiserArt* association, for them, it was a sort of "alien institution" that did not encourage them to be part of a project. They were too hermetic for a rather ambitious cultural project that did not fit their expectations. After another very long research, we chose another location and, in the meantime, it appears that this location was a very bad choice, because we did a tiny installation that we could call an urban furniture, a playing spot for children, putting benches, etc. First of all, that wasn't a backyard, but rather a tiny square that was very neglected. Anyways, about two years ago, we were noticed by the municipality that we had to take it away, because the city decided to sell this area and that there would be big investments in this location. This was

a huge challenge for us as we didn't have budget nor skills or tools to remove this installation.

B. P.: *But you were personally charged do remove this? The municipality and the organisers of the ECOC, by extension the organisers of the project Wrocław – Backyard Door asked you to implement those projects in the neighbourhood and then the municipality sold the place and you had to go there and remove this?*

M. Z.: In fact, that is the top of the iceberg of the municipality's problems in our city. Generally, it took them very long to find out who was responsible of this project, who had done it and how to remove it. Finally, we were able to cooperate closely with the owner of the parcel that the municipality sold with the institution that is responsible of the communal building and properties in general, so they had all the resources to conserve the project and displace it. Our goal was only to put back again plants in it and so on. Finally, we found a solution, but it took us again a couple of long weeks. This location was very bad, but we had no clue nor information that, in the future, it was going to be sold.

B. P.: *So, this spot does not exist anymore?*

M. Z.: No, it doesn't. It exists in a different location, but the new location is an enormous backyard which was totally renovated thanks to the revitalisation program, so it was just added there, and it does not function like it should be. We decided that, as we don't have enough resources ourselves to undertake animation, we wanted to put it in a backyard that is already functioning pretty well.

B. P.: *Did you mainly focus on the first spot, with already existing kind of project? Did you invest more time and money there?*

M. Z.: Yes, and we were able then to build some sort of relationship with the residents. In the other location, it wasn't possible. Of course, we did the whole same process with the public consultation and encouraging people to take responsibility for it, but the second backyard seemed to be such a no man's land that no one would take care of it. Of course, they were using the project later on, because it gave shadow, so it was functioning pretty well for some time, but it wasn't any sort of space that they would feel that they own it.

B. P.: *And for this second project, did you build those infrastructures with them, or did you just asked what they wanted and then did it on your own?*

M. Z.: We asked them what they wanted and did it by ourselves, they didn't really participate in the building process, it wasn't possible. In fact, we were so pushed by time

and weren't able to find any convenient location for it that we just had to do it this way. To be honest, the construction of the whole project didn't give us flexibility to do it in any other way and I'm aware that we didn't do it in a perfect way, with a proper preparation process and really creating an involvement of the inhabitants.

B. P.: *I read that these backyards, especially in those neighbourhoods in Wrocław, have a real historical importance. Could you tell me what place these backyards hold for the local communities?*

M. Z.: Historically, it was more important than it is now. For a very long time, these backyards were functioning as spaces used by some sort of manufactures or entrepreneurs who had their production space in there. It was very different, because sometimes it was used as horse stables, some were used as manufactures, like for the production of mirrors or glass. It was either used for craft or simple production processes. These were pretty lively spaces, because it also was a place where the costumers came. This use of the backyard stopped either before the Second World War or not long after. For example, one backyard was used as a kind of chocolate factory. These places were used for all kind of tiny production processes. It also used to function in such a way that either people had their tiny gardens there or, sometimes, they were keeping farm animals there. So, hens, for example, or pigs. It was pretty absurd to have that in the middle of the city centre, but it functioned this way for a while, mainly because a lot of people who were living in rural area came to Wrocław and used these spaces in such inconvenient way. It used to have this role, but then, generally, some whole neighbourhoods were totally devastated after the war. This devastation occurred on several levels: some backyards and buildings were damaged by bombs or shootings, but this destruction was also part of the process of getting rid of anything that was linked with Germans. For example, ancient furniture would be thrown away from the windows, like beautiful finishing of the staircases for example, were demolished by Polish people who lived in the buildings. They either weren't conscious or aware of the value of this stuff, but it was also something that they symbolically wanted to get rid of. In the following times, those neighbourhoods were kind of left behind and not invested or renovated. The buildings and yards slowly decayed. Then, during the 90s or the beginning of the years 2000s, all of the backyards were totally emptied and were some kinds of muddy deserts with no infrastructures, mainly habited by rats and used to dispose waste bins and containers. For a pretty long time, these were like totally forgotten areas.

B. P.: *I also read that the development of the usage of the car changed those areas, they are now mainly used as parking spots.*

M. Z.: Yes, that's mainly linked to the increase of incomes and of the car ownership, it changed those backyards a lot. Some flat owners have two or three cars and there are no dedicated places to park the cars, so they use those backyards for it.

B. P.: *Coming back to the project, the aim was also to give back those places their soul, to reinput life in those areas?*

M. Z.: Yes, to somehow give back the ownership of the place to the residents. But it was a huge challenge to find concepts that people would agree to implement at the expense of parking spots. But we finally managed to do it, because the residents had the needs for such project. The cars were taking a lot of space in this backyard and damaging the grass and plants that were there, so in the case of the bigger yard that we've been working on, it was pretty successful. They even decided to give up some parking spots.

B. P.: *So, this mostly happened in the first garden, where there already was this botanical garden?*

M. Z.: Yes, in the first one. It wouldn't have been possible in the second one. In fact, their intention was to make this backyard safer for children to play in, to close the entrance to the cars that would drive very close to the playground.

B. P.: *In your opinion, what really did go wrong with the second location? Were the people not interested at all in the project or were they angry towards the municipality for the state of their backyard? What were their main reason to "oppose" to the project?*

M. Z.: The one we resigned from?

B. P.: *No, the one you finally chose as a second location for the project, but you couldn't do that much.*

M. Z.: My assumption is that we had chosen the bad location because it already was a "no man's land". An area that no one would be feeling responsible for. We tried to create a sort of meeting spot instead of a space that no one would use except as a spot for their dog to take a shit. The thing is that none of the inhabitants who took part in the consultation would suggest us that they don't use the place or don't want to use it. The disposal of the area wasn't as convenient as the first one. The backyard wasn't completely surrounded by buildings, it was exposed to the street, like a square.

B. P.: *So, the state of mind of the residents was not optimal for such project, they didn't want to invest time in this kind of project?*

M. Z.: Yes, and there was no community, and they did not use this space before. They did not see the need for the project. In fact, they did see the need to make it greener and put some shadow on it, because it was very opened to the sun. They were happy with it, but there was no community that would feel that they own it and that they should take care of it.

B. P.: *Ok so they hardly could appropriate the place.*

M. Z.: Yeah.

B. P.: *Did you get back to those places afterwards to see their evolution?*

M. Z.: I was planning to visit it before our interview, but I didn't had time even though it's next to where I live. But I visited it quite regularly after the project. First, we planted the plants with the inhabitants, and they were really involved in the whole construction process. We were building those urban furniture and containers for plants, and it occurred that there was a guy who owns a construction company, and he was helping out with his tools and his knowledge. It was funny because we firstly had to bribe him with beer. I'm not sure this is something that should be recommended as a way to do social project, but it did help a lot. He was very sceptical at first, but he involved himself and his friends, and they helped us from the very beginning until the end with everything. In fact, they also felt that they owned the project from the very beginning. Although, after we planted everything with the children and other people, there was a pretty big group of people who helped us out, there was a kind of drought, a long period of time in summer without any rain. I was panicked that all of these plants would die, and it took me a really long time to encourage them to water them and we had to find some solutions for that. Two weeks after the end of the project, I was there every day to organise the watering. That was also an issue: who would pay for the water, so that was actually a barrier for a community like that. Finally, we decided to buy them a pipe to water the plants, and that helped. But finally, it occurred that they did have a conflict around this pipe so they cut it in half so that they could share it between the buildings: people from one building could take care of a part of the plants in the backyard and the others could take care of the other part.

B. P.: *In order to share the water bill?*

M. Z.: Yeah, but it wasn't easy because there weren't very close one another, during the whole work, some conflicts appeared because those guys who were helping us were

“heavy users” of the backyard for drinking alcohol. People who had children weren’t fond of this, neither did the residents of the new building that was adjacent to the tenement houses. So, there were some conflicts about how people use the space, what for and so on. But, in fact, this whole creation process and the designing and building of the place helped a little bit to overcome these kinds of tensions. For example, families with children noticed that the guy and his friends built the structure, and their children could use it, so in fact, even though they felt disturbed by the guys after they drank alcohol, the residents saw that those guys cared about the neighbourhood, and they wouldn’t allow anything bad to happen there. So, even though their way of living doesn’t fit them, it was acceptable in such a way that every one of them believe this space is common and that they care for it.

B. P.: *They finally found a compromise between the different purposes, and everyone’s will?*

M. Z.: Yes, well, when we went there to build the structure, this guy was on his holidays, so he was spending like 2 weeks, every day, every time in the backyard. So, that was a bit of a moment of tension. But yes, they found a sort of compromise. There are plenty of funny anecdotes. For example, when we started planting the climbing plants against a part of the wall, they said: “Don’t dig there, under the tree, because there are the graves of our dogs here”. That’s of course illegal to do, but they had like a tiny dog’s graveyards. By the way, the whole administration aspect of this project was a nightmare. We did tiny constructions like placing benches or containers for the plants, but we also painted a mural on the wall, in the backyard, that in fact belonged to the fire station. It occurred that, once we decided we wanted to use this wall, we required their agreement because they owned this wall and a part of the backyard itself. It was weird because it was behind this wall so, again, we were touching some very complicated ownership structures issues considering this common spaces.

B. P.: *Were they opposed to this?*

M. Z.: No, they did agree but we had to push the whole administration to legalise the situation.

B. P.: *Did you need a permit for that?*

M. Z.: We needed a permit for every one of our projects. Even for those tiny interventions, you had to get all of the permits for that.

B. P.: *Even for the bench and the plants?*

M. Z.: Yeah.

B. P.: *But wasn't this project mandated by the municipality? Or couldn't the organisers manage to agree with the municipality for a global permission of the project?*

M. Z.: I think that, in a way, we were pushed in that situation as we are a foundation who has this kind of experience. That was a very convenient thing for them. As far as I know, in all of the other yards, when they just invited artists to do some installation, the ECOC was responsible for it regarding the legal aspects. In our case, we were two professional and well-functioning NGO that could do this on their own. Perhaps this was my mistake, to sign this kind of agreement.

B. P.: *But are those kinds of administrative actions something you usually do with your association?*

M. Z.: Well, we had this experience even before the events, but in this case, it occurred to be very complicated. At some point, we decided not to continue doing projects like that because this formal knowledge that requires those kinds of architectural projects isn't our specialisation. So, this was very difficult for us. We were confronted to numbers of barriers in that case. It's an important experience to be confronted to this very vertical structure of the city with no real horizontal communication.

B. P.: *And when is the last time you went in this backyard?*

M. Z.: I think two years ago.

B. P.: *Ok so it's going to be interesting for me to go there this year, to see how the project lasted. Because that was the main idea of the whole project: to activate local communities around these kinds of social projects.*

M. Z.: I would also be curious to drop in there now and see how it evolve. I can perhaps go there once and send you some pictures or we could also go there together when you come.

B. P.: *After the setting-up of the project, did you notice the emergence of similar project, impelled by local communities in backyards next to this one? How did it inspire the neighbours?*

M. Z.: I wouldn't say so. The communication between the yards is not very important and the urban structure somehow doesn't encourage that. In fact, there were some situations where some people contacted us and asked how to do something like that, so we shared our knowledge. I know one place where this idea also implemented itself. We

also got contacted by a florist shop that wanted to create this kind of intervention in the yard, but I think it didn't succeed. They started some sort of public consultation and asked the inhabitants for help, but they didn't manage to do it.

B. P.: *And were the people who contacted you in the first-place residents?*

M. Z.: Yes.

B. P.: *From a neighbouring backyard or from other parts of the city?*

M. Z.: In neighbouring backyard, not in the direct neighbouring but in the same district. They knew we did this, and they came to find out how they could try on their own.

B. P.: *Last time we met, we talked about this association called OKAP, who did those murals with the residents in some backyards of Nadodrze and you told me that those projects were quite successful within the neighbourhood. Some residents from neighbouring backyards came and asked the association if they could do the same in their backyard. Could we say that your project also met this kind of success at a smaller scale?*

M. Z.: In a way, yes, we had this kind of situation, but, in fact, it was too involving for us to start running this kind of project in other location and there was no perspective to get finances from the same source. We gave up and it was such an effort from our side to do this project with that small budget that we simply decided not to continue this kind of activities at all. It requires a lot of time and energy, and we couldn't offer good salaries neither to the coordinators nor the designers that were hired for the project. We also involved plenty of volunteers to help us out during the whole construction process, it wasn't possible to only do it with the residents. We also had to involve a big team to do it.

B. P.: *What were the good surprises you had during this urban garden project?*

M. Z.: The feedbacks of the residents were very positive. The way they reacted and got involved was surprisingly good. And after several months, they would also take care of it, so it had a very positive effects on the relationships between the residents and the fact that they took care of the project was a good surprise. I'm not sure of the situation of the project now. It's been 5 or 6 years since we did the project, I'm afraid that it might not be a time-lasting project. For us, as we did those projects in locations that aren't very close to our foundation, we couldn't take responsibility of the project nor organise anything there, that's a situation where it gets difficult. Speaking again of OKAP, the association was host of the backyard, so it was much easier, and they were present there all the time.

We didn't manage to find a spot that would have someone that could take the responsibility of the project.

B. P.: *So, would a part of the solution to make these kinds of projects work through time be to have fully available qualified people in the vicinity of the project?*

M. Z.: Yeah, this would be a solution to make it somehow sustainable. Perhaps it would be possible to implement those projects without this element if the project would be completely rooted down by the residents and that was an aspect that happened in the yard where we intervened. In fact, I again don't know what the situation is like now, because the girls who started the small botanical garden moved out in a totally different neighbourhood, so I'm not sure if the rest of the residents took care of it. I think that giving like financial support, formal support as an answer to the need coming from the users of the space have a greater sustainability than any kind of external intervention. Even though it took a lot of effort to build a feeling of community a relationship between people, it's not the same. We couldn't work there regularly and monitor the situation, so the sustainability of the project rather depended on their good will to take care of it. In fact, we had experience from totally different location, and it was a totally different project that we did with the company *Skanska*. They wanted somehow to help the residents of the building next to the place where they invested to make the backyard neater and have a better view from the windows of the building in which they invested, but also to build some sort of relationship with the residents. In that case, we proceeded very similarly, but we faced an issue. We built a "bench swing", and several months after the renovation, they called us and told us to take it down, because children from the school were coming to use it or homeless people were using it as a bed. We told them that they owned this backyard, if it doesn't work out even though they wanted it in the first place, it's not our responsibility and that they had to find a way to arrange the situation or contact the municipality to sort it out.

B. P.: *And what was the thing that did not really go as planned for the project? You talked about some conflicts that emerged between the different uses of the project, but that was something that you perhaps anticipated?*

M. Z.: We did not anticipate that much, but that wasn't a very serious problem. It was rather the other location that surprised us a lot. Even though we anticipated in a way that it won't function that long and that good, because we were able to notice that the commitment was much smaller, we weren't able to anticipate the fact that it would evolve

in such direction, that the residents would not appropriate the project and it would be so neglected. Some of the plants died soon, some were stolen there, that was the not very surprising, but it was something we didn't plan.

B. P.: *So, you didn't anticipate the level of disfunction that you would encounter for this project despite the low complexity (put plants, benches, and so on)?*

M. Z.: Yes, and some people tagged the structure, it wasn't totally functioning in a common way, plus the fact that we were contacted by the municipality after several years to move the project somewhere else, this was a huge surprise.

B. P.: *Now, what were the main elements that make the project work out, when it did? What would you consider as the main elements of success of this kind of project? We talked about the proximity and sustainability supervision of the project or the cases where the initiative is completely bottom up*

M. Z.: I think one of the important points that allowed the success of the first project was the identification of the residents to the place. Firstly, we used to propose this idea because they literally had a sign on the wall of the backyard where it was written "Botanical Garden", so we developed that idea. The other thing was that they really wanted to make this place more accessible and friendly for children, because the playground was very small, and they also wanted to have a football goal out there. That wasn't possible, but we painted goal on a wall, so they started using it, and we also painted the slogan of the football team of Wrocław. We also wrote "We love Śląsk (the football team's name) and this backyard" on the wall. We also used the colour of Śląsk to paint a mural and that was something that had a very positive impact, that encouraged these football fans to take care of the backyard and get involved in the whole process. We somehow try to offer them perspectives that were matching their values and points of view. This was also very important.

B. P.: *To what extend does the age structure of the neighbourhood impact the chances of success of those projects? I mean, if there are more young people or children, does it have a better chance of success in your opinion?*

M. Z.: It depends, I think. It isn't necessarily a guarantee of success and in this situation, it was funny because the one of the important points was who owned and who lived in the flats, but also the structure of the buildings surrounding the backyard. In the first location, there was a new building that was closing the backyard. There was a group of new residents who had a very fresh view of the location, and it was inspiring because they

got involved in the consultation process, but finally didn't get involved in the renovation project, unlike those workers who were there. They encouraged in a way and opened the field to this kind of discussion. As far as I know, there weren't a lot of families with children in that new building, so later, they weren't using the backyard that much, what mainly was important for them was the visual aspect. The residents of the new building were rather belonging to the middle class, so they weren't very interested to spend time down there. This backyard usually was used by lower classes.

B. P.: *Finally, to what extent do you think this kind of project and the involvement of local communities has a future regarding the evolution of the city?*

M. Z.: I think that the implementation of such project requires a much bigger budget and generally a concept that either is a rooted down initiative or that is followed up by a continuation of social animation. It will never work without such very sustainable concept run either by an organisation which proposes activities in other neighbourhoods. It could also somehow be coupled with "micro grounds", so giving a small budget to the inhabitants for them to organise and set up their own ideas. Just doing tiny intervention with small budgets, even with bigger budgets, because plenty of those projects for Wrocław – Backyard Door had bigger budgets and organise it in an unsustainable way – with no one to take care of the project afterwards – doesn't work. That's my opinion coming from several experiences. Once there's an artist or organisation that stays there for a couple of week or months to do something like that and then he disappears, it won't work. One a good example of a successful project is the one that was ran by Iza Rutkowska, *The Hedgehog*, where, even after the "official" project, she continued to organise activities there, like film making, she put a lot of efforts in encouraging the residents to create projects for the civic budget and so on, so this continuity was a guarantee of a bigger success it changed the area. So, perhaps also finding such involved people who can give a part of their life to this kind of project, that will create an impact and induce sustainable changes in the neighbourhood.

B. P.: *So, beside the budget for materials, there's also a need of investing in some staff and in people who really care and have the will to change the neighbourhood.*

M. Z.: Yes exactly.

B. P.: *Alright, thank you very much for your time.*

10.1.3. Łukasz Medeksza – Department of Strategy and Development of the City

What role did the European Capital of Culture 2016 in the development strategy of the city of Wrocław?

Expectation: The main idea about the ECOC is based the idea Wrocław is basically a capital of culture, cultural city. One guy said that Wrocław already has been a European Capital of Culture, informally in the 50s and 60s, with several big projects or institutions which were by themselves big cultural attractors. This is a contemporary tradition. The idea to apply for the ECOC was based on a strong foundation. Secondly, the idea was to strengthen the position of big cultural centre and the goal was to strengthen the community/cooperation/processes that underly below the cultural life. And strengthen the social fabric/culture production (own reflection of Ł.Medeksza). The capital of culture is a sort of strategy, but it wasn't formulated directly. Internally, they had such an idea that the ECOC in Wrocław may be used as some kind of inspiration for the strategy of Wrocław. What's very important is the definition of the Terme "culture". For Ł. Medeksza, culture is a way of being according to values. This is another way to define culture in comparison to "usual" definition. The other definition of culture is a mean to change social structures of a city. For him, the most important thing was to gain some conciseness of the variety of definition of culture (What is the strategy of the city about culture, in relation with values and to change social structure). Then, what kind of culture do we want to produce, but the ECOC wasn't really about these questions. After the ECOC, they wrote down a new strategy adopted in 2018. A part of the team that were engaged in managing the ECOC wrote a sort of strategy of culture in 2017-18. Ł. Medeksza was responsible of the so-called social foreside of Wrocław "Laboratory of the Future". Wrocław is getting renovated not because of the capital of culture, but it always has been the case. The public money spend by the municipality on renovation is the second amount of money spend by a municipality after Warsaw.

The city of Wrocław undertook a lot of modernisation and renovation work for the ECOC, what were the main targets of those projects for the city?

The capital of culture was useful in realising projects like renovation of process of several infrastructures. The main example would be the National Forum of Music, it wasn't only about renovation, but it helped a lot. When we look inside the strategy of culture mentioned before, in the section of the goals, there are many projects like renovating.

What lessons did you learn from the implementation of the ECOC?

Informal: when we speak about culture, especially in the environment of public municipality in Poland, we mainly talk about institution and projects that are publicly financed. We didn't notice significant changes after the ECOC in this domain. One of the main element was that the authorities changed their cultural policies towards more socially oriented culture. It means, for example that we opened and plan to open several new cultural "objects"/institution in various new parts of the city. It spread culture in the whole city. And these are more socially oriented, for bottom-up initiative. This was written down in the 2018 strategy and aims to strengthen.

Did the implementation of the ECOC had unexpected fallout for the city? If yes, what were they?

Maybe the biggest thing that could be interpreted as unexpected was the attribution Nobel Prize in 2018 to a person (Olga Tokarczuk) who participated in the capital of culture. This underlines the role of culture for the city on a worldwide scale.

To what extent is culture a tool for the enhancement of local life conditions?

The idea is really to enhance the life quality. The second big idea is to make it decentralised. This has much to do with territorial and social cohesion. This is a strategy of cohesion inside the territory of the city. One of the big projects that Wrocław plans to do more is the revitalisation of "difficult neighborhoods". One of the main tools of the revitalisation was culture. This is an important point.

- Improve the life quality in the city
- Make it spread through city
- Empowerment → give more power to the neighborhood with bottom-up movement.

It can also mean Empowerment through the municipal budget (give more money) and empowerment of the municipality.

What role does the aesthetic of the city have in the development strategies, especially regarding regeneration projects?

This is definitely an important part of the strategy. But it depends on what kind of revitalisation we talk about. The first official programs started more than 10 years ago. The second revitalisation program was smaller in terms of money and now the third "wave" of revitalisation is being prepared. Parallely, some parts of the city are *de facto* revitalised, and this also happens outside of the city. Renovating of public building and

spaces is one of the crucial factors in the “development of the city”. Wrocław has been doing it from decades. One of the main symbolic acts of renovating was the renovation of the marketplace. And it was an inspiration to do more in the city centre and outside of the city centre. The other example is the renovation of railway station, financed by the public national railway company. They are still doing it, but the main wave of renovation was 10 years ago. The biggest challenge for Wrocław is the old *Kamienica* and their renovation.

What is the municipality’s strategy to foster a long-term improvement of life quality in depredated areas?

The city strategy (not unusual) is about various fields and area of intervention or problem to solve. We talked about culture but, on the other hand, the adaptation to climate change also mobilises the attention. Today, it’s very trendy to talk about the healthy city. So those specific strategies are mixed. The ECOC may have been one of the inspirations for the network (polycentric) approach that the city is trying to adopt. When we see the city from the polycentric point of view, for example there are a lot of “Small” marketplaces. So, it is important to get commodities spread all around the city, close to where people live.

Wrocław had 3 strategies: 1998, 2006 and 2018. In every one of them, we can read about the polycentric vision, so it’s not a recent idea. The monocentric approach prevailed for several years. The new president who won the elections in 2018 was the director of the department of social affairs. This department hosts the bureau of culture and urban regeneration. He was the main person who was responsible of the ECOC. For this new strategy, he adopted a sort of slogan: “The whole Wrocław closer to home”

10.2. Tables

Annex 1: Table 1 – Observation grid used during the fieldwork.

Observation Grid					
Themes	Day	Time	Object-s	Photograph-s	Description & notes
Urban regeneration programs					
Cultural elements in regeneration, personal contributions in urban regeneration or visible grassroots projects					
<i>Urban Botanical Gardens on Kreta street</i>					
<i>Urban Botanical Gardens Door on Ptasia street</i>					
<i>The Kamienica on Hubska</i>					
<i>Podwórko – Nasze Atelier & Podwórko – Odkrywanie Sztuki on Franklin Delano Roosevelt street</i>					

Annex 2: Summary of the methods used for the gathering and analysis of the data.

Methodology					
Method	Proceeding	Source/academic reference	Contribution to the research question	Type of the produced data	Analysis method
State of the art	Exploration of the existing specialized literature of the topics gravitating around the research questions and hypothesis	Flowerdew, 2008; Healy & Healy, 2010; Longhurst, 2010	Allows a contextualization of the research questions and hypothesis; helps understand the explored phenomenon; gives reflexion angle to the analysis	Qualitative	Codification; triangulation
Interviews	Elaboration of a interview guide on the basis of the literature review; selection of contacts (e.g. contact list); interview (if possible with audio recording); retranscription of the content of the interview; analysis of the content; creation of a contact network ('Snowball effect')	Braun & Clarke, 2006; Chevalier & Meyer, 2018; Flowerdew, 2008; Longhurst, 2010; Paillé & Mucchielli, 2012; Point, 2018; Saldaña, 2013	Better understanding of the local situation; comprehension of the events through various points of views	Qualitative data	Retranscription; codification; thematical analysis
Field observation	Inventory of the situation; "reading of the landscape" (Duncan & Duncanm, 2001); observation of elements underlined during the interviews	Chevalier & Stenger, 2018; Duncan & Duncan, 2001; Liarte & Maire, 2018	Offers a better understanding of the local situation	Qualitative data; visual data	
Research/reflective diary	Writing down field experience and noting observations and atmosphere; having a trace of how the field was perceived without recoil;	Chevalier & Stenger, 2018	Allows to keep a trace of how the field was perceived without recoil; helps memorizing details; inventories feelings and atmosphere of the field	Qualitative data	Visual quantification; semiotics and symbolic analysis
Photography	Picturing of elements met on the field that illustrate the statements written in the research diary and approached during the interviews	Crang, 2008; Krase, 2007; Liarte & Maire, 2018	Illustrates the examples treated in the study; helps the visualization and contextualization of the elements encountered during the fieldwork by the reader; "An image is worth a thousand words – Confusius"	Visual data	