

European Capitals of Culture and the limits of the urban effects in Luxembourg and Sibiu 2007¹

Capitais europeias da cultura e os limites dos efeitos urbanos em Luxemburgo e Sibiu 2007

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Abstract

A mega-event is a replicant: local copy of a global model. The European Capitals of Culture (ECC) is an annual mega-event, currently usually held in two European cities. This paper argues it has three particular dimensions, recognisable from the European Union's policy. First designed to articulate a European identity, it has been a mover for local urban transformation and city-branding, and later participation. The policy projects Europe as "family of cultures", which suggests attention for a particular ECC year, when the old Saxon fortress town of Luxembourg hosted the title together with the former Saxon fortress town Sibiu of Romania, which joined the European Union only the same year: 2007. The article asks, what are the limits of the urban effects of the three dimensions of the European Capitals of Culture, using as a method urban art interventions for investigating the limits and potential spatial effects of the ECCs and the extent of the diffusion of institutional elements.

Keywords: European culture. Identity. Branding.

Resumo

Um megaevento é um replicante: cópia local de um modelo global. As Capitais Europeias da Cultura (ECC) é um megaevento anual, atualmente e normalmente sediado em duas cidades europeias. Este artigo argumenta que este fato tem três dimensões específicas, reconhecidas a partir da política da União Europeia. Primeiramente, o evento é planejado para articular uma identidade europeia, que tem sido uma alavanca para transformações urbanas locais e marketing urbano, e posteriormente participação. A política projeta a Europa como uma "família de culturas", que sugere atenção a um ano específico para o ECC, quando a antiga cidade fortaleza saxônica de Luxemburgo recebeu o título juntamente com a antiga cidade fortaleza saxônica de Sibiu, na Romênia,

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que inclusive se juntou à União Europeia no mesmo ano, 2007. O artigo coloca a pergunta: quais são os limites do efeito urbano das três dimensões da Capital Europeia da Cultura, utilizando como método intervenções artísticas urbanas para investigar os limites e efeitos espaciais em potencial dos ECCs e a extensão da difusão de elementos institucionais.

Palavras-chave: *Cultura europeia. Identidade. Marketing.*

[I]f 'Europe' and 'European' signify something more than the sum total of the populations and cultures that happen to inhabit a conventionally demarcated geographical space, what exactly are those characteristics and qualities that distinguish Europe from anything or anyone else? Can we find in the history and cultures of this continent some thing or things that are not replicated elsewhere, and that shaped what might be called specifically 'European experiences'? (SMITH, 1992, p. 68).

Introduction

European Capitals of Culture are the perfect mega-events (RICHARDS; WILSON, 2004), designed to excite the citizens, provoke feelings of common citizenship through participation and by restructuring urban space. Spatial effects of the ECCs are most pronounced. Sometimes they are dealing with a particularly contentious place (FRANK, 2003, 2000) or catalyzing regeneration (BAILEY; MILES; STARK, 2004; GARCÍA, 2004; MOONEY, 2004; NÉMETH, 2009). Sometimes they are more tied to tourism or city-images (RICHARDS; WILSON, 2004, 2006). There is also a danger of uniformity as the cities are seeking to fulfill a format of the ideal ECC. Having studied three applications of the ECC 2008 and the discussion surrounding the bid, Griffiths (2006, p. 429) claims that the ECC bidding process managed to articulate differences between the cities, and their distance to the local and regional strategies. Yet, while creating differences between cities, regions and even offering insights to Europe that vary, the ideas of culture are rather similar. And so are the features of the programmes and their application.

In the policy process cities become emblems of Europe as a 'family of cultures' (SMITH, 1992). The exploration on this mega-event could focus on the institutions and actors of the process, but in this article

a novel angle is sought. It explores how the institutionalisation of the cultural ideals of Europe, participation and special effects (usually gentrification) are limited in the space of the city staging artistic interventions as part of the official programme of two closely connected ECCs. The level of observation is the micro-context of an encounter between the locals and the intervention staged by 'cultural workers' including the author herself.

Originally, it was the idea of nominating a European City of Culture was voiced in 1983 by the Greek Minister of Culture, Melina Mercouri. ECCs have been nominated since 1985 and the policy has shifted over time. For example, the decision from 1999 (1419/1999EC, article 3) stresses 'artistic movements and styles shared by Europeans', involving people from different parts of the Union for 'lasting cultural cooperation' and movement, mobilisation and participation of large sections of the population', 'reception of citizens', 'dialogue between European cultures and those from other parts of the world', and 'the historic heritage, urban architecture and quality of life in the city'. However, guidelines for the applicants and criteria for the national selection boards in 2006 (1622/2006/EC) introduced two dimensions: 'the European Dimension', stressing cooperation, richness of cultural diversity in Europe; and common aspects of European cultures; and 'City and Citizens', stressing participation and sustainability in terms of long-term cultural and social development of the city.

Each member state has the right to host an ECC, and the power to choose the city is, in practice, delegated to the member states by the European Union, which officially nominate the cities. As the integration deepened and the European Community turned into a European Union in the Maastricht Treaty of 1992, and the Union later expanded, more countries wished to host the event. In response to this, the possibility was offered from 2000 to more than one city at the same time. Recently, this has meant two

cities – one from the older member states and one newly joined.

This article focuses on two ECCs, which were perhaps more interconnected than other simultaneous mega-events of this kind, particularly as one asked the other to join its application for the ECC year. Luxembourg had already held the title in 1995 and now hosted a regional event. Furthermore, it tried to implement post-Fordist city-branding, which, especially since Glasgow's title year 1990, was part-and-parcel of the 'culture-led' urban rejuvenation and branding. In this instance, Luxembourg wished to enter another round of the ECCs, and asked the Romanian town of Sibiu to join its application. Sibiu in Transylvania, Romania, was built as a Saxon fortress town in the 14th century by Germanic emigrées to defend the Hungarian kingdom from the barbarians in the East. The vernacular architecture heavily utilized wood but later immigrants built fortifications from stone. Spatially, the case of Sibiu is interesting from the perspective of restoration of the old urban core: instead of a landmark building, typical of the ECC package, the city focused on the old town, medieval fortress city, neglected during the socialist period. It was perceived that, as a first-time ECC (as they all ought to be according to EU legislation), Sibiu's ECC year was focused in the city core whilst Luxembourg's entry focuses away from the centre to the wider region. Yet the recent ECC policy insists on wider participation and on spatial impacts. This article explores the limits to these EU-level ambitions (hereafter 'limits') via the engagement of individuals in EU-endorsed artistic interventions across different spatial settings.

As its method, the article utilizes an ethnomethodological investigation, exploring the application and limits of EU-level aspirations for ECCs through how various local groups engage with art interventions associated with and sponsored by the ECC. This study was conducted across both ECCs of 2007. In this case the interventions were from the Bauhaus Kolleg Dessau programme EUrbanism 2007, and were part of the official programme of both Luxembourg and Sibiu's ECC year. The case selected from the Sibiu ECC was developed by myself in a series of other interventions in the city. For Luxembourg, a series of three art interventions is investigated, and for one of which I played a planning role. The group did not perform the same action in the two cities but each

of the interventions were site specific. The interventions I was personally planning sought to repeat the same act in different parts of the city. This worked as a tool for testing the limits of the ECC. All three interventions in Luxembourg were dealing with the same concepts: home, homecoming and homeliness, so they provide comparable material for that case. The interventions are local variants of the same phenomenon in a similar way as mega-events.

This article draws from three theoretical sources: institutionalism (SCOTT, 2008), discourse theory (LACLAU, 1990, 2005) and geography (MASSEY, 2005). The ECCs can be seen as artifact-carriers for embedding institutions (SCOTT, 2008). In so far as institutions are defined as systems of elements that act to produce meaning, stability and order (SCOTT, 2008), they also can be related to discourses the structure and sediment meaning (LACLAU, 1990). The regulative, normative and cultural-cognitive elements which make up an institution for Scott or a discourse for Laclau are here argued to be mainly the three dimensions of the ECCs. The study explores the limits of the discourse or the diffusion of the institutional elements over space.

Space is referred as the terrain of the city, not as a neutral entity, but rather as something constituted through social relations. As Massey argues both space and public are co-constitutive and continuously created through social relations (MASSEY, 2005). From this perspective, it is in human encounters that the space is constituted and appears, that it becomes tangible. This understanding of space reaches out to the processes of identification and to the constitution of the subject and identity. Shared identity is the crucial – spatial – element articulated by the ECC programme. Yet, mega-events are also particular cases of (re)producing more of the same, yet are applied to new contexts.

Urban surroundings and the ECCs are both types of institutional carriers. Perhaps proposing such a programme for the European Community, Melina Mercouri had read Meyer and Rowan's (1977) work: "organizations which incorporate institutionalized myths are more legitimate, successful and likely to survive" (MEYER; ROWAN, 1977, p. 361). This may serve as a background for understanding the legitimating role of the mega-events, and the policy of the ECC. In this article, I first explore the three dimensions of the ECC. Then I outline the aims of the ECCs

of 2007. Finally I introduce and analyse the urban art interventions in Sibiu and Luxembourg.

European Identity

Roots of the ECCs lay in the “myth” of Europe that Jean Monnet launched in his insistence on culture as the basis of the European Community in the 1980s. The idea was to highlight European culture and recognise the value of cities like Athens and Florence for a European identity, in the similar lines as a European history could be formed. The European Commission decreed in 1985 (85/C 153/02): “the ‘European City of Culture’ event should be the expression of a culture which, in its historical emergence and contemporary development, is characterized by having both common elements and a richness born of diversity.”

Behind this policy was an intuition that a European identity offers legitimacy for the European project and it cannot be formed by mere economic and governmental structures. It is visible in Anthony D. Smith’s (1992) suggestion of a third way, between unacceptable historical myths and memories – each of which are contestable somewhere around Europe, and “memoryless scientific ‘culture’ held together solely by the political will and economic interest that are so often subject to change” (SMITH, 1992, p. 74). There are shared traditions, even though not all Europeans invest in all of them. “But at one time or another all Europe’s communities have participated in at least some of these traditions and heritages, in some degree” (SMITH, 1992, p. 70). Instead of the unity-in-diversity thesis, he rearticulates Wittgenstein’s concepts of ‘family resemblances’ into the idea of a ‘family of cultures’ (SMITH, 1992, p. 70), a concept that informs the accolade of a ECC.

Moreover, the toolbox of the European leaders increased after the Maastricht Treaty of 1992 with the possibility to run European cultural policy – as well as various forms of funding, legislation and administration – across the larger and integrating Union (BIANCHINI, 1993; SASSATELLI, 2006). Here, ECCs became a vehicle to reflect Smith’s vision of European identity-building; icons in the search for a United Europe, to paraphrase Carola Hein (2006). Thus, in their initial phase, ECCs took this traditional role although were limited in their ability to effectively

disseminate these newly constructed ideas and values. These were later articulated via spatial impacts and mass-participations. Thus, in a development from mere commonality among European historical traditions, the norms for planning the mega-event become attentive to issues such as what could be shared, and what is ‘European’ (in this contrived sense) about particular cities?

Spatial transformation

In its origins, the ECC process was a top-down modernist and essentialist project. Later, it later gave more scope to present and represent the city in relation to ‘European’ culture. The turning point in the history of these mega-events was the year 1990, when not London but Glasgow – a place not so much famed for its culture but industry – was awarded the title of European City of Culture. The event helped Glasgow to transform its city-image and rebrand itself as a cultural city, at least in its appearance (MOONEY, 2004; GARCÍA, 2004). In many ways, Glasgow’s ECC year also concretised the ideal of European integration: progress and prosperity. While in the 1950s integration was about finding ways to enhance industrial development, increasingly from 1990 it was about post-industrial challenges and creative industries as the solution for a post-Fordist transformation.

Glasgow reached what was considered as the ultimate indicator in the success in tourism industry when reviewed favourably by the highly influential reports by Robert Palmer’s office – which have become an integral part of the policy of ECCs (PALONEN, 2010). A crucial measure of success here was the increased level of successive overnight stays in the local hotels in the years following the mega-event (PALMER et al., 2004), thus pointing to a positive and sustained impact on tourism. Glasgow became the model for successive ECCs. It thus symbolised how, for its organisers, the ECC does not only enhance the existing ‘cultural value’ (locally and, crucially, in relation to the contrived sense of ‘European’ culture), it also can offer culture-led urban transformation for the host city. This was something that previous hosts – Athens, Florence, Amsterdam, Berlin and Paris – had not achieved, principally, given the reduced need for post-industrial city-branding or urban transformation in these early ECCs (GARCÍA, 2004). The ECC had

thus become a vehicle for 'culture-led' post-Fordist transformation. Besides enabling more than one city per year to hold the title, the application phase offered a marketing opportunity for many cities. Here, sub-EU national competitions for candidacy enable small cities to market themselves to a broader (national) audience. Indeed, the national competition has been vital for promoting the small cities and for building confidence – with related projects – in the local population (e.g. BAILEY; MILES; STARK, 2004).

In the UK, the bidding seasons have been deemed as a marked success. With regard to the UK City of Culture competition for 2013, the shortlisted cities – Birmingham, Derry, Norwich and Sheffield – were all deemed in need of a facelift, whether in guise the post-Fordist development or heritage-mining. This was a prime opportunity to express their charms to potential investors and the competition offered free publicity and an articulation of aspirations for a culture-led economy. Indeed, "even in the losing cities there is talk about a "momentum" around culture built up during the bid that participants are anxious to keep going. Different, and less bureaucratic [approaches] may not in themselves have produced more "creative" outcomes" (GRIFFITHS, 2006, p. 429).

Having realised the decline in traditional industries, the post-Fordist solution in Europe became culture-led economy. However, even if economic logic prevailed, the salvation sought from the ECC programme is not automatic. It is a complex policy-process and financing does not always accompany it. Struggle, power and resistance are continual realities amid the staging of European Capitals of Culture. Multi-level cultural policy is highly volatile to transformations on the local and national level – particularly as the EU provides minimal funding to ECCs. Indeed, many of the ECCs – including the two under study in this article, and most notably Ruhr 2010 – can be seen as regional projects.

Furthermore, Griffiths (2006, p. 430) points out the anodyne character of culture in the European Capitals of Culture devalues the struggles and contestations that underpin truly creative culture:

There is there is little sign, in any of the bids of culture being viewed as a medium for collective emancipation; of culture as a field of struggle and resistance; of culture as a source of oppositional identities; of a more fundamental politics of culture.

Often in the ECC programmes, the citizen participant is not active in choosing and, rather, passively gazes at the culture that rather purports to represent them.

The European "family of cultures" and the ECC 2007

The cases chosen for study reflect the idea of "family of cultures" quite intimately. Relatively little has been written about Sibiu or Luxembourg in general, but even less about their ECC years 2007 (DRAGOMAN, 2008; MAYER, 2009; HEIN, 2006). Luxembourg, as the capital of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg held a ECC in 1995 already. As a city is not allowed to stand as the ECC twice, the bid for Luxembourg was on the basis of a 'Grand Region'. As there were doubts about this strategy, the Prime Minister of Luxembourg proposed a different one to the ministers of the neighbouring countries: to put forward a regional bid. The title was nominated to Luxembourg and the Greater Region – a large commuting area, despite the apparent absence of a cohesive urban identity. As the Final Report of the ECC year stated:

Perhaps this is the first challenge of 2007, the desire to make the Greater Region live, both within and beyond its borders. [...] four bordering European countries (Luxembourg, France, Germany, Belgium), three national languages (German, French, Luxembourgish), whose 11.2 million inhabitants share a territory of 65 401 km. across which 160 000 cross-border workers travel every day, 120 000 of them commuting to Luxembourg (LUXEMBOURG AND GREATER REGION, 2008, p. 17).

The focus of the bid was indeed outside the traditional urban core of the city. In 1995 the Luxembourgish discovered national and urban possibilities of highlighting, fostering and experiencing high culture, and cultural institutions in a city that had been more occupied with finances and administration. Meyer (2009) argues that there are other differences between Luxembourg's 1995 and 2007 hosting of the ECC. Here, 1995 was part of a larger professionalisation process and process where the connection between culture and attraction of capital was realised from 1980s up to 2000s. The difference between the

two years was not however, only in their spatial focus. Twelve years later a different generation was carving its own space for culture and making cultural links of different kind. The ECC in 2007 highlighted post-industrial and transnational values (POCHAT, 2006).

Sibiu was a different case. It got the chance to become an ECC through the back door. At the time of application Romania was not even an EU member – rather unusual, although the title was not reserved for EU member states only (in 2000 Krakow, Prague and Reykjavik and in 2010 Istanbul held it, too). The country joined EU in 2007 and much of the coverage of the membership celebrations in the media were precisely from Sibiu. The old town square became the scene for the European Romania.

The invitation for ECC title had come from Luxembourg, which wanted to reinforce their regional focus. On one hand, it was about the rediscovery of Saxon roots in both cities. Sibiu was established in the 14th century as a fortress town. Saxons were invited by the Hungarian king to defend the easternmost areas of western Christianity against the attacks by the Ottomans. Renown for their fortress building skills the Saxons settled and built seven fortress cities in Transylvania – *Siebenburgen*, in German. Hermannstadt was the home of Universitas Saxorum, the assembly of the Germans or Saxons in Transylvania. Some of their language and culture was left in the area. Today's Luxembourgish is claimed to resemble the dialect of German spoken in Transylvania, which would still have its Frankish roots. On the other hand, it was about connection between the East and the West, the New and Old member states of the EU.

The juxtaposition of a Transylvanian Sibiu and the capital of the Grand Duchy is interesting. Both cities are fortress towns. This is an idea that has been fostered in Luxembourg, which for years has been planning a Fortress Museum to the Fort Thüngen part of Vauban's fortification attached to the museum of modern art MUDAM, which took two decades to build (MEYER, 2009). Both cities are also *de facto* multilingual and multi-ethnic. Luxembourg has three official languages, French, Luxembourgish and German. Sibiu (*Hermannstadt*, in German, or *Nagyszeben*, in Hungarian) is a multiethnic city, and important historical site for Saxon Germans in Transylvania, Hungarians and Romanians. During the Ceaucescu period prior to 1989 many of the Transylvanian German-speakers

were exchanged for funds from the German government to Germany and the status of the Hungarian-speakers worsened. In 2000 the citizens of Sibiu elected the first German Mayor in Romania since WWII. Klaus Johannis, representing the Democratic Forum of Germans received 88.7 % of votes in 2004 and 83.3 four years later. Despite the strong trust on the "German" mayor, as Dragos Dragoman (2008) has discovered, the ability to speak the national language was the strongest criterion for citizenship amongst the Sibiu citizens, casting doubts on the claims of the town's multilingual ethos.

The above discussion serves as a background for the heterogeneity and complexity within the cities and their historical tradition. Thinking more spatially, however, Sibiu stands apart among historical Saxon towns in Romania. While during the communist period other old towns experienced massive restructuring of old urban cores, the old town of Sibiu was saved. As in Luxembourg 1995, the historical core became the focus point in Sibiu 2007. The urban core was not renovated during the whole post WWII period up to the 2000s. Instead of building a landmark building, such as for instance the ECC in Graz 2003, the main effort of the ECC project in Romania was focused on the Old Town.

As the ECC year was coming closer there were two initiatives with contrasting methods in place to tackle the decay of the inner city: the German Agency for Development Cooperation (GTZ), with a restoration project of the structures of the old buildings and restoration of old paints and materials, and the Romanian government which simply wanted to renovate the inner core to transform it into a liveable city. One of the constraints in the two projects was time: the Romanian government released funds for the renovation quite late in 2006, so there was only time to provide a face-lift of the facades and roofs could be done in the inner-core.

The infrastructure in general was part of the ECC project: water, electricity and roads were improved in and surrounding the hitherto untouched Old Town. The town had little capacity for tourists. Outside the Old Town, the railway station was renovated, new trains were acquired, hotels were built (70 percent increase in two years) to serve as the infrastructure for tourism. These new hotels included a tall new four-star hotel in the socialist period's centre, which became then the privately sponsored landmark building

of the ECC. In 2011 the evaluation of the success of the ECC2007 in Sibiu states:

The actions of the City of Sibiu over the past decade form an interesting case study of culture-led regeneration, drawing heavily on a “mega-event” as a source of cultural, social and economic dynamism. [...] An overall conclusion, based on close observation of the city and nearly 10 years of survey research is that the ECOC in 2007 was the first time that Sibiu had developed a clear (cultural) tourism product (RICHARDS; ROTARIU, 2011).

While the Sibiu ECC year sought to have tangible effects of renovating and creating infrastructure for citizens and visitors, the Luxembourg ECC year was about building a region. The office of the 2007 ECC was located next to the flagship venues: the two Rotundas, round railway engine workshops by the railway station. One of them was a place for the youth – a key intended audience for Luxembourg’s ECC year – and indeed the Rotunda 2 attracted younger age groups even though it failed to reach its principle targets (ECC Final Report, p. 42). The other one was in near-by Hollerich, a gentrifying industrial area. Here, the Espace Paul Wurth in Hollerich became the space for alternative culture and base for urban interventions. The former industrial halls, Halle des Sufflantes, in the mining town of Esch/Belval hosted a large post-industrial exhibition centre. The exhibition sought to highlight the effects of mass consumption and globalisation (entitled “All We Need”) and the silent history of immigrant workers and trade unions in the country. This seemed to be triggered by the Luxembourg 2007’s emphasis on the region, commuters and multiculturalism that came with and simultaneously the general ECC focus on post-industrial culture and post-Fordism.

The rest of this article will look at spatial effects of the mega-event through urban art interventions. The interventions were part of the Bauhaus Kolleg programme EURbanism 2006–2007, staged as part of the official ECC programme in both cities.

Public space and interaction in Sibiu

The EU memorial – speculations on public sculpture made part of the *Speculations on Space* urban

interventions by the Bauhaus Kolleg 2006-07 in Sibiu. As political scientist working on space and memory (e.g. PALONEN, 2008) and now artist, my aim was to react against the typical character of a memorial, to provide a space for reflection and interaction. The temporary memorial intervention migrated to different parts of the city from the town’s main square. It was not bound to its surroundings, but it created space where it appeared.

The locals were surprised to see the memorial when it appeared outside of the old town where all the ECC events were located. Rather than occupying a place of its own with a plinth or a base, this EU memorial was tied to the existing street furniture: a public well, flower pots, trash cans, etc. It formed a surface for interaction, gathered people, became a live memorial through participation. Even though temporary, and not set in stone or bronze, it was “democratic” in the sense that Malcolm Miles seems to have intended (MILES, 1997) when wondering whether memorials could be turned from the top-down ideology – and place-markers into ‘bottom-up’ democratic ones.

The memorial intervention consisted of an EU flag, pole, ribbon, notebook and the tools for making a new design for an EU flag: a dark blue door mat and a set (three sets) of florescent stars fixed with a sticking surface. I acted as a “cultural worker” to facilitate the process. People were invited to write what Europe meant for them in the notebook (“Europa este..?”) and to make an EU flag of their own, and then pose for a photo with their flag. Though still within the traditional framework of the stars on a blue background, the memorial played with and contested the canonised shape of the EU flag to invite new visions and meanings of Europe.

While each flag lasted only moments in the city, the new designs were captured on camera and stored. They were a reminder, turned into another, virtual, memorial or exhibition (<http://euflagmemorial.wordpress.com>). A design that unified all the flags into one was later nominated among 12 others in a design competition of a Dutch think tank as ‘A New Symbol for Europe’.

The intervention also gathered people around the flag. Passers-by paid attention to the memorial, and in this way noticing – and even the momentary reflection implied – could be seen as participation. At times, there was a crowd of people discussing the

project, Europe and the designs being made. Drawing on Massey (2005), we can argue that it created 'a public' and sense of sharing the symbol, even though the visions put forward were different.

The memorial also worked as a tool for analysing public spaces. In traditional squares of the inner city (Piata Mare on Thursday and Piata Mica on Sunday), people were not too surprised to encounter the intervention. Many of them were simply spending time on the square and also seemed more relaxed and ready to engage with the intervention, than in the other places. The flow of people was slow but constant on these squares. In two of the other places, there was a more rapid flow of people. In front of the state socialist time department store Dumbrava (Friday noon) and the post-communist out of city shopping centre (Saturday noon) people did not spend much time – but these spaces were clearly for passing by and occasional stopping. People were happy to engage, and surprised to see an art intervention in this unconventional place.

However, at the food market, people were more reluctant to engage with the intervention. On a Saturday afternoon everyone seemed to know each other on the square. Informal social control was higher and therefore also the fear of 'losing face' by engaging in a silly-looking activity, such as making a flag with florescent stars and doormat, was greater. This state persisted until a stall-keeper's son was persuaded to make the flag. Subsequent participants included kids, an alcoholic and a middle-aged man with religious Romanian nationalist views. In the other places it was occasional passers-by whom engaged, who hailed from more diverse backgrounds – including women and people in all age groups. While in the other places one had encountered many people who knew English, German or some other language – or were happy to try interacting with a foreigner – at the market it was also the most difficult to communicate in English or without a common language.

The places could also be distinguished between through the exchange value of the memorial. In the main square Piata Mare – with social and political character (c.f. <http://www.turism.sibiu.ro/en/centrul.htm>) – people participating recognised merely the symbolic value of the flag. In the out of city shopping centre the non-commercial character of this action in contrast to the other signs and places was obvious. Outside Dumbrava and on Piata Mica – a

flower market square – some passers-by were asking whether they had to pay for this action. On the food market they asked whether the foreigner would pay *them* to participate!

Public interventions in Luxembourg

In the similar vein to Sibiu, the series of urban art interventions in Luxembourg by Bauhaus Kolleg 2006-07 revealed several limitations of the ECC. To highlight the similarity between the spatial dynamic in Sibiu and in Luxembourg, here the focus is on the three interventions in the series *Europe on the Move*.

The starting point for the intervention was the reality of immigration. It tackled the ECC year "as a showcase for a new geography of diverse patterns of European mobility where different types of (re)location converge" and "a microcosm of migratory and commuter movement throughout Europe", investigating "new forms of 'settling down' at locations in the city where various types of movement intersect." (All quotations here are from the website of the interventions: www.eu-urbanism.de) While taking the ECC year's theme under investigation the interventions equally revealed some the spatial effects of the ECC.

Intervention 1: "The Homesick Advice Bureau (HAB) is a new public service appearing in some of the key places of migration in the city of Luxembourg, with a real telephone hotline, floor plan and personnel carrying out a questionnaire."

The Homesick Advice Bureau (HAB) – by a multi-disciplinary and international group of seven Bauhaus Kolleg participants – explored few different locations of the city. Again, Similar to Sibiu, local participants were consistently surprised to see anything connected to the European Capital of Culture outside the touristic centre of the city. This feeling of surprise was felt even in the EU-centred financial district of Kirchberg, when establishing the "bureau" made of cardboard boxes outside the Auchan shopping centre and discussing with the workers having their lunch break. These areas contained large constituencies of so-called 'Eurobankers' and 'Eurocrats' most living on temporary basis in Luxembourg. The form of the HAB provided an interface for discussing Luxembourg and the reality of immigration. Another place

where the ECC felt completely out of place yet in contact with the reality of immigration was in Eich (Eech), just two kilometers north of the centre of Luxembourg. The HAB installed itself next to the office and social centre of the association for immigrant workers (Association de Soutien aux Travailleurs Immigrés, ASTI). Here, some of the people really came to talk about homesickness without realising that it was an art intervention. The HAB also contained a catalogue of products and services to combat homesickness. In the centre the “customers” of the HAB were mainly elderly locals and tourist people. On the desk there was an old fashioned telephone and a flag of the EU.

Intervention 2: “Lux Lumen is an installation that addresses the sense of home and locality by setting up an artificial fireplace in different quarters of Luxembourg together with sand bags as cushions.”

Another art intervention, *Lux Lumen*, was set mainly at intersections of residential neighbourhoods in the city’s outskirts targeting commuting passers-by. It involved an artificial fireplace with the intention of dealing with ambiguous issues of being in sight and outside, of public and private and of what constructs home. The artificial fire and tape recorder became visited by locals in places where nobody would have thought of seeing cultural capital year projects. The encounters were usually at first mixed with suspicion – some decided to build a friendlier bond, offering electricity or coming back with their families to hang out in the artificial camp fire and talk about being at home and away.

Intervention 3: “By laying out doormats over the length of the pedestrian bridge at Central Station Luxembourg, the installation *Welcome* stimulates – crossing the train tracks – a reflection upon home and away, public and private, mobile and settled, ordinary and representative.”

The third intervention, *Welcome*, by an architect was vested on a simple idea: it covered a well-frequented foot-bridge over the railway next to the Luxembourg main station with door mats in different colours and shapes, intimating reflection on mobility and migration. Interestingly, the door mats were first encountered with joy and surprise. Next to the office

of the ECC and the Rotundas it seemed to be clear for the passers-by that this was an ECC year project. The area was gentrifying, close to offices and hotels and a neighbourhood of Portuguese immigrants. Although the purpose was that people walked on the mats, many sought to avoid stepping on the artwork while crossing the bridge. Yet, overnight the door mats started to disappear. The respect for art intervention diminished. One of the mats even disappeared during the setting up of the intervention.

In the light of the three interventions, the actual spatial effects of the ECC could be traced to the centre of Luxembourg, where the flags of blue stags – the symbol of the ECC were hung over the main shopping streets. The rest of the city seemed undisturbed by the programme. The blue stag was the symbol of the ECC year, and principally wherever there would be ECC action, there would also be a blue stag. Still, in the final report of the ECC year a just over a fourth of the respondents thought it was always clear which events were part of the ECC year, similar share of the respondents thought it was clear most of the time, while under 20 percent thought it was usually not or never clear (ECC Final report, 25).

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In Luxembourg, the interventions by the Bauhaus Kolleg were affiliated with the ECC through the UrbanLab at the Espace Paul Wurth in Hollerich. Thus, unlike in Sibiu, where the official logo was used, part of the surprise to encountering ECC programme could be associated with this. However, the results from both cities indicate a similar phenomenon: people did not expect the ECC to come to their doorsteps but stay in the centre of the city and quite often also inside the institutions or confined to specified outdoor activities such as concerts. Yet, as they discovered art at their neighbourhoods they were enchanted to realise that the ECC had reached them.

The task of this article was not to account for the institutionalisation of the ECC project through looking at actors engaged in the process or the effect of the ECC in local contexts. Neither did it seek to explore how ideas travel across the EU through the ECCs. Here the focus has been on the diffusion of institutional elements carried by the ECC in a micro

context, spatially rather than temporarily, through using the urban art interventions as tools. Analysing the experiences of the urban art interventions in Sibiu and Luxembourg, one can notice a challenge the three dimensions of the ECCs (Table 1).

As material constructions, the ECCs as such serve as artefact-carriers in which various kinds of regulative, normative and cultural-cognitive institutions can be conveyed. The above table demonstrates the diffusion of the institutional elements carried by the ECC. The monumental centre squares of cities are expected to work as artefacts where the ECC is particularly prominent (SCOTT, 2008). Discursively, confusion appears when the urban environment as an artefact is perceived – consciously or pre-consciously – to be projecting very different elements from those of the officially branded ECC. Yet, conversely, the aim of the ECC centres on enhancing participation and spreading the ideals of the EU beyond the ceremonial centres and to the everyday. Bringing the ECC across the region to smaller municipalities was also the aim of Luxembourg's ECC year. As the two parts of the word "art interventions" indicate both the Speculations on Space in Sibiu and Europe on the Move in Luxembourg sought to challenge the

ceremonial and what would traditionally be seen as part of the ECC. These art interventions are something more than mere artefacts, although from the point of view of the institutional theory they are carriers of the ECC.

Conclusions

When thinking about the spatial effects of mega-events, one seems to think that mega-events reach out to a macro setting. The European Union's ECC programme, however, also seeks to foster everyday encounters. These are also monitored through the final reports of the ECCs. This kind of close contact is part-and-parcel of EU's identity-building project. It operates not only through mega-events and flagship buildings, or gentrification of formerly industrial areas, but also encounters between locals and tourists and even temporary effects among the locals.

The ECCs as mega-events have a potentiality towards spatial effects beyond the conventional city-branding and gentrification exercises. Informed by Massey's (2005) conception of space and public being co-constitutive – and of identities as temporary

Table 1 - Responses to the ECC in Sibiu and Luxembourg 2007

	Sibiu	Luxembourg
General impression on the reception to the art intervention: how well was the ECC brand recognised?	Recognised in the centre and with some surprise in the commercial districts, hostile attitude in the poorer neighbourhood of food market.	Recognised in the centre with some distance and with some surprise in commercial-EU district. First-time encounters difficult especially in the suburbs.
European identity	European identity most pronounced in the old town, especially the more ceremonial main square. Hostility towards the EU in the food market. Europe signifies progress, prosperity and possibility of consumerism.	European identity was discussed in all areas of Luxembourg with generally positive undertones, but in Eich, at one of the suburbs and at the railway station more mixed. Europe signifies everyday reality, immigration, travel and daily experienced multiculturalism.
Spatial effect	Reached only the Old Town, where gentrifying effects of the ECC were visible. In daily quarters as shopping-mall, the commercial socialist core and the food market little signs of the ECC. Positive reactions at the mall and commercial core indicate spillover effects of gentrification.	Effect visible in downtown but notably beyond the Old Town, e.g. in the railway station. However, appeared as the only ECC events in each of the suburbs and the EU district, despite the regional ethos of this ECC.
Participation	In the Old Town the question was: Do we have to pay for taking part? People of all ages take part – they are easily persuaded. In the food market: How much do you pay us for taking part?	Attitude quite reserved but once familiar with the intervention participants were happy of it reaching them, too. Some expressions of fatigue with the European project, especially in the Euro-centric quarters of Kirchberg.

Source: Research data.

fixations of process of identification – such cultural events can evoke local reflection on the relationship between the citizen and the lived space, the tourist and the monument, and thus spatial effects – however brief or long-lasting.

This article has first recognised ECCs as mega-events containing three different dimensions, European identity as a “family of cultures”, spatial effects as gentrification and city-marketing, and participation as something not very emancipatory but increasingly focused on the everyday. It has analysed the character of the 2007 ECCs and investigated the diffusion of the three dimensions of the ECC through space. We saw how inter-regionalism, the urge for creating an identity for super-region manifested of the European identity in Luxembourg – expressed in the three interventions of the Europe on the Move. In Sibiu it became the task to represent Europe for Romanians and Romania for the Europeans through the Transylvanian town. And in Sibiu, the Old Town was renovated but the food market remained untouched. In these spaces, participants reacted differently to the artistic interventions.

The main finding of this paper is thus that ECC art interventions in Sibiu and Luxembourg remained recognisable in the centre of the city, where there was generally positive feedback in the encounters of this EU-endorsed artefact-carrier. Further research on cases like Turku that have had a strong concept of the everyday could investigate the spreading effects of the mega-event and the institutions embedded in it (including European identity). This may have consequences on the way in which we see the role of mega-events and their discursive and institutionalizing power.

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