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Title **European Capital of Culture: How it can Change the Cultural Participation in the Hosted City.**

Abstract The European Capitals of Culture Policy Group recommends investigating six crucial themes by impact evaluation in cities designated for European Capital of Culture (ECOC). One of them counts for “cultural access and participation” to understand the cultural offer and socioeconomic and geographic characteristics on participants as well. The outcomes of associated research in ECOC cities are mainly simply described as “increase in cultural participation” without any more in-depth analysis of ECOC impacts on the cultural participation of residents.

In this paper, we introduce the local case-study to address these issue. Košice, the second largest city in Slovakia with population 250 000 was designated for European Capital of Culture in 2013. Through ECOC funding was built new cultural infrastructure in the city and rebuilt the old one. The title instigated visible changes in the cultural vibrancy within the city. New cultural infrastructure, a large number of cultural activities and introducing of new art forms could have the potential to influence traditional patterns in the cultural participation of residents.

This article analyses the effects of the designation of European Capital of Culture on the cultural participation of residents. The data stem from the local surveys conducted in 2007 and 2012-2014. The results of quantitative analysis using the Latent Class Cluster Analysis demonstrate which aspects of cultural participation were influenced by the changed cultural policy in the city.