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## **A Large Sports Event in the Eyes of the Host City's Inhabitants: the Example of Wrocław**

*Abstract:* In this article the authors have presented the history and organizational structure of the UEFA Euro 2012. They describe the main investments accompanying the organization of the competition in Poland, and particularly in Wrocław (one of the host cities). They also present a synthesis of the costs and benefits connected with organizing the championship. For the needs of the article, a survey was taken of Wrocław residents asking them what results they foresaw from the organization of the event. The aim of the research was to determine perceptions of the Euro 2012's expected social, economic, and promotional effects for the city and the country.

*Keywords:* Euro 2012, sport events, Wrocław, social reactions, perceptions

### **Introduction**

This article presents the results of research into the phenomenon of social perceptions of sports events and their effects on the areas where those events are organized. 'Sport is institutional or social behavior the core of which is competition based on skill and strategy. The specific behavior ranges from games of children to the contests of professional athletes. The institution of sport extends into economics, education, and the mass media; it has been studied by anthropologists, historians, economists, political scientists, social psychologists, and researchers in physical education' (Luschen 1980: 315).

The organization of sports events fulfils essential social functions. Participation in such events as a member of the audience is an element of what is called socialization: that is, spending one's free time with friends and family and strengthening relations with them (Standeven and De Knop 1999). Sports activity shapes the social image of nations, countries, and regions (Dolles and Söderman 2008). Sports events draw tourists, generating revenue for the areas where they are organized. Sports rivalry—for instance, in football—is also an element in building national pride, which is sometimes even coloured with nationalist hues. In this context, sports often evoke very strong social emotions, which can be a source of positive social mobilization, but which may also create aggressive attitudes (Illycheva 2005).

The contemporary image of large sports events is largely created by the media. Audiences all over the world observe, often with solemnity, the atmosphere of large sports events (Kennedy 2001). In contemporary sports rivalry, medal statistics have also become important. Many people rank a given country or nation on the basis of its achievements in international sports competitions.

Given the above-mentioned functions of sports events, the authors of the present article decided to conduct an analysis of how Wrocław's inhabitants viewed the significance of Euro 2012 for their country's and city's development. The authors addressed the issue of the Euro 2012 in Poland because it is a subject that has appeared frequently in the public forum in recent years. Among other matters, the preparations for the event, and the social and economic effects of organizing it, have been widely discussed in the media. In Poland, such a major sports event is a rarity, thus its organization was much discussed by the public as well. Scholarly works touching on similar sports events are likewise rare in Polish literature, although such sports events are frequently the subject of research abroad. Publications on the World Championship (Baade and Matheson 2004; Horne and Manzenreiter 2004; Lee and Taylor 2005) and European Football Championship (Barros 2006; Marivoet 2006) can be given as examples here.

The researchers' main aims in the present work were to present:

- the history and organizational structure of the UEFA European Championship—the Euro
- the main investments conducted in Poland in preparation for the Euro 2012
- in particular, consideration of the investments undertaken in Wrocław
- the expected benefits from organizing the Euro 2012
- the attitude of Wrocław's inhabitants to the Euro 2012
- the inhabitants' expectations of the events' costs and benefits.

The basic research method used for the article was the survey method. Its particular premises will be presented later. The authors also used other research methods, such as analysis of the literature and internet sources, and observation. The article is composed of six parts, beginning with the introduction. The second part describes the basic concepts used in the work. The succeeding parts give an overview of the Euro games' history and show the expected costs and benefits from Euro 2012 for Poland and Wrocław. The research area and the structure of respondents participating in the survey are described. Then the results of the survey concerning perceptions of the Euro 2012 and its effects are presented. The article ends with a discussion of the results and with a postscript, written after the championship games, presenting the first balance of the event's effects for the host city.

### **The Event—Concepts, Types, and Most Important Functions**

In the contemporary world, sport has an enormous influence on mass consciousness, and thereby on social, tourist, and economic phenomena (Giulianotti and Klauser 2010). This large social influence is shown, for instance, in Waitt's work (2003), which

describes the impact on Australians of holding the Olympics in Sydney. Alejziak's publication (2008) points to the major economic significance of sports events. Sport also has political influence, as was proven, for example, by the Football War between El Salvador and Honduras in 1969. Such a strong impact would not be possible without large sports competitions, or 'events'. These are a subject for research in several disciplines, including economics, sociology, culture studies, and geography. Furthermore, in recent years, a new discipline called 'event studies', devoted to researching organized events, including sports ones, has arisen.

As Getz (2005) writes, the noun 'event' is understood as a synonym for the terms 'occurrence, happening or experience'. Getz defines 'planned events' as 'temporary occurrences with a predetermined beginning and end. Every such event is unique, stemming from the blend of management, program, setting and people' (Getz 2005: 16). In the literature, many types of events have been distinguished. One classification was proposed by Jago and Shaw (1998), who distinguished, within the framework of 'events', minor events, major events, hallmark events, mega events, festivals, etc. Getz (2005) made a synthesized division of 'events', according to their size, into: local, regional, periodic, hallmark, and occasional mega events (Figure 1). He considered events that generate a large tourist influx and have large social and economic significance to fall in this last category. The Euro 2012, which we will discuss in the present article, belongs to this precise category of 'occasional mega event'.

The sports event is distinguished in Getz's work (2008), and he classified them into several types. He divided sports events into sports competitions and recreational events and further distinguished between amateur and professional activities.

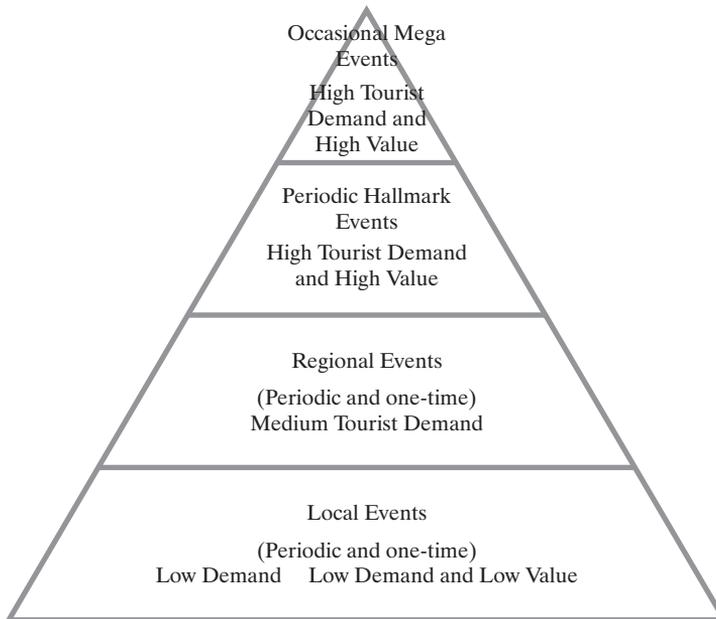
Within the framework of event studies, research is conducted concerning, among other things, the effects of sports events on the areas in which they are located. Another type of analysis of the effect of events is research into the perceptions of inhabitants of areas hosting such events (Fredline and Faulkner 1998; Fredline and Faulkner 2001a; Fredline and Faulkner 2001b; Gursoy, Chi, Ai and Chen 2011; Lorde, Greenidge and Devonish 2011).

A range of essential works concerning sports events also appears in the sociology literature. These are works in what is called the sociology of sport (Lunschen 1980). In this case, sport, and its norms, behaviours, and institutions, are treated as an element of social organization. Among the issues analyzed in the sociology of sport are phenomena connected with large sports events. Their effects on society, the economy, tourism, and politics are researched. The questions of safety during the course of mass events and the development of urban areas are also analyzed (Roche 1992, 2006; Horne and Manzenreiter 2004; Hall 2006; Marivoet 2006; Boyle and Haggerty 2009; Giulianotti and Klausner 2010).

The present article belongs in both the above-mentioned research fields—the sociology of sport and event studies—as it analyses the effects of Euro 2012 on Wrocław, one of the host cities for the event, through surveys of its inhabitants.

One important social result of the organizing of sports events is the creation of excellent places for friends and family to get together. Mega events also provide an opportunity for people to express their club sympathies, and are places for football fans

Figure 1  
**The Portfolio Approach to Event-tourism Strategy—Making and Evaluation**



Source: Getz (2005).

to meet. Such events in particular, when national teams participate, also constitute an occasion for shaping national pride and can create feelings of patriotism and national belonging (Waitt 2003). On the other hand, the possible negative consequences of this type of event should not be forgotten. In the work of Cudny, Korec, and Rouba (2012) a synthesis is given of the positive and negative effects of another type of event, that is, festivals. On the basis of this work, the authors of the present article have noticed that certain negative effects of festivals could apply to large sports events as well. For example, a large influx of tourists from many different countries in the world may generate conflicts. The activities of football hooligans and the incitement of conflicts on a national or historical basis can be dangerous. This danger was pointed out in the sociological work of Iliycheva (2005). The expansion of prostitution, risky sexual behaviour, and increases in the use of alcohol and drugs may occur.

Events such as the Euro have major promotional effects, which transfer onto the development of the economy. Countries and regions are presented in the media around the world as tourist destinations. In addition, we are also dealing with word-of-mouth promotion, that is, tourists' transmission of their impressions of the country to which they travelled in order to participate in a sports event. It should be remembered that there is also a large risk of negative transmissions: for example, organizational errors or hooliganism. These types of occurrences have negative reverberations and could destroy what are often years of preparations. It should be emphasized that the

promotional effects of mega sports events have in addition delayed economic results. Thanks to the promotion, more tourists arrive—not only those who come for sports tourism. Thanks to tourism, cities develop; there are more jobs in the hotel business, in gastronomy, and in transport firms. Revenue is generated for the inhabitants and for businesses, and the growth in taxes paid increases inflows to the national budget.

Barcelona is an excellent example of a city making use of an opportunity resulting from the organization of a large sports event. In 1992, the Summer Olympic Games took place there, and resulted in a growth of revenue from tourist traffic from the level of 1–2% of the city's GDP before the Olympics to 12% of GDP after the Olympics. This economic result of organizing the Olympics is called 'the Barcelona effect' (Alejziak 2008).

It should be emphasized, however, that the benefits depend, among other things, on the level of the event, the type and origin of the tourists, the preparations for their reception, promotion, and many other factors. In order for the benefits to be large and long term, it is important for the country and city to try to ensure that one mega event is succeeded by others. This promotes the given destination, maintains its positive image, makes it possible to ensure a more economic use of the facilities, and generates further profits (Song 2010). An excellent example of an attempt to introduce this principle in Poland is the organization of the 18<sup>th</sup> World Championships in Men's Volleyball in the year 2014. The championship matches will occur in six host cities: Bydgoszcz, Sopot and Gdynia, Krakow, Łódź, Katowice, and Wrocław. The last city, as a host city of Euro 2012, will thus be host to another large sports event in a short period of time.

One of the possibilities for supporting and promoting large sports events and for intensifying the benefits derived from them is the organization of accompanying cultural or entertainment events. These attract audiences, are reported in the media, and make it possible additionally to promote the facilities and the sports events connected with them (Garcia 2001). The festivities connected with the opening of the National Stadium in Warsaw are an example. An event entitled 'Here I Am!' involved concerts by the well known Polish groups.

Large sports events also constitute economic and organizational challenges for the hosts. So, analyzing the economic effects of events is a very complicated task, also because those effects of events should not be identified with their economic benefits. Benefits are only one element of the total effects of events. The costs should also be analysed, as a second, no less important, factor (Spilling 1998; Dwyer, Forsyth and Spurr 2005). When the sums invested are too large—for instance, in the construction of stadiums and infrastructure—it could emerge that organization of the event brings not benefits, but rather generates losses (Baade and Matheson 2004).

Sports facilities built for the needs of a given event must be multi-functional in nature. Stadiums or sports halls should be constructed for the purposes of various sports disciplines, as well as other events—for instance, concerts, large conferences etc.—to increase their possibility of being utilized. In addition, when not being used for sports competitions, these facilities should have something to offer local residents. The costs of maintaining immense facilities are not small. Therefore, if the hosts of

sports events do not take these factors into account they could be threatened with a situation like that which occurred in Greece. There, the Summer Olympics in 2004 did not bring the expected positive financial results, and even steeped the country in debts (Alejziak 2008). In Greece, Portugal, and also China, deterioration of the facilities even occurred: that is, after the Olympics in Greece and China, and after the European Football Championships in Portugal. Moreover, in regard to the costs connected with organizing such events, the increase in costs of food, hotel services, catering, and transport, etc., should be mentioned. This effect is visible in many cities organizing large sports events and has a negative impact on the economy and society.

### **The UEFA Football Championship—Euro 2012—General Characteristics of the Event, History of the Event**

The idea of a European Football Championship appeared for the first time in 1927. Its initiator was the French football activist Henri Delaunay, first secretary general of the Union of European Football Associations (further the UEFA). The first championship took place in 1960 in France. Presently the championship is played every four years, with two years between it and the World Football Championship organized by the Federation of International Football Associations (FIFA) ([www.2012.org](http://www.2012.org)). The UEFA Euro is composed of 3 stages—qualifying, group play-offs, and the final tournament. At the qualifying stage, as many as 174 teams may participate, competing in subgroups on a two-match principle. 48 teams progress to the stage of group play-offs, divided into 4 groups of 12 teams. The final tournament begins with the participation of 32 teams, playing two matches apiece in 16 pairs, in order for the European champion to emerge through quarter finals, semi-finals, and the final. It is traditional for the host team to participate in the final tournament, without participating in the eliminations. The Euro 2012, organized in Poland and Ukraine, was the third event to have had two organizing countries: after Belgium and Holland in 2000 and Austria and Switzerland in 2008. On 18 April 2007, the UEFA Executive Committee made its decision about the location of the Euro 2012. On 28 March 2008, an agreement was signed about the mutual organization of the Euro 2012 tournament ([www.2012.org](http://www.2012.org)).

Within the framework of the Euro 2012, 31 final matches were planned at 8 stadiums in Poland and Ukraine. In Poland, the host cities were Gdańsk, Poznań, Warsaw, and Wrocław. In Ukraine they were Kharkiv, Donetsk, Kiev, and Lviv. The Championship inauguration was planned for 8 June 2012, with a ceremony in Warsaw, while the final tournament was to take place on 1 July 2012 in Kiev.

### **The Balance of Expected Effects from Organizing the Euro 2012**

It is difficult to compare the magnitude of preparations for Euro 2012 to anything else in Poland's post-war history. The total expenditures for organizing the Euro 2012 in Poland were estimated in March 2012 by the Chancellery of the Prime Minis-

ter at 95 billion PLN (<http://euro.interia.pl/news-wartosc-inwestycji-na-euro-2012-to-ponad-95-mld-zl,nId,593997>).

Experts divide the benefits of organizing the Euro 2012 into direct and indirect. The expected growth in revenue from tourism during the Euro 2012 itself, the increase in sports, tourism, and transport infrastructure, and the growth in demand connected with the organizational surroundings of the tournament are counted as direct benefits. The number of tourists expected to come for the Championship differed depending on the variant adopted (basic, optimistic, or pessimistic). The basic variant expected that around 820,000 tourists would come to Poland, of whom somewhat over half would spend the night. The expected growth in revenue from tourism in June 2012 was estimated at around 850 million PLN, of which 16% was to constitute the expenditures of foreign football fans possessing stadium tickets, 41.5% the expenditures of the organizers and VIP fans, and 32.6% expenditures by foreign tourists who did not have tickets to the matches and who would watch from fan zones (Borowski 2010). The direct effects of the Euro 2012 were considered to be: increasing the attractiveness of Poland, an increased inflow of tourists, and growth in the consumption of services over a long time frame. It was expected to bring an increase in tourism revenues in the years 2013–2020 of 4.2 billion PLN in comparison with 2008. A growth in economic productiveness was expected as a result of the improvement and modernization of infrastructure. The prognosis was for the development of private domestic investment and the improvement of conditions for foreign investors. The result of the whole of the activities was supposed to drive Poland's further economic development. It was supposed to exceed the scale of the phenomenon observed in highly developed countries that had been organizers of previous Euro championships (Borowski 2010). 216 undertakings were begun for the needs of the Championship, including the building of roads, airports, stadiums, stations, and railway lines.

Before the championship, experts estimated that the long-term effect of a successful organization of the Euro 2012 would be a growth in the numbers visiting Poland by 5 million annually, and in the years 2008–2020 the total growth in GDP should reach 2.1%, or 27.9 billion PLN. The growth in employment in connection with the Championship should be maintained at the level of 20,000–30,000 additional jobs<sup>1</sup> (Borowski 2010). The calculation presented above constitutes, obviously, a prognosis of the future benefits from the Euro. In actuality, it will be several years after the championship before it will be possible to make a final determination of its real material and non-material influence on Poland's economy and image.

In Wrocław itself, with which the present article is concerned, investments for the needs of the Euro 2012 amounted, according to information on the city's internet site, to over 7 billion PLN (UEFA Euro 2012™ in Wrocław 2012). The extension and modernization of infrastructure included ([www.2012.org](http://www.2012.org)):

<sup>1</sup> It should be emphasized that prognoses of benefits from the organization of the Euro 2012 in Ukraine, made before the event, were much more critical on the subject of the event's economic effects. A report by the firm Da Vinci AG indicated that with the high costs of organizing the championship tournament in Ukraine (around 14 billion dollars), the benefits of the event will be less and could generate losses in the amount of 6–8 billion dollars. <http://finanse.wp.pl/kat,72914,title,Euro-2012-przyniesie-miliardy-eurostrat,wid,14204295,wiadomosc.html>

- construction of a football stadium, development of the land around the facility, construction of footbridges over the Ślęza River,
- construction and rebuilding of road infrastructure in the vicinity of the football stadium,
- extension of an airport (Copernicus Airport),
- construction and reconstruction of the city's road infrastructure,
- construction of the city's northern by-pass route,
- integration of the Rail Transport System with the urban agglomeration,
- the Intelligent Transport System (ITS Wrocław),
- the A8 expressway—the Wrocław bypass—35.4 km,
- restoration of the Wrocław Central Station Historical Complex,
- the E59 railway line between Wrocław and Poznań,
- extension of the power supply system for the Wrocław agglomeration.

The large scale of investment makes clear the expenditures involved and raises the question about the economic balance sheet for the whole undertaking. However, public opinion polls commissioned by the Ministry of Tourism and conducted by the public opinion research centre TNS OBOP on expectations of the Euro 2012's profitability indicated that Poles had a positive opinion about the organization of the event. The polls showed that as many as 60% of Poles considered that Poland would gain from the championship and only 14% were of the opinion that the championship would bring losses to the economy ([www.2012.org](http://www.2012.org)).

## **Field, Research Method, and Structure of the Sample Analyzed**

### **Field and Research Method**

The town of Wrocław (with around 630,000 inhabitants) is the fourth largest urban centre in Poland and served as one of the eight host cities for the Euro 2012 championship. It is a leading administrative, economic, tourist, and cultural centre in contemporary Poland. It also plays a role as an academic centre, educating over 100,000 students. The city's rank is increased by its function and title as European Capital of Culture 2016. The Euro 2012 matches, that is, the three group matches, including one in which Poland participated, were played in the stadium in Wrocław. The facility was built for the needs of the Euro 2012 for around 853 million PLN. It has 44,000 seats, all the stands are roofed, and the walls are made of Teflon-coated fibreglass, which produces lighting effects like those at the Olympic Stadium in Beijing ([www.stadionwroclaw.pl](http://www.stadionwroclaw.pl)).

The basic means of analysing reception of the Euro 2012 event by the inhabitants of Wrocław was an interview questionnaire, which is a survey and qualitative research method (Lutyński and Lutyńska 2000). The person conducting the interview asks the respondent questions orally and writes down the answers received. The questions are uniform in nature, standardized, and contained in the interview questionnaire (Lutyńska 1984).

As with other research concerning perception of events by local society (Kim, Gursoy, and Lee 2006) the field research was conducted by students, in this case of the University of Łódź, who had been trained for the purpose. A practice used in other types of research was applied (Kim and Patrick 2005; Lorde, Greenidge and Devonish 2011): that is, the interviews were conducted in a public place, in Wrocław's centre, in its Old Town, on 13 May 2011. A questionnaire containing four main groups of questions was used.

The questionnaire began with an introductory question intended to determine whether the respondent was an inhabitant of Wrocław. Then the respondent's level of interest in football and in watching matches was determined, in order to divide the inhabitants into the group of fans and the group of persons with loose emotional ties to football. The researchers had decided to determine to what degree opinions would vary between fans and other respondents. The succeeding questions were intended to determine what feelings, including fears and hopes, were connected with Poland's organization of the Euro, as well as Wrocław's role as a host city and the consequences of this choice. An important element of the research was the attempt to define the level of benefits that would accrue to Wrocław as an organizer city. Another goal was to test the level of the respondent's knowledge about the investments being done for the Euro 2012 in the city. The questionnaire ended with a request for the respondent to qualify as true or false sentences concerning the effects of Wrocław's having been awarded the status of host city.

The interview technique consists in approaching every fifth passer-by with the question of whether he or she would participate in a survey, and if the person refuses, the procedure is repeated with the next passer-by. 400 interviews were conducted in total. It should be emphasized that the research was not representative of the whole collective of Wrocław inhabitants. It was random in nature, because those selected for interviews were persons who happened to be in the given public place. This is a so-called site survey, whose results, in spite of a lack of representativeness, have value for the analysis of researched phenomena (Veal 2006).

### **The Sample**

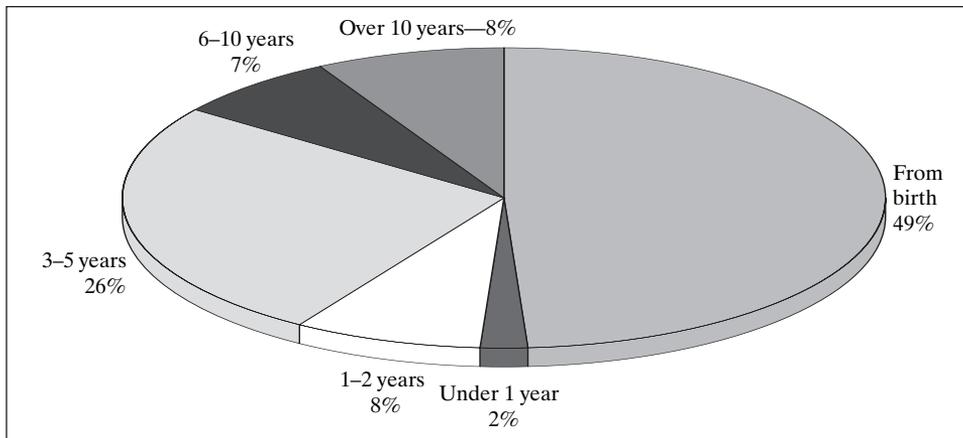
*Demographic and social structure.* The sample group was composed of a majority of young persons, under 25 (52%). Another 27% were 26–35 years of age. Only 13% of respondents were above 45 years of age. The group of persons 36–45 years of age was comparatively small (barely 8%). An explanation for such a sample structure could be the period at which the survey was conducted, that is, a Friday afternoon, when the majority of inhabitants of mature age were at work. On account of the good weather, there were many young people—university and secondary school students—in the Old Town at the time. The gender structure showed a small preponderance of men (52.5%). In terms of education, 59% had a secondary school diploma. This could have been the result of the respondents' young age. A considerable portion of persons under 25 years of age are in the course of acquiring an education and have not finished their university studies. Another 35% of respondents had completed

higher education, while 6% had only an elementary or vocational school education.

*Period of residence in Wrocław.* The survey was in premise intended for the inhabitants of Wrocław. The authors expected that the period of residence in the city of respondents in the sample group could have a connection with an understanding of its problems, as well as a personal relation to it. Nearly half the group was Wrocławian by birth, and the largest group of newcomers (26%) had lived here for between 3–5 years (Figure 2).

Figure 2

**Respondents' Period of Residence in Connection with Their Expectations about Wrocław's Role as an Organizer of Wrocław EURO 2012**



Source: Own research.

The smallest group was of persons who had lived here for less than a year.

*Level of interest in football.* The respondents' declared interest in football was important for the analysis. 4 basic measures were chosen:

- declaration—58.1% described football as a significant interest
- watching football on television—80% watch matches, of which 21% watch them regularly
- personal presence in the stands—28% had attended a match at some time, of which 10% had done so more than ten times
- followers of a football team—these could be distinguished as a separate group of fans.

As many as 51% of the respondents reported very considerable interest in the clubs they followed. Men predominated in the group of fans, constituting 74%, and among these the majority supported the local team Śląsk Wrocław (43%). In the group of the 15<sup>th</sup> most often mentioned teams of which respondents were fans, as many as half were foreign teams, with the leading ones being FC Barcelona (16%), Real Madrid (7%), and Inter Milan (3%). A preference for foreign teams indicates a desire for world-level football, which Polish teams of recent years have been unable

to provide. The results of the survey are comparable with the results of research done by CBOS. The CBOS research, conducted on a representative group of Poles, showed that, for instance, 51% of Poles are interested in football.<sup>2</sup> In further analysis of the field research, it was decided to present the opinion of the group of fans—the 51% who declared themselves fans of some football team—separately (in the context of the opinions of Wrocław inhabitants in general).

## **Euro 2012 in the Eyes of Wrocław Inhabitants**

### **Knowledge of the Host Cities for the Euro 2012**

The results of inquiries concerning the host cities were selected as an indicator of knowledge on the subject of the Euro 2012. As many as 80% of Wrocław residents and 92% of fans declared that they knew the host cities for the championship. What is interesting is that 100% of respondents who declared that they knew the host cities both in the group of all Wrocławians, and in the group of fans, were able to mention Warsaw, even though they were Wrocławians. On the other hand, 93% of fans and 96% of all Wrocławians knew that Wrocław would also be a host city. It is curious that only in the case of Wrocław was there such a reversal: that is, fewer fans than Wrocławians in general knew about the role of Lower Silesia's capital during the championship.

In the case of Poznań as well as Gdańsk, decidedly more fans than Wrocław inhabitants were aware of the city's role in Euro 2012. The most erroneous answers concerned Kraków, and curiously the same error was frequently made by fans. Erroneous answers also encompassed Katowice, Kielce, Chorzów, Szczecin, Łódź, and Białystok. The respondents were well informed on the subject of the host cities although the authors were surprised by the lacuna in their knowledge about Wrocław's role in the championship.

### **Hopes and Fears in Connection with the Euro 2012**

One of the key research problems was to define the opinion of the host city's inhabitants on the subject of Poland's role as an organizer of Euro 2012. The inhabitants were generally in agreement (82% of answers) that the organization of Euro 2012 was a positive phenomenon and would be beneficial to the country. In the group of fans, this percentage was 5 points higher (87%). Similar research by CBOS showed that Poles in general were satisfied or very satisfied (44%) with this fact to a decidedly lesser degree. In those surveys indifference was preponderant (49%).<sup>3</sup> It should be

<sup>2</sup> Statement from CBOS research, 2012, BS/65/2012, 'Opinie o przygotowaniach do Euro 2012 i szansach polskiej drużyny,' [Opinions on Preparations for the Euro 2012 and the Chances of the Polish Team] Warsaw, p. 2.

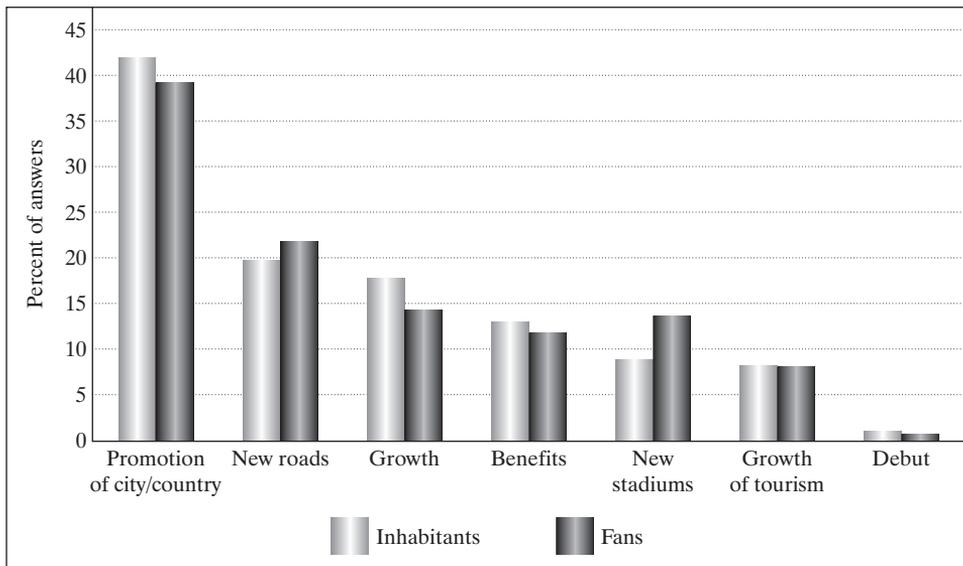
<sup>3</sup> CBOS [Social Opinion Research Centre] research, 2012, BS/65/2012, 'Opinie o przygotowaniach do Euro 2012 i szansach polskiej drużyny,' [Opinions on Preparations for the Euro 2012 and the Chances of the Polish Team] p. 3.

stated that the differences in outcome are the result of the sample selection. The authors of the present article surveyed young Wrocławians, inhabitants of a host city, who at every step in the city could feel the approaching championship and the accompanying media promotion, and thus they were decidedly more excited than society in general. CBOS, on the other hand, surveyed a group that was representative of all Poles, for the majority of whom, on account of their ages and various places of residence, the Euro championship was a distant television or virtual event.

Among the benefits from Poland's role as an organizer of the Euro championship, the most frequently mentioned were promotion of the country and city (42%), improvement of road infrastructure (20%), development in general (18%), material benefits (13%), new stadiums (8%), the development of tourism (7%), and Poland's being the organizer of such an important event for the first time (1.5%) (Figure 3). The prioritization of benefits was similar among the group of fans, which yet placed more emphasis on the stadiums and did not give weight to development in general.

Figure 3

#### Expected Benefits for the Country from Organizing the EURO 2012 According to Wrocław Inhabitants

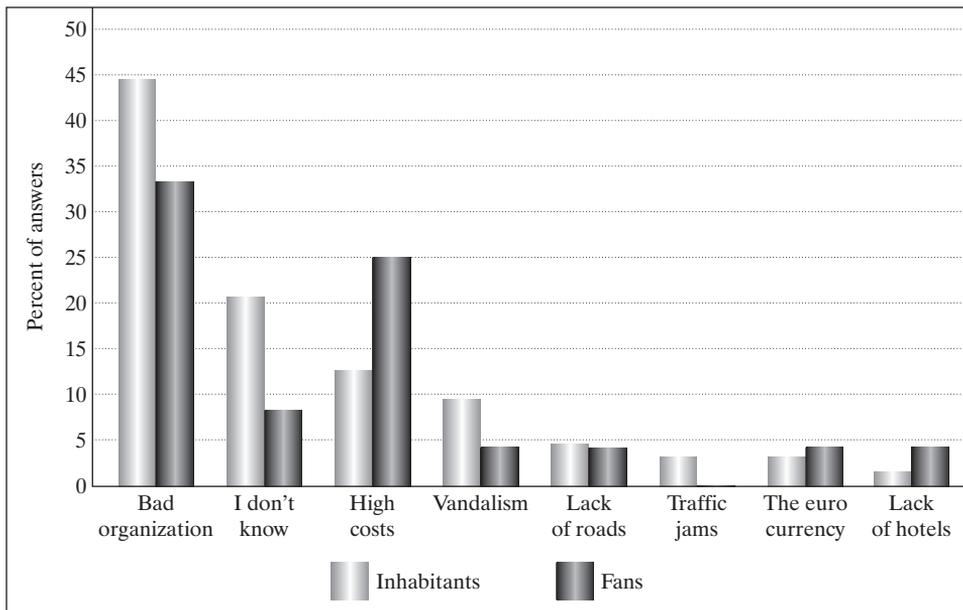


Source: Own research.

18% of respondents were of the opinion that it was unfortunate that Poland was a co-organizer of the championships. The main fears (44%) concerned bad organization; the costs connected with the enterprise were also an important element (12%); another was hooliganism and vandalism (9%). The large cost of the undertaking was the main argument used in the media by pessimists, while fears of hooliganism and vandalism were the result of the frequent recent news items concerning aggressive be-

haviour by football fans, as well as a campaign driven by the British media<sup>4</sup> before the championship, with the aim of discouraging Britons from travelling to Poland. Next in the category of fears were lack of road infrastructure, traffic jams, and communications problems. Further fears were related with the influx of euros, given Poland's lack of integration with the European financial system, and insufficient hotel facilities. Both these latter fears were entirely unfounded as payment in euros constituted a small percentage of transactions, and the amount of hotel facilities grew before the Euro 2012 championships to previously unseen levels. More than 500 buildings were added and over 20,000 beds. Football fans were much less pessimistic; only 13% of them had fears connected with Poland's role as an organizer of the championship, and of these only a third were afraid of organizational problems. Twice as many (25%) of fans had doubts as to the scale of costs for the undertaking. Similarly, many fewer fans were worried about acts of vandalism (4%) (Figure 4). The fans, in distinction from the other respondents, were not worried about traffic jams, but thought the lack of hotel infrastructure would be a serious problem.

Figure 4  
Fears About the Organization of the EURO 2012



Source: Own research.

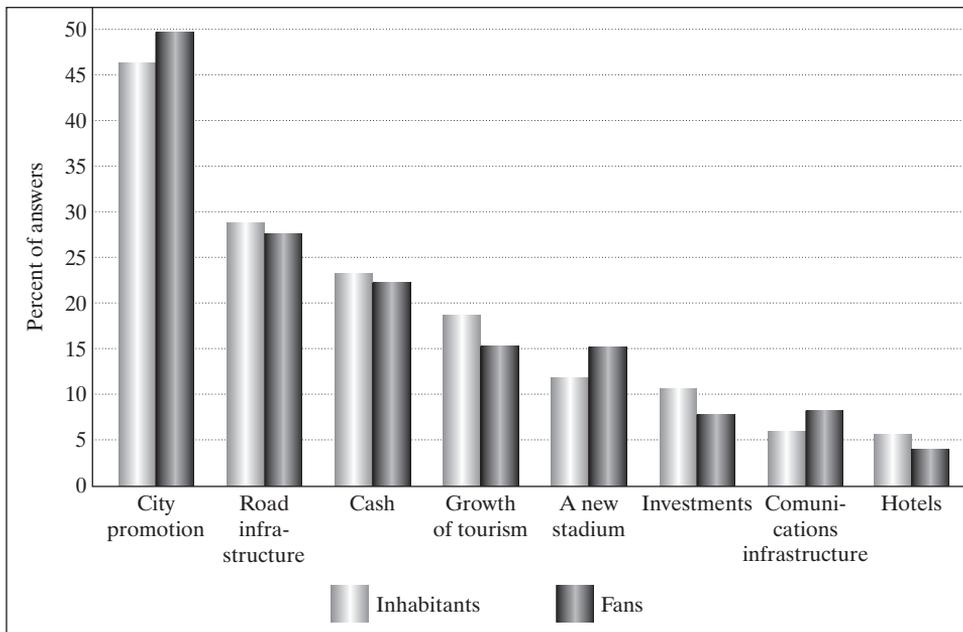
The top-ranking question in terms of the reaction of Wrocław inhabitants to the organization of the Euro 2012 was a perception of the benefits the city could obtain

<sup>4</sup> Before the Euro 2012, the BBC broadcast a documentary presenting Poland as a dangerous country with a negative attitude toward foreign tourists. It was widely commented upon in Poland.

from being an organizer city of the Euro 2012 tournament. Promotion of the city was seen as the most important of these, then the development of road infrastructure, and then cash inflows to the city and the develop of tourism in the broad sense.

In principle, there weren't a lot of differences in appraising the effects of the event between the fans and the rest of the respondents. However, it should be added that the fans had a higher awareness of the promotional role of organizing the championship in Wrocław than did other inhabitants. More fans also had a positive opinion about the construction of stadiums and the development of communications infrastructure, as the most important benefits to the city (Figure 5).

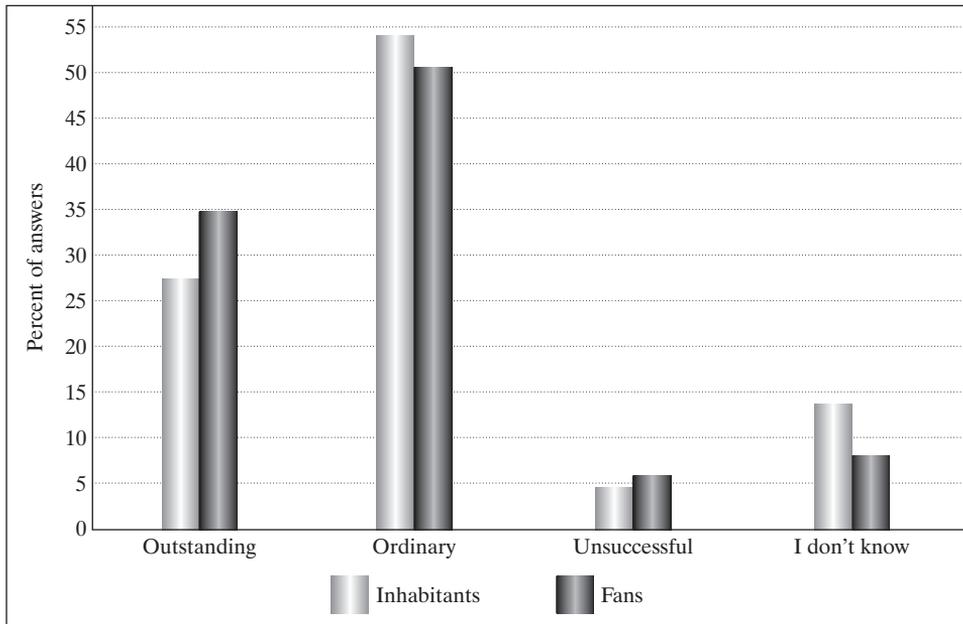
Figure 5  
Expected Benefits for Wrocław as host city for the EURO 2012



Source: Own research.

Key to the preparations for the Euro tournament was the building of stadiums. They are above all the symbol of the championship; they also often provoke controversy. The design for the stadium in Wrocław is variously received by the inhabitants and by the separate group of fans. Generally, the majority of respondents considered the stadium to be an ordinary building, not standing out. The opinion that the Wrocław stadium is unusual was much more common in the group of fans (35%) than in the group of inhabitants (27%). What is interesting is that more fans (6%) than inhabitants (4%) have a negative view of the stadium. A decidedly smaller number of fans than inhabitants did not answer, on the basis of lack of knowledge (Figure 6).

Figure 6  
Opinions About the Stadium for the EURO 2012

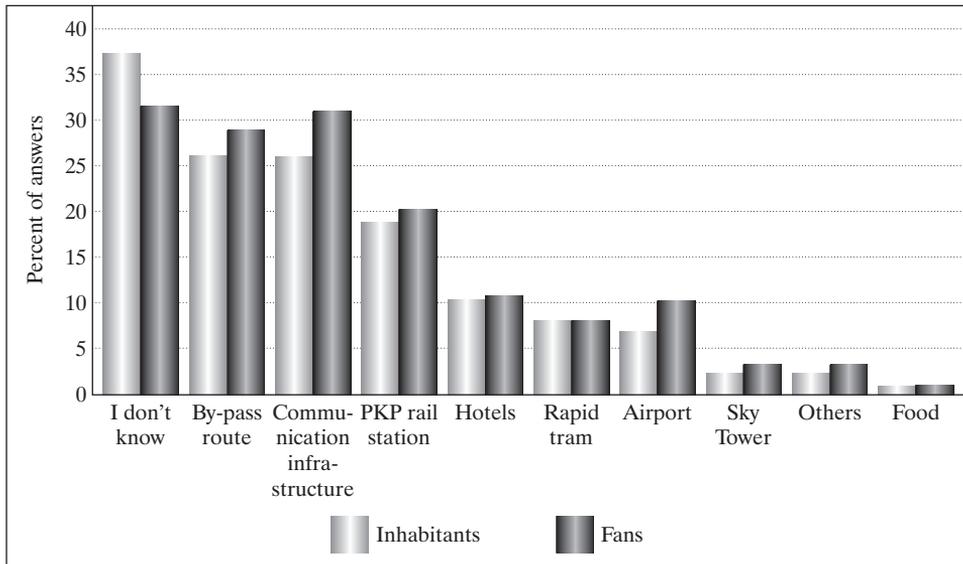


Source: Own research.

Such a distribution of answers seems natural given the decidedly larger emotion accompanying the reception of the stadium among fans than inhabitants. The largest benefit after the European Championship will be urban investment in the eyes of the inhabitants; the Euro 2012 was brief, while the facilities will remain for years, making life easier. Fans, in this area, are decidedly better informed than average inhabitants. As many as 38% of inhabitants were unable to mention an investment made in the city on account of the championship. The Wrocław by-pass, improvement of the whole of the communications infrastructure, and the construction of the PKP railway station were most often mentioned. What is interesting is that barely 10% of answers concerned new hotels, or the extension of the airport, and even fewer mentioned the rapid tram system (Figure 7).

Large sports events could lead to a growth in the price of goods and services that are used by both the tourists and the inhabitants. The best examples are the cases of the Olympics in Athens and the World Football Championship in South Africa. The prices in restaurants and hotels in Greece and in South Africa grew considerably. After the event they remained at a high level, which affected the inhabitants. As many as 80% of Wrocławians declared that the growth of prices as a result of the European Championship was very likely, and the inhabitants (79%) feared the growth in prices more than the fans (73%).

Figure 7

**Wrocław Inhabitants' Knowledge About City Investments Connected with the EURO 2012**

Source: Own research.

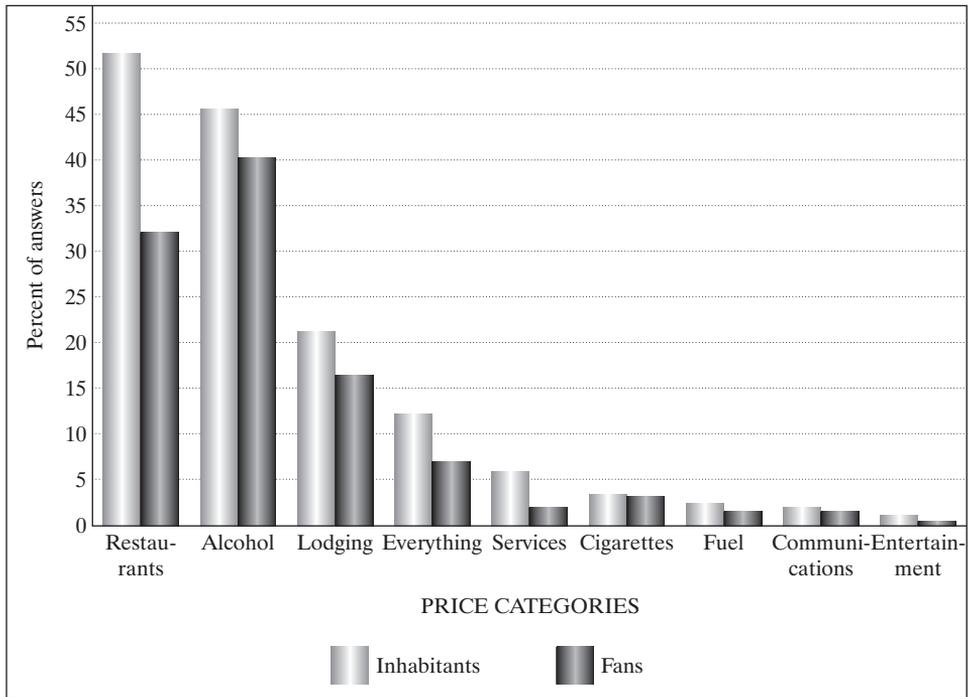
The largest probability of a growth in prices, in the opinion of the inhabitants, would occur in the case of restaurants (52%). Interestingly, barely 32% of fans shared this opinion. A significant number of fans (40%) feared a growth in the price of alcohol. A similar opinion was shared by 46% of inhabitants. Further fears concerned the prices of lodging, services, and cigarettes. The least fears concerned a growth in the price of fuel, communications, and entertainment (Figure 8).

Both the inhabitants (88%) and the fans (89%) were satisfied with the fact that Wrocław would be a host city for the Euro 2012. The view that traffic jams might emerge in the city was shared almost equally by inhabitants (83%) and fans (80%). A similar opinion concerned an increase in the cost of food in restaurants. As shown in Table 1, 57% of inhabitants and 51% of fans feared that football hooligans might cause damage to the city. On the other hand, 50% of inhabitants and 55% of fans considered that Wrocław could handle the problem.

The largest dissonance occurred in opinions about the possible use of the large Wrocław stadium after the Euro 2012. Around 60% of the inhabitants considered that the stadium would not be used, while a similar opinion was shared by only around 34% of fans. The majority (around 60%) of inhabitants, like fans (around 55%), were convinced that during the Euro, life would not proceed normally. The optimism of both groups appeared in the area of the Championship's economic effects on the city: around 66% considered that Wrocław would gain from the Euro and that a situation where the city would be left with debts would not occur.

Figure 8

**Main Possible Consequences for Poland and Wroclaw of Having Organized the EURO 2012**



Source: Own research.

Table 1

**Opinions of Wroclaw Inhabitants on the Consequences of the Euro 2012 for the City**

Do you agree with the following statement:	Inhabitants % YES	Fans % YES
Is it good that Wroclaw is an organizer of the Euro 2012?	88.3	89.8
Will there be traffic jams in the city?	83.6	80.1
Will restaurant meals be more expensive?	79.3	80.2
Will football hooligans cause damage to the city?	57.9	51.3
Will Wroclaw manage the organization all right?	50.1	55.9
Will the stadium be used after the Euro?	40.1	66.7
Will life proceed normally during the Euro 2012?	39.3	45.7
Will the city be left with debts?	33.7	33.2

Source: Own research.

**Inhabitants' Emotions and the Role of the Host City for the Euro 2012**

Appraisal of the emotional relation of the survey group to Wroclaw's participation as an organizing city was based on defining two emotions evoked by the fact. Traits were chosen from among three opposing pairs of emotions: joy and dislike, pride and

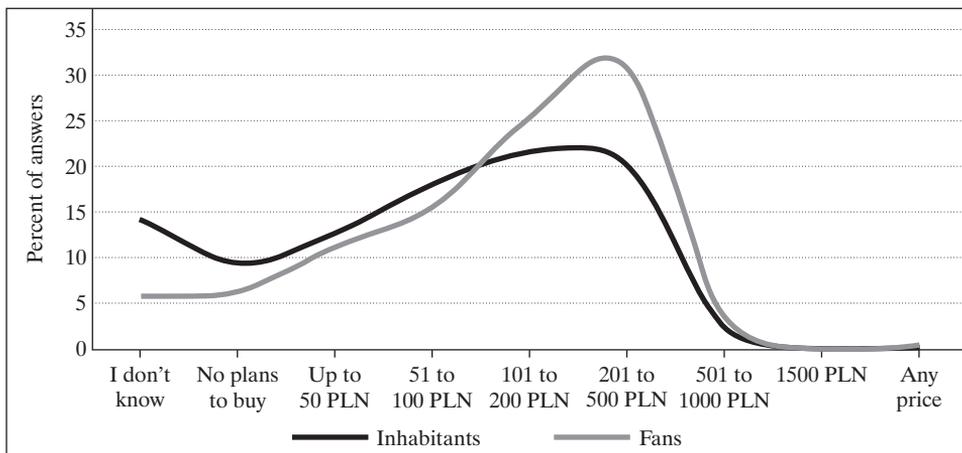
anxiety, and excitement and indifference. The most frequently mentioned feeling, both in the group of all Wrocławians (56%) and in the fan group (64%) was joy. The fans, however, were happier about the event than the average city inhabitant. In second place was pride: in this case, the fans were more proud (53%) than the average Wrocławian (46%).

In turn, the predominant negative feeling was worry, which was proclaimed by 25% of inhabitants and 21% of fans (probably, as early research indicated, mainly in connection with organization). From the research, it is clear that the average fan was decidedly more engaged than the average inhabitant (22 to 11%). Excitement as a positive feeling was more frequent among fans than inhabitants (21 to 26%). To summarize the question of feelings, it should be stated that fans decidedly predominated over average inhabitants in the extent of their positive feelings, while the inhabitants predominated in negative feelings.

In the test sample, 35% of respondents planned to attend a match, 52% did not, and 13% were undecided. Interesting results were shown by the part of the research estimating the readiness of inhabitants and fans to pay a set sum for tickets to the Euro, for a match in which Poland's team would participate. Figure 9. shows that the limit of accessibility for a ticket was the sum of 500 PLN, while fans were ready to pay more for a ticket than inhabitants. Scarcely 3–4% of potential attendees were inclined to pay more than 500 PLN for a ticket (Figure 9).

Figure 9

**Maximum Price Respondents were Willing to Pay for a Ticket to a Game Involving the Polish National Team**



Source: Own research.

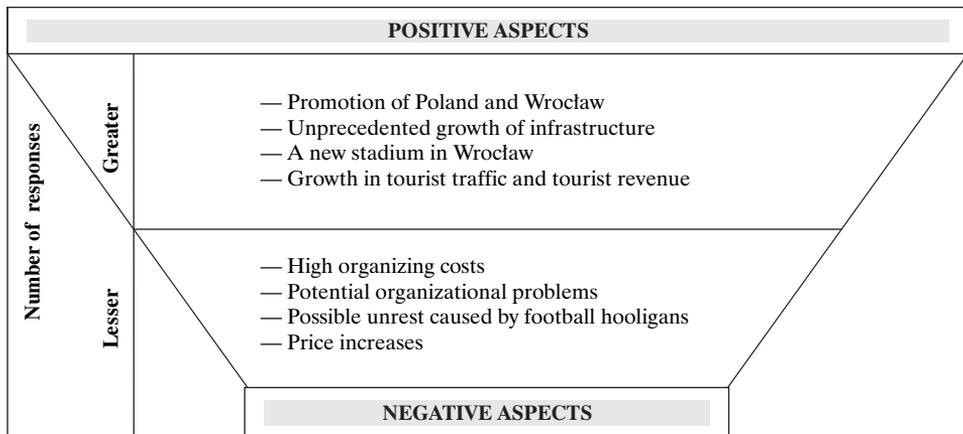
### Discussion and Results

As the research showed, among inhabitants of one of the host cities of the Euro 2012, that is, Wrocław, there was a general conviction about the importance of an organizing

role in the Euro Championship 2012 for Poland and the undoubted promotional and infrastructure benefits for the country. Similarly, in the case of Wrocław itself, as many as 90% of inhabitants considered the choice of the city as a host to be good, although the majority did not have illusions that life during the course of the Euro would proceed normally. The greatest advantage for Wrocław, in the eyes of the inhabitants, was promotion of the city, the previously unseen rapid development of infrastructure, mainly communications, the growth in the importance of tourism, and cash inflows. The new stadium was also a large advantage in the opinion of the inhabitants (Figure 10).

Figure 10

**Main Potential Consequences for Poland and Wrocław for Having Organized the EURO 2012 in the Eyes of Respondents**



Source: Own research.

During the course of the months preceding the beginning in Poland of the Euro 2012 tournament, there were discussions about the expected results of the event on many television and radio stations and on internet portals. Predominantly positive opinions from experts on the economy, marketing, and tourism were aired. No doubt, the broad media campaign influenced perceptions of the Euro tournament and was reflected in the positive reactions of the Wrocław inhabitants in regard to the expected results of the event. On the other hand, the discussions in the media reflect specific results of analyses concerning the effects of sports events. In many cases, large events have brought considerable benefits for the city and country that organized them. It is also clearly visible that in countries that had previously not hosted such important events, and which had been on the sidelines of global sports life (for instance, Australia before the Olympics in 2000), the benefits expected by the inhabitants from organization of the event were particularly high. In an obvious manner, people expected that being awarded the organization of a sports event for the first time would help in promoting their country, bring about an influx of tourists, and contribute to

the development of infrastructure and revenues. It was expected, often correctly, that increased media interest, the arrival of famous sports figures from around the world (celebrities in a fashion), and the large investments made in connection with the given mega event would contribute to the development of the host country and the host city as well.

In the case of the Euro Championship in Poland, positive opinions might also be connected with the participation (bypassing the eliminations) of the Polish team, which until this time had had considerable difficulties in qualifying for such an important football event. This was much appreciated, in particular by the group of Polish fans. The participation of Polish football players in the Euro 2012 was also an opportunity to exhibit a patriotic attitude. A feeling of national pride was produced by the possibility of participating in such a large sports undertaking. On the other hand, respondents noted the costs of organizing the Euro 2012, and the potential dangers it could bring. In this case as well, the role of the media in shaping public opinion and perceptions of an event such as the Euro 2012 should be emphasized. In spite of the dominance of positive transmissions, there were also voices pointing out the high organizational costs of the Euro 2012. Reference was made to the examples of countries which in organizing mega events lost considerable sums, and the expected benefits were lower than expected. The respondents understood as well that an increased demand caused by the influx of fans could cause a growth in prices. The potential threat from the actions of fans was also noted by the Wrocławians.

It should be emphasized, however, that in the research on the event conducted before the Euro 2012, optimistic opinions clearly predominated. In the opinion of the authors, it was the dominance of positive media transmissions that had an essential influence on perceptions of the event. No less important indubitably was the decidedly positive attitude of the respondents. They were glad that Poland would, for the first time in its recent history, host such an important sports event. The results acquired from field research conducted in Wrocław are reflected in the literature on the subject. Already at one of the first scholarly conferences devoted to mega events, organized in Australia in 2000, 'Events beyond 2000: Setting the Agenda', the essential role of events was indicated for the development of infrastructure, the generation of profits, and the promotion of areas (Goldblatt 2000).

As in Wrocław, a positive reaction by the inhabitants of organizing cities toward the sports events taking place in those cities has been confirmed by research as well. For example, in analyses conducted before beginning the event, the inhabitants of Sydney (Waitt 2003) were decidedly positive about the benefits of organizing the 2000 Olympics in Sydney. Positive perceptions and large expectations in terms of promotion, tourist influx, and expected economic development were noted among the inhabitants of Beijing who were surveyed in the first week of the Olympics' duration in 2008 (Gursoy, Chi, Ai, and Chen 2011). A positive attitude to the large Indy Car Race was also noted in research conducted among the inhabitants of the Australian Gold Coast (Fredline, Faulkner 1998).

In research comparing the opinions of inhabitants before the start of an event or at its beginning, and in its end period, a significant difference in appraisal of its

effects was observed (Fredline, Faulkner 2001a, 2001b; Gursoy, Chi, Ai and Chen 2011; Lorde, Greenidge, Devonish 2011). In research conducted during an event, positive answers clearly predominate, while to a lesser degree the possible problems related to organization or costs are observed. In public opinion expressed after the event, more attention is directed at the costs and problems, although in many cases the positive opinions still prevailed.

In terms of the details, the research showed that the development of infrastructure as a benefit from organizing the Euro 2012 competition for Poland, and for the city of Wrocław, was particularly emphasized by the respondents of the survey (figure 10). They indicated the significant number of infrastructure investments such as football stadiums, transport infrastructure, and new hotels. The indications concerned the development of infrastructure in Poland as well as investments in Wrocław itself. The scientific literature as well abounds in confirmations of the positive role of sports events for the development of infrastructure and the formation of urban space. Thanks to sports events, entertainment or exhibition venues and stadiums are constructed, revitalizing towns (Mules 1993; Goldblatt 2000). These facilities serve for sports and exposition purposes even after the end of the events for which they were constructed. These types of benefits are to be found in research concerning other mega sports events such as, for instance, the Summer Olympic Games in Barcelona in 1992 (Alejziak 2008), the Winter Olympic Games in Lillehammer in 1994 (Spilling 1998), or the Summer Olympic Games in Sydney in 2000 (Waitt 2003).

One of the major benefits mentioned by Wrocław inhabitants of organizing the Euro 2012 was the growth of tourist traffic and income from tourism (Figure 10). A lot of other research confirms the thesis about the growth of income from tourism as a result of organizing sports events (Murphy, Carmichael 1991; Crompton, McKay 1994; Spilling 1998; Dwyer, Forsyth, Spurr 2000; Goldblatt 2000; Daniels, Backman, Backman 2003; Alejziak 2008). The economic effects of sports events are connected with the expenditures of tourists travelling to the event, outside of the place in which the event occurs (Goldblatt 2000). Thanks to this, the organizer-city of the event receives additional revenue, which does not come from the redistribution of its inhabitants' incomes, but is provided to the economic system from 'outside'. Tourists travelling en masse to sports events make considerable expenditures for the purchase of many goods and services. These include tickets, lodging, food, car fuel, souvenirs, and gadgets connected with the sports event (Murphy, Carmichael 1991; Daniels, Backman, Backman 2003). It should be emphasized that sometimes the economic effect of such events may be overestimated; the high costs of organizing such mega sports events are also frequently overlooked (Crompton, McKay 1994). One of the best examples of the positive economic effects of organizing sports events are the above-mentioned Summer Olympic Games in Barcelona. The 1992 Olympic Games caused Barcelona to become one of the most important tourist cities in the Mediterranean region. This was the result of the development of infrastructure, a good campaign to promote the city, and a high level of tourist satisfaction (Alejziak 2008).

The research conducted by Waitt (2003) into perceptions of the expected effects of organizing the Olympics in 2000 by the inhabitants of Sydney produced similar

results to the analysis conducted in Wrocław. Before the beginning of the Olympics, the inhabitants of the city indicated that, like Wrocławians, they expected benefits in the form of the development of infrastructure. They considered that the facilities that were built for the purposes of the Olympic Games would serve the inhabitants for many years after the Games. The respondents also pointed to the important role of Olympic host. They considered that it would be an element promoting Australia, and in particular Sydney, in the international arena (Waitt 2003).

The positive indications of the respondents, presented in the article, concerning the development of infrastructure and the growth of incomes from tourism connected with the organization of the Euro in Wrocław were confirmed as well in the first official reports on the effects of the event. The city gained a new football stadium, a range of new road investments, extended city communications, and an airport. The growth in the number of tourists was visible, and the consequence was a growth in income for businesses in the tourist sector. Data from accessible official reports concerning the organization of the Euro 2012 in Wrocław (see postscript) confirm it.

Another benefit of organizing the Euro 2012 was assumed, by the Wrocław respondents, to be far-reaching promotion of Poland and the organizing cities of the event (Figure 10). This opinion was confirmed in research of a theoretical and empirical nature. Large sports events are widely covered by the world media. Many global television stations also emit promotional material showing the organizing cities of such events (Goldblatt 2000). Information services show the state of readiness, the team profiles, and celebrated athletes. Often, films are shown and information is given concerning the countries of the organizers of large sports events. The sports events are also shown in sports programmes and on information services (Getz and Fairley 2004).

Similar results were also received from the above-mentioned research concerning the perceptions of the effects of the Olympics in Sydney among inhabitants of that city. The surveys conducted there showed that the Australians observed the benefits from the promotion of their country and city when the Olympics were held there in 2000, as one of the most important benefits of the event (Waitt 2003).

For the purpose of the present article, the Wrocław respondents, in addition to the benefits, also noted the potential dangers from, among other things, the hooliganism of the fans (frequently shown on television recently), the growth of prices, traffic jams, organizational deficiencies of the city, and the possibility of falling into debt (Figure 10). It should be emphasized that in the survey research, positive appraisals of the effects of the event were clearly predominant.

In the case of the above-mentioned comparable Australian research conducted among the inhabitants of the city in which a large car race and the Olympics in 2000 were to be held, a range of fears was noted which were similar to those expressed by the inhabitants of Wrocław (Fredline, Faulkner 1998, 2001a, 2001b; Waitt 2003). Australians were clearly anxious about the problems in communications, given the influx of a large number of tourists. They also noted the problems related with the growth of prices, the high costs of organizing the event, the growth in noise levels

(during the events), the disturbance of the inhabitants' daily lives, and the crowding connected with a kind of tourist invasion.

In conducting an analysis of the influence of mega sports events, the long-term social effects of the Euro 2012 Championship should be mentioned. This subject should be covered in further, detailed, sociological research. Doubtless, the efficient organization of the Euro 2012 influenced the redefinition of Poles' view of their own country and society, as well as other European nations' views of Poland and Poles. The organization of Euro 2012 also contributed to the growth of social capital and changes in attitude, including increased tolerance for foreigners, feelings of pride, and citizens' ties to their own country and society. Euro 2012 also influenced the popularization of football, the increased interest of Poles in sports, and the promotion of a healthy, sports-oriented lifestyle.

### Postscript

Reports published on the internet page of Wrocław City Hall after the Euro 2012 Championship indicate that fans were satisfied with their visit to Wrocław (90%). In addition, as many as 82% of them would recommend visiting the city to their friends and acquaintances. The level of satisfaction among fans with various aspects of Wrocław's functioning exceeded in every instance the expectations from before the Championship and was on average 10–15% higher than the results of analogous research conducted 4 years ago among fans who travelled to Austria.

Research into the amount of tourist traffic showed that half a million people in sum attended events in the Wrocław stadium from its inauguration to the end of the Euro 2012, of which, 130,000 attended the Championship tournament, including 45,000 foreign tourists from 80 different countries. The entirety of the foreign tourist traffic to Wrocław in connection with the Euro 2012 was estimated at 300,000 persons, with a decided preponderance of Czechs. The majority of the guests remained in Wrocław for at least one night. (UEFA EURO 2012™ in Wrocław 2012)

The marketing potential of the Euro 2012 Championship is shown by the fact that the match between Poland and the Czech Republic played in Wrocław was watched by a television audience of over 15 million, and information about the city appeared in over 100 countries of the world. 10,000 news items appeared on monitored Czech, Greek, Russian, and German media sites. The number of times Wrocław was mentioned in the Polish media was estimated at 400,000, and the local service ([www.wroclaw.pl](http://www.wroclaw.pl)) noted an 80% growth in views. The promotional value of the Championship for Wrocław was determined to be 80 million PLN (UEFA EURO 2012™ in Wrocław 2012).

Analysis of the financial turnover during the course of the Championship in Wrocław also gave satisfactory results: it amounted to 390 million PLN, of which 25% went to lodging services, food services, the trade and entertainment sector, and other areas (UEFA EURO 2012™ in Wrocław 2012).

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