

DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES AND CULTURAL POLICIES IN ROMANIA. THE CASE OF CLUJ-NAPOCA

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Abstract

Once with Romania's integration in the EU, a long series of structural reforms have been at the core of the national, regional and local policies. There are three major aims of this paper. The first is to investigate the culture-oriented policies that have been envisaged in post-communist Romania, before and after joining the EU, in order to point out the correlation with the European cultural agenda, and to observe the transition towards a decentralized vision on culture that would redirect the cities' contributions to their urban development. The second is to analyze what types of development strategies and cultural policies have been developed and implemented in Cluj-Napoca (Romania) that frame a new vision on the city and propose the concepts of 'participation, creativity and university' at the core of its transformation. The third is to question the role of the festival use (as a cultural form involving large participation) and to discuss the specificity of the city of Cluj-Napoca where the enthusiastic support from the local authorities for this type of actions is balanced by a more reasonable consideration within the cultural strategy. The research is based on document analyses and interviews with decision-makers and stakeholders' representatives.

Keywords: development strategy, cultural policies, participation, festivals, social transformation, urban regeneration.

1. Introduction

In a continuous state of transition, after the fall of the communist regime, Romania is still working hard to reach the stability of Western European countries. Once with Romania's integration in the European Union a long series of structural reforms have been at the core of the national, regional and local policies, and successive strategic documents have tried to generate the necessary changes.

Through literature reviews, document analyses and semi-structured interviews the present paper investigates the role attributed to culture in both national development strategies and local development strategies, with a case study on Cluj-Napoca (Romania), a city of an active population that comprises more than 410,000 inhabitants, at the moment a candidate for the European Capital of Culture 2021 title, and a winner of the European Youth Capital 2015), as well as the evolution of the cultural policies within.

There are three major aims of this paper corresponding to its three major chapters. The first is to investigate the culture-oriented policies that have been envisaged in post-communist Romania, before and after joining the EU, in order to point out the correlation with the European cultural agenda and to observe the transition towards a more decentralized, instrumental vision on culture that would redirect the cities' contributions to their own urban development and could further contribute to the national development strategies. As Cluj-Napoca is the first city in Romania that has built up, through a serious research process and within a participative community effort, an important development strategy, the second aim of the paper is to analyze this strategy and the cultural policies that have been developed and implemented in the city. They frame a new vision on the city focused on a participative approach, which could generate a better quality of life for its inhabitants, and propose the concepts of 'participation, creativity and university' at the core of the transformation of the city. This approach intends to and has the potential to be further used for other communities as well, so to become a model of best practices at regional and European level. Closely related to the concept of cultural participation, the third aim is to question the role of the festival use as a cultural form that involves large participation, and to discuss the specificity of Cluj-Napoca where the enthusiastic support from local authorities (that endorse the city in terms of 'the city of events') for this type of actions is balanced by a more reasonable consideration within the cultural strategy.

2. Methodology

The present research is based on qualitative methods that combine review of scientific literature (focusing on the evaluation of cultural policies at national level, on different global concepts such as 'quality of life', 'cultural vitality', 'urban regeneration', or discussing issues such as the role of the festival use, socio-cultural impact of festivals, etc.), document analysis (of national government plans, national cultural strategy, Cluj-Napoca development strategy and cultural strategy, reports and results of sociological investigations), and semi-structured elite interviews with represen-

tatives of the NGOs in charge with the elaboration of the 2014-2020 Development Strategy for Cluj-Napoca. During the five interviews, in order to get a clear view on the building up of local cultural policies, we have investigated (through 20 major questions) the following aspects: the cultural strategy and policies (their construction, their vision, their sustainability, their impact for the community), the connection between local authorities (municipality) and social actors (public and private institutions, NGOs), the candidature of the city to the European Capital of Culture (ECOC) title, the role of events and festivals within the local policy, the social transformation and the economic regeneration of the city through culture. The content of the paper is split into three main parts; the first one is based on document analysis and literature review, while the second and the third combine the document analysis with the interview results.

3. Cultural policies in post-communist Romania

3.1. Cultural policies in South-Eastern European context:

The strive for internationalization

When discussing the particular case of the cultural policies implementation in Romania, we need to consider the specificities of the cultural policies in Central and South-Eastern European countries that come from a long tradition of communism regimes. Scientific research in the field (Suteu, 2005; Dragicevic-Sesic and Dragojevic, 2005; Svob-Dokic, 2001; Svob-Dokic, 2005) points out the paradoxical logic that governs the cultural policies after the fall of communism from the administrative, legislative or strategic point of view. As Suteu mentions, before 2000's these countries were faced with the lack of cultural policies as such, and there were different endeavors that culture had to face. From the administrative point of view, Suteu observes the legacy of mammoth-like cultural institutions that had to answer the new liberal market logic, and to become cost efficient, but were still state administrated and, therefore, dependent on the central power of the state. From the legislative point of view, implementation of new legislation had to be quick and effective, but, unfortunately, it was both taking a lot of time (as dependent on the Parliament vote, while governments have been constantly changing due to political instability), and nevertheless inefficient. In the same time, consideration had been given to measures related to the audiovisual sector while the performing arts and fine arts legislation (as well as the heritage legislation, the sponsorship law) were thoroughly neglected. From the strategic point of view, two directions were identified: the drive towards modernity, and the openness towards European multilateral, modern, international values on the one hand, and the preservation of national traditions and identity, on the other hand, the focus on one or another depending on the type of socio-cultural-historical legacy of the respective country.

In this context, the internationalization process seemed to be a commonly accepted direction of orientation for all countries in the region. An impressive number of cultural bilateral conventions have been signed, 'but beyond a very affirmative need

and wish for cultural exchange, usually done with Western funds and Eastern human resources, the international cultural cooperation policies in Central and Eastern Europe did not succeed in creating a necessary framework for administrative and financial inclusion of national institutions in the rich network of European and world cultural and artistic organizations. Initiatives for exchange always came from outside.' (Șuteu, 2005).

However, these initiatives have not engaged real reflection on the potentialities and perspectives of cultural policies before 2000. Still, the initiation of creative cultural policies (instead of normative policies) that rethink the local cultural policies (within a highly decentralizing process) as boosters for a new life quality, rather than of a creation of a new symbolical metropolis (Katunaric, 2003), the encouragement of public private partnerships for cultural organizations, shaping the state's role as regulator, and the development of democratic institutions to ensure policies design and cultural sustainability, a larger perspective on the cultural sphere that includes media, education, creative industries have been strategic key points of orientation for cultural policies in the beginning of the new millennium.

3.2. Cultural policies in Romania before joining the EU:

The urge for a responsible cultural policy

In this research context, complex analyses on cultural policies in Romania have been drawn by Dan Eugen Ratiu (Ratiu, 2012, 2009, 2005). He observes that the first national cultural strategy was formulated in 1997, and that the critical reflection on the principles of cultural policies, and their implementation was mainly manifested through public debates/discourse organized by cultural managers, experts, and leading members of nongovernmental organizations, yet in a technical language that tended to eliminate critical reflections on social, political and aesthetical values, on political ideology, or on the complex philosophical justifications that shape them.

With this in view, Ratiu has investigated the inherent values of cultural policies in Romania (Ratiu, 2009) focusing on four main justifications for funding culture that represent the Romanian case. The first one, the grandiloquent justification for funding culture in terms of national interest and prestige is based on the identitarian conception, the patrimonial conception, and the celebrative conception on culture, all of them focusing on imposing Romanian identity, patrimony, and cultural events (with the aim of enhancing the country's image) on international level. The ineffectiveness of public actions under the banner of promoting culture and art in the name of national prestige, the nature of cultural supply in the service of diplomatic rigors, the heterogeneous cultural manifestations presented abroad have all contributed to the self-representation of the ministers more concerned with advancing their status as cultural administrators than with the artists themselves. This policy has been changed after the inauguration in 2005 of the Romanian Cultural Institute, as an autonomous body that took the responsibilities of promoting Romanian culture abroad. The second (the pragmatic) justification emphasizes the social and economic

benefits of funding culture and the arts, focusing on the three reasons for investing in culture: economic growth, social cohesion, and the promotion of belongingness to Europe. Still, even if this perspective was launched in 1999, this direction remained a discursive one, and the actual strategies abandoned these ideas (until 2005), and focused on the identitarian role of culture. The third justification, the ideological one, was intended to correct market inequalities or failures. In the context of an absent art market, and a subsidiary developed art system, as well as taking into consideration the lack of private support for culture, the public intervention was indeed extremely welcomed. Still, as the scholar observes, this led to the bureaucratization of artistic life, and the replacement of the former state artist to the socially assisted artist on the one hand, and to the distortion of the art world. The last argument (the a priori justification), close to the ideology of merit good, is an intrinsic argument that considers culture as a source of human progress, and a factor in the improvement of the quality of life. But unfortunately, the vision of culture was very limited, favoring written forms of culture over visual ones, traditional forms over nontraditional and canonical over alternative, and neglecting its connection to other sectors of social action, and thus to the general public. Rațiu's analysis points out the need for a responsible cultural policy that should consider various forms of cultural expressions or activities, as well as the plurality of actors and artistic practices, and the mutations related to the emergent cultural industries.

3.3. Cultural policies in Romania after joining the EU: From international policy to national strategic development, towards an instrumental vision on culture

In order to point out the development of the national cultural policies in Romania within 2007-2014, we have made an investigation of a series of governmental and ministerial documents correlated with the topic: 'National Development Plan 2007-2013', 'Governmental Program 2009-2012', 'Governmental Program 2013-2016', 'National Sustainable Development Strategy Romania 2013-2020-2030', 'Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Culture and National Patrimony 2009-2013', 'National Development Plan for the Cultural Sector 2007-2013', and 'Sectoral Strategy for Culture and National Patrimony 2014-2020'. Hundreds of pages have been dedicated to the strategic development of culture in the above mentioned documents, all comprising analyses of the current state of the issue, various series of objectives (strategic, sectoral, transversal), and priorities, directions of action or intervention, strategy implementation planning, financing directions, and recommendations.

It is mandatory to mention that in the perspective of Romania's integration in the European Union, the strategic planning of the Government of Romania has been declaratively drawn in accordance with the EU cohesion policy. 'The National Development Plan 2007-2013' (Government of Romania, 2005) included the six national development priorities: increasing economic competitiveness and developing an economy based on knowledge; developing and modernizing transport infrastructure; protecting and improving the quality of the environment; developing human resources,

promoting employment and social inclusion, and strengthening administrative capacity; developing rural economy and increasing productivity in the farming sector; and diminishing development disparities between country regions. The cultural area is not among the priorities, it is only tangentially named as a source for tourism development as well as for the growth potential and regeneration of urban centers.

Once with Romania's integration in the European Union, the European Agenda for Culture in a Globalizing World (Gordon *et al.*, 2007) has been settled, and Romania has adhered to the three priorities of the document: promoting cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue, promoting culture as a catalyst for creativity and innovation in the context of the Lisbon Treaty (therefore stimulating cultural industries and economy), and the reinforcement of the cultural dimension as a vital element of EU external relations. Therefore, in the governmental documents that point out the national development planning, culture becomes an integrated chapter as an important factor for sustainable development (Governmental Program 2009-2012 (Government of Romania, 2009), Governmental Program 2013-2016 (Government of Romania, 2012), National Sustainable Development Strategy Romania 2013-2020-2030 (Government of Romania, 2008).

The national objective for horizon 2013 was to set up and maintain a coherent legislative, regulatory and institutional framework for the cultural domain, consistent with existing EU regulations and practices; to implement the first phase of the action plan for the listing, preservation and promotion of the national cultural heritage and contemporary cultural assets, and for closer links with the European and universal space of cultural values; to enhance access of all categories of people from all regions and social environments to information and culture, and to improve the social and economic condition of artists (Government of Romania, 2008). The major institution responsible for the development of the cultural strategies or policies adopted by Romania, the Ministry of Culture and National Patrimony integrated in its documents a series of objectives and actions that follow and respond to the national objectives: safeguarding the national cultural patrimony and the maintenance of the cultural heritage and diversity, the increase in the number of participants to culture and cultural events, the modernization and internationalization of the cultural infrastructure and the professionalization of the human resources within, support for contemporary art and creative industries, as well as for research in cultural policies, promoting the national values on international level, promoting multiculturalism and minorities' cultures (Ministry of Culture and National Patrimony, 2009; Government of Romania, 2009).

The national perspective on the development of culture and the government cultural policies are therefore oriented towards national heritage, people involvement in culture and the development of creative industries. Five budgetary sub-programs were envisaged in the document dedicated to the public policies, strategy and structural policy coordination for culture (Ministry of Culture and National Patrimony, 2009) that aim at the protection and safeguarding of the national cultural patrimony (historical and archeological monuments, museums and collections, immaterial pat-

rimony), the promotion of contemporary creation and cultural diversity (visual arts, performing arts, written cultural heritage), the development of multilateral international relations for the promotion of Romanian culture abroad and the promotion of foreign cultures in Romania, support for the cultural institutions subordinated to the Ministry, rehabilitation of historical monuments and modernization of public cultural institutions.

The latest document focusing on the cultural strategy for the period 2014-2020, *The Sectoral Strategy for Culture and National Patrimony 2014-2020* (Ministry of Culture and National Patrimony, 2013), makes the transition towards a new vision concerning culture. Two types of objectives are settled, while a long, middle and long term planning draw the directions for the actions that should be carried out by different institutions: Romanian Government, The Ministry of Culture, Romanian Parliament, regional and local administration, The Ministry for Development, The Ministry of Public Finance, the NGOs, etc. The sectoral strategic objectives include the protection of national cultural heritage (immobile patrimony, mobile cultural patrimony and immaterial cultural patrimony), and the support and promotion of contemporary cultural and artistic creation (considering the status of the contemporary artist and the author of cultural products and services), while the transversal strategic objectives concern the education and cultural intervention, the enforcement of institutional capacity, the development of cultural infrastructure, and the settling of four transversal targets that aim the participation and involvement of young people in cultural activities, the digitization of cultural resources, the enhancement and diversification of cultural offer, and consequently cultural consumption, the exportation of national cultural products and the internationalization of culture. This strategy maintains the already established objectives (concerning the national patrimony and cultural heritage), but opens up towards new spheres of action which emphasize the economic benefits of culture, and the economic growth that culture could bring to the country.

Based on the European models of cultural strategy, this instrumental vision on culture constitutes a new approach for Romania's policies, aiming the trans-sectoral dynamics and values of culture as an important factor for economic and social development. An important aspect of this strategy is the transition towards a more decentralized approach which indicates directions of action for other institutions and local authorities, thus from a state perspective to a city perspective on cultural policy. This transition is starting to be implemented in Romania, as more and more cities work and draw their own development strategies, within which culture gets to be a central asset for economic growth and urban regeneration: Sibiu, Iași, Timișoara and Cluj-Napoca. Although, in the majority of the cases, the local strategies are still depending on the national directives, the above-mentioned cities could become pilot cities that reconfigure the planning processes in Romania, as within these cities the local governance (which includes local authorities, organizations, association, private sector, local communities) becomes the main actor for setting its own development strategies and cultural policies. Thus, the local level is setting the stage towards a set

of strategic fields that should be conceptualized within the national policies. With this in view, the present article will focus on the city of Cluj-Napoca, and will point out the particularities of a development strategy that could become a model for the strategic planning at the level of central government.

4. Cultural policies and urban development strategies.

Three models for the cultural strategy of Cluj-Napoca

There is high amount of research on European cultural policy which investigates the transition from the traditional notion of culture as art and heritage to a view of culture as an economic asset (Zukin, 1995), the use of culture as an integral part of urban policy (Bianchini and Parkinson, 1993; Garcia, 2004), its use for urban economic and physical regeneration, for city marketing and city branding (Kong, 2000; Paddison, 1993) and three major models of the use of cultural policies and strategies for the cities development have been largely discussed (Landry, 2000; Miles and Paddison, 2005; Binns, 2005; Menger, 2010). To the cultural strategies identified by Bianchini and Parkinson (1993) as cultural production and consumption oriented models for driving the economic regeneration of cities, a third model has been added that focuses on the participation of the community to the city regeneration (Landry, 2000; Binns, 2005).

The cultural production oriented models comprise the growing creative industries and financial investment in cultural production (in areas such as advertising, architecture, art and antiques market, crafts, design, fashion design, film and video, interactive leisure software, music, the performing arts, publishing, software and computer games, television and radio), while the cultural consumption oriented models are based on two major directions: investment in big hallmark iconic cultural infrastructure (the famous case of Guggenheim Bilbao – and the Bilbao effect) and hosting major cultural or sporting events (such as the Olympic Games, World Cup, etc.), festivals (film festivals, contemporary art fairs or biennials, etc.) or obtaining the title of European Capital of Culture. 'Through such a policy, city authorities attempt to develop a culturally vibrant image deemed attractive by mobile, middle class, high-tech or 'knowledge' industry workers. Cultural activities are one sellable asset that, along with a clean and safe environment, congenial climate, social capital, aesthetic qualities, and so forth, can be added together to make up city dwellers' 'quality of life'. An attractive image is also thought essential for competition in that other post-industrial growth industry, tourism.' (Binns, 2005). The third model involves the development of a sense of community and high participation to the actual construction of the cultural strategy and policies of the city, by the involvement and commitment of different social actors belonging to different areas of the social and economic environment. This model would lead to 'enhanced social cohesion; improved local image; reduced offending behaviors; promoted interest in the local environment; developed self-confidence; built public/private sector partnerships; explored identities and visions of the future; enhanced organizational capacity; and supported independence'(Landry,

2000). The three models have been successfully applied in different cities all over Europe, while the policy schemes are differing according to how the cities set their priorities. But, on the same time, none of these models is infallible nor self-standing or sufficient on the long-term.

4.1. The development strategy of Cluj-Napoca:

Through participation towards a better quality of life

With this in view we would further discuss the latest cultural strategy for Cluj-Napoca, and the cultural policies the city envisages for the urban regeneration of the city, stating that due to very serious research in the area, the three models discussed above are highlighted and used for consideration. Still, the city adopts a hybrid strategy that involves strong participation of the community and social transformation through culture (social actors, NGOs and public institutions, but also private companies and individuals), and shares a cultural consumption model of economic regeneration. A series of documents stand at the basis of our research: The Development Strategy for Cluj-Napoca 2014-2020 (CMPG, 2014), The Cultural Strategy for Cluj-Napoca (CMPG, 2014), Cluj-Napoca 2021 – European Capital of Culture Association Activity Report for 2014 (Asociația Cluj-Napoca 2021 Capitală Culturală Europeană, 2015).

To state the context, Cluj-Napoca is the most important city of Transylvania (the North Western region of Romania) a city of an active population that comprises more than 410,000 inhabitants, at the moment a candidate for the European Capital of Culture 2021 title and a winner of the European Youth Capital 2015. According to a study published by the National Institute for Research and Cultural Training (2010) concerning the cultural vitality of Romanian cities, Cluj-Napoca is on the top of the list (they did not include in the study Bucharest, the capital city of Romania) with an index of vitality that proves the city has a cultural life twice more active than the other cities of Romania. The concept of vitality is defined in Landry's terms that considers economic, social, environment and cultural categories of criteria for analyzing a city vitality and viability (the amount of activities, participation, interaction, exchanges and representation at the community level) (Landry, 2000). More than 800 cultural events took place in or very near the city in 2012 (with more than 90 festivals, among which TIFF – The Transylvanian International Film Festival, Electric Castle, Temps d'Images Festival, Jazz in the Park, Mozart Festival, Cluj Musical Autumn, SoNoRo Festival are already world known) with 45% of the actions holding an international and multicultural character. Around 20 cultural public institutions, six creation unions, six public universities, seven international cultural centers, 17 libraries, and more than 60 cultural NGOs configure the area of cultural implication of different social actors in the cultural sphere, and their activity is mostly focused on the production of events and their public display (CMPG, 2014). Historically, Cluj-Napoca is a university city with more than 100,000 students, which is more than 20% of the active population that take part in the city life, and they are constantly in the quest for dynamic events.

In the period February 2013 - December 2014, 28 voluntary working groups formed of hundreds of experts and representatives of the most important institutions, universities, NGOs and local administration joined under the title Cluj Management Planning Group (coordinated by the Faculty of Political, Administrative and Communication Sciences of Babeş-Bolyai University) in order to build up the development strategy of the city (Cluj Management Planning Group, 2014). This experiment has never been used in Romania before, and involved a community effort and a participative endeavor that prioritized the future actions of the city in eight strategic dimensions: people and community, the creative city, urban regeneration and spatial planning, the green city, good governance, culture and local identity, healthy city and safe city. The key concept for the vision on Cluj-Napoca is 'the quality of life' of the people living in the city capable to use its resources for the sustainable development of the community. The term has been widely used in the contemporary theory concerning urban development, and there is no consensus over the whole definition that could explain it, as it is differently used on the basis of research interests and objectives (medicine, psychology, sociology, culture, etc.). It is a multidimensional concept referring both to the community and the individual that is correlated to those of sustainable development and community wellbeing, and there is no definitive set of indicators used to measure it (Galloway *et al.*, 2006). Here the concept refers to the community life, and seven series of indicators (comprising 196 indicators) are considered in the preliminary analysis used as a basis for the future evaluation of the development strategy: lifestyle and community life, security, health, education, environment, government quality, economic growth (Cluj Management Planning Group, 2014).

The strategic key factors that prioritize the future projects of the city and would influence the local community on the long term are: participation (association, social inclusion, multiculturalism, youth, public health, sports and community), creativity (economic regeneration, IT, culture and creative industries, tourism, territorial marketing, environment, safety) and university (higher university, historical identity), all being considered within the eight above-mentioned strategic dimensions. These factors are strongly connected to the local community linking tradition (the university city) to contemporary development through the actual and active involvement of the community (Cluj Management Planning Group, 2014). The whole process is clearly justified by an organic evolution of the city in which the strategy is driven from the community towards the local authority, involving a process of participative democracy. The directions set forth through this strategy are the result of careful consideration for both the state of fact of the city and scientific and practical knowledge. The vision for the city is trying to address the scientific discourse, either by appealing to different contemporary concepts discussed in the literature, and thus reinforcing the theoretic approach, or by addressing the issues that may interfere with the future actions. Still, while the strategy has been thought by theoreticians, it should be implemented by technocrats, and we could point out an important issue in what concerns its results. In addition, a second issue is correlated to the administrative coordination

of the city, which should totally assume this strategy, in spite of an eventual change of the political status.

4.2. The cultural strategy: Through participation in culture towards social transformation and urban regeneration

The cultural strategy is a major component of the city development strategy, as Cluj-Napoca is defined as a 'city of artistic excellence and cultural participation', while culture is the catalyst for social transformation and urban regeneration (Cluj Management Planning Group, 2014). It was elaborated by the Association Cluj-Napoca – European Capital of Culture 2021 (constituted in 2010), an NGO whose members belong to the local and regional authorities, and around 90 cultural institutions, organizations, companies and private individuals. The agenda set forth for 2014-2020 starts from the premise that the local community has an increasing potential of development through culture and cultural industries, due to a specific cultural vitality, an important cultural diversity, consistent cultural consumption and positive dynamics in the participation to cultural events. The following strategic priorities are set: increasing the participation to cultural events, sustainability for the cultural area (financing cultural programs and activities), encouraging the creation of new cultural forms, the development of international cooperation and the regional and European dimension of the cultural sector, increasing intra and inter sectoral cooperation, infrastructure development, increasing the quality of cultural acts, and professionalization of cultural operators, raising the use of public space, improving the cultural communication (Cluj Management Planning Group, 2014).

The challenge is multiple, but we observe three major areas of implications: participation, communication and cooperation; financial support for cultural creation and infrastructure; and professional management for culture (in private and public space). Within the strategy we find a balance between the cultural consumption, cultural production and participation models that we have mentioned earlier (Bianchini, 1993). Still, the major input is more oriented towards regeneration through participation and cultural consumption. This is due to a series of factors: the openness of the municipal authorities towards events held in the public space (mostly held in the central areas, in parks and city squares), the restoration and revitalization of the city center (a make-over of different spaces and their transformation in pubs, cafes, restaurants), the revival of urban public spaces (not only in the center, but also in different peripheral areas), investment in infrastructure and architecture (road modernization, the building up of new centers dedicated to sports – Cluj Arena).

An important infrastructure project, dedicated to cultural production and creative industries (which aims the transformation of the city into a smart city – which involves citizens' participation to creative activities and social innovation) is Cluj Innovation City, which is still under construction and in need for financing. The city authorities are extremely fond of the project, which is supposed to regenerate a peripheral area of the city, but, there are still a series of problems correlated to it: lack of

connective infrastructure – public transportation and functioning access, a necessary change in the behavior of local population (still very used to small distances from their residence to the working space and to the center of the city which is the strongest in terms of cultural vitality).

Another important project, Cluj – ECOC 2021 is thought in terms of consumption and economic regeneration (as it is supposed to influence participation, internationalization, tourism), but, yet again, the candidature of the city is supposed to be reliable in terms of efficiency and sustainability (the creation of cultural actions and the building up of cultural infrastructure that should be long term viable and efficient). The considerations behind the project imply not only the acquired result, but more the process of reaching the objective through permanent consultancy between the involved social actors, through public mobilization and invitation to participation to different cultural events already initiated under the title of the future ECOC, through transparency, communication and internationalization. The concept WEAST (wonder, explore, activate, share, trust) inquires three main relations (the city and its citizens, the city and Europe, the citizens and Europe) and it is closely related to the cultural strategy that connects culture with social transformation and urban regeneration. It is a vision oriented towards the city as the place for change, a citizen centered perspective that would improve the quality of life for the residents of the city.

5. Cluj-Napoca, a city of events? Finding the balance in cultural policies

5.1. Cluj-Napoca: A participative approach for the development strategy of the city

We have conducted five elite semi-structured interviews with representatives of the NGOs in charge with the elaboration of the 2014-2020 Strategy for Cluj-Napoca (Cluj Management Planning Group team, Cluj-Napoca 2021 – ECOC Association, the Paintbrush Factory, AltArt Foundation) that point out the particularities of the local policies and focus of the administration. The questions focused on five main directions: the cultural strategy and policies (their construction, their vision, their sustainability, their impact on the community), the connection between local authorities (municipality) and social actors (public and private institutions, NGOs), the candidature of the city to the ECOC title, the role of events and festivals within the local policy, the social transformation and the economic regeneration of the city through culture.

The findings were extremely conclusive for the coherence of the whole process of strategic development for the city for 2014-2020. First of all, this is the first time in the contemporary history of the city when the process for elaborating the development strategy has been a participative one, it was not based on a panel of experts but on a community effort (the voluntary work of more than 300 persons from different scientific areas and professions, representatives of institutions and NGOs). We have to mention that this type of experiment was possible for Cluj-Napoca due to three main reasons: the nature of the local community (open minded and internationally driven, multicultural, highly intellectual, extremely active and socially involved)

with an extremely organized active civic and cultural sector, which is a great asset for the city that can only facilitate and integrate the strategic perspectives already present in the community (Cluj Management Planning Group, 2014); the high degree of cooperation and association between the public authorities and the private sector, that could explain the mutual involvement and the premises for strong networking, communication and cooperation in the implementation of the strategy; the economic development potential (the economy of the city is positioned third in Romania after Bucharest and Constanța) which implies a significant local budget and economic resources available for the development of the city (Cluj Management Planning Group). Consequently, the joint efforts of the working groups, starting from a professional elaborated methodology, were based on serious research, analyses and discussions of the most recent theories on urban regeneration, as Cluj-Napoca is supposed to be a multi-functioning city, a catalyzer for social transformation, a smart city, a place for participative democracy and e-governing, a multicultural international place, an urban regenerating place – all of these globally analyzed concepts. Yet, again, in spite of its academic reasoning and optimistic vision on the city, this approach (included in 1226 pages) could find itself in the position of not finding a solid implementation. The vast quantity of information endangers the actual execution of the projects either because of the human resources involved (technocrats that do not clearly understand it, or do not feel represented by it), because of the lack of financing, or simply because of the limited amount of time (not all the projects could be enacted in the same time). It is also difficult to be operationalized, monitored and evaluated only by the authorities. A possible solution for the success of the strategy, could be the mutual appropriation of the strategy, not only by the local authorities (to whom the strategy is directed), but by the whole community, by the specific operators. Still, in the case of solid implementation, the actual development strategy for Cluj-Napoca could become a new model for the internalization of the European values, a boost for competitiveness and a best practice model in local administration at both national and European level. It is thus a possible pilot program that has the potential to be successfully implemented in other communities as well.

Second, it is the first time that culture is enlisted in the strategy as a facilitator for urban regeneration, and the candidature of the city to the ECOC title is an adjuvant for this regeneration. Third, this candidature to the ECOC title is a pretext for action, it could be the engine for the start of a series of processes enlisted in the cultural strategy that would function before the year of designation (2021), and would continue after its end. It is a prediction of sustainability and a support for the success of the ECOC event. Of course, the initiation and development of these projects need to find both political support (on behalf of the authorities) and private support (from different stakeholders belonging to the community). This might also encounter a problem as at the moment the economic environment is not investing in culture, other areas (social, medical, sports) gaining a lot more sponsorships from local companies. The solution would be again a participative one, a more consistent inter-sectoral coopera-

tion with a stronger correlation with the image capital that culture could bring to the various stakeholders.

Fourth, (and we will allow a more detailed discussion to the following issue), in the recent years, there has been in Cluj-Napoca a proliferation of festivals and various events, as the local authorities were extremely supportive for the assimilation of Cluj-Napoca with the collocation 'a city of events'. Hundreds of festivals have started to be organized every year in Cluj-Napoca, some of them with a longer tradition, others just in their inception, especially since the discussions about Cluj-Napoca European Youth Capital 2015 and Cluj-Napoca European Capital of Culture 2021. The cultural strategy agrees upon the importance of the community participation to cultural events and observes their benefits, as they could improve the quality of life of the people who share these events, they could raise tourism and, of course, they could generate specific incomes and economic growth. Scientific research on the issue is directed either towards the economic impact of festivals, as useful strategies for urban regeneration and city marketing (Robertson and MacMillan Wardrop, 2004; Garcia, 2004; Richards and Wilson, 2004) or towards the socio-cultural impacts of festivals, as they could contribute to the enhancement of the quality of life, including participation and interest in cultural activities, accessibility and inclusion or social outcomes in terms of the intensification of the sense of place and local identity (Liu, 2014; Robertson *et al.*, 2009; Garcia *et al.*, 2010; Galloway, 2006; Richards and Palmer, 2010; Palmer-Rae Associates, 2004; Quinn, 2005). A series of debates have been launched in what concerns the positive and negative impacts of festivals, as well as on their role in advancing urban policy, contributing to urban life or to individual development. Following success examples (in terms of economic growth) after the 'cultural turn', more and more cities invested heavily in festivals as part of their urban regeneration strategy and city marketing, as these were considered 'entrepreneurial displays, image creators, capable of attracting significant flows of increasingly mobile capital, people and services' and 'a means through which political and urban elites can refashion collective feelings of identity, emotion and consciousness' (Quinn, 2005). Throughout her research, B. Quinn focused on three main roles attributed to festivals: the festival as image maker, the festival as tourist attraction, and the festival as community (Quinn, 2005). The first two roles address the issue within an international context, as raising the city's international profile (and thus differentiating in an extremely competitive world) and attracting visitors seems to have become a main reason for the existence of city festivals. The positive images attached to festivals, their connotation of diversity and entertainment, of sociability and direct participation, as well as the ambition of generating substantial tourist flows and acquiring economic incomes are important justifications for the engagement of cities in these policies. The third role seems to be more authentic, as it involves a strong connection to the realities of the place, to the local community and the needs of the society, being enrooted in the historical meaning of the festival (a mechanism through which place-based communities express identities, celebrate communally held values and strengthen communal bonds)

(Quinn, 2005). In the same time, increased social networking and community involvement are important factors generating individual satisfaction, a sense of well-being and quality of life.

5.2. On festivals in Cluj-Napoca: Vision of the local authority vs. the strategic approach

In what our case study concerns, we believe that the roles of the festivals are differently perceived by the local authorities and the strategists. While the former urge the use of the festival mostly for economic and marketing reasons, the latter construe a vision based on community, participation and involvement, on genuine development of this type of events (as rooted in the place and addressing more the needs of the community than those of the visitors). The interviewed persons discuss the festivals of Cluj-Napoca as a strategic tactic of the local authorities used for city image boost, for economic growth and tourist participation but they raise a series of questions and address some possible threats of the excessive use of festivals. In scientific literature, once with the exponential growth of festivals, a series of researchers have pointed out that this strategy could generate certain risks. First of all, the risks of suffering from serial reproduction (Richards and Wilson, 2004), McDonaldization (Ritzer and Liska, 1997) or McFestivalization (Finkel, 2004) generated by the strategies of the cities that aim to be distinctive, but instead reproduce the same facilities to the extent that they become global, emulated and copied all over the world (Richards and Wilson, 2006). The simple import and the implantation of these kind of strategic models to new locations could lead to the risks of lacking originality and connections to the particularities of the city itself (of the space, of the local traditions and identity) or to the failure of the local authorities of understanding how to cultivate these local particularities in order to avoid homogenization under the influences of globalization (Bailey *et al.*, 2004). Next, the focus of the city on the increase of festival use might generate an unbalanced economic and social setting addressing the risks of inadequate support for ephemeral events, in the detriment of long term cultural productions or infrastructure (such as financing the spectacular side of the cultural production and not supporting the process of production and the permanent activity), as well as the risk of gentrification and biased proliferation of the city center over peripheral spaces (Bianchini, 1993), or the unbalanced social participation to these events. As example, Zukin (2004) echoes this point by stating that money investment in the fixed capital of cultural facilities strikes an imbalance by concentrating resources in the urban center, and paying less attention to the culturally underserved peripheries. A study on Liverpool, ECOC 2008, and its impact on the socially marginalized communities, shares the skepticism over the direct impact of the event on this type of communities (Liu, 2014). Another study on Istanbul, ECOC 2010 (Kuzgun *et al.*, 2010), states that participation to popular cultural events depends on the social and economic level of the audience, generating disproportionate social perceptions, while another study on the Olympic Games in

Beijing 2008 (Zhang and Zhao, 2009) discusses the negative impact of building the national stadium which involved the removal of traditional neighborhoods and the installation of new architectural landmarks which had negative effects on the local community. Of course, these threats have been brought up by the interviewees as a caution and care towards the intended results of the strategic development planning for the city.

In Cluj-Napoca, festivals have definitely brought along a more serious involvement of the population in the cultural acts. More than 60% of the population is taking part in this type of festivals and there is constant growth in the number of beneficiaries of cultural events (Institutul Român pentru Evaluare și Strategie, 2013), which is a clear evidence of the fact that festivals are a popular means through which citizens consume and experience culture. But the festivalization of the cultural life is not a guarantee for the quality of events, does not imply any more the valuable cultural production that it should stand for. The inflation of the festivals comes from the very use of the term, which includes varied forms from traditional fairs, product selling items, to celebration events or cultural events. As examples, we could find under this name, from the Ice-cream Festival (during which companies selling ice cream would bring their products in the main square of the city), to Jazz in the Park (which involves concerts, workshops, conferences held in the public space), to Cluj Days (which is the celebration of the city through gastronomy, music, multiple smaller events) or to TIFF (Transylvania International Film Festival, which is a grand event, involving numerous volunteers and locations for the enactment of film projections, exhibitions, workshops, etc.), a multiplicity of forms of exposure. The term becomes an abusive one, a fashionable mimetic form through which various entrepreneurs just add a title to an event for the sake of popularity and the need for economic growth. Therefore, careful consideration should be given to the specific content of the events, for a correct evaluation of their impact, and for a better use of the resources they involve (financial allowance prioritization according to the evaluated results), and also to research on the audience which would also better reflect and prioritize the events. In the same time, the festivalization could have an important negative impact on local cultural production, because of the tendency towards the importation of international events without a genuine connection to the local profile, because of the support for the final stage of events (the showcase stage) to the detriment of their production, as well as because of a general focus on the spectacular short-term cultural experience against a constant participation of the public to cultural events. Thus, the finding of a balance between resource allowance to cultural production and infrastructure, and to public exposure of cultural products could change the model of action of cultural operators, who focus more on the presentation of their products within specific cultural events, than on a sustainable long-term cultural program.

Even if the local authorities seem to have driven the strings towards the transformation of Cluj-Napoca into a city of events, the cultural strategy and the develop-

ment strategy reposition this phrase, striving to enlarge the vision on Cluj-Napoca. The economic regeneration is an aim, but social transformation through cultural consumption and community participation is more directly linked to the actual state of the city. As mentioned above, the development strategy is extremely complex, rigorously written, the first one of this scale for Cluj-Napoca, with prospects for success. But it definitely needs careful monitoring and intermediate evaluation, social inquiries, planning and reports.

6. Conclusions

In this article we have investigated the evolution of the national and local development strategies and the role of cultural policies within, focusing on the necessity of a joint effort for their implementation. From major objectives to specific terminology, we have analyzed a series of documents that focus on these issues, and we have observed a transition towards a more instrumental vision on culture which becomes an important factor for social transformation and urban regeneration.

As a case study, we have pointed out the major benefits of a participative approach in the elaboration of the current development strategy (the first situation in Romania) in the case of Cluj-Napoca. The whole process is clearly justified by an organic evolution of the city in which the strategy is driven from the community towards the local authority, involving a process of participative democracy, which has the potential to become a model of best practices for other communities as well. But we also notified upon the necessity that this strategy should not only be delivered for implementation to the local authority, but it should be commonly appropriated and internalized at all levels of the community. Included in the development strategy, the cultural policies define Cluj-Napoca as a 'city of artistic excellence and cultural participation', while culture is the catalyst for social transformation and urban regeneration. Discussing the cultural strategy in terms of consumption and participation, we have also focused on the role of events (festivals) and on the festivalisation of the city, a phenomenon which has reached large participation at community level and support from the local authorities. We have noticed a difference in the approach between the vision of the local authority and the one within the cultural strategy. While the former urge the use of the festival mostly for economic and marketing reasons, the latter construes a vision based on community, participation and involvement, and on genuine development of this type of events (as rooted in the place and addressing more the needs of the community than those of the visitors).

This study is an analytical approach on a first stage of the development strategy constructed for Cluj-Napoca, and it focuses on the particularities of the local cultural policies. Still, it does not claim to be exhaustive and thus we strongly assert that future research on the implementation of both the development strategy and on the cultural policies, as well as serious studies on their impact at social and economic levels are needed.

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