

TOWARDS A CULTURE-LED URBAN REGENERATION  
STRATEGY FOR ROMANIA FROM A CULTURAL  
POLICY PERSPECTIVE. THE CASE OF THE  
PAINTBRUSH FACTORY

By

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## **Abstract**

In the post-socialist city, converting factories into cultural facilities is becoming a relevant solution in the urban regeneration strategies. However, in this logic it is very easy for local authorities to conceive culture as no more than an instrument to attain goals unrelated to culture. While many times a top-down initiative (local government), these projects can also be a bottom-up process (initiated by cultural non-profit organizations, artists, and other cultural operators). I will argue, based on my case study, that a bottom-up culture-led urban regeneration process has great potential to contribute both to the development of the cultural field and to the urban regeneration, and has greater chances of staying outside the neoliberal ideology and the instrumentalization of culture for economic gains.

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## Introduction

The thesis will be constructed around the topic of culture-led urban regeneration policy. My goal is to answer the question of how a factory converted into a cultural center by cultural organizations and artists can contribute to the culture-led urban regeneration process, and change the cultural policy-making at local level. Furthermore, I will seek to answer how the culture-led urban regeneration topic is brought by such an initiative on the agenda of local authorities. I will explore what measures in terms of cultural policy are needed in order to ensure the sustainability of the cultural center and in the same time avoid as much as possible the transformation of culture into an instrument for attaining goals unrelated to the development of the cultural field. I will explore the particular advantages of a bottom-up initiative in the process of culture-led urban regeneration.

In order to answer these questions, I chose as case-study the Paintbrush Factory – contemporary art center - located in Cluj, Romania. I considered that this case-study will allow me to explore in-depth how the relations with the community, with the local authorities and other actors, e.g. universities are being built, and how the Paintbrush Factory gets to be integrated in the urban landscape and legitimate its existence. These developments would have been less traceable or visible in the case of already experienced cultural centers resulting from recycled factories.

I will situate my case-study in the context of the post-socialist city, and the broader changes brought by the post-industrial era. Because the conversion of factories into cultural resources is part of culture-led urban regeneration process, I will discuss the implications of such a process pointing out the dangers it might be associated with as well as the benefits, especially

referring to the Western European experience. This is particularly important as the local governments from Central and Eastern Europe are likely to seek inspiration in some of the Western European culture-led urban regeneration models and transfer some policy measures in their local context. The concepts of “creative city”, “creative class”, “creative clusters” coming from the Western world, associated mainly with economic benefits for the city, might seduce the Central and Eastern European local authorities. Therefore, I advise for caution regarding how culture-led urban regeneration policy is being undertaken at the local level, and careful consideration of its possible undesirable outcomes, e.g. instrumentalization of culture, gentrification.

I will argue that the above mentioned outcomes can be, at least partially, avoided if the cultural-led regeneration process is starting as a bottom-up initiative of cultural agents. I will plead that the partnership with the local authorities, and other urban actors such as the universities, is desirable, if not necessary, in order to prevent the risks that such a bottom-up initiative is likely to face, so that it does not become vulnerable to market forces and unsustainable. My argument is inscribed in the local governance perspective.

The first chapter is dedicated to the methodology I used for my research on the Paintbrush Factory. The second chapter is putting the city in the context of the post-industrial era changes showing how the global processes have effects on the local level and the challenges the city authorities need to address today. The third chapter is dealing with changes in cultural policy focus from 1945 onwards and the transformations in the cultural policy-making with reference to the shift from local government to local governance. In the fourth chapter I will discuss more in-depth the culture-led urban regeneration policies and strategies, and give some examples of converted factories into cultural centers from Eastern Europe. The

fifth chapter evolves around the findings on the Paintbrush Factory based on the interviews with the representatives of the Paintbrush Factory and representatives of the local authorities. Finally, the sixth chapter consists in conclusions and recommendations.

## Chapter 1 – Methodology

This research is an in-depth analysis of a factory that has been recently transformed in a cultural center, and the broader implications of this transformation for cultural policies and the city. I chose the case-study as the method that best allows for studying a case “in its natural setting, recognizing its complexity and its context” (Punch 2005, 144). Furthermore, as I analyzed a “contemporary phenomenon within its real life context” and “wanted to cover contextual conditions” (Yin 2003, 13), the case-study comes as the most appropriate strategy. The policy focus of this paper also requires a solid understanding of the specific case before formulating recommendations.

The focus of the research is the Paintbrush Factory in Cluj, which is at the moment the single example in Romania of a factory recycled into a cultural center and therefore a possible model to be followed in recycling other unused ex-factories buildings in Romanian cities.

One critique that usually comes along with the case-study method is the difficulty of generalizing (Punch 2005, Yin 2003). Here, in line with Stake (1994), my intention is not to generalize, but to acquire a thorough understanding of this single case. Although, the findings of a single case-study can not lead to generalization, they can put “forward concepts or propositions to be tested in further research” (Punch 2005, 146).

The data collection method I choose for this research are the in-depth qualitative interviews because in this way “perceptions, meanings, definitions of situations and constructions of reality” could be easily identified (Punch 2005, 168). I used semi-standardized interviews with predetermined questions and topics (Berg 2001). Semi-standardized interviews allowed

me to explore more certain topics and to probe beyond initial answers (Berg 2001). Some interviewees could offer more information in one direction than others. By choosing this method for data collection I managed to gather information that completed to a certain extent the picture and gave me the sense of the context in which the Paintbrush Factory is operating. This information would not have been possible to gather through standardized interviews.

I prepared two sets<sup>1</sup> of questions for two categories of interviewees: representatives of the Paintbrush Factory cultural setters and representatives of the local authorities. The persons I interviewed at the Paintbrush Factory are the president and one member of the decision-making body, and the manager of the Paintbrush Factory. I first conducted the interviews with these key persons of the Paintbrush Factory which helped me identify the representatives of the local authorities, relevant for the case. Then, I interviewed the president of the Commission for urbanism, urban development and environment protection, the president of the Commission for education, culture, religious affairs, human rights, minorities and civil society, pertaining to the city council, and one architect from the Commission for urban development and urbanism, pertaining to the city hall administration. However, the research is missing interviews with the civil servants from these commissions which could have brought some additional information regarding the relationship between the Paintbrush Factory and the authorities, especially in the case of the Commission for culture.

Apart from interviews, I consulted articles from the local mass-media concerning the Paintbrush Factory transformation. In order to identify elements of urban cultural policy and its interaction with urban regeneration, I analyzed the Cluj city urban development strategy.

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<sup>1</sup> The questionnaires and the interviews are available upon request.

## Chapter 2 – Cities in the postindustrial era

### *2.1 The transition from industrialism to post-industrialism*

Cities cannot be understood outside the broader context of macro-level transformations in which they are embedded as crucial actors. The industrial era, characterized by mass and standardized production and consumption (Jessop 1994; Amin 1994; Chelcea 2008) spans between the second part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the mid 1970s. The radical shift in the logic of capital accumulation that started in the core capitalist countries in the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and had different reverberations throughout the globalized economy is often labeled post-industrial (Amin 1994; Lash, Urry 1994). Economically, its main pillars are the decentralization and flexibilization of labor, the outsourcing of production to countries offering cheaper labor force and loose regulatory frameworks and the increased importance of the service sector. Technological innovation and the centrality of information are paralleled by new forms of organization and new employment arrangements (Chelcea 2008; Amin 1994)

In direct response to these changes, the new social movements aim at the humanization of “the new capitalism” (Amin 1994, 2), raising awareness in areas such as minority and women rights, environmental issues, and economic security (Amin 1994; Chelcea 2008).

At the social and cultural levels, identity building and formation is less related to collective solidarity, being exposed to “greater fragmentation and pluralism” (in Amin 1994, 24). The greater emphasis on individual choice often results in having culture and creative industries increasingly used for commercial outcomes (in Amin 1994; Chelcea 2008). Social researchers draw attention to the fact that the current shift in the capital economy itself

endangers the cultural forms and products, which are progressively made part of the productive strategy: “the realm of human culture as a whole is increasingly subject to commodification” (Scott 1997, 323; see also Lash, Urry 1994; Boltanski and Chiappelo 2005).

## **2.2. The city**

There were many voices throughout 1960s to 1980s predicting the end of the city in the decades to come due to the development of transport and telecommunication infrastructure which would change the way economic, social and cultural activities are going to be deployed (see Amin, Graham 1997). Not only did this prediction prove false, but cities became key players in the dynamic of globalization. The city, far from disappearing, it is studied now as a “node in global networks”, as “the economic motor of national development” and the “creative city” (Amin, Graham 1997).

The centrality of cities in the globalization process does not come without challenges (Bianchini 2004; Paddison 2001). Contemporary cities, albeit in significantly different ways depending on their particular history, need to fight social polarization and increasing inequalities, the proliferation of crime or the fear of crime, the legal and illegal migration which shatters existing orders, as well as increased poverty (Paddison 2001, 142; Bianchini 2004; Griffiths 1995; Gospodini 2006). Another danger is the trend pressuring towards uniformization (Bianchini 2004), which results in an increased competition among cities on a global level for attracting capital (Chelcea 2008; Gospodini 2006). Confronted with their potential interchangeability for the fluxes of capital (Shaw 2001) the city administration needs to devise strategies for positive differentiation that would make their locality more attractive for investors, new residents and tourists. As a consequence, the managerial logic of

city administration shifts towards an entrepreneurial one (Hubbard 1995; Kavaratzis, Ashworth 2007; Gospodini 2006).

The middle-class composed of “young professionals and high-tech staff” (Gospodini 2006, 312) are one of the sources of dynamism in cities. They are key actors in the processes of gentrification, which change the distribution of the areas of functionality in the city. Also, the cultural and leisure industries in the growth of “new urban economies and new economic sectors” (Gospodini 2006, 312) are deeply intertwined with the middle classes. Moreover, the “creation and expansion of new cultural, leisure and consumption spaces” led to “new types of urban redevelopment, renewal and regeneration” (Gospodini 2006, 312), which will be the topic of a different chapter.

### **2.2.1 The Post-Socialist City**

As much as their Western counterparts, the post-socialist cities need to enter the global level competition for attracting investors and labor force. However, they are on the receiving end of the processes of outsourcing of production from the core capitalist countries and their competitive advantage is often at the level of being providers of cheaper labor force.

Besides the great heterogeneity that can be found in the post-socialist urban landscapes, there are some commonalities. The socialist urban development occurred without private property, under “the monopoly of state ownership over the means of production, and of the redistributive, centrally planned character of the economic system” (Szelenyi 1996, 287). Socialist cities had a crucial role as “means in achieving political purposes” (Smith 1996, 72) and towards the overarching goal of industrialization; the control over the urban development was greater than in the case of the capitalist city (Smith 1996, 72; Haussermann 1996).

After the dismantling of the socialist system, the Eastern European cities started to change rapidly (Szelenyi 1996, 312). New and severe forms of inequality become visible. Some of the socialist neighborhoods were in a severe decay (Szelenyi 1996, 315) and their situation worsened during the transition years. The middle-class tends to move out from the city to the “formerly rural villages around the metropolitan centers” where the leaving conditions are better in terms of health, and safety (Szelenyi 1996, 314). The poor and ethnic minorities are left behind, facing the danger of neighborhoods becoming ghettos (Szelenyi 1996, 315).

The “excessive role of industrialization in urbanization” (Enyedi 1996, 115) becomes visible in the great number of factories that post-socialist cities inherited. Privatizing the state property was one of the most intricate post-socialist processes. David Stark’s concept of “recombinant property” is suggestive for the complex strategies of economic actors to maintain fuzzy lines of delimiting property that can then be used to shift liabilities towards the state and concentrating resources in their favor (Stark, 1996).

The industrial heritage of the socialist period represents a challenge for the urban planners and city leaders in terms of how to deal with it and how to use it. One option is the conversion of factories in cultural resources, as part of the culture-led urban regeneration policies, as will be shown later in the paper.

## **Chapter 3 – Local Government and Cultural Policy in the City**

This chapter discusses post-war cultural policies in Western and Central and Eastern Europe, their change in focus over time as well as the impact of decentralization process. I will then argue that the community involvement in the process of policy making and implementation is beneficial for cultural policy in general and for urban regeneration through culture in particular.

### ***3.1 Urban cultural policy after 1945***

#### **3.1.1 Western Europe**

After 1945, cultural programs and policies were developed “in the context of the welfare state” (In from the margins 1997, 38; D’Angelo 2000,). The central governments saw their role being “to safeguard the quality and diversity of cultural life”, and to make culture “available to everyone” (In from the margins 1997, 38, 40). The emphasis was mainly on “the preservation and conservation of heritage” and culture as “identity promotion” (In from the margins 1997; D’Angelo 2000). Therefore, the tendency in the immediate post war period was that for the state to keep the control over cultural policy; as the headquarters of the government, the capital city received the largest founding (In from the margins 1997).

In time, the decentralization of powers, the new economic and social changes from 1970s and 1980s, the emergence of grassroots and social movements which came with new cultural demands led to a cultural revitalization of the non-capital cities and a change in the way the cultural policy was conceived (see more Bianchini, Parkinson 1993, In from the margins

1997; Delgado I Calvera, Martinell 2000). While cultural policies were mostly part of the strategies of the left parties (see more Bianchini, Parkinson 1993), they also became a concern for the political right (McGuigan 1996, 106).

Local authorities got gradually involved in promoting culture “on their own initiative and often from their own resources” (In from the margins 1997, 42). The central governments transferred responsibilities to local and regional authorities, but the financial resources remain problematic since the cities/regions do not always receive or have the possibility to raise the necessary amounts for cultural purposes (In from the margins 1997, 42).

In some cities, local authorities saw in cultural policies a way of responding to the “traumatic transition from industrial to post-industrial societies” (In from the margins 1997, 91). Therefore, we can say that if in 1970s the focus of the cultural policy was on social and political issues, from 1980s the accent was moved to economic development and urban regeneration (Bianchini, Parkinson 1993). It was also acknowledged that culture can play a role in addressing the multi-ethnic, multicultural realities created by migration, further social integration and emancipation, induce job creation and changing the city’s image (see In from the margins 1997; D’Angelo 2000). In parallel, at the level of municipal authorities cultural policy began to be seen as encompassing not only “high” culture but “popular and youth cultures and cultural industries” as well (In from the margins 1997, 91). At the Bremen conference - “Town and Culture. New responses to cultural problems”, 1983 - organized jointly by the Standing Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe and the Council for Cultural Co-operation the role of local authorities in cultural development was recognized. “[T]he need to provide appropriate technical and financial resources for the objectives the towns wanted to pursue, and the need to emphasize research and

experimentation and take greater account of the links between cultural and economic development” was stressed (in D’Angelo 2000, 11).

From the Western European experience, it becomes salient that local governments “have been more imaginative and innovative in the cultural field than national ministries and arts councils” (In from the margins 1997, 93). However, “planners and policy makers have often regarded culture simply as a resource to be exploited, rather than a critical and creative force that questions established ways of thinking and working and which could inspire a fresh approach to urban planning and policy” (Bianchini 1996).

### **3.1.2 Central and Eastern Europe**

In the over-centralized socialist state culture remained the prerogative of the national government. Culture had an official status and was the “key ideological and propaganda instrument” (Suteu 2005, 5; In from the margins 1997, 38). Cultural administration during communism had a unique funding source, suffered from administrative centralization; censorship/ideological control, isolation from the world, and lacked a bottom-up approach (see Suteu 2005). All these features had their particular effects on the future developments of the cultural sector and cultural policy design after 1989.

The governments after 1990 did not consider culture to be a priority. Therefore, the cultural sector found itself in a very bad situation without adequate legislative changes, institutional disorder and much reduced funding (see Suteu 2005). The very notion of cultural policy was misunderstood by post-communist cultural administration (Suteu 2005).

Decentralization of cultural policy appeared to be a desirable step, but turned out to be complicated and often not successful because of “the too numerous and too heavy cultural organizations” and also because of the “not yet stabilized and reliable new order of economic transition” (Suteu 2005, 19). In some cases, decentralization consisted only in the “transfer of public cultural institutions from the Ministry of Culture to regional or local authorities” without adequate funding schemes or a satisfactory legislative framework for local cultural policies to be implemented (Mucica 2003, 17). We can add the deficiency in terms of competent leadership and management competences. In some cases the local and regional authorities lacked the capacity and will to support the cultural infrastructure (Suteu 2005, 20). The decentralization process is still going on. Much has to be done in terms of local authorities to understand the importance of cultural policies at local level as well as acquiring expertise in dealing with cultural policies and local cultural sector. However, the state also needs to comprehend the implications and desirability of cultural policy decentralization.

### ***3.2 From local government to local governance***

Urban regeneration and cultural policies have an impact on the quality of life of citizens and different groups of actors residing in the city. Designing and implementation of policies then would rather involve multiple actors such as local authorities, private sector, community, associations and organizations – local governance -, than be exclusively the local government’s task. Local governance is more likely to happen in countries where decentralization process has some tradition, i.e. Western Europe, where the local tier started to become important since 1970. In Central and Eastern Europe, where the decentralization began after 1989 and it is still unstable (see Swianiewicz 2005), the transition from local government to local governance can meet difficulties.

Participation of city actors in the local government can legitimize some authoritative decisions or bring changes to the status-quo (Pascual 2007). The participation as transformation is valued because in this way “the processes of participation can be genuine educational processes for all the agents that take part in them, naturally including the public administration itself” (Pascual 2007, 24). Pascual points out that the participation in the cultural policy-making is just coming into prominence. Nonetheless, there are examples of successful participation of citizens in “designing cultural programs, facilities and events” (see more Pascual 2007, 25).

Pascual argues that “if culture is to be at the center of our societies we must equip ourselves with the processes that help relate our plans, programs and policies to the citizens as a whole” (2007, 30). Without cooperation between civil society organizations, associations and networks and local authorities in the policy-making field, cultural and urban development policies can not respond properly to the needs of urban community. In the same time, through participation of different urban agents in the policy-making process “the destructive features of international competition which have distorted attempts of culturally-led urban regeneration since the mid 1980s” could be confronted (Bianchini 2006). The above mentioned cooperation would lead to identifying new cultural resources (Pascual 2007, Bianchini 2006). In the process of regenerating “the social and territorial fabric” and fighting “unemployment, poverty and exclusion” local governance may prove more efficient.

## Chapter 4 – Culture – led urban regeneration

Culture as part of urban policy is widely seen as contributing to city development and urban regeneration and revitalization. We look at two types of cultural policy in the city: one oriented towards boosting the image of the city in the international setting and the other, more inner-looking, towards the neighborhood in order to improve the quality of life of inhabitants (see Amendola 1998).

Culture-led regeneration comes with different assumptions as shown in the literature: it will bring economic benefits for the city, and will lead to job creation; it will have a positive impact on the city's image; it will increase the social cohesion in the urban fabric, improve the quality of life and decrease the criminality (see McCarthy 2005); it will lead to development of new cultural infrastructure which goes beyond the traditional cultural institutions and familiar cultural formats (Factories of the Imagination or Cultural Conversion 2008). These new cultural institutions are places for innovation and experimentation.

Cities are competing for good positions in different rankings (see Evans 2009) all related to creativity: creative city, creative class, creative industries and creative economy. They are emulating each other with regards to the urban strategy and policies for urban regeneration (see Evans 2009). Thus in their endeavor to become unique some cities end up being similar to others by ignoring their own heritage and collective memories, which city's public policy should focus on (see Dragičević Šešić 2007). However, we can not generalize since in the post-socialist cities the debate regarding the city development and regeneration and the role of culture in such processes is relatively new (see Švob-Đokić 2007).

#### **4.1 Creative city. Creative class. Creative industries.**

Urban planners and city leaders have to respond constantly to the challenges – unemployment, poverty, inequalities, crime, migration - the cities are confronted with. Increased competition among cities makes the city leaders more sensitive with regards to the city's image and “distinctiveness” (Landry 2003). In this context the notions of “creative city” (Landry, Bianchini 1995; Landry 2000) and “creative class” (Florida 2002), “creative industries” have appeared. The common feature is that “they are instrumental policies which seek to use culture or creativity to achieve non-cultural ends” (Pratt 2008, 107). The ideas behind these notions were adopted by many public institutions, especially in United Kingdom, some European countries, also in Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Eastern Asia (Costa 2007).

The creative city is usually associated with urban development policies. With “the creative city” a switch has been made from the interest shown to the physical infrastructure and solutions to more attention given to soft infrastructure. This change has required urban planners and city leaders with imagination and different skills than the planners which were concentrated on finding physical solutions (Landry and Bianchini 1995, Landry 2000). According to Landry (2000), the creative city is the city which manages to find innovative solutions to today's problems and this can not happen if the old framework does not change. In the creative city “urban culture, the media, entertainment, sport and education” are put to work together through adequate policies (Landry and Bianchini 1995). The creative city goes beyond cultural activities and cultural institutions although it incorporates them (Landry 2003). The involvement of different actors, i.e. local authorities, business representatives, voluntary sector representatives, in rethinking the city is a sine qua non condition for the success of a creative city and this goes back to the governance issue discussed earlier.

Florida (2002) introduces the concept of creative class as a driver in the urban regeneration and economic growth. The creative class refers to the population residing in the city, possessing creative jobs which are situated in the following fields: research, architecture, design, education, arts, performing arts, entertainment. It also refers to the management and legal experts. In Florida's vision, cities need to attract these types of workers in order to prosper. One of the critiques to this vision is that culture and the creative industries in Florida's work, as Pratt underlines, "are an instrumental sideshow that attracts the workers, which in turn attracts the hi-tech investors" which will be conducive to growth (Pratt 2008, 108). For these workers to come, the communities and the work places need to be liberal, tolerant, flexible, and the cities need to provide "a bohemian consumption place" (Pratt 2008) since the creatives are in search for the so-called "bo-bo culture" (see more Pratt 2008). The unused spaces, such as warehouses and factories, because they are cheap, can become places where artists gather to work and produce cultural goods. But as the "creative class" is being attracted by these bohemian places, they tend to move in order "to be close to the artists" (in Pratt 2008, 111, Miles 2005). Consequently, as many examples show, the prices of real estate rise and the artists are forced to leave the places, the city exposed to gentrification.

The concepts of creative city, creative class and urban regeneration are usually linked to the creative industries (see Evans 2005). Pratt (2008) shows that the term was introduced in 1990 by the UK Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and substituted gradually the notion of culture industry, a concept defined by Adorno and Horkheimer in 1940s (in Bernstein 1991). According to DCMS the creative industries comprise: advertising, architecture, the art and antiques market, crafts, design, designer fashion, film and video, interactive leisure, software, music, the performing arts, publishing, software and computer

games, television and radio (2005). In the logic of neoliberal ideology the relation between culture and economy became central. Culture is perceived as an instrument of economic growth and solving urban problems in the late 1970s (see Evans 2009; Miles 2005). The shift from cultural to creative industries was merely ideological as the term “creative industries” is associated to the neo-liberal government in UK (Pratt 2008). This change in terminology “created the possibility of placing the creative industries alongside other areas of government policy and providing output measures that were robust” (Pratt 2008, 113; see Kunzmann 2004; Miles 2005). The creative industries became a good ally for the UK’s New Labour in conducting its “policy of competition” (Pratt 2008, 113).

In conclusion, culture, in the post-industrial city, is merely seen as an instrument in attaining goals that are not related to culture, especially, economic goals (see Delgado I Calvera, Martinell 2000). Cultural policies tend to be evaluated in terms of being able or not to bring economic gains and are conceived with this end. In this context, policy makers should pay more attention to the development of culture as a field in itself and not only as a means.

#### ***4.2. Cultural/creative clusters, Cultural/creative quarters, Creative milieux.***

In the consulted literature on this topic, the terms in the subtitle are not defined in a consistent manner and the authors tend to mix them. Thus, cultural cluster tends to be simultaneously creative cluster, cultural and creative quarter and milieu; or the creative quarter to be understood as comprising cultural or creative clusters. Therefore, it is difficult to make a clear distinction between them. I will avoid giving definitions myself in order not to perpetuate the confusion, but I will try to advance several common features and some distinctions between different urban projects.

These urban projects have in common the fact that they represent strategies of grouping cultural activities; cultural organizations; production, consumption, experimentation and presentation of culture. They are associated with bringing benefits for a specific area or for the city depending on the purposes for which they were established and on who established them, for example local authorities, or artists and cultural organizations occupying unused spaces. Local authorities will, most probably, advance them with the goal of regenerating the urban space, sustain the “local ‘creative economy’”, “amenity and place-promotion, the revitalization of arts and culture and preservation of cultural heritage” and “stimulation of the local cultural democracy and diversity” (Mommaas 2004, 530). Artists and cultural organizations in need of a space would, most likely, transform them in contemporary arts spaces. Therefore, urban projects can develop at least in two ways which I find necessary to distinguish. Some of them will remain spaces for “genuine artistic/cultural activities” (Mommaas 2004, 508). Others will be oriented towards incorporating, beside cultural activities and cultural organizations, elements of leisure and entertainment such as “bars, restaurants, and cultural retail spaces, health and fitness complexes” (Mommaas 2004, 508). Thus, they are created merely for economic benefits. These urban projects can be located in former industrial buildings and complexes, but building new facilities it is not excluded (Mommaas 2004).

#### ***4.3 Arts and culture in the neighborhood. Neighborhood cultural policy.***

The neighborhood started recently to be seen as a part of the city in need of proper cultural policies. On one hand, these cultural policies need to address the demand for culture of the inhabitants and improve the quality of life (Amendola 1998). On the other hand, they need to

eliminate the barriers between neighborhoods and between neighborhoods and city center (Rellstab 1999).

More concretely, why would the local authorities bother with enhancing culture and cultural policies in a neighborhood? Participating as public or as a performer (professional or amateur) may be more accessible and with fewer constraints in the neighborhood than in the city center (Rellstab 1999). The neighborhood can become the place where artists and cultural organization find an empty space to settle in. Cultural events in the neighborhood bring together the residents, produce common memories and link the residents with their environment (Rellstab 1999). The neighborhood is the place where multiculturalism is the most visible and the place where the gap between people with different backgrounds can be reduced. Advancing culture in the neighborhood can introduce people to culture; make them curious about it and confident about themselves as consumers or producers of culture. Arts and culture can change the image of a neighborhood with a bad reputation (Rellstab 1999; Delgado I Calvera, Alfons Martinell 2000).

#### ***4.4. The new cultural spaces. From factories to cultural centers.***

Beside the traditional cultural places such as theatres, museums, or concert halls, new cultural resources appeared in the city. These are located in facilities that lost their initial destination and remained unused, e.g. factories, depots, unused train stations, warehouses. These places are usually accommodating contemporary art. My focus is on factories recycled into cultural spaces because my case-study represents a factory that was converted into a cultural resource.

I mentioned earlier that cities need to use more their heritage, and urban memories in the process of regeneration. The factories can be such sources of memories. They do not have “artistic importance” but have a “value as a witness of an industrial process which has changed society” (in Edwards, Llundrés 1996, 341). Chelcea underlines that “the industrial objects become in time valuable through their association with different moments in history, or with construction materials that are used rarely nowadays, or even artistic trends such as art deco” (2008, 365), with a specific language used in the factories, or fashion (Chelcea 2008).

If in the Western European cities local authorities are encouraging artists to take over these industrial spaces (Chelcea 2008), in Eastern and Central Europe this phenomenon is still not spread and a policy in these sense is rather absent at the local or national level. In numerous cases, we will see the artists or cultural organizations occupying these places at their own initiative and waiting for legalization of their status.

#### **4.4.1 Factories recycled into cultural centers in Eastern Europe**

Trans Europe Halles website shows that cultural centers residing in ex-industrial buildings are to be found all over Europe. It is more common to see factories taken over by artists and cultural organizations originally without any involvement of the local government. Local or national authorities may get involved afterwards trying to accommodate the new phenomenon, support it or they may ignore it. Two examples from Eastern Europe will be presented next.

In Moscow, one example of factory converted into cultural center is Proekt Fabrika (non-profit organization). It got support from the Ford Foundation (Ruutu 2010). The state did not

contribute in any way to the establishment of this new cultural resource (Ruutu 2010). At the local level, there is not any policy regarding newly established cultural centers (Ruutu 2010). Ruutu argues that, in Russia, “because of the lack of public support and interest, the development of the new cultural centers is driven more by economic considerations rather than cultural needs” (2010, 13).

In Vilnius, Arts Printing House (non-governmental organization) was the first cultural center occupying a former industrial building in Lithuania. In 2000 several NGOs with cultural profile took over the factory. In 2001, after intense lobbying, the government decided to transfer the building to the city municipality in order to be used for cultural needs (Artsfactories). A year later, through the city municipality decision Printing House became officially Arts Printing House’s space (Artsfactories). The place was renovated almost to completion with EU structural funds and financial support from the local government.

These examples of conversion into cultural production and consumption places are not part of an urban strategy or a long-term cultural policy related to urban regeneration, but result from incidental initiatives. For a better understanding of the phenomenon and process of factories taken over by artists as a bottom-up initiative, in the next chapter I will discuss the specific case of the Paintbrush Factory, the first example of such kind in Romania.

## **Chapter 5 – Case-study: The Paintbrush Factory**

Cluj is situated in the North-Western part of Romania, and it is the capital of Cluj county. In Cluj city development strategy, under the urban development section, there is not any reference to culture. Under the section on cultural policies, there is reference to the creative city and developments that have at their core culture and creative industries, happening in different countries such as UK, Switzerland, and Sweden. It is underlined that Cluj does not have a strategy in this sense, or cultural policies.

The next two sections comprise the findings from the interviews with the representatives of the Paintbrush Factory and local authorities. The last section will discuss the findings.

### ***5.1 The Paintbrush Factory (PF)***

#### **Background**

In the spring of 2008, the paintbrush factory owned by Perom ceased to produce paintbrushes. The owner decided to lease the factory. Sabot Gallery decided to rent a space and spread the news about the availability of the factory's space to other cultural operators and artists (SA 2010). Artist, cultural organizations, galleries from the contemporary art field gathered in the factory. Afterwards they organized themselves in the Federation of the Paintbrush Factory – not-for-profit organization - and started the negotiation with the owner for the entire surface of the factory. The PF was opened in October 2009.

The entire factory has 2000 square meters, and 29 spaces occupied by cultural agents. Each resident has to pay 2eur/m<sup>2</sup> per month rent. The contract with the Paintbrush Factory was concluded for 5 years.

The PF is situated at the border between the industrial area and the semi-central area of the city (Marasti neighbourhood). It changed the cultural itinerary in the city – from the center to the neighborhood.

### **Mission, vision, strategy**

The members worked on the mission, vision and strategy in the months after settling in the factory. However, SA underlined, “everything was kept minimal in terms of a supra-structure” (2010). The PF describes itself as an independent contemporary art center because “it wants to show that it appeared as a result of the members’ own initiative and forces and that it is a place *destined only* to contemporary art” (SA 2010). They are not accepting firms in creative industries, firms that have “a capitalist profile” (TJ 2010).

DC said that the process of defining the mission was still work in progress (2010). The strategy is also “under construction” (DC 2010) and there is nothing such as “a document called Strategy” (SA 2010) or a holistic vision regarding the development of PF in the following four years. The residents of PF do not have an alternative plan if they lose this space. Nonetheless, the three interviewees identified some common directions and elements and decided on “what the PF does or doesn’t” (SA 2010). One of the directions concerns the relation with the immediate community: “We have to get close to the community, in one way or another, to adapt our activities or to create new ones in order to bring to the PF a public

that is not familiar with the contemporary art and culture” (DC 2010). Another important element is strengthening the relationship with the local authorities. Equally significant is building partnerships with the universities.

For the organizations residing in the factory it is important that the PF becomes a reliable and trustful partner in relation with the authorities in designing cultural policies. For the individual artists, it is important that the PF becomes a powerful name so that it can facilitate the access of the artists residing here to cultural resources and activities on the national and international level. For those who are working with the surrounding community it is significant that the PF is seen as having a strong role at the social level: social work through culture. “Where these three directions are meeting, there is our common way” (DC 2010).

### **Decision-making in the PF**

The PF realized from the beginning that it needed some kind of decision-making body. The formula accepted was a Board of Directors with five members, elected by the residents of the PF. The board “has the responsibility of supervising the processes in the Factory, to make sure that we are doing something... to attract some money, for example” (SA 2010) and makes the decisions concerning the PF as whole. The PF has also a paid manager. She represents the executive power. The manager deals with the processes regarding the management of the factory. She coordinates and administrates for example the actions related to the dispersion of information about PF and its activities, and setting up partnerships. The manager described herself as “administrator and coordinator of everything that has to do with the common things” (DC 2010). The manager participates in the meetings of the board and when considers to be necessary she calls for a meeting. Each member of the board is

responsible for a domain: communication, partnerships, funding etc, and they all are constantly in contact with the manager. The decisions are made after consultation between the members of the board and the manager.

The board's meetings are opened for all those who want to participate in, however the people from the PF are not really interested in getting involved in the managerial issues or organizational issues, as the president of the board, concluded.

### **The relation with the community**

One important aspect in PF's activity is the attention given to the immediate community not only as having it as an audience, but also as engaging it in the PF's artistic projects and workshops. The PF is still an outsider in the community, as one of the representatives of the PF mentioned, but the situation is likely to change if the PF is going to keep and develop this working direction.

The representatives of the PF recognize that their cultural events might be "too elitist", addressing only a certain audience. Therefore, they suppose that the members of the community may feel uncomfortable if participate in these activities. Consequently, the PF is preparing several "special type of events", i.e. more accessible, with which the members of the community can relate to and enjoy. These events might combine the social with the cultural and their aim would be to familiarize the people from the neighborhood with the existence of the PF and its activity.

As mentioned in the background, the first funding the PF accessed came from the Norwegian Fund. The fund was addressing the NGO sector and it had a section dedicated to patrimony. Therefore, the PF applied to the fund with the stated aim of “integrating the factory as an object of the industrial patrimony and as an active element of the community” (SA 2010). This meant that the PF had to design a program of activities that would develop the relationship with the community. Each member of PF had to design activities in this sense: artists from the field of contemporary dance conceived courses of contact improvisation, and jam sessions opened to anyone, theatre representatives prepared workshops for the children learning in the neighborhood’s school and delivered a theatre performance for a religious group frequenting the neighborhood’s church, one painter had a workshop with children suffering from autism, and the organizations residing in the factory organized a series of debates about the role of the PF in the community and more generally the role of culture in urban development process. Although some of these projects addressed the community in the broader sense (local community), there were also some initiatives specifically directed towards the surrounding community such as “Creation workshops for the children leaving in the PF zone”. One representative of the PF said that the PF is opened to offers and collaborations initiated by actors from the community, i.e. school, kindergarten.

Besides these projects and events, one of the founding organizations of the PF – AltArt - initiated a research in the neighborhood – “The Probable Future” - together with the Faculty of Sociology of Babes-Bolyai University, before the PF opened officially. Students from the Sociology department conducted interviews with the people living in the PF surroundings. The aim of the research was to get to know the immediate community and its specificities, and have a reference point in time that could indicate the changes the appearance of the PF in the neighborhood brought. The latter element could be useful for an evaluation of the impact

of the PF on the community, an evaluation that the PF's representatives have in mind now and are trying to find the appropriate instruments together with the help of the sociologist.

The members of the PF are aware of the dangers of gentrification the existence of PF in the neighborhood might cause. They know they need to react in order to prevent it. Until now, the projects mentioned above are the manner in which they understand to respond. The relationship with the neighborhood is one of the elements that receive a great deal of attention, as pointed out by the representatives of the PF that I interviewed. Therefore, the relation is likely to evolve in the sense of becoming more complex.

### **Expenditures and financing**

The expenditures of the PF are mainly the rent and utilities and the salary for the manager.

The only funding the PF managed to access until present came from the Norwegian Fund, through the Civil Society Development Foundation.

The PF applied in 2010 for funding at the Administration of the National Cultural Fund, but the amount of money is small and it is given for projects not for administrative expenditures

The PF also submitted a project to get funding from the Local Council.

The EU structural funds are not available at this moment because the money for investments in the North-West region was spent in 2009. However, the EU structural funds for the next period, 2010-2013, could represent an option for the PF (SA 2010).

The PF applies for funding with projects concerning the relation with the community, support for the cultural sector, as an element of urban regeneration and development.

### **The relation with the local authorities**

The first contact with the local authorities was initiated by the PF. The PF representatives came with a proposition of cooperation in terms of urban development showed their interests and submitted some projects to attract funding from the Local Council. The authorities, the interviewees conveyed, had a negative reaction. The answer of one of the two vice-mayors who received them at that time was: “Maybe if you manage to demonstrate that you can bring in some tourists because this is what interests us... We are not interested in supporting culture, but football because this brings performance and benefits, and increases the visibility and the prestige of the city” (SA 2010). After this unsuccessful contact, the PF realized that they have to develop the PF project without any support from the city authorities hoping that at some point the project could not be ignored anymore (DC 2010).

Gradually, the PF became visible in the city realm. It received attention from mass-media as being the first project in Romania, gathering cultural organizations and artists operating in the field of contemporary arts, in one place. The location they have chosen was also a novelty meant to raise their profile apart from the quantity and quality of their cultural offer. One of the organizations residing in the PF – AltArt – organized at the PF, in the very first month of existence of the PF, a forum on culture and urban development and the role, potential and contribution of the PF in the urban development process. Politicians and cultural operators from Europe were invited to discuss this topic with representatives of the Romanian national and local authorities and cultural operators. None of the representatives of local authorities

responded to the invitation despite the efforts of the AltArt organization, SA said. However, as the Romanian Ministry of Culture came, one of the vice-mayors had also to participate in the event. It was probably a result of all these – visibility in mass-media, attention received from a national authority - that the perception of the city leaders regarding the PF became more positive. The interviewees pointed out that the local authorities care about their public image and did not want to be criticized in the mass-media for completely ignoring the PF and this also led to a change of attitude.

Consequently, the local authorities started to pay more attention to the PF, to be more opened for discussions. The PF was invited to contribute to the different projects deployed by City Hall and Local Council: the branding of the city, the restructuring of the city's display system, Cluj as European Capital of Culture, participation in the writing of the General Urban Plan. However, there is not a coherent relation yet, but it is a positive change.

The people with whom the PF has more frequent contacts are those from the Commission for urbanism, described as “more open minded” (SA 2010). The Commission for culture is considered by the interviewees to be completely irrelevant, and without any kind of vision. SA characterized the civil servants from this Commission as “being bored, young, and inexperienced”, therefore not partners for dialogue (2010). Also the manner the funds for cultural projects are given, i.e. “on the basis of preferences and acquaintances, without any cultural relevance” (SA 2010) makes this commission an unreliable partner. This practice is recognized genuinely by the president of the Commission for culture. Beside the Commission for urbanism, the PF started a dialogue with the people in charge with the external relations who seemed interested in the PF project.

## **Partnerships: international, national, local**

The PF inherited the prestige, the know-how, partnerships, networks, and contacts of all the residents of the factory. But the PF does not have any contacts with entities similar to it. The need for such contacts is acknowledged by DC as being important “because this facilitates the process of learning” (2010). Apart from that, there are projects where the PF is more relevant as an entity as such, than the smaller units that compound it are. It was acknowledged by the interviewees, that being part of a network of similar spaces could enhance artistic mobility which would be beneficial for the artists in the PF as well as for the PF as organization. The interviewees agreed that having to pay a fee as a member of a network is discouraging for the PF because there are other expenses more important for the survival of the PF such as paying the monthly rent, and utilities.

The interviewees said that the PF has good relations and partnerships at national level with cultural institutions such as the National Center for Dance and with the Ministry of Culture and National Patrimony, some of the members of the PF being actively involved in designing the national cultural policies. The PF made it easier for some national institutions to approach the contemporary arts field from Cluj as the organizations, galleries, curators and artists gathered in the PF became more visible. Therefore, besides the contacts inherited from the members, new partnerships with the PF as an entity were developed.

At the local level, the PF has initiated multiple partnerships with several institutions. The Local Council and City Hall are becoming, slowly, partners for dialogue. The interviewees voiced the PF’s wish to have a stronger relationship with these institutions. The PF is constantly approaching the local authorities. However, as resulted from the interviews with

the representatives of the local authorities they are not doing it in the most efficient way. “A partnership with City Hall would open the way towards new domains or sectors, will facilitate the relation with people and other institutions subordinated to City Hall” (DC 2010).

Another significant partnership was initiated with the Faculty of Sociology – the Urban sociology branch - of the Babes-Bolyai University. The first joint action consisted in the research “The Probable Future” and now an evaluation of the impact of the PF on the surrounding community is under debate. The Faculty of Theatre and Television is another partner of the PF. The PF is providing space for the students from this faculty to rehearse or to give performances. Another partnership that is going to emerge involves the Faculty of Agronomy. Several artists in the PF are interested in the expansion of the green space in the public space. These artists consider that artistic interventions could contribute to it. The expansion of the green space being a topic of interest for the Faculty of Agronomy too, actions to start a partnership were taken by the PF. Some steps were taken also towards a partnership with the Babes-Bolyai University for starting a program of cultural management because, as CB said, in Romania there are no such programs. The PF can and will provide the place for putting in practice the theoretical knowledge acquired in an academic program on cultural management.

The PF has strong ties with the foreign cultural institutes from Cluj. Several cultural events were organized in partnership with these institutes as well as debates such as the forum on culture and urban development. The PF entered in partnership with the Hungarian Theatre also.

Another field they want to approach is the business sector, however until now there is no strategy at the level of the PF regarding this direction. This point is problematic particularly because it is difficult in Cluj to find companies that are socially responsible.

## ***5.2 Local authorities' perspective***

Talking about urban regeneration through culture with the local authorities, MB, one of the vice-mayors, said that when discussing and setting up the priorities in 2004, there was a discussion on the rehabilitation of the urban architecture in the historical part of the city and the reconsideration of the public space – aspect and utility. “There are no cultural projects and cultural events in the neighborhoods” (MB 2010, NM 2010). And there are no projects that could be related to urban regeneration through culture. MB believes that “the success of the PF will stimulate other initiatives of this type to emerge” (MB 2010), while NM considers it is “a good thing for the city and neighborhood that PF appeared” (2010). There is no program of the authorities to support this sort of initiatives or to encourage them. NM emphasized that the city has the power and resources to sustain similar projects; however, there is no political will (2010). There is no inventory of other places/industrial spaces in the neighborhoods that could accommodate cultural events.

The relation between the PF and the authorities is characterized as being timid (MB 2010). MB said that “there wasn’t a good communication from the PF part and its representatives did not explain well what their intentions were and how they saw the role of the authorities” (LA 2010). From MB’s point of view “the authority’s role is not to deal with this domain. The role of the authority is to create the conditions for those who are experts to deal with this problem. We are trying to externalize these relations. We are trying to change the role of the

authority from a paternalistic authority which says what should be done and how it should be done to a more flexible authority which leaves the [outside] experts to stand up” (2010).

The answers coming from the president of the Commission for culture were rather discouraging, starting with the fact that the interviewee has never been to the PF although said it was very curious about it. He did not know anything about the PF and he mentioned he never met any of the representatives of the PF, nor he heard from his colleagues about having meetings with anyone from the PF. He only seemed to know about a project the PF submitted to receive funding from the Local Council.

NM underlined that “sports receive 2 or 3 times more money than culture at this moment” (2010), which shows where the interest of the authorities lies in and it is in line with what the PF experienced as well as shown in the above section. Culture is underfinanced, but in the last years the situation slightly changed (NM 2010). The money the Local Council has for culture is oriented towards supporting some old, forgotten festivals of poetry and music, and cultural magazines that barely have readers. Regarding how the money is spread among cultural operators, NM said: “I personally know 90% of those who come and ask for money. It’s not only me, but also my colleagues have ties with cultural magazines and artists. This sometimes counts more than a bureaucratic link” (2010).

Usually, the cultural operators are invited to participate and formulate the cultural policies and strategies in public debates coordinated and guided by universities. The outcome is approved through Local Council’s decision.

The local authorities are opened to enter in partnerships for EU structural funds. However, they did not receive many proposals that referred in some way to cultural projects.

### **5.3 Discussion**

The interviews, both with the representatives of the PF and the local authorities showed that the local government has a very poor understanding of what the PF means or could mean for the urban context. In the same time, the efforts of the PF to make its goals and role it can play in the city known to the authorities, seem not to be enough and most probably, another type of approach is necessary. However some sort of cooperation arose and the PF is being involved in a few projects deployed by City Hall.

Not only the PF, but the development of culture, of new cultural forms and the relation of culture with other domains or sectors are not receiving attention from the authorities. The city regeneration with the participation of culture gets even less attention. In addition, the city regeneration and development is more a synonym for the historical center development and rehabilitation. The only relation between the city regeneration and culture the representatives of local authorities could identify was the European Capital of Culture. Although the problem of Cluj lacking cultural resources and facilities in the neighborhoods appeared as a concern, it did not engender any measures until the present moment. The most problematic part is that when an initiative like the PF is finally happening, instead of being supported and given the appropriate attention it is dismissed as not being the local authorities' job to get involved with it. The involvement is considered to be paternalistic. However, the discourse of the vice-mayor was missing the coherence. On one hand he played the card of non-engagement, on the other he said the local authorities are opened to discussion and cooperation. I would say

that the local authorities do not really know what their role to play in this new setting is. They have waited for the PF to tell them how they see the role of authorities in their case. The local authorities need to build their position and figure out their role and respond.

As the architect FR underlined “there are industrial spaces, closer or farther from the city center that will have to change their original destination. The initiatives similar to the PF are important and by occupying a certain zone they can create urban personality and uniqueness” (2010). This perspective did not come out when discussing the topic with the two representatives of the local authorities. The conversion of factories in cultural spaces is being a topic they are not familiar with or they do not pay too much attention to in the city of Cluj context.

The PF is still a new project, its activity starting only in October 2009. Therefore, it is difficult to point what are the benefits for the immediate or the local community. It is a long term process and major changes will not happen over night. Despite the efforts, enthusiasm and energy the members of the PF put in the development of the surrounding area and community and the broader urban area, they can not do it all by themselves. Partnerships were set in place and others are envisaged. The model the PF is likely to engender is a type of local governance, more exactly participation through transformation. However, it is premature to conclude that this is the situation. The communication with the local authorities did not work very well until now. Both sides need to reposition themselves otherwise the gap will grow and the autism will be perpetuated, endangering the first signs of good governance. New actors such as universities and other educational institutions or organizations can be brought in this equation to strengthen the position of the PF and also to become a third

partner for dialogue in a process – urban development and regeneration - that concerns the entire urban community.

## Chapter 6 – Conclusions and recommendations

Many of the problems faced by the contemporary post-socialist city have their counterparts in the challenges the Western European cities had to confront since the 1970s: inequalities, migration, decay, ghettoization, and a decrease in the quality of life, mainly in the neighborhoods. Besides these similarities, the excessive industrialization of the socialist economy has left the cities in the region with an important legacy. Many of the factories did not survive the complicated process of privatization and are no longer productive units but empty industrial buildings in different stages of deterioration. They have become the object of concern of urban regeneration policies, which often seek their inspiration in the Western European models. Given the prominence they have in the post-socialist urban landscape, converting factories into cultural facilities is a policy strategy of culture-led urban regeneration that presents itself as a relevant solution. While many times a top-down initiative (local government), these projects can also be a bottom-up process (initiated by cultural non-profit organizations, artists, and other cultural operators) that can draw local government's attention, and attract other actors from the community to the project (i.e. universities, schools, community members), and push for policy measures that would accommodate their interests. Based on the case-study of a former factory converted in a contemporary art center in Cluj, Romania, I argued throughout the paper that the latter alternative has significant advantages. Having emerged from the cultural community needs and not as part of a strategy which plays on the potential role of culture for bringing economic gains, this initiative has greater chances of staying outside the neoliberal ideology and the instrumentalization of culture for economic goals. The bottom-up culture-led urban regeneration process has great potential to contribute both to the development of the cultural

field and to the urban regeneration, and challenges the traditional way of policy-making and implementation, in which the local government has the central role. At the same time, its bottom-up character makes it more vulnerable and less sustainable on the long run. Because of this a key point to discuss is what kind of partnerships such an initiative should seek to establish and foster so that it manages to reach its intrinsically cultural goals and avoid the mere instrumentalization of culture for economic goals, but in the same time be sustainable and effective.

The cultural field itself is one of the main beneficiaries of such initiatives. First, artists, curators, cultural organizations and other cultural operators with converging interests are brought together, have a space to work and disseminate their work; they can potentially organize into a stronger voice and position in relation with other cultural and non-cultural institutions. Secondly, the surrounding community, the industrial space, and the new partnerships can prove fruitful sources of inspiration both for their intrinsic artistic endeavors and for future projects. At the same time, the city benefits from the regeneration of its unused and decaying industrial buildings in a way that maintains the link with its past usage. Also, the converted factories can enter the circuit of cultural tourism and bring economic benefits; however, one of the struggles is to maintain the economic gain aspect subsumed into the larger intrinsically cultural aims of the project. If the new cultural centers are located in a neighborhood, they can culturally revitalize the zone, engage people from the immediate community in cultural events or workshops, and familiarize them with different cultural expressions. This is another related challenge for these cultural centers, namely to consciously design strategies that would foster social inclusion, instead of simply starting a process of gentrification of the formerly less prosperous neighborhoods, which become appropriated by the “creative class” and gradually exclude the poorer and less educated.

Such a bottom-up initiative emerged in 2009 in Cluj, Romania, with the transformation of a former Paintbrush Factory into a contemporary art centre. My research shows that the PF has successfully established several partnerships in the city (e.g. foreign cultural centers and several university departments). However, there are no measures at the local government level regarding cultural-led urban regeneration, nor measures to support this already existing initiative. While it has identified the importance of their support, the Paintbrush Factory itself has not yet devised an efficient strategy for approaching the local authorities. In this context, some practical recommendations can be advanced.

1. *City cultural strategy*. While the cultural and urban context in Cluj changed with the appearance of the PF, little is known about the project among the local authorities. This only makes the need for the city to develop a cultural strategy more salient. Moreover, as the concept of “creative city” is no longer unknown in Cluj, it needs further considerations. It is crucial that the local authorities, representatives of the Commissions for Culture and Urbanism, the local cultural operators and representatives of the civil society gather and design together a suitable cultural strategy for the city in dialogue with the aims of urban regeneration and urban development. The PF should take an active role and invite the relevant actors to a debate to be held in a space provided by the factory. This new cultural strategy needs to rely on the assessment of cultural resources in the city through the joint action of cultural operators and local authorities. It needs to state goals, identify possible new partners in the urban context and sources of financing the sector. The strategy will constitute the basis for future coherent action and cultural policies, and for identifying the challenges of the cultural sector, the direction in which change needs to be pursued. At the moment, the

relevant information is scattered among the different categories of actors, which are unaware of each other's needs, goals and resources.

2. *Evaluation of the PF impact.* The PF has already made the crucial step of including the impact it has on the immediate community among its priorities. It is currently discussing with representatives from the Faculty of Sociology, Babes-Bolyai University about the appropriate manner of evaluating this impact. A further partnership with City Hall in this sense would be beneficial not only for the PF and City Hall but for the urban community itself. In addition to what the PF together with the sociologists have identified as being important, City Hall could bring the indicators it is interested in. It is for the common benefit of the city to see how a factory converted into a cultural center, in a neighborhood, can contribute to an area that needs regeneration and revitalization. The PF can provide a model for future projects of urban regeneration. It can be a source for innovative ideas with respect to the usage of other resources the city has was not aware of how best to utilize them.

3. *Culture Group.* A major problem identified by the PF was the difficulty it faced in finding a stable partner for dialogue at the local government level. This also explains why much of the information about the PF's existence, role, interests, and possible contributions to urban development does not reach the local administration. Therefore, the establishment of a Culture Group with expertise in cultural matters at the level of City Hall imposes itself as necessary. Cultural operators (not only the PF) would in this way have a single venue to address. It would need to centralize information and disseminate it. At the same time, it should advise cultural agents on the issues they are interested in as well as regarding the representatives in the local government they need to contact. It should also act like an

intermediary that would translate the interests of the local cultural operators into proposals to the city leaders and vice versa.

4. *Trainings on EU structural funds.* The Service for European Integration and International Cooperation (within the county authority) is the body in charge with dissemination of information about EU structural funds and training on how to access these funds and other types of EU funds. It should organize open sessions for cultural operators and institutions aiming at increasing their awareness of the instruments they have at their disposal and how they can use them optimally.

The opening of the PF raised the attention of cultural operators and artists at the national level and opened new perspectives for them in terms of spaces that they can use in the urban context. Therefore, it is likely that in the next period other similar initiatives will appear.

Factories and other unused spaces can be found everywhere in Romania. Not only cultural operators and artists could be tempted by the possibility of using them, but also local authorities. Having identified the common interest that both cultural operators and the local authorities might have in the regeneration of the industrial patrimony through cultural reconversion, the dangers of this partnership need to be emphasized as well. I have shown in chapter 4, how culture is in danger of being used merely as an instrument in attaining goals unrelated to the cultural field. It is important that the qualities of the bottom-up initiative are conserved in this partnership.

In order to avoid the accusations of being paternalistic, the post-socialist local government often takes a *laissez-faire* attitude. It is important that the role of the local government is re-

invented in a way that does not crush bottom-up initiatives, but contribute to creating an overall environment in which they are encouraged. A possible direction towards creating such a setting is moving from local government to local governance, discussed in chapter 3.

Depending on how the PF project will develop further in terms of partnerships with local authorities, universities and other institutions, and the relation with the neighborhood and the surrounding community could become a model of best practice for other Romanian cities.

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