CULTURAL HERITAGE, LOCAL IDENTITY AND URBAN REGENERATION: THE CASE STUDY OF LUGOJ MUNICIPALITY, ROMANIA

Ioan Sebastian JUCU
West University of Timișoara, Department of Geography, Blvd. V. Pârvan, No. 4, 300223, Timișoara, Romania, e-mail: sebastianjucu@yahoo.com

Abstract: As a medieval settlement, but with a longer history than this layer of time, the Municipality of Lugoj disposes by an important cultural heritage less known at the national and European level. Known for a long time in the past as the cultural capital city of the Romanian Banat, during the communist and post-socialist periods this settlement loses this status with real valences more than the metaphorical mean. The old communist regime through its particular way of development fades and ignores the cultural potential of the town, this political attitude being against of the cultural affirmation of the town on the local, regional and national level. In a globalized world, marked by neoliberal trends of development, in connection with the promotion of the international values, the (re)construction of the local identity represents a prior condition for sustainable development of the town. On the other hand between the local cultural potential, the contemporary trends of development and the urban dynamics can be create a close connection that could offer new opportunities for further evolutions of the town. With an important cultural heritage and as an old model of inter- and multiculturalty, the municipality of Lugoj could evolve in the future as a settlement with a cultural function beside the other ones outlined in time grounded by particular political, economic, social and cultural frames developed in this geographical space from Romania. Which are the cultural values that must be known and valorized? How much are they known in the contemporary period? In what extent the cultural potential can help to reinforce the local identity? What about the local symbolic landscapes? What actions must be adopted for future development in connection with the local cultural values from here? How can be recreated the old perceptions? These are some particular questions set on this paper thereupon we can try to find optimal solutions regarding the future urban regeneration in connection with the local cultural heritage, the geographical identity of the town and with the symbolic landscapes of this urban settlement.

Rezumat: Ca aşezare medievală, dar cu o istorie mai mare decât această perioadă, municipiul Lugoj dispune de un patrimoniu cultural important mai puțin cunoscut la nivel național și european. Numit pentru o lungă perioadă de timp, în trecut, capitala culturală a Banatului românesc, atât în timpul comunist și perioadele de post-socialist, această aşezare își pierde acest statut, cu valențe reale mai mult decât sensul metaforic. Vechiul regim comunist, prin felul său special de dezvoltare estompează și ignoră potențialul cultural al orașului, această atitudine fiind împotriva afirmării culturale a orașului la nivel local, regional și național. Într-o lume globalizată, marcată de tendințele neoliberale de dezvoltare, în legătură cu promovarea valorilor internaționale, (re)afirmarea identității locale, reprezintă o condiție obligatorie pentru dezvoltarea durabilă a orașului. Pe de altă parte, între potențialul cultural local, tendințele contemporane de dezvoltare și dinamica urbană se poate crea o legătură strânsă, care ar putea oferi noi oportunități pentru evoluțiile ulterioare ale orașului. Cu un patrimoniu cultural important și ca vechi model de inter-și multiculturalitate, municipiul Lugoj ar putea evolua în viitor ca o ășezare cu funcție culturală distinctă alături de celelalte caracteristici

**Keywords:** cultural heritage, identity, urban regeneration, landscape, municipality of Lugoj

**Cuvinte cheie:** moștenire culturală, identitate, regenerare urbană, peisaj, municipiul Lugoj.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The municipality of Lugoj has an important cultural heritage and a specific local identity provided by the history of this town as well as by its social and economic functionality. These features are reflected by the contemporary cultural landscape, outstanding concept for current geographical research. The inter- and multiculturality of the town, religion, ethnicity, education, the local activities, all these ones have conquered to create a unique landscape and an individual model of evolution through the Romanian cities and towns. Some features have been preserved in time and today appears as real witnesses of the history. Other ones have disappeared taking away with them important cultural values of this community. On the other hand, the persistence or the extinction of the cultural values has been often command by the political systems succeeded in time in this part of Romania. After the Second World War, the communist regime directly contributed to the dilution of some relevant cultural features and traits of the town. The new post-socialist period, opened after 1990, had to redevelop the old inherited structures and values but willful or not, some actions of the local authorities also contributed to the abatement of the local cultural values, in terms of cultural and functional structures. The new trends should be focused on a real urban regeneration but between loss and gain some ignorant attitudes have also leads to the attenuation of the cultural values of the town. Being considered in the past the cultural capital of Banat, between memory and current dynamics, the municipality of Lugoj has fairly well lost this relevant attribute.

The cultural function is revealed by many authors. In this regard, Luchescu, since 1975, considers this urban settlement as „an old centre of Romanian culture” (1975, p. 5); the same author (2004) points out that during time Lugoj has developed as a cultural centre. Analyzing the spirituality of this town Luchescu et al (1993) stated that Lugoj has always had an intense spiritual life. Similarly, the town of Lugoj is described as a „cultural capital of Banat, an active centre within the Romanian spirituality”¹ Furthermore, the municipality of Lugoj is perceived as „a town enriched by history and culture being for a long time the spiritual light of Banat” (Sidei, 2009, p. 3). The cultural status of the town is also revealed by many authors² all their consideration leading us to understand both the

---

cultural heritage of the town as well as its historic values and its local identity. In order to maintain the cultural features of the town, after 1990, the local authorities tried to promote an urban development taking into account the preservation of the local cultural values. Some initiatives have encountered success other ones failed up.

These realities are justified both by the pathfinder actions of the local actors, in terms of the urban management and by the chaotic dimension of the Romanian transition in the adjustment processes to the market economy standards. Nowadays, despite of the current economic crisis, we assist at the more stables background concerning the urban planning and further urban management, but in the case of the contemporary collective mental perceptions the quality of the cultural status of the town is more reduced than in the past. In such conditions the future urban strategies of the local development have to be focused on the renewal of the local culturally based on the capitalization of the cultural heritage and local identity, in terms of the structural and functional perspectives generated by the local culture. This paper boards the study of the urban regeneration in close connection with all cultural features of the town that generates a particular functional model seen as a global component of the municipality of Lugoj. In the light of this assertion, the current study is based on particular approaches that could inspire the local actors in their actions concerning the further urban development. It does not simply charge only the cultural features, in terms of directly or indirectly perceptions on the components of the local culture (religion, education, architecture, ethnicity, politics and so on). Moreover, it deals with the global way of life of this settlement seen through the lens of the local activities governed by the passed cultural systems. Also, the article tries to reveal the dynamics of the urban regeneration actions connected to the local economic activities and to the territorial disparities, in terms of spatial, structural, functional and physiognomic attributes.

2. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The problem of urban regeneration in close connection with the topic of the cultural heritage capitalization has become a central theme for the current urban renewal actions both for the urban settlements from the developed country as well as for those ones from the former communist countries of Europe. In this last category we can remark the new trends of redevelopment after a long period that often ignore the cultural values of the human communities. It is widely known the reality that the communism strongly altered the cultural values within its particular actions to developed the Romanian urban system. The post-socialist period that followed tried to correct some made demarches but the outcomes are far to be completed in present. The urban development related to the capitalization of the cultural heritage as well as to the contemporary urban regeneration requirements seems to be a current topic for the present researches. In such circumstances appeared this study. It is a part of a larger research focused on the urban restructuring process of the municipality of Lugoj that deals with the recent post-socialist urban transformations. The complexity of this boarded problems lead us to make a separate approach concerned on the development of the town and the urban regeneration. The approached questions sat, were discussed on a scientific meeting in Timișoara (2011), while the practical application on terrain that

followed after discussions had the aim to validate the designed hypothesis according to which the cultural heritage of the town in terms of spatial, structural, functional and physiognomic features have been different capitalized. As outcomes of such actions the patterns of the town reveals many disruptions and disparities that must be corrected in the future, even if we talk in terms of the scale of short, medium and long time. The present study based on the specialized literature tries to produce a real scientific viewpoint as an objective tool for the future actions of the local government concerning the urban regeneration of the town, in close connection with the capitalization of the local cultural heritage.

3. THEORETICAL INSIGHTS, PRINCIPLES AND METHODOLOGICAL FLOW OF THE STUDY

The cultural heritage as a key concept, both in the urban regeneration and tourism studies, behaves many definitions often similarly. Generally it comprises relevant components, marks and values generated by the layers of times under the stress of some particular cultural and politic systems, reflected by the landscape in different form of presentation. Definitions are assumed by many scholars including in this context, for instance, Cocius (2006), Teodorescu (2009), du Cluseau (1998), relevant for the French academic school and Smith (2003), important researcher within Anglo-American academic school. But to illustrate the meanings of this concept we have focused our attention on some official documents assumed by important international institutions. This boarding is to reveal both the legal perspectives as well as the official interpretations at the worldwide scale. So, according to Jokilehto (2005, pp.4-5), which makes a relevant selection of the most important documents focused on the cultural heritage, the concept

"may be defined as the entire array of material signs - either artistic or symbolic - handed on by the past to each culture and, therefore, to the whole of humankind. As a constituent part of the affirmation and enrichment of cultural identities, and a legacy belonging to all humankind, the cultural heritage gives each particular place its recognizable features and is the storehouse of human experience. The preservation and the presentation of the cultural heritage are therefore a cornerstone of any cultural policy. In this way it has helped to gain worldwide recognition of the very idea of the heritage, which, at the same time, has been broadened and extended. The cultural heritage should be considered both in time and in space. First, it no longer stops at the dawn of the nineteenth century but now also embraces the records left behind by the twentieth century. Second, the aim is not only to preserve increasingly numerous items of cultural property but also to safeguard complexes which go far beyond single large monuments or individual buildings. Theidea of the heritage has now been broadened to include both the human and the natural environment, both architectural complexes and archaeological sites, not only the rural heritage and the countryside but also the urban, technical or industrial heritage, industrial design and street furniture. Furthermore, the preservation of the cultural heritage now covers the non-physical cultural heritage, which includes the signs and symbols passed on by oral tradition, artistic and literary forms of expression, languages, ways of life, myths, beliefs and rituals, value systems and traditional knowledge and know-how."

Beside the cultural heritage and the local identity the most important concepts used in the studies focused on the relation between urban regeneration and culture is represented by the

3 Definitions of Cultural Heritage; References to Documents in History, ICCROM Working Group ‘Heritage and Society’ Selected by J. Jokilehto (Originally for ICCROM, 1990), Revised for CIF: 15 January 2005.
landscape or cultural landscape. In boarding up these important notions is mandatory to clarify some key concepts, in order to provide a better understanding of the studies concerned on the urban renewal based on the cultural identity and heritage. They are about the landscape as a particular concept and certainly about the connected notions and action as policy, protection and management. In this regard, Jokilehto (1990, 2005) in its selections focused on the current sat topic, points out some important definitions, as they appear in the most important documents of the world. So, accordingly to the Council of Europe, European Landscape Convention (2000), the concept of landscape „means an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors”, the landscape policy „means an expression by the competent public authorities of general principles, strategies and guidelines that permit the taking of specific measures aimed at the protection, management and planning of landscapes,” the landscape quality objective „means, for a specific landscape, the formulation by the competent public authorities of the aspirations of the public with regard to the landscape features of their surroundings”, and the landscape protection represents „actions to conserve and maintain the significant or characteristic features of a landscape, justified by its heritage value derived from its natural configuration and/or from human activity.” According to ICCROM Working Group Heritage and Society (cited by Jokilehto, 1990, 2005) the landscape management is an „action, from a perspective of sustainable development, to ensure the regular upkeep of a landscape, so as to guide and harmonise changes which are brought about by social, economic and environmental processes”.

Finally, the same source reveal the action as the landscape planning that represents „strong forward-looking action to enhance, restore or create landscapes.” In connection with the sat concepts the study of the urban regeneration linked by the inherited cultural structures is important to note the principles that guide the main recommendations for the analysis, conservation and structural restoration of the architectural heritage. These ones are (Jokilehto, 1990, 2005): „conservation, reinforcement and restoration of architectural heritage requires a multi-disciplinary approach; value and authenticity of architectural heritage cannot be based on fixed criteria because the respect due to all cultures also requires that its physical heritage be considered within the cultural context to which it belongs; the value of architectural heritage is not only in its appearance, but also in the integrity of all its components as a unique product of the specific building technology of its time. In particular the removal of the inner structures maintaining only the façades does not fit the conservation criteria; when any change of use or function is proposed, all the conservation requirements and safety conditions have to be carefully taken into account; restoration of the structure in Architecture Heritage is not an end in itself but a means to an end which is the building as a whole; the peculiarity of heritage structures, with their complex history, requires the organization of studies and proposals in precise steps that are similar to those used in medicine. Anamnesis, diagnosis, therapy and controls, corresponding respectively to the searches for significant data and information, individuation of the causes of damage and decay, choice of the remedial measures and control of the efficiency of the interventions.”

Regarding the urban identity it „represents the unitary set of characteristics which are capable of expressing the same signification for each citizen of a city (Brunet et al., 1993, p. 267, cited by Stoiculescu, Huzui, 2011, p. 58) that is reflected at a mental level through a symbol adopted and developed by each generation. This symbol provides cohesion and continuity in the existence of a particular urban community (Dematteis, 1994,
Space identity doesn’t appear sui-generis, but is collectively constructed by the actors of a certain society, and they are able to continuously manifest the tendency to inoculate this message in the ordinary language. Spatial identities are not permanent because they undergo a process of relating to the urban landmarks and symbols” (Stoiculescu, Huzui, 2011, p. 58). On the other hand, regarding identity, Popa (2007, p. 11) states that it is represented by a large number of variables, the most important of them being the geographic and historic evolution of a space, the cultural and linguistic specific of it, the economic profile defined in terms of its peculiarities and the place attachment.

In addition with this general theoretic background, the methodological design of this approach focused on the urban regeneration of the Lugoj municipality linked by the cultural heritage is based on some methods as: the bibliographic research and literature review in order to find out both the scientific requirements in boarding such a particular topic and, certainly, to find out the real cultural heritage of this chosen town as a particular case-study; the research on terrain (observation and participatory observation), in order to remark the spatial realities, the mapping demarche - to illustrate the spatial distribution of the urban regeneration processes and the framework for analysis the urban regeneration suggested by Hall (2007). The intersection of these methods is able to create a complex and objective background for analyzing the urban regeneration in relation with the cultural heritage. Furthermore the current approach, beside the scientific findings wants to be an instrument for the local actors in their decisions regarding the further urban development of the town.

4. THE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF THE LUGOJ MUNICIPALITY AND THE LOCAL IDENTITY OF THE TOWN

The cultural heritage of the municipality of Lugoj is provided by the cultural complex of the town that includes many cultural systems created in time under the norms and rules afforded by the succeeded political regimes that governed the different layers of time. In the light of this consideration we can state that the cultural heritage is given by the history itself as well as by the social, economic, cultural and politic evolution of the town as integrated part of the Romanian Banat. The evoked cultural complex comprises many cultural features as the historical contexts, ethnicity, language, religion, the cultural activities, education, political affirmation of the local values, economic activities (in terms of commercial practices, old crafts, industry), the landscape, cultural events, architecture and artifacts, the human capital in terms the cultural personalities and not only etc. The historic stages marked the cultural features of the town through the lens of the political contexts that continuously followed. So, the contemporary cultural complex of the Lugoj municipality reflects continual the sequence of the Ottoman Empire, of the Habsburgs, of the capitalist system and so on.

In the municipality of Lugoj ethnicity always played an important role in the spatial pattern of this settlement. As outcome of the colonization during the 18th Century on the left bank of the Timis River have been sat German population that formed a particular community named the German Lugoj. At that time, on the right side of the river there already exists a clot settlement with Romanians named Romanian Lugoj. The both

---

4 As inherited monument from this period is The St. Nicolae Tower, a patch of an old church from that times.
settlements evaluated separately since the end of this century when the settlements are united in a single one, Lugoj. In the light of this passed reality the town evaluated as real model of interculturality. Moreover, taking into account that together with the Germans, here were colonized other ethnic groups. From this perspective we can talk about a spatial and functional model of multiculturality. For instance, the women workers from Textila were Romanians, Hungarians, Germans, Russians, Roma etc (Mariș, 2010). The cultural values of these groups marked the cultural landscape of the town and their functionality, in terms of new particular activities. Therefore, this historic feature has generated many cultural traits that today are directly or not perceived within the cultural heritage of the town. Language represents another cultural feature of the municipality of Lugoj.

In this town not only the speaking of other languages were relevant, important always being the printed documents in other languages (German and Hungarian) in terms of local press (newspapers) and other prints (magazines, books). Furthermore, significant has always been the education in German and Hungarian. In this regard, the schools from Lugoj were important at the regional level this tradition continued until today (for instance, the current teaching in Hungarian, German Ukrainian in schools as National College C. Brediceanu, National College I. Hasdeu, School No. 6, the former School No. 5). Also, a relevant aspect is assumed by the fact that the local school was permanently in the past connected to the religion (School No. 3). This last cultural feature presents a large complexity at the level of the municipality of Lugoj, this town as we already seen, being considered the spiritual centre of Banat. Lugoj is an old cultural hearth for the orthodox religion, as well as for the Greek-Catholic church, being in the past the capital of this religion in Banat. From this perspective, in close connection with this religious segment and related to the urban regeneration actions the Greek-Catholic Church reveals an important evolution. During communism it was completely censored and the church was turned into orthodox one. After 1990 the initial status recede and the Greek-Catholic Church (re)win the previous status.

The dynamics of other religions made also by this town a real model of multiculturality. Simultaneously, the post-socialist evolution of the orthodox religion leaded not only to the local urban regeneration but also to the restructuring of the religious space of the town (Jucu, 2011). Analyzing the cultural landscape we can remark that the religion (whatever could be the cults) is well represented in terms of monumental buildings (restored after 1990) with an important cultural value less capitalized by the local actors.

The cultural activities represent another important cultural feature of the town. The municipality of Lugoj as outcome of its complex cultural potential has hosted many various cultural events and manifestations in the past (see, for instance, Luchescu, 1975, Popescu, 1993, nowadays it being the host of four international festivals in the field of theatre, folklore, choral music). Certainly all these ones could represent a feature that presents many opportunities for capitalization in close connection with the local cultural heritage. The revaluation of the old tradition in education was developed by the appearance of the European Drăgan University that after 1990 definitely changed the functional profile of the town (university town). Its relevance is more increased in terms of symbolic values by the fact that from the spatial perspective, valorize an old significant place. It is about the old

---

Cultural heritage, local identity and urban regeneration: the case study of Lugoj...

fortress of the town that today, through the position of this institution, becomes an academic citadel (Jucu, 2011).

The economic activities, in terms of cultural heritage, are represented by the old traditions of the crafts, of the commercial practices (Lugoj being well known in Banat as important borough), as well as of the old industrial activities (specialized in textiles, construction materials and food). Some of these branches were been preserved, other ones no. Is the case, for instance, of the Natural Silk Mining (that from national symbol becomes a partial relict area, the silk production being extincted; the same is the case of other cultural industries). However, the town preserves both its industrial function as well as its commercial one. It’s important to note that some of these old industrial features could be further capitalized in terms of cultural tourism, industrial tourism etc.

Architecture and the cultural landscape resulted as outcome of the cultural marks peculiar for each layer of time from the very old past to present. In the light of this consideration we mention the historic houses, the old cultural monuments, the old churches and other cultural institutions. In close connection with the symbolic structures of the town (see for instance the Iron Bridge) as well as with the natural components and local human capital resulted a unique cultural landscape that could be more capitalize in the next future. The very old constructions attested to the 15th and 16th Centuries as well as the medieval ones and the ones attested on the 20th Century, in terms the decoding the local cultural landscape could reveal the history of this place and the whole its culture.

The same goes for the symbolic values of the settlement. In this regard we can note The Iron Bridge (photo 1), The City Hall, The Old Prefecture, The Greek-Catholic Church, The Roman-Catholic Church, Bejan Palace, The National College C. Brediceanu, memorial houses, old factories and many more. These symbols could be revaluated through touristic demarches, at the national and international level. The promotion of them at a large scale could represent the key strategy for the local actors. The cultural personalities of

![Photo 1: The Iron Bridge in Lugoj](image)

the town represent another relevant cultural trait of the municipality of Lugoj. This town is the swing for many important personalities both well known at the level of Romania and abroad. From the historic ones and not only we can remark the family of Brediceanu (Coriolan, Tiberiu and Caius), Traian Grozavescu, Victor Vlad Delamarina, G. Petculescu, Ion Vidu, I. C. Drăgan, Lavinia Miloşovici, Ion Boldea, Dan Popescu etc. The cultural potential of this relevant segment of the local human capital also could represents an alternative for increasing the revaluation demarches in order to capitalize the cultural heritage of the town. Closely with the previous aspects the local identity of the municipality of Lugoj occurs from different cultural feature. Summarily we can discuss about ethnicity, interculturality and multiculturality, about the religious and historic background, about the town as a cultural centre in the past, about the economic activities in terms of textiles, silk and bricks, about the local cultural personalities, about the town as the second free urban settlement released by the communism in December 1989, about the town as a place of women, as a little but important borough in Banat and so on.

All these features reveal an important cultural heritage that could be more promoted at the regional, national and international levels and on the other hand represents a strong basis for further demarches of urban regeneration. The ways, forms and actions of this topic are various and numerous but in the following section we suggest a particular method recommended in the specialized literature from the field of urban geography. It is about the framework for analysis of the urban regeneration that could inspire the local actors in their further decisions focused on the urban development.

5. THE FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS THE URBAN REGENERATION

This methodological approach, as a part of the framework for analyzing urban policy and regeneration, is suggested by Hall (2007, p. 59) in order to study the urban regeneration and renewal problems. The analyzing framework is focused on many particular topics as follows: urban problems (what urban problem or problems can be identified, what has been identified as the cause of this problem or problems); policy contexts (what is the origin of the policy/programme/projects, what is the relationships to earlier approaches or those being implemented elsewhere); funding (where does the funding for the policy/programme/projects come from, in what way is funding allocated), the nature of regeneration (in what way does the policy/programme/projects seek to achieve its aims, what are the outcomes of the policy/programme/projects); stakeholders (who are the stakeholders involved; what are the relationships between the stakeholders); impacts of regeneration (what are the impacts of the policy/programme/projects, in what ways has the policy/programme/projects been evaluated).

According to this methodological framework (figure 1), the urban problems of the municipality of Lugoj occurred from the all made interventions during the post-socialist period concern different types of spaces in terms of their functionality. For many years the cultural real estate of the town has been ignored. After 2000 at the level of the town we can remark actions of urban regeneration oriented to the cultural buildings as well as on the cultural monuments of the town. During the last ten years the most of the monuments of the town has been restored but this demarche is not an ended chapter of these types of interventions made by the local authorities. In this context, we can remark the historic churches from Lugoj (the works on the Great Cathedral from Lugoj are still ongoing
because of the absence of funding, see photo 2 and photo 3), cultural monuments as the Municipal Library (photo 4), historic palaces, the Museum of History, the former Prefecture, the building of the City Hall (photo 5 and photo 6), The National College C. Brediceanu etc. A real problem for the current period linked by the cultural monuments is to finalize the started works as well as the restoration of other relevant architectural structures of the town.

Another important problem is generated by the local housing environment. The regeneration of these particular patterns is still a priority both for the local authorities and for the residents. The inconvenience occurs by the absence of the funding because the whole restoration of the local capital for housing is too expensive. Consequently this feature must be included in the further strategy of local development in terms of the urban regeneration. An important part of the residential buildings have been restored (block of flats in districts, individual palaces, or individual houses) but the problems are too far to be solved. Acute situations are matched to the poor districts of the town, areas that increase the backward character of these areas.

They are about the peripheral sectors, so in this case in the next future the regeneration strategies having to focus on the rethinking of the urban peripheries in order to attenuate the local territorial disparities. On the other hand, in close connection with the previous topic concerned on the peripheral districts, we can remark industrial marginal areas, true cultural urban zones from the perspective of the local economy inherited from the past. Today these old industrial platforms well known in the past for their products that have sprung (textiles, silk and building materials) has generated a real industrial culture.
It is well represented by the textile industry that made from this town a settlement of women, by the cultural traditions of the Textile Industry from Lugoj (photo 7 and photo 8),
by the uniqueness of The Natural Silk Mining (photo 9) and by the prominent figure of J. Muschong the capitalist owner of the brick factory. All these units are now forgotten and ignored just when they could be capitalized through the lens of the cultural tourism. Furthermore, the decline and the relict status of some plants attract in fall the residential areas located in their proximity generating real poor and disagreeable areas (photo 10). This mutual destiny between different functional peripheral areas is assumed by the fact that the development of the residential districts, located nearby them, went hand in hand with the increasing evolution of these factories during communism. The fall of this industrial units as outcome of the post-socialist deindustrialization generated relict or partial relict areas that must be completely renewed.

Photo 7: An old image with the Textile Industry from Lugoj (source: Actualitatea, no. 708, 2010, p. 8)

Photo 8: The relict factory of Textile Industry as it appears today (photo Jucu, 2011)

Photo 9: The Natural Silk Mining from Lugoj - relict sector (photo Jucu, 2011)

These stated problems are, summarily, only a part from the all situations particular from the town but they are simply representative for the further directions of the urban regeneration of the town. They must to paid attention from the local authorities and to reflect the real claims for their renewal in the contemporary conditions of the developed communities. Certainly, there are real outcomes of the communist industrialization but they have to be renewed in the condition of the new political contexts.

Thereby we can go on to the second issue assumed by Hall (2007) in its framework, the politic contexts. They are much important not for the evolution of a community but mostly for the integration of the inherited structures from a political context to another. The communism has left many important structures adrift. Their integration into the new post-socialist political context represents a complex and long process, especially in the absence of some particular strategies focused on this problem.

The new urban management as well as the new forms of properties on the real estate goods as well as the investments can create an objective framework for the urban renewal. This action must be a central theme in the local politics of the authorities, especially taking into account the power of decentralization. After two decades of Romanian post-socialism such interventions are moderate. Some intense actions regarding the sat questions, as outcomes of a proper local politics, could generate a faster integration of the ignored structures into the urban regeneration process. It is not about the capitalization of some spaces it is about the preservation of the cultural inherited structures into the present landscape and the town functionality. Which are the stakeholders? Certainly the residents on one hand and on another the local actors involved in the development of the town. In this regard the gain is assumed by the all local community that could offer a new perspective for the other subjects interested by the town (investors, developers, potential residents). Furthermore, the attractiveness degree of the town could
represent o real factor for the further development. Sure enough, for all these scenarios the financial resources represent the key. The funding for all the actions that could be designed in order to ensure the urban regeneration through the capitalization of the cultural heritage could present different sources.

The funding for local urban regeneration could be provided at least by five parts: from the central governance (the specialized ministries), from the local administration (through the sums claimed in terms of different taxes and imposts), from the European projects (by applying for projects funded by the European Union), from the national and foreign direct investments and by private initiatives of the local residents and not only. In the light of this global perspective, the impact of the urban regeneration through the lens of the capitalization of the cultural heritage and local identity is a complex one reflected by the spatial and the functional dynamics of the town. This impact turns up in the landscape of the town, in the new functionalities of the urban structures, in the spatial dynamics and in the increasing degree of the quality of life of the local residents. Furthermore, there is valued the cultural capital that could generate new status for the town in terms of their image, attractiveness, equal evolution and objective functionality. On the other hand, we can talk about a town that successfully (but partly) integrated his inherited cultural structures into its current dynamics.

Finally, analyzing the nature of regeneration, the outcomes of the local politics based on the urban renewal through the lens of the integration of the cultural heritage into the present are both in the benefit of the local community as a complex system and in the benefit of the town itself as a spatial reality that reflects the ways of life of its inhabitants managed by different cultural decisions. The town and, in our case, the municipality of Lugoj wins in terms of its spatial and functional dynamics that capitalize the all cultural heritage of it. The local culture is integrated in the new trends of evolution whatever they could be. The outcomes of such managerial actions could preserve the local cultural values and certainly could offer them to the next generations as a symbol of the current sustainable development requirements. In a contemporary globalized world, the urban management focused on the spatial regeneration through the capitalization of the local cultural heritage, could assert the local identity of the town on different scaling levels from the regional point to the international scale that often is able to capture through the cultural diffusion all the cultural traits, values and virtues of a place.

6. OUTCOMES OF URBAN REGENERATION IN LUGOJ AFTER TWO DECADES OF ROMANIAN POST-SOCIALISM

This section, in close connection with the previous considerations on the nature of the urban regeneration, presents the actual and definite outcomes of the made actions of the local administration of the municipality of Lugoj as well as their impact on the local community, in terms of spatial, structural, functional and physiognomic perspectives. The experience of the local government during the two decays of the Romanian post-socialism reveal interesting aspects both positive and negative. The most actions of the urban regeneration have been made within the inner city and especially on the central area of it. Thus, all these assumed initiatives capitalized the monumental buildings of the town, in terms of historic palaces, cultural monuments, religious constructions, public space of the historic centre and so on. A global perspective of the urban regeneration that exploits the
cultural heritage shows the priority of the central areas of the town (figure 2). Such a general approach of the local urban management was against the peripheral sectors that also dispose by a remarkable cultural potential.

The central area was renewed in terms of the religious buildings (churches and cathedrals), historic houses and palaces, educational units with cultural value etc. For instance, we can remark the Great Cathedral from Lugoj (as we already state now in a restoration process), the Romano-Catholic Church, The Greek-Catholic Church, Reformed Church etc. At the same time in the town have appeared new orthodox churches that restructured the religious space of Lugoj in new particular patterns (Jucu, 2011). We also outline the renewal of other structures as The National College C. Brediceanu, The Museum of History, the City Hall of the town, the former Prefecture, the primary schools, the Justice Palace etc. An important aspect through the lens of the private investments is assumed by the appearance of Drăgan European University on the former space of the old medieval citadel now becoming a university citadel (being also known as Drăgan University Citadel). This new structure was a real gain for the municipality of Lugoj because its appearance renewed also the functional profile of the town. On the other hand, an important role is assumed by the public space. The importance of this category in the cultural geographical analyses is call up by Mitchell (2000) the author pointing out the
relevance of the cultural politics and the politics of culture inside of the study of the cultural landscapes. The public space of the Lugoj municipality, in terms of the public squares has supported many changes stressed by the new post-socialist urban management.

Considered a minor spatial feature by the old communist regime this sort of urban spaces become more significant during the post-socialism. Accordingly, they were restored emphasizing important tangible and intangible cultural values. In Lugoj is the case of the Union Square that include the Greek-Catholic Church. It was restored through the lens of the private investment of Iosif Constantin Drăgan (a great international personality born in Lugoj) occasion to which this place was named by the name of this prominent personality (photo 11). With this we can outline also the Victory Square (photo 12) in the front of the City Hall that was the place of the local Revolution in Lugoj in December 1989, being known the truth that Lugoj was the second free town from Romania in the fight against the totalitarian communist regime. This place hosts many important (restored) cultural monuments being in a really contrast with communist features.

Finally, in this context, we remark the central area of the town that was completely restored and changed in a pedestrian square that also was entirely renewed through a particular post-socialist process as tertiarization. If the central hearth of the town shows many changes in terms of the current urban regeneration some peripheral areas appear too defaced. Is the case of the industrial areas (important cultural spaces in terms of the local economic activities that created relevant traditions in time).

Is the case of the industrial area from the Buziașului Road - specialized in textiles - (that generated a real culture of this industry both to the level of the town and to the level of its proximity district, designed especially by the old communist regime for the workers from this large industrial unit). Another case is represented by the industrial area Mondialul Bocșei - specialized in construction materials (bricks) - its destiny being connected to the great capitalist J. Muschong (photo 13). To these ones we can add the industrial area from the proximity of the railway sector (photo 14) which hosts the old factory of shoes called Calapoade in the past. All these areas are relict or partially relict from the functional perspective disposing by an increased degree of defacement both from the functional, spatial and physiognomic perspectives.
A global perspective on these realities reflects ignorance from the side of the local authorities that directly contribute to the deepening of the local functional, spatial and functional contrasts. All this industries represent the identity of the town, to these ones adding The Natural Silk Mining (partially relict) its failure ending an important cultural tradition of the town in terms of the production of the natural silk (Jucu, 2011), this unit being uniqueness in Romania and well known in Europe in the past.

These spatial contrasts and disruptions must be integrated in the further actions of the urban regeneration. In the light of this assessment, we can suggest the capitalization of these units through the lens of the old activities valuating the cultural tourism, industrial tourism, cultural industries and so on. Talking by ignorance we can discuss another sample in the central area. It is about the place called Liliacul - a pastry - (another feature of the local cultural identity) that have been changes into a Bank (a common transformation during the post-socialist period). This place (photo 14) had always a special site for the local cultural landscape. A place that hosted many cultural and historic events, a place where stopped many important cultural Romanian personalities. Through the lens of the contemporary urban renewal these old traditions and significances has disappeared. Only a simple plate on the building still reminds the cultural value of this building.

The districts have been regenerated through individual and collective actions, both made by the local administration and residents. In this regard, there have resulted many functional and spatial contrasts within the same district or between districts. For instance, peripheral areas show two distinct aspects: on the other hand we can observe defaced residential areas and on another new residential peripheral sectors designed in respect of the new contemporary housing. So it is for the industrial areas of the town. The global perspective on this topic reveals on the town’s peripheral industrial platforms, relict or partial relict areas, restructured areas (regenerated through the new investments) and new industrial areas (arose after 1990). The functional and spatial contrasts are evident in this case too. The one hand and another we can remark new dynamic areas as outcome of the developed actions in terms of urban restructuring and regeneration.
As a conclusion we can state that the urban regeneration actions boosted the functional and spatial dynamics of the town but at the same time generated strong functional and physiognomic contrasts and disruptions between the central areas of the town and its peripheries. The local urban renewal actions have favored the downtown and marginalized the outskirts. So they are the interventions within the residential districts. These outcomes must to be integrated and taken into account in the future actions of the urban development assumed by the local authorities.

**CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**WHAT TO DO NEXT?**

The cultural heritage and the local features that define the town's identity have been different capitalized after 1990 by the local actors of the municipality of Lugoj even if we discuss about the individual actions or by the organized programmes of the local authorities. The previous chapters showed us that the municipality of Lugoj disposes by varied and complex cultural values that on the present days are more or less known at a large scale. The cultural potential of the town can reinforce both the urban regeneration processes and the further urban development. In the light of this consideration the local symbolic landscape of the town could be more capitalized in order to promote the sustainable development that take into account the cultural features of this settlement.

In addition with this proposal the old perception of the town could be recreated through the lens of a sustain promotion of the cultural potential of the municipality of Lugoj. We can state that the urban regeneration actions have developed different and unequal. If the downtown has been regenerated in some extent the peripheral cultural areas has been pretty ignored. At the level of town we can observe both a functional and physiognomic regeneration but these demarches are far to be completed. A further action could be oriented to the renewal of the peripheral industrial areas, important economic zones for the town in close connection with the local cultural economy.

From this perspective these areas could be boosted and could neutralize the relict aspects. Furthermore, the functional revival could attenuate the local defacement of these industrial sectors. An outstanding demarche could include the achievement of some proper strategies exclusively and objectively focused on the topic of the urban regeneration as well as the practice of an urban management that beside the urban development promotes the
regeneration of the old inherited functional, symbolic and physiognomic structures (in close connection with the cultural capitalization of them).

Another important action could be represented by the promotion of the local culture and identity at the regional, national and international scale through particular practices that could illustrate both the urban regeneration processes and the cultural capital. The tourism could represent a key activity in this regard as well as the promotion of the cultural capital within particular international collaboration programmes strained by the town’s relationships with other urban settlements from Europe.

REFERENCES

Brunet, R., Ferras, R., Théry, H. (1993), Les mots de la géographie, dictionnaire critique, Reclus, La Documentation Française, Montpellier.
Jucu, I. S., (2009), Lugoj, the municipality of 7 women to a man – from myth to post-socialist reality, in Analele Universității de Vest din Timișoara, Seria Geografie, Edit. Universității de Vest din Timișoara.
Cultural heritage, local identity and urban regeneration: the case study of Lugoj ...

*** (1997), Plan Urbanistic General, Primăria Municipiului Lugoj, S. C. Arhicons, Reşiţa;
*** (2009), Plan Urbanistic General, Primăria Municipiului Lugoj, S. C. Proiect Alba, Alba Iulia;

SUBMITTED  REVISED  ACCEPTED  PUBLISHED ONLINE