

GOVERNING THE EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE AND URBAN REGIMES IN SIBIU

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Abstract

Narratives of success regarding entrepreneurial strategies of urban governance tend to veil the power structures at the urban level and to obscure the origins and consequences of these stories. This paper has as a starting point the success stories built around the European Capital of Capital 2007 programme in Sibiu and traces the consequences of the ECC on the structures of urban governance. By bringing together urban regime theory and a multiscalar perspective on urban governance, this paper focuses on how the bidding, preparation and implementation of the ECC programme was possible due to the overlapping and fusing of interests and agendas of actors and institutions from different scales and how this overlapping made possible not just the ECC programme but also urban governance in general. Furthermore, the narratives of success which emerged due to this overlapping were and are used to legitimate the material and electoral benefits obtained by the actors and institutions involved and also the correctness and effectiveness of past measures undertaken by the urban regime and also of future ones.

Table of Contents

Introduction / 1

Chapter 1. Literature review / 7

- 1.1. Urban Politics and Urban Regime Theory / 7
- 1.2. Regulation Theory and the Scalar Perspective on Urban Politics / 10

Chapter 2. Methodology / 15

Chapter 3. The Structured Context of the Invitation / 20

- 3.1. The European Level and the ECC policy / 21
- 3.2. Luxembourg and the Myth of Common Origins / 24
- 3.3. Cultural Diplomacy and State Rescaling / 27
- 3.4. Local Governance and the Formation of the Urban Regime / 32

Chapter 4. Urban Governance and the Post-invitation Context / 40

- 4.1. Seizing the Moment. The Formation of the Bidding Coalition and the Preparation of the Bidding Application / 41
- 4.2. The Bid Selection Panel / 52
- 4.3. The European Capital of Culture, Regimes and Urban Governance / 56

Conclusions / 67

Bibliography / 74

Introduction

Although the European Union was initially conceived as a economic union, starting with the '80 the documents released by the European Communities stressed more and more the importance of creating “an ever closer union among the peoples of Europe” (1957:16) and concepts like “People's Europe” became central to the vision of the European project (Shore and Black 1992; 1994). Recently, declarations of EU officials and documents revolve around understandings of the European project as “fundamentally a ‘cultural’ project” (European Commission 2009) and of cultural values as ranging above economic ones, as stated by the European Commission President José Manuel Barroso at the first edition in 2004 of the Conferences *A Soul for Europe*. Throughout the four editions of these conferences, in a perpetual “European soul-searching”, administrative, cultural and political figures presented culture as the “structural element of our unity” (Barroso 2004) and as the catalyst for the development of a European community.

In this line of thought, it is not surprising that the European Commission created the European City of Culture programme, later known as the European Capital of Culture (ECC), in order “to bring the peoples of the Member States closer together” (European Commission 1985): the Commission chooses usually one or two cities per year which in a year-long programme celebrate their status as cultural capitals of Europe. Since 1985 when the title was first held by Athens, the ECC programme undertook a significant process of change and is now considered one of the success stories of EU. Its success is due to the fact that the ECC programme operates at least two levels, overlapping the interests of actors and institutions from these levels: EU bureaucrats developed it as a tool to legitimize the EU project and to promote a sense a belonging and local governance structures can use it as a route for urban transformation and as an entrepreneurial strategy of urban governance (Harvey 1989). For the

latter level on which the ECC can operate, theories of urban politics can provide an important lens for how the ECC is used as a restructuring strategy at the local level.

The specificity of the ECC policy requires that a bid is submitted to the EU from at least a city which belongs to the country listed to host the title in a specific year and that the bid should “highlight the richness and diversity of European cultures and the features they share, as well as to promote greater mutual acquaintance between European citizens” (European Commission 1999:3). As a result, various actors and institutions come together to work for the application for the title and for the implementation of the programme, in case the bid is successful. Therefore, at the local level, coalitions are formed for the bidding and implementation of the programme, which model the particular form the ECC bid and programme takes and models also the effects of pursuing ECC as an entrepreneurial strategy on urban governance.

In order to study how a specific coalition gained the capacity to govern and implement the ECC policy and how the coalition building process with its specific internal politics influenced the broader process of urban governance, urban regime theory, as theorized and used by Swanstrom (1988) and especially by Stone (in Orr and Johnson 2008; 1989), appears as one of the most useful frameworks among theories of urban politics to study the aspects noted above (Lauria 1996; Tretter 2008). A disadvantage of using the urban regime theory for studies dealing with urban politics of redevelopment is its localist tendency (Judge, Stoker, and Wolman 1995), which appears even more problematic when taking into account that the ECC is a European cultural policy used a restructuring project. Changes related to the broader economic and political environment, the increased local autonomy, but also the increased importance of EU institutions, policies and regulations (Articus 2005) and also the rescaling of statehood (Brenner 2004; Brenner et al. 2003; Caglar 2007) should be included in studies which focus on restructuring projects. This paper aims to bring together a multiscalar

perspective on the ECC as an entrepreneurial strategy of urban governance with the urban regime theory: this combination would account for how the ECC was pursued and implemented at the local level not just due to its internal politics of coalition building, but also to how the local coalition interacts with actors and institutions from the other scales, be it national, European, international, and how the local context is placed within the broader economic and political environment.

This present paper is based on the theoretical claim that urban governance and the capacity to govern a city is socially produced by interscalar interactions and by the overlapping of interests and agendas of actors and institutions from different scales. The overlapping of interests and agendas make possible the pursuing of certain entrepreneurial strategies and in general urban governance. Thus, a coalition formed out of different actors and institutions can gain the capacity to pursue and implement effectively rescaling projects not just because of its favorable internal logics of the coalition building process, but also as a consequence of policies and actions of actors and institutions across geographical lines with complementing and sometimes competing agendas. This overlapping and fusing of interests and agendas can give rise to narratives of success which are used to legitimate the correctness and effectiveness of past measures and also of future ones. These existing narratives veil the power structures at the urban level and obscure the origins and consequences of these stories.

A similar narrative of success built around Sibiu as the ECC of the year 2007 provided the starting point, the spark for pursuing the research. Therefore, the research for this paper focuses on Sibiu, a Romanian city, which gained in 2004 the title for ECC after the municipality received an invitation from the Luxembourg' officials to bid for the ECC 2007 title together with Luxembourg and the Greater Region. Sentences like the following one are common in the media and in the public perception: "Incontestably, the city's gain due to the

implementation of this cultural policy was enormous” (Vasiliu 2009:88). The title held by Sibiu in 2007 is presented at all scales as a success story of the ECC programme and especially at a local and national level as a model of development through culture: expressions like “the Sibiu model” and “the success of Sibiu” are highly present in the mainstream local and national public discourse. The present paper stems from the initial intention of providing an analysis of how the success story surrounding the ECC programme in Sibiu emerged and through what processes and circumstances such discourses emerged and have been established. These narratives of success built around the ECC and the economic redevelopment of Sibiu interaction with representations of Sibiu as “the model city of European-ism” in the year of Romania's integration in the EU (Iohannis in Iancu 2007) and with representations of Sibiu as a model of ethnic cooperation compared with other cities from Transylvania (Dragoman 2007; 2008; Vasiliu 2009; 2008).

Through the lenses of urban regime theory and multiscalearity, this paper will analyze how actors and institutions from different scales with their specific interests and agendas interacted and made possible the bidding and implementation of the ECC in Sibiu and what were the consequences of this interaction and overlapping of interests on the local level, on urban governance.

Using the narrative of success as an entry point into the field site, the main argument advanced in this paper is that the overlapping of scalar agendas makes possible the bidding, preparation and implementation of the ECC and also urban governance in general. The successful pursuing of entrepreneurial strategies does not depend just on a competent and resourceful local coalition of actors and institutions, but also on an advantageous position within circuits of capital flows or within the urban hierarchy and on the interaction of the local scale with resourceful actors and institutions from other scales.

The paper consists of the following parts: this introduction is followed by a literature

review, a description of the methodology used, the analysis and conclusion. The literature review will present theories of urban politics: first, it will focus on urban regime theory, while assessing its advantages and limitations. Since the local and voluntaristic bias characteristic of urban regime theory is clearly problematic when dealing with the implementation of a European cultural policy at the local level which requires the involvement of the national government, another part of the literature review will deal with the regulation theory and the scalar perspective on urban politics.

The first chapter of the analysis entitled *The Structured Context of the Invitation* will provide a description of the context in which the invitation from Luxemburg's officials to the municipality of Sibiu came. The invitation for participation will be contextualized and analyzed from the perspective of different scales and their interscalar relations, with their interests and agendas: the first section will present the context of the European cultural policy and more precisely the context of the ECC policy and what type of interscalar relations it generates; the second section focuses on the interests and agenda of Luxembourg's officials to invite Sibiu to participate with them, while the third one, on the practices of cultural diplomacy pursued by actors and institutions from the Romanian national level and on the intergovernmental relations between Romanian, Luxembourgian and EU actors and institutions; the fourth section follows the structured context of the invitation from the local perspective and places the invitation in the architecture of urban governance complexity and in relation with the interaction between local and non-local actors in urban governance.

The second chapter of the analysis entitled *Urban Governance and the Post-Invitation Context* focuses on the post-invitation time period and analyzes the following aspects: how the bidding and implementation of the ECC were pursued and articulated by actors and institutions at a local level, what was the influence and interaction with actors and institutions from other scales and what was the relation and effects of the ECC on urban governance. The

first section will present how the application for the title was pursued and articulated at the local level by a specific configuration of actors and institutions and what were the internal politics of coalition building: who was and who was not part of the ECC bidding coalition, how the coming together was accomplished, what message it articulated, what conflicts this process generated. The second section will present how the bidding itself went and will briefly analyze the reasons for its success in the EU selection panel and the interaction of different scalar agendas in this bid (the interaction between the EU and the local level, between Luxembourg's officials and the local level, between the national government and the local level and the interests and agendas of each part in the bidding process). The last part of this section will focus on the implementation of the ECC programme and on the effects of the ECC title on urban governance.

Chapter 1. Literature review

The first part will present urban regime theory with its emphasis on contingency and on the study of the flow of events over time. However, considering that globalization, the rescaling of statehood and the increased influence of the EU greatly problematize the local and contingency tendency characteristic of urban regime theory, the last part of the overview will turn towards regulation theory and the scalar approach to urban development in order to embed urban regime analysis. At the end of this chapter, I provide an account of how the research is placed in regards with the relevant theoretical literature on urban politics.

1.1. Urban Politics and Urban Regime Theory

At their basic definition, theories of urban politics attempt to explain “how interests contend for power over the distribution of resources and why some win while others lose” (Strom and Mollenkopf 2006:9). The first theories developed in order to answer these questions were the elite theory and the pluralist theory. As its name suggests, the elite theory of urban politics is based on a view of the power structure as highly stratified and of policies and decisions as being highly influenced or imposed by a small elite and “concerns itself with relations between the rulers and the ruled, the powerful and the powerless” (Harding in Judge et al. 1995:35). Usually, elite theory of urban politics put an emphasis on the power of the business community. Regarding the growth machine theory of Logan and Molotch (1987), it can be argued that it refines the elite theory by concentrating on the politics of urban development and not just on the decision-making process of local governmental structures: the growth machine is formed between the “rentiers” whose proprieties gain value in case of

economic development and their allies in the growth machine, the business community.

Pluralism theory was developed by Dahl ([1961] 1989) in opposition to elite theory in order to describe and analyze how decisions are really made: although he did not deny the inequalities between individuals and groups in terms of their resources and power to influence policies and decisions, Dahl (1961) argued that many interest groups are able to compete and to influence urban policy-making and policy-decision since inequalities are dispersed and power is fragmented and decentralized (Judge et al. 1995). The normative expectations built into pluralism were highly criticized, although the use of “urban pluralism as an empirical descriptive theory” is still present in studies of urban politics, especially in the ones informed by urban regime theory (Judge et al. 1995).

As part of the urban politics literature, urban regime theory was developed in the '80s by Stone (1989) as an attempt to resolve the debate between the elite and pluralist theory of urban politics: for him, the duo elite hegemony – pluralistic politics is “either a false dualism or as theoretically driven historical or empirical question”, just like other conceptual duos: “economic determinism – political machinations, external – structural determinants, local – social constructions” (Judge et al. 1995). Stone (1989) argued that the elite – pluralist theory debate is resolved through urban regime theory which was presented as a hybrid between the structuralist (Logan and Molotch 1987; Peterson 1981) and pluralist approach (Dahl [1961] 1989). Thus, from the pluralists the decisional methodology was kept: the empirical description of who was involved in local governance decisions and how they were involved. It is important to note that urban regime theory appeared in the '80s when the neoliberal shift in urban governance became increasingly visible. The shift from government to governance in local politics implied that different private interests started being increasingly involved or increasingly sought by the local government to be involved in decision-making or in urban restructuring (in Stone's perspective, private interests are not necessarily business interests).

For this reason, the need to describe the new forms of urban governance in which different private interests were coming together influenced the inclusion of “urban pluralism as an empirical descriptive theory” in urban regime theory, although pluralism was negated of its normative expectations with the inclusion of structural assumptions inspired by elite theory and growth machine theory, like assumptions of the primacy of business interests among private interests, “assumptions of business’s key role in local policy and that local governing regimes use policy to maintain the coalition” (Lauria 1996:122).

According to Stone (1989), the core of the urban regime is “the process through which the city hall has to come to terms with private interests” (X) in order to form “an informal yet relatively stable” link between local authorities and private interests as a way of facilitating urban restructuring goals and the decision-making process on the long term, or more broadly said, as a way of facilitating the long term governing of the city (Stone 1989:4-5). The reason why these arrangements with private interests are needed to “surround and complement the formal workings of governmental authority” (3) is first due to the fact that private interests groups have a different access to institutional, economic and social resources than local governments and secondly is because of the fact that local governments are “constrained by the need to promote investment activity in an economic arena dominated by private ownership” and thus they are limited by the need to accommodate business interests in order to maintain and attract investors (7). Having resource mobilization and exchange as a reference point, the urban regime theory appears as a theoretical account of “the internal politics of coalition building” (178) focused on who is part of the coalition, how the coming together was accomplished and with what consequences. Moreover, studies informed by urban regime theory have to explain how a coalition of the local government and private interests was formed and maintained even when confronted with resistance, since an urban coalition qualifies as an urban regime only if it stands the test of time, since a regime is “a

particular type of long-term stable relationship between governmental and non-governmental partners” (Judge et al. 1995:57).

One of the advantages of applying urban regime theory is the fact that the focus on the internal politics of coalition building best explain how actors mobilized and exchanged resources and how they worked across institutional lines in order to implement governing decisions, why the local governing regime and why various policies, initiatives and decisions took the particular form they did. Thus, urban regime theory is at its best when the research is focused on a specific place and time, on concrete social practices or policies in urban politics.

The advantages which derive from the focus on the internal dynamics of the local governing coalition are also considered as the drawbacks of urban regime theory by proponents of contextual theory, of approaches relating to globalization, regulation theory and especially to the scalar approach to urban politics (Judge et al. 1995; Stoker 1998; Tretter 2008).

1.2. Regulation Theory and the Scalar Perspective on Urban Politics

Proponents of contextual theories of urban politics argue that the focus of urban regime theory on the internal politics of the process of local coalition building sets any study informed solely by this theory in a localist trap since it fails to place the analysis in a broader context of economic and political environment and of processes of economic and political change (Judge et al. 1995; Lauria 1996; Stoker 1998).

For this reason, urban regime theory appears to define the world by the geographical boundaries of cities which seem to have an unrealistic high degree of local autonomy (Judge et al. 1995). Thus, urban regime theory assumes that the powerful “reside within the relevant

boundaries” (Judge et al. 1995:66-7) failing to take into account that local governments are empowered to make certain decisions and that higher levels of governance can influence urban governance. Thus, actors and institutions involved in urban decision making have a relative autonomy in relation with the broader economic and political environment and in relation with non-local levels of governance or sources of policy (like the state or supranational organizations).

At this point, the overview will turn towards the scalar approach to urban politics of development and towards contextual theory (e.g. globalization and regulation theory) (Judge et al. 1995; Stoker 1998), which according to Stoker (1998), “provide a notable addition to the terrain of urban politics when comparing the situation in urban politics literature of the 1990s with that of the 1970s” (127) and help contextualize the changes in urban politics and in the formation and maintenance of an urban regime, although these theories can not explain urban regimes on their own (Jessop 1996; Judge et al. 1995; Lauria 1996; Stoker 1998; Tretter 2008).

Jessop (1996) argued that the expansion and the enhanced role of urban governance involves a loss of autonomy by the state apparatus: “the postfordist state will typically be hollowed-out with functions shed downward to regional and local governments and upward to international structures like the European Union” (67). For Jessop (1996), the relationship between postfordism and urban politics is characterized as the expansion of local governance and the increasing influence of supranational intergovernmental regimes or to transnational policy networks.

Firstly, considering that in postfordism, urban governance implies a variety of actors and institutions from a variety of spatial scales, the localist tendency of urban regime theory to assume that the relevant actors and institutions reside within the city limits seems especially problematic when dealing with the implementation of a EU policy at a local level.

For this reason, it is important to note the increasing influence and far-reaching effects of EU institutions, policies and regulations on urban areas, the increased connection between local governance structures and non-local, European sources of policy change. Not just neoliberal restructuring, but also European integration appears as “one of the driving forces behind the shifting conditions under which municipalities operate” (Articus 2005:1). Articus (2005) and Cento Bull and Jones (2006) argue that local governance structures have more leverage in pursuing restructuring projects due to EU legislation and funding which encourage the development of a form of urban governance in which the local level acts in partnership with the actors and institutions from the EU level.

Secondly, the role of the state should also be included into accounts of the working of urban governance since the state was not simply hollowed-out and continues to be an important player at the global level. For this reasons, a scalar perspective on urban politics which accounts for the role of the state is needed to complement urban regime theory since “regimes need to be placed in the architecture of governmental complexity” (Judge et al. 1995:67). According to scale theorists (Brenner 2004; Brenner and Theodore 2002; Brenner et al. 2003), the rescaling of statehood is not a spatially homogeneous process affecting all cities and regions in a similar way: the state is not an even entity on its territory and state policies are applied differently. Consequently, the location of a city in urban hierarchies, the relation between the state and the city and the position of the city in relation with regional and national flows of investment and public funds contribute to the competitiveness of that city and increase or decrease the potential for the local governance structure to pursue entrepreneurial strategies. Thus, the possibility of the local governance structure to employ entrepreneurial strategies should be linked not just with the increased influence of the EU or other supranational organizations or transnational policy networks, but also with the fact that the state contributes to an uneven development within its territory which enhance the

possibility of certain cities to pursue restructuring projects. Therefore, higher levels of governance have the capacity to influence the structure and outcomes not just of the entrepreneurial strategies employed by local governance, but of local governance itself.

In contemporary context, the local governance structure is relatively autonomous to pursue entrepreneurial strategies, but it needs to draw in the state and other supranational actors, organizations or policy networks. According to Caglar (2007), scale theorists argue that the possibility of local governance structures to pursue entrepreneurial strategies is partially based on their existing resources and depends more on their position in the national and international urban power hierarchy and capital flow and the possibility to attract the involvement of supranational actors.

Since the formation of urban regimes were one of the consequences of neoliberal restructuring at the local level, description and analysis of an urban regime is what could be called a description and analysis of “actually existing neoliberalism” in urban governance (Brenner and Theodore 2002). For this reason, I argue that studies informed by urban regime theory can easily be integrated in the narrative of neoliberal shift in urban governance, in the narrative of neoliberal restructuring. The local level accounts of urban regimes and coalitions formation can be easily complemented with an analysis of wider economic and political changes and these wider tendencies enable or not the capacity of local actors and institutions to pursue development and govern the city. Moreover, I consider that it is not necessarily true that studies informed by urban regime theory enter into a direct contradiction with regulation theory. Although there were attempts to combine these two theories for better studies of urban governance (Lauria 1996), some authors like Painter (Lauria 1996) argued that the marriage between regulation theory and urban regime theory is largely problematic. One of the reasons given for the rejection of the combination between the regulation and urban regime theory is the fact that the urban regime theory was conceived as “an explicit attempt to move away

from political economy explanations for urban politics and change that is offered by regulation theory” (Tretter 2008:98). I argue that this not the case because the urban regime theory was conceived as an explicit attempt to bypass taking theoretical sides with traditional dichotomies: it tried to resolve the debate between the elite and pluralist theory of urban politics. Indeed, urban regime theory has certain assumptions both from the structuralist and pluralist approach to urban governance, but it would hasty to argue that urban regime theory was conceived against the political economy of urban politics: for studies informed by urban regime theory, the duality between the primacy of business interests or political interests and the duality between hegemonic control or pluralistic control are “theoretically driven historical or empirical questions”. The same could be said about the duality between the urban regime theory and the regulation theory, between the economic politics of urban development and the political economy of urban development: that the preponderance or gain of one over the other is “theoretically driven historical or an empirical question” (Judge et al. 1995).

Although urban governance and the success of its strategies are heavily dependent on the interscalar relations and on the overlapping of interests and agendas between scales, studies which deal with projects of redevelopment rarely address in a joint effort all scales and their interscalar relations. This paper aims to bring together urban regime theory and a multiscale perspective on urban governance: the aim is to introduce the role and influence of non-local actors and institutions on the formation and maintenance of stable governing arrangements between governmental and nongovernmental interests.

Chapter 2. Methodology

In order to address how the interaction between actors and institutions from different scales and the overlapping of their agendas and interests made possible in particular the bidding and implementation of an urban entrepreneurial strategy like the ECC and in general urban governance, this paper aims to bring together urban regime theory and a multiscalar perspective on urban governance.

First of all, it was important to focus on the specificity of the ECC and to address the fact that the ECC itself has more levels of action and is used and conceptualized differently at different scales: at the European level, it is a cultural policy created by bureaucrats to improve the image of the EU and to attempt to create a feeling of belonging; at the national level, state officials mobilize the European-ism of the programme to promote national interests and a certain national identity and image; and that at the local level, various actors and institutions with access to resources and in certain power positions use it as a pretext to pursue urban development and therefore the ECC becomes entangled in various issues related with urban governance and the formation of bidding and implementation coalitions.

Therefore, since the paper is a combination between the multiscalar perspective and the urban regime theory which focuses on the urban governance of the ECC in a specific place, the methodology had to address how the different scales interact with each other at the local level (or with relevance for the local level) and more precisely to deal with the influence of the interaction of scales on the local structure of urban governance.

One level of the methodology focused on the ECC as a policy and followed how the policy evolved and how policy documents reflect the localization of a European policy at the local level. A focus on ECC as a policy is useful because it can shed light on the “workings of multiple, intersecting and conflicting power structures which are local but tied to non-local

systems” (Shore and Wright 1997:14) and it can make easier connections between different levels and forms of action and authority.

Therefore, as data sources, I used EU legislation, policy papers and official publications related to the EU cultural policy and to the ECC programme. The sources of data used did not consist of just general legislation or publications which could apply to all ECC cases, but also reports and studies commissioned by the EU institutions, national institutions or local coalitions regarding the implementation of the programme and its effects and impact. Therefore, I followed the ECC from the general to the particular. To study a particular ECC (in this case, Luxembourg and mostly Sibiu) also meant to follow its evolution and to study how this evolution is reflected at various stages of the process in official reports and documents issued by actors and institutions from different scales¹. It is important to note that this level of methodology which focuses on ECC as a policy and on how it is reflected in official documents is subsumed into the characteristic methodology of urban regime theory, the methodology which follows events and happenings sequentially over time (legislation, reports and studies as moments which should be studied because they reflect in a certain degree the view of the issuing organization and also because they can shape future occurrences).

Since the focus of this paper is on how the ECC was pursued and articulated at the local level, how it was made possible by the interaction between actors and institutions from different scales and with what effects for the urban governance of the ECC in Sibiu, another

1 The following data sources were used: key EU policy and legislative documents (ex-article 151 of the Rome Treaty 1957, Maastricht Treaty, Resolution on ECoC 1985, Decision on the Kaleidoscope programme 1996, Proposal 1997, Decision on ECoC 1999, Decision on ECoC 2005, Guide for applicant cities for the ECoC title), documents, research papers and reports of evaluation commissioned by the European Commission/ the EU institutions (ECOTEC 2009;; Palmer/ Rae Reports on the ECC programmes from 1995 until 2004; European Commission 2009), studies and reports of evaluation commissioned by the local coalition of the ECC or by the national government (CSCDC 2007b; 2008b; Darasteanu 2007; Nistor 2007), studies or papers written by members of the association which bidded for the title and implemented the programme (Craiut 2007; Radu 2008). Also, the original application of Sibiu for the title and the documents issued by EU institutions in the process of bidding were used as data sources (e.g.: the report issued by the selection panel, the recommendation for a Council Decision, the final Council decision which nominated Sibiu).

source of data should focus on the bidding and implementation of the ECC in Sibiu and its urban governance. For this purpose, I used extensive newspaper coverage ranging from 1997 until 2010, both from newspapers from the local and national level. Moreover, for the 2004 – 2006 period, I used the archive of the municipality with newspaper articles about the ECC programme, archive which I had been given access to during the research period.

Finally, I interviewed 20 individuals who were participants in the political, administrative, cultural, civic life of Sibiu or which were involved in the pursuing and implementation of the ECC. Thus, the interviewees were part of the following institutions: the municipality and local structures of authority, cultural institutions, local press and local NGOs; the majority of them were directly involved in the ECC coalition or participated in the ECC programme. In the analysis, I will not quote from them. Firstly, because the interviews were confidential (and not on a for-attribution basis) and it would be highly problematic to ensure their anonymity considering that the majority of them are public figures which represent a certain institution and whose opinions are somehow public (thus, their discourse will disclose them).

Secondly, the interviewees were not important for recalling what happened (for that, I used newspaper coverage and official reports and publications), but for pointing out aspects of context and background or other occurrences which evaded my attention and especially for providing insights in the workings of the ECC coalitions and of the urban regime. In short, my approach on this is similar to the one proposed by Stone (1989) for the study of urban regimes: all the information, occurrences and facts I use in the analysis are fully public and the analysis I provide reflects on the patterns of this public information. The analysis is not (meant to be read as) a detective novel which points to and tries to solve issues of corruption and “is not an account of a hidden conspiracy or secret protocol” (259). When studying the governing arrangements of urban regimes, I argue that this issue always appears as

problematic and needs to be dealt with. My solution to this is not to use information obtained out of confidential interviews for the recording of events and to use only information which is fully public, either from newspapers and legislation or from official studies and reports.

Although in the research period I followed or attempted to follow the events or happenings related to the ECC and to urban governance sequentially over time, this aspect is not totally reflected in the analysis. The analysis breaks the sequential framework on scales and groups events or happenings according to their scalar level and their interscalar relation. For example, when presenting the interaction of a specific scale with the local level of governance, I mostly present my analysis in a sequential order following the flow of events which have importance for that specific scale and for the interaction with the local level or with other scales.

The style of presenting and ordering the analysis can give an impression that I conceptualize the European, national and local scale as Russian puppets and that my analysis is a clear manifestation of “our contemporary scalar thought” which is characterized by “the idea that political bodies such as *cities, regions, nations, states, leagues, federations* relate to each other in an exclusive and hierarchical way, whereas in reality their existence is fluid, multiple and overlapping” (Isin in Syssner 2010). Although I do not argue against the fact that the style of presenting the analysis gives this impression, the findings of the analysis which I present argues that a distinctive scale does not limit social relations within some territorial bounds and that the interaction of interest and agendas between different actors and institutions from different scales makes possible certain types of action at different scales, not necessarily in a hierarchical way (eg.: actors and institutions from the local level can make possible a type of action at the national or European level; not just the European level can determine actions in the national or local level). Also, the way I characterize and conceptualize scales does not express that scales are naturalized, rigid and hierarchical, but

that “the scales of human action, particularly juridical and administrative scales, are emergent and tentative and exist only as features of the social world in and through human practice” (Tretter 2008:91). Thus, the way I present the interaction between scales in the analysis is a feature and is indicative of how the actors and institutions involved in the ECC programme conceptualize themselves and use through their practices “the scalar thought”.

Chapter 3. The Structured Context of the Invitation

In the 10th of February 2004, a mission of Luxembourg officials was present in Sibiu to prepare the 30th March visit to Sibiu of the Grand Duke Henri and Grand Duchess Maria Teresa of Luxembourg. During this preparation visit in his talks with the mayor of the city of Sibiu Karl Iohannis, Guy Dockendorf, general director in the Minister of Culture from Luxembourg, invited Sibiu to apply for the ECC 2007 title together with Luxemburg and offered the support of the officials of Luxembourg for the candidacy of Sibiu. Although, in 1997 a local committee of initiative was formed in order to pursue the 2007 or 2008 ECC title (NG 2007), Sibiu's application for the title would have been unlikely without the support of Luxembourg (or of another country) since the European Commission decided since 1999 the countries which will host this event until 2019. More precisely, it was already decided since 1999 that a city from Luxemburg will hold the title in 2007 and one from UK in 2008 (European Commission 1999), thus the bidding of Sibiu for the title was determined by the invitation and support received from Luxembourg officials, although it initially conflicted with the regulations of the EU. It would be a mistake to focus the analysis on only how the local structure pursued the bidding and implemented the ECC programme, since the invitation from Luxembourg was essential as a starting point, as a push in the formation of an urban coalition for the application for the title.

Happenings or events do not simply happen, Stone (1989) argues, but they occur in a structured context. Hence, the invitation from Luxembourg officials and the bidding of Sibiu as ECC 2007 along with the city of Luxembourg occurred in a structured context which needs to be analyzed in order to grasp more accurately the situation which led to the invitation and which thus influenced how the bidding and the implementation occurred, how a coalition was formed for the bidding and implementation. Since one of the arguments of

this paper is that the invitation from Luxembourg was socially produced by the interactions between different scales and by the overlapping of interests of actors and institutions from different scales, the structured context of the invitation must be analyzed from the perspective of actors and institutions from different spatial scales (local, regional, national, European) and their interscalar relations (e.g.: between the city and the state, between the city, the state and Luxembourg).

3.1. The European Level and the ECC policy

First of all, the invitation for bidding was placed in the context of the European cultural policy and more precisely in the context of the ECC policy. In order to understand how the invitation came to be, it is important to briefly present the history and development of the ECC policy, an aspect of importance when later discussing the bidding, preparation and implementation of the title and of importance for analyzing the increased influence and effects that EU institutions, policies and regulations can have on urban areas, even when these policies or regulations do not strictly address the economic issues.

The reluctance of EU member states to transfer powers to the EU in cultural matters (Schäfer 2004) made culture a battlefield highly caught in representational and political struggles between member states (Shore 2000). This issue was somehow solved in two ways: firstly, by replacing the initial goal of cultural unity of the European Communities with the more acceptable theme of “unity in diversity” and secondly, the cultural field had been gradually drawn into the domain of the Community law from the economic side, especially from the side of the more “economic” aspects of cultural activities increasingly influenced by EU laws and regulations (Loman et al. 1992). Shore (in Shore and Wright 1997) gives the example of audiovisual policy and analyzed how the boundary between culture and

commerce was manipulated in the case of national broadcasting and media in order to articulate claims related to the harmonization or not of the national mass media.

Although the Treaty of Rome (1957) had given no legal competence to the Commission to intervene in the cultural sector and although only the Treaty of Maastricht (1992) “recognized formally for the first time the cultural dimension of European integration” (EC 2008), granting and regulating the powers which the Community has in cultural affairs, the European Commission could and did become involved before the adoption of the Treaty of Maastricht in the cultural matters of its member states through funding, incentive measures and cultural initiatives: the Council can “adopt incentive measures, excluding any harmonization of the laws and regulations of the Member States” (EC 1957). The European Capital of Culture programme is one of those cultural initiatives.

ECC was established in 1985 in order “to help bring the peoples of the Member States closer together” (European Commission 1985): it was decided that a city per year will act as “the European city of culture” and will host a year-long festival to promote common European identity. Along with other cultural policies, Shore (1993; 2000) argued, it was designed at the EU level by bureaucrats in order to realize the EU project of political unity rooted culturally and to stimulate the creation of a new type of subject (the European subject) appropriate for the envisioned political project. Thus, the rationale that drove the emergence of this policy was political and ideological from the perspective of the EU project and of EU bureaucrats.

When analyzing EU legislation, policy papers and official publications related with cultural policy and the ECC policy, it becomes apparent that the ECC policy has undergone a process of significant change: an increasing complexity, the introduction of longer times for application, of a more competitive tendering process and of EU selection panels instead of an intergovernmental basis of designation, the introduction of official guides for applicant cities,

the increased production of official reports, the building up of transnational networks of agencies and experts which deal with this policy. One of the most evident changes is the one regarding the type of cities which apply and host the festival. If the first five cities which hold the ECC title were already established cultural centers (like Athens, Florence, Amsterdam, Berlin and Paris), starting with 1990 and with the nomination of Glasgow, the majority of applicant and hosting cities were not part of the established cultural destinations of Europe, but deindustrialized cities or cities in search of redevelopment which used the ECC policy as an economic tool. Thus, in many cities, at the local level this policy was integrated within urban development agendas and “oriented towards obtaining some kind of profitability” (Herrero et al. 2006:43).

It should not be considered that the rationale behind the ECC policy shifted to a more economic view of cultural policy, but that two different agendas exist at two different scales, the European and local scale. Culture is still politicized at the EU level, but at the local level there is an increasing commodification of this politicization of culture and through this, of any element of cultural distinctiveness². Thus, through this policy, EU bureaucrats can pursue their political objectives of improving the Commission's image and identity and become involved in the cultural matters of its member states through the funding and the implication in the economic development of that city (Vasiliu 2009). Hence, “Europeanists appealed to the interests of local elites, who conjoined their interests with those of the EC” (Tretter 2008:97-8). While EU offers only a fraction of the total cost (less than 2% of the total cost of the ECC programme) in exchange for the image campaign for the European Commission which the ECC represents for EU bureaucrats, at the local level, ECC gives the local structure an unquestionable pretext for urban development and the ability to exploit the economic

² It became common practice to use as valuable resources the city's history, heritage, culture, ethnic composition (multiculturalism, cosmopolitanism, cultural diversity) or quality of life within the city's symbolic economy (Ashworth and Tunbridge 1990; Boyer 1994; Boyle and Hughes 1991; Judd and Fainstein 1999; Prato 2009; Sezneva 2005; Zukin 1995).

potential of the cultural policy. Thus, the ECC policy creates a possibility for a partnership and for the overlapping of agendas between the European Commission (EC) and the local level by bypassing the nation-state.

Although the invitation for bidding, the bidding itself and the implementation of the policy are enmeshed in this wider context which emphasizes the role of the local structure and EU institutions, the application for the bidding cannot be pursued only between the EC and the local level and needs the involvement of the state authorities and other non-local actors. This aspect becomes obvious in the case of Sibiu since the 1999 Decision did not list that a city from Romania will host this event until 2019 and thus the involvement of non-local actors and institutions, especially the involvement of the Luxembourg officials and of the Romanian central government, was central to the possibility of the local structure to pursue the ECC title. Just like any other element of the ECC process, the invitation for bidding was socially produced at different scales: it was determined by the interaction between actors and institutions from different scales with different agendas. Thus, it is important to analyze the structured context of the invitation from the perspective of other scales than local and European: the involvement of the Luxembourg officials, of the state structure, and the relationship between the Romanian and Luxembourgian government and how this relationship was reflected at the local level and used by the local structure to gain leverage in relation with other potential cities.

3.2. Luxembourg and the Myth of Common Origins

Since 1999, due to the rotational system of designation, it was decided that the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg will choose again a city for the ECC title, title held in 1995 by the city of Luxembourg. The officials of the Grand Duchy decided that the city of Luxembourg will

host again the festival and in May 2003 an application was presented in front of an EU selection panel, but “at this stage, the panel could not approve the candidacy as it stood” (EC 2004:4). Thus, the 2003 application from Luxembourg was rejected on the basis that it did not bring “added value” when comparing the application proposed with the programme held by the same city in 1995. In this situation, a new or a modified proposal was expected from the Luxembourg team. This was forwarded to the selection panel in February 2004, after the Luxembourg officials invited Sibiu to apply with them and modified the proposal so that its themes included the cultural projects pursued in collaboration with Sibiu and more precisely the connection between Sibiu and Luxembourg.

The main theme of Luxembourg's ECC programme was migration and it included besides the city of Luxembourg also the Greater Region which is composed of four other surrounding regions from different countries: Lorraine, Rhineland-Palatinate, Saarland and the Wallon Region. It was not for the first time when the ECC title was applied to a city and its region, but it was the first time when this region was composed from parts from different countries. If what is called the Greater Region was already known as an economic region, the rationale of the programme was to bypass borders, not just geographical but also cultural, and to establish the Greater Region as a cultural region, not just economic. The inclusion of the Greater Region in the ECC programme was present in the proposal which was rejected in 2003, but this inclusion and the migration theme was given a much desired twist through its partnership with Sibiu: migration was presented not just as a contemporary phenomena, but as a historical one which establishes a connection between Sibiu and Luxembourg and extends the cultural areal of Luxembourg's influence. Thus, Sibiu was chosen due to this historical link: “The Saxons of Transylvania living in Sibiu, descendants of settlers who founded the city in the 12th century, actually speak a language which is very akin to Moselle Frankish as spoken in the area lying between the Moselle and the Rhine” (LuxECoC

2007:33). Dragoman (in Vasiliu 2009:115-40) argues that the motive why Sibiu was invited to apply for the title together with Luxembourg is linked with the “identity dilemma” of Luxembourg. The myth of the common origins of Luxembourg and Sibiu provides historical depth and importance to a micro-state like Luxembourg (and a connection with Western Europe to a small East European city).

The officials of Luxembourg (and Romanian officials) made explicit references to the founding myths of the city of Sibiu by German colonists (Saxons) not just in terms of historical links, but also architectural and linguistic. Although significant differences were found, the thesis of similarity between the Luxembourg language and the language spoken now by Saxons in Transylvania still holds importance in public discourse. The fact that the thesis was disproved in 1905 “did not dislocate the Saxons from the Luxembourgian collective memory” (Dragoman in Vasiliu 2009:129) because of its symbolic function to consolidate the national identity of Luxembourg and to reinforce the idea that the language is the essential definition of the nation.

In brief, for the officials of Luxembourg, the invitation was made to Sibiu due to the myth of common origins and to the persistence of the thesis of dialectical similarity. Thus, the ECC provided a context and a pretext in which Luxembourg officials made claims related to national identity and in which nostalgia for a mythological golden age was expressed. At first glance, the fact that a policy which should focus on the European cultural dimension is used to reinforce national identity and Luxembourgian nationalism appears as ironic or contradictory, but this apparent contradiction has to do with how the European dimension of the ECC policy is vaguely defined and pursued in such a way that can satisfy all parties from different scales: in this case, the European Commission spreads, improves its image and attempts to induce a sense of belonging and identification with EU through insignificant funding, the local elites use ECC as a pretext to pursue development, the Luxembourg

officials make claims related to national identity and state legitimacy, while at the same time the Romanian officials made claims related to their own national identity through practices of cultural diplomacy, through the relationship and historical link between Sibiu and Luxembourg and through the ECC programme.

3.3. Cultural Diplomacy and State Rescaling

For this reason, the analysis will now turn to how the invitation for bidding was influenced by practices of cultural diplomacy pursued by actors and institutions from the Romanian national level and by the interaction between Romanian, Luxembourg and EU actors and institutions and how this intergovernmental relationship and its characteristics were used by the local structure to gain leverage in relation with other potential cities³ in the organization of European events of cultural diplomacy and ultimately in the invitation for bidding.

After 1989, the emphasis on the German heritage of cities from Transylvania in public discourse and diplomacy were part of the broader post-socialist repackaging of national imagery which heavily stressed the Western commonality and the historical and cultural ties of Romania with Western Europe (Light 2006). If socialism was characterized by the ideological historical rewriting which emphasized national values and “indigenism”, by the downplaying of the German past of cities and by practices of displacement of the German population, post-socialist discourse and diplomacy likewise reconstructed the past in order to meet the demands of its present: it stressed the country's adherence to European norms and values and to “Westernism” from which it was “only temporarily detached during the period

³ The phrase *potential cities* refers especially to the seven cities from Transylvania which were founded by German colonizers (Saxons) and which thus had German ethnics: Bistrita, Brasov, Cluj Napoca, Medias, Sebes, Sibiu, Sighisoara.

of state socialism” (Light 2006:263).

This repackaging of national imagery with its emphasis on the Western commonality and more specifically on the German heritage of cities did not have effects only at the discursive level, but also material effects through cultural diplomacy and through the measures undertaken by public actors and institutions. The state regulations and political practices related to post-socialist repackaging affected the urban hierarchy of cities and contributed to the development of a new map of unevenness, to the creation of new territorial inequalities within the national territory. This improved the positionality in the urban hierarchy of cities with German heritage: since the policies and practices which the state pursues are not uniformly distributed, certain cities were advantaged in relation with others. The leverage and competitive advantage which Sibiu gained in relation with other cities should be understood in this broader context which was legitimized through historical arguments, not through the conceptual needs of the present to reclaim the country's Europeanism.

Among the first measures the state officials took was the organization of *The Days of Romanian Culture* in Luxembourg in April 1993. This event was organized by the Romanian Ministry of Culture which invited members of Sibiu's academic sphere. Moreover, a year later in 1994, an accord was signed between Romania and the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg regarding the cooperation in culture, education, science and sport (this accord for cooperation in the cultural field was renewed since then almost every two years starting with the 2000s). In the same day, 25th April 1994, the Center for Studies and Documentation Romania – Luxembourg named *Pierre Werner*, part of the Romanian Academy, was inaugurated in Bucharest in the presence of the Grand Duke of Luxembourg and officials from the cultural sphere, which also visited Sibiu with this occasion (MAE 2004).

Furthermore, the Ministry of Culture, under the patronage of the Presidency of

Romania and with support and funding from UNESCO, organized a conference in Sibiu in May 1998 entitled *Sibiu – European Confluences*. Pierre Werner, the honorific president of the Luxembourg government after which the center was named, and Erna Henricot Schoepges, the minister of culture from Luxembourg visited Sibiu and were awarded the Honorary citizen title by the Local Council of Sibiu.

Later, in 1999, the campaign *Europe, a Common Patrimony* was held in Sibiu. It was sponsored by the Council of Europe and organized by the Romanian Ministry of Culture and the Department for culture, cults and cultural patrimony. In 2000 the name of this campaign, *Europe, a Common Patrimony*, became the new slogan of the European Days of Patrimony or Cultural Wealth (a 1991 joint initiative between the Council of Europe and EU) and this new slogan was launched in Bucharest by the Council of Europe under the aegis of the Romanian Ministry of Culture (MCC 2007). The then-president of Romania, Emil Constantinescu, and the then-minister of Culture, Ion Caramitru, were awarded the Honorary citizen title by the Local Council of Sibiu for their direct involvement in the campaign and for their involvement in the inclusion of Sibiu in the programs of the Council of Europe.

After these two programs of the Council of Europe and with the visits of Luxembourg officials, the Romanian authorities offered the Luxembourg government in 1999 a house for restoration, *The Red House* (later named *The Luxembourg House*), chosen for its striking architectural similarity with houses from the Luxembourgian historical center. The Minister of Culture put this house on the list of the buildings in need of urgent renovation. Later, around the year 2004, in this building, various institutions were opened or various projects held: a Luxembourgian cultural center, the headquarters of the Luxembourgian consulate, the project *The Dictionary of Saxons Dialects in Transylvania* and an office for the European Institute of Cultural Itineraries which started organizing a cultural itinerary between Luxembourg and Sibiu to follow the footsteps taken by the Saxons colonists in the 12th

century.

The practices described until this point between Romanian central authorities, European institutions and Luxembourg actors and institutions which emphasized from all levels the Westernism of the Romanian past, the German heritage and the myth of common origins could appear at first sight as unimportant, hazardous, officially needed practices of public diplomacy which had effects or were intended to have effects only at the discursive and representational level, but these practices of cultural diplomacy became greatly intermingled with practices which sought economic development. This mix between political-ideological and economic aspects became increasingly clear with the seminar *Sibiu – economic rehabilitation through culture* organized in February 1999 by the Romanian Ministry of Culture, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Romania and the Hanns Seidel Foundation. At this seminar, “a movie for the future of Sibiu” ordered since 1997 by the minister of culture Ion Caramitru, was presented to ambassadors, representatives of foreign cultural institutes, cultural ministers, representatives from the World Bank, UNESCO and EU and to directors of the most important German companies present in Romania. One of the most important motives for organizing this seminar was to attract German, Austrian and Luxembourgian investors in Sibiu, city was presented as part of the Germanic speaking cultural area.

This seminar organized in partnership between a governmental institution, an institution representative of the business interests and a representative of civil society in order to promote investments in a region and economic development through culture from below is indicative of the formation of new forms of governing arrangements between public and private interests, of broader transformations related to state rescaling and of the tendency of the state to increasingly engage as a mediator in “the production and transformation of places” (Brenner 2004:111).

In the same day as the above described seminar, the prime-minister of Romania signed a decree in which the city and county of Sibiu were declared a zone of national interest. This national targeting of a local and regional space for economic development is one of the characteristics of how national statehood was transformed after '89 and how through its policies, the state enhances the competitiveness of particular zones in relation with others. The discourses and practices related to post-socialist national repackaging and the intermeshing of state practices of cultural diplomacy with economic development, pursued by political actors irrespective of their political affiliations, greatly benefited certain cities in relation with others. This aspect helps explain why Sibiu gained access to a different type of resource and thus why Sibiu was able to engage in a different type of economic activity: the answer is not related to historical resources, but to the state practices which emphasized these historical resources as part of state image building and later as mediator for economic development from below.

The intergovernmental relationship between the Romanian and Luxembourg state and the general cultural diplomacy carried out by the Romanian government (in relation with other states and European institutions) legitimized Sibiu as the most important Saxon historical city and influenced greatly the possibility of the local structure to pursue the ECC title in tandem with Luxembourg. Moreover, this transformation of the state in postsocialism, state practices and its rescaling benefited the repositioning of Sibiu in the urban hierarchy and had wide-ranging effects on local governance and on the possibility and effectiveness of pursuing urban entrepreneurial activities, not just the ECC.

3.4. Local Governance and the Formation of the Urban Regime

If the previous sections placed the invitation for bidding in the architecture of state governmental, intergovernmental and European governmental complexity and analyzed how it fused the interests and agendas of actors and institutions from that scales, this part will map the structured context of the invitation from the local perspective and the relation between the invitation, the structures of local governance and non-local institutions and actors. As was already argued, the ECC policy provides the local governance structure with a pretext to pursue urban development. This section will examine the already existing governing arrangements at the moment of the invitation in 2004 and how the local structure of governance gained this capacity to pursue urban development in general and the ECC policy in particular, thus placing the invitation in the architecture of local governance complexity in relation with the context of interaction between local urban politics and non-local actors and institutions.

The central argument of this part is that at the moment of the invitation an urban regime already existed at the local level, a regime whose development was influenced by non-local actors and institutions. A description of how this urban regime came to be will be provided and of local policies and practices symptomatic of a move of the local structure towards a more entrepreneurial approach of governance. Urban governance in Sibiu had particular governing arrangements and was already characterized by a pro-growth, pro-market imaginary, developments which were influenced first, by a broader socio-economic context and second, by non-local actors and institutions.

First, the broader context in which Sibiu was enmeshed is going to be briefly presented, a context which imposed certain structural requirements on the urban politics of development. The implementation in the '90 of a market economy was marked by a rapid

deindustrialization which affected Sibiu as well, the reduced involvement of the state in the economy of cities, smaller provisions of basic amenities and funds offered by the state structure and an increased competition between cities to attract both investors and state funds. These changes created new economic spaces which were characterized by an increased decentralization and autonomy and required novel and more complex forms of economic coordination at the local level in order to seek to accomplish economic growth. These changing patterns of coordination were influenced by the decline in the role of local government: the local administration as the local representative of the state was no longer central to the development of the city since it lacked sufficient and adequate resources to pursue development. Thus, in order to accomplish that, the local government needed to draw in other groups which can complement its workings with their different access to institutional, economic and social resources. Indeed, the socio-economic restructuring in postsocialism meant an enhanced role for the local structure to pursue entrepreneurial strategies, to attract investors, to be involved in international economic activities, but only if the local government forms a broader coalition of forces by coming to terms with private interests (business interests, civil society, etc.), with a “highly diverse range of institutions of many different types, origins and histories” (Lauria 1996:26). If the link is stable, not short lived and not oriented only towards a task or single project, the coalition between the local government and private interests is, what Stone (1989) would call, an urban regime which is characterized as having a long-term beneficial influence for the pro-growth governing of a city.

This section is not an account only of how different actors and institutions from the local level came to be as a regime with its specific characteristics, but also of how non-local actors and institutions from national, European and international level had an influence in the formation of the urban regime, in providing resources and legitimation for its formation. In

the previous section, it was already presented how higher levels of authority can influence urban governance and how the national levels empowered the local governance structures to make certain decisions. Through its policies and practices of cultural diplomacy, the state stressed the German heritage of Sibiu and enhanced the competitiveness of Sibiu in relation with other cities in order to attract German, Austrian and Luxembourgian investors. Through this state-promoted “Germanness” of Sibiu, the local structure gained access to a certain of resource and to the possibility of pursuing certain types of urban entrepreneurial activities.

One of the consequences of these state measures and policies was the opening up of the headquarters of *The German Economic Club Transylvania* (DWS – Deutscher Wirtschaftsclub Siebenburgen) in Sibiu in March 1999, Club which acted as “a forum for ideas and business opportunities, where business people can discuss freely about the development of businesses” (Rollin qtd. in Bradu 2009). The Club was not limited to business people and companies from Germany, but it also included companies from Austria, the Netherlands and Switzerland: for its members, the club did not represent “just an economic space, but also a cultural one (...). It is a club due to the fact that the German language is spoken, it is not linked with citizenship” (Bottesch qtd. in Bradu 2009).

Moreover, at the beginning of the year 2000, *The German Society for Technical Cooperation* known as GTZ (Gessellschaft fur Technische Zusammenarbeit) started working and opened an office in Sibiu besides the coordination office held in Bucharest. GTZ is a private international enterprise owned by the German Federal Government and which works on the behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). Starting with the 2000, GTZ worked “to help Sibiu rehabilitate its ‘Old City’ district. All that time GTZ has been advising local inhabitants who want to protect their dwellings against further decay and to rehabilitate them step by step” (GTZ 2005b). The rehabilitation of the historical center was a joint project started in 2000 between the municipality of Sibiu

and the agency which acted on behalf of the German state: oriented not just towards offering support for the dwellers of the historical center, but also as a support for the City hall for the management of urban regeneration in order to improve “their administrative, legal, institutional and financial framework conditions and processes” and to train “skilled construction workers, architects and structural engineers (...) to oversee the renovations” (GTZ 2005a). Thus, GTZ was involved in the modernization process of the municipality structure and also in the training of expert knowledge for urban regeneration.

Regarding the political control over the municipality, until 2000, local elections for mayor were won by the Romanian Democratic Convention. For the local elections in June 2000, the Democratic Forum of Germans, a small party representing the German minority in Romania, participated with a representative in the elections, Klaus Werner Iohannis, who won with 69.18% in the second poll. The election of the candidate of a small minority party by an over 95% Romanian population for the mayoralty office was the basis of what became known as Sibiu's “exceptionalism” regarding the ethnic climate in comparison with the ethnic context of Transylvania. Various explanations were articulated in the media for this non-ethnic vote from the Romanian population in support of Iohannis: it was simply an utilitarian vote at that moment, a protest or disapproval vote against the situation in Sibiu until 2000 and against the Romanian political class from Sibiu (from which Iohannis was seen as not being included, as being above) or an election whose success could be explained due to “the favorable stereotypes which the ethnic Germans and the German community” have among the Romanian population (Dragoman in Vasiliu 2009:130). Indeed, Sibiu was characterized as “an eccentric urban context due to the non-ethnic behavior of its voters” (Dragoman in Vasiliu 2009:115), but in 2000 the Democratic Forum of Germans obtained the mayor office and only 6 positions in the Local Council out of 25. Thus, even if the party had obtained the mayor office, it did not have control over the decision-making process in the Local Council.

Because of this situation, the control over the formal machinery of local government was obtained through, what was heralded as a sign of multiculturalism, “the cooperation between elites of different ethnicity” (Dragoman in Vasiliu 2009:115), when in fact it was power-sharing, cooperation between different political parties for obtaining majority and thus control over the decision-making process in the governing of the city. Thus, in order to achieve control over local government, the formal governing arrangements were characterized by a cooperation achieved across ethnicity and party affiliation.

Starting with the 2000s, Sibiu was characterized in the mass media as undergoing a period of economic development which was not only an effect of the broader economic development that characterized Romanian economy with the beginning of the year 2000. Its development was linked with increased German foreign investments in Sibiu due to the strategies pursued by the local government.

Between 2001 and 2003, three industrial parks were constructed in Sibiu and in Sibiu's proximity: Selimbar Industrial Park Sibiu in 2001 which opened in 2003, Sura Mica Industrial Park in 2002 and the Western Industrial Area in Sibiu in 2003. Who are the stockholders of these industrial parks, how these initiatives were taken and what are their characteristics is indicative of a move of the local structure towards an entrepreneurial approach of urban governance. Also, it is indicative of how an urban regime was formed and who was part of it. Based on the analysis of the stockholders of the newly built industrial parks, the developments in urban politics are characterized by an increased diversity of types of institutions involved, by a shift towards the application of a public – private partnership in pursuing development, by the entrepreneurial turn which urban governance took.

For the implementation of the measures related the industrial parks, the structures of local government, composed of the County Council of Sibiu and the Local Council of Sibiu, Selimbar and Sura Mica, acted in partnership with the structure in Sibiu of Chamber of

Commerce, Industry and Agriculture and with the Center for Business Initiation and Development Sibiu. Moreover, as part of civil society, the Romanian – German Foundation from Sibiu was part of the stakeholders of the industrial parks. The Romanian – German Foundation from Sibiu is a NGO founded as a result of intergovernmental agreement between the German and Romanian Governments and whose objective is to supply high quality professional formation for adults in electrical engineering and also support for business development in this field. Thus, the Romanian-German Foundation acts as a professional coaching center for the labor force employed in the industrial parks. Moreover, since the principle on which these industrial parks were formed were “making enough land available at low cost” while providing for the enlargement and upgrading of the infrastructure (Municipality of Sibiu 2007:20), institutions, public or private, which could provide for the infrastructure were included as part of the governing coalition, like Water Conducts Inc. (S.C. Apă Canal S.A), Roads and Constructions Inc. (S.C. Drumuri și Prestări în Construcții S.A), Roads and Bridges Inc. (S. C. Drumuri și Poduri S.A.). Thus, in order to attract investors, the local government draws in the governing coalition institutions with different access to resources and with different areas of occupation: the structures of local government offered the needed land, the Romanian – German Foundation training for the employees, construction and infrastructure companies for providing infrastructure, etc.

The document which institutionalizes the entrepreneurial turn of the urban governance and the pro-market imaginary of the governing coalition is the development guide of Sibiu whose “guidelines for corporate design for the city of Sibiu” were produced between 2002 and 2003 (Municipality of Sibiu 2007:2). The guide is embedded with a business ethos whose language revolves around concepts like strengths, weaknesses, goals, objectives and with a preoccupation of attracting investors and pursuing development. One of the things of importance about the development of this guide is that it was produced by the municipality in

collaboration with two non-local, German institutions: *the Academy for German Civil Servants* (dbb akademie in Bonn) and the already mentioned GTZ (German Society for Technical Cooperation). The local administration, municipality and council, have underwent a process of modernization starting with the 2000s since the Academy for German Civil Servants starting offering consultations for the administrative process and for the modernization of the administration, working closely with the Regional training center for local public administration Sibiu. The Academy for German Civil Servants, the Regional training center, the municipality and GTZ worked closely for the development of the corporate guidelines for the city, for the development guide which officialized the pro-market imaginary and practice of the urban governing coalition.

Between 2001 and 2003, the majority of the investors involved in the newly opened industrial parks were from Germany, the Netherlands, Austria, Switzerland and Romania, and part of the German Economic Club Transylvania opened in 1999 in Sibiu. The German Economic Club had a close working relationship with the municipality regarding the development of the industrial parks, infrastructure projects and over Club investments in Sibiu.

Thus, for investors determined to achieve profits with their businesses in Sibiu, a good public administration and an administration open for investors were an important resource in order to achieve their goals. This is why institutions like GTZ, the German Economic Club and the Academy for German Civil Servants promoted a reform and a modernization of the public administration. Especially for foreign investors, it was a too useful resource to be employed meagerly.

Sibiu's governing coalition was driven especially by the business community built around the German Economic Club. This becomes evident with their involvement in the reform and modernization of administration and with their connections with other actors and

institutions (especially German institutions) which were involved in the governing process of Sibiu and in the modernization not just of administration, but also of infrastructure, quality of living and life, leisure. The non-local actors like GTZ and the Academy for German Civil Servants influenced urban governance and more precisely influenced the legitimation process and the formation of an urban regime in Sibiu. The urban regime consisted of a set of governing arrangements and close working relations formed with the beginning of the year 2000 between the local governments structures and a German-ethnic mayor which were endorsed by the German Democratic Forum and the other political parties with which the Forum shared decision power, infrastructure and construction companies and most importantly, the foreign business community around the German Economic Club which worked closely not just with the municipality and the German Democratic Forum, but also with the Romanian – German Foundation and the German Consulate in Sibiu⁴. It is important to note that the governing arrangements by which Sibiu was governed and by which development was pursued were influenced by non-local actors and institutions. The formation of an urban regime in Sibiu and its form was not limited to and was not only influenced by the local context with its actors and institutions, but also by the interaction of the local actors with non-local actors and by the intergovernmental relation between the Romanian and German state, between Sibiu and institutions like GTZ and the Academy for German Civil Servants which shaped the capacity of the urban coalition to govern and influenced its form.

In this context, the invitation for the ECC bidding in 2004 provided the already existing urban regime characterized by a pro-market imaginary and orientation with another pretext to pursue urban development and to cement the German image of the city. From the perspective of urban governance structure, ECC could be viewed as Sibiu's development agenda writ large and as a means to maintain and secure the governing coalition in its form.

4 Although not a rule, the presidency between the German Economic Club can be held and was held by the General Consul in Sibiu. Besides the Embassy of Germany in Bucharest, there are two German consulates in Romania: one in Sibiu and another one in Timisoara.

Chapter 4. Urban Governance and the Post-invitation Context

As was already mentioned, happenings or events occur in a structured context. Events differ from happenings in the aspect that events are considered as that “relatively subclass of happenings that significantly transform structures” (Sewell 1996:262). For Stone (1989), happenings can become events later “in our minds because they have some bearing on structures that help shape future occurrences” (10). The focus of urban regime theory on the study of the flow of happenings and events over time is derived from the very definition of an urban regime as a set of stable arrangements between the governmental sector and private interests. Thus, a coalition of forces qualifies as a regime only if it endures the test of time, but that it is not say that a regime is not a dynamic form of governance “in a continual process of formation and becoming while facing challenges and countervailing pressures” (Judge et al. 1995:64). Studies informed by urban regime theory must explain why the coalition was able to endure through time and why something qualified retrospectively as a happening or as an event, as something which reproduced, reshaped or changed fundamentally the structure of local governance.

In the previous chapter, the structured context of the invitation for bidding from Luxembourg's officials was analyzed from different scalar and interscalar relations. This chapter will have as a focus the post-invitation time period and analyze the bidding and the implementation of the ECC programme at the local level: how the application and implementation were pursued by different actors and institutions and how these interacted and influenced the already existing urban regime. Also, the following perspectives will be presented: how the interaction between the local level and other scales made possible the bidding for the ECC title in particular, and urban governance in general.

4.1. Seizing the Moment. The Formation of the Bidding Coalition and the Preparation of the Bidding Application

The invitation for the bidding together with Luxembourg came in February 2004 and it required that the documentation for the application would be finished in less than two months with the first draft in less than a month. The Luxembourg officials asked that the bidding application should be finished at the beginning of March in order to be presented to the Romanian Ministry of Culture and then sent to the EU, before the meeting with the panel of EU officials for the selection of the ECC scheduled on 5th of April. Thus, the time constraints shaped and influenced how different actors and institutions came together in a coalition to articulate the bid, how the bidding writing process was done and how the official documentation took the form it did.

The added value which the ECC brand would bring to the city was used as an argument to legitimize the pursuing of the bidding in the last moments and the need for a hasty application. The need to pursue the ECC title was presented as a useful endeavor for the city and as “a chance which we are not allowed to miss” (Iohannis in Staicu 2004), a chance which should be seized without hesitation. The value of the ECC title was used to justify the haste, and the haste was used to reinforce the value of the title. Moreover, the candidacy of Sibiu for the ECC was linked with the candidacy of Romania for the EU. The legitimization needs of the state and the future integration of Romania into the EU in 2007 were used as arguments at the local level, and later at the national level, to legitimize the need to bid for the ECC: “The documentation must be done extremely fast, otherwise the candidacy of Sibiu and of Romania would fail. And it would be a real shame to miss an opportunity like this, because all of us are hoping that starting with the 1st of January 2007 Romania will be a full member of the EU” (Iohannis qtd. in Staicu 2004).

Furthermore, the fact that the bid had to be quickly drafted, submitted and pursued at

the last minute put great constraints, limited greatly the possibility to contest the need to pursue the ECC title and the form the bid took. Not just the time constraints in which the bid was pursued, but also the positive image, the mythological character of the ECC programme (as it was articulated at the European and local level, correspondingly by European bureaucrats and by representatives of the local elite from the municipality and cultural centers) explains at least partially why the need to pursue the ECC title was left uncontested at the local level.

The official invitation for the bidding was made to the mayor and, throughout the bidding and implementation, the municipality acted as the motor of the ECC policy, as the leading institution in charge of it. The time constraints influenced the legitimization of the need for a leading institution, more precisely, they legitimized the need for the municipality to act as the most appropriate institution to be in charge with the writing of the bid and with the implementing of the programme in case of success. Because of this context shaped by the time constraints and the fact that the invitation was made to the representative of the city hall, the ECC appeared as a strategy driven by the city hall since the first moments prior to the invitation. In the same day that the invitation was made, the mayor Iohannis declared that “In order to realize the cultural programme, we make a public appeal to all institutions from Sibiu and to all county authorities to send to the Municipality as soon as possible the list with projects and the assessments for the budget plans. We need to put all these together to make a common schedule” (qtd. in Staicu 2004). Thus, even if the municipality took the leading role in writing and pursuing the bid, it needed to draw in different institutions in a coalition in order to realize the project, institutions with a different and complementary access to institutional, economic and social resources than the city hall.

It is important to note that it is not possible to explain the formation of the local coalition for the ECC bid only through the governing arrangements that existed in Sibiu at

that time and that were described in the previous chapter: the coalition was not formed only of actors and institutions part of the urban regime. The coalition formed for the bidding and implementation of the ECC is different from the urban regime which existed at the local level, although it can be part of it. Both of them, the formation of the urban regime and the coalition building process for a specific project, imply a process in which the governmental authorities have to come to terms with the private interests which can complement their workings in order to pursue or implement various decisions. Thus, in this paper, a difference is drawn between the coalition for the ECC project (either bid or implementation) and the urban regime, a difference based on their durability in time: in the case of the urban regime, a stable link between governmental and nongovernmental institutions is formed for the long term governing of the city, whereas in the case of the coalition, the link is short-lived and established for a single project. Nevertheless, since the ECC coalition is part of the broader process of urban governance, it can be included at least partially in the patterns of the stable arrangements between governmental and non-governmental institutions which characterize a specific urban regime. The coalition building process for the ECC is not just determined and shaped by the existing urban regime, but also influences and shapes the form of that urban regime. Therefore, the interaction between the coalition for the ECC and the urban regime needs to be analyzed in order to describe the effects that the coalition for the ECC had on urban governance. One of the arguments of this paper is that the coalition building process and the internal politics of the ECC coalition cemented the pro-growth imaginary of the urban regime, since the ECC as a socially formidable task, as a valued task provided the local regime with legitimation, material benefits and new focus policy areas to be included in the long-term governing of the city.

The existing urban regime at the time of the invitation and bid, 2004, did not include institutions with appropriate resources to deal on its own with the bidding and

implementation of the title. Moreover, EU requirements and the specificity of the ECC policy required that certain institutions are drawn in and cooperate with the municipality for the bidding and implementation of the programme (cultural actors and institutions, the local community, etc.). The municipality of Sibiu invited cultural associations and institutes, press representatives and representatives of tourist companies at discussions for the preparation of the bid. Neither the population of the city, nor the smaller group of the inhabitants of the historical center which needed restoration for the ECC title were not consulted prior to the bidding for the title. Although the inhabitants of the historical center would automatically bear the burdens of the restorations, there were no consultations until the very beginning of the restorations done by the Ministry of Culture when meetings occurred because the law was demanding that inhabitants should be consulted and their approval sought when the restorations are done with public money. The time constraints excluded the very idea of consulting the population and also deproblematized and legitimized this exclusion.

The specificity of the ECC policy and the urgent need to write the application influenced also what type of actors and institutions were included in the coalition formed for the title. For the bidding, the internal politics of coalition building was characterized by operating with a definition of agency understood as institutionalized agency and of culture as institutionalized culture: “The Municipality considered it was fundamental to ensure the active involvement of all the willing institutional subjects”(Association Sibiu ECC2007 2004:14). The general requirement of the ECC policy to promote culture took in this case the particular form of established cultural institutions from the local level. Independent cultural artists were not included in the coalition. Thus, only a handful of local cultural institutions, the majority of them high culture institutions, were part of the coalition which worked for the application for the bid: Brukenthal Museum with the History Museum under its subordination, ASTRA Museum Complex, Radu Stanca Theater, Municipal Cultural Center,

University of Sibiu, Visual Anthropology Foundation, Gong Theatre, Philharmonic Orchestra.

According to the requirements of the ECC policy, an independent association, an NGO should be established for the bidding and implementation of the programme. The idea is that in this way the association will be separate from political and administrative structures and thus not under financial and political control, either from the local or national state structure. Thus, the coalition from Sibiu as well needed to apply this rule in order to be awarded the title: an association named *Sibiu ECC 2007 Association* was constituted separate from the municipality. In the application documentation, this association was presented as if it already existed as a legal entity, although in the bidding phase it had the form of a highly volatile arrangement, as a series of meetings between representatives of different institutions under the coordination of the municipality. This association did not legally and officially exist until later when the bid had already been won (the constitution meeting of the association took place in the middle of June 2004).

According to the application proposal (Association Sibiu ECC2007 2004), the association was composed of three teams or committees: the management board, the consultative committee and the management coordination task group. The management board was formed of 22 people: nine representatives of the local government structures (municipality, county council, prefecture), seven representatives of state authorities (from the ministry of culture, of foreign affairs and from the Consulate of Luxembourg), one representative of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry and five representatives of leading local cultural institutions (Brukenthal Museum, ASTRA Museum Complex, Radu Stanca Theater, University of Sibiu and Visual Anthropology Foundation). The mayor acted as the chairman of the management board and thus as president of the association, while Constantin Chiriac, the director of the Radu Stanca Theater, acted as the vice-president. In this group, in the management board, the principal coordinates of the application were established.

The consultative committee was formed of representatives of the local governmental structures, local NGOs and local cultural institutions in order to work closely with the management board to discuss and order the proposed cultural projects. If the management board was formed of leaders or directors in their respective institution or department, the persons from the consultative committee had a lower position in their respective institution than the ones in the management board. Regarding the composition of the consultative committee, the local government had 10 out of 34 people, while the cultural institutions which already had their directors present in the management board had 13 positions. Moreover, out of these 13 positions 7 were held by the Brukenthal Museum and 2 by the Radu Stanca Theater, while the other 4 were distributed one per remaining cultural institution (eg.: ASTRA Museum Complex and Visual Anthropology Foundation). The rest of the 11 positions in the consultative committee were held by other local NGOs and smaller cultural institutions with one position per organization.

The management coordination task group which was meant “to ensure the coordination of all partners involved, the elaboration of the official application, documents and correspondence” (Association 2004:16) was formed of nine people: five were from the municipality and associated institutions, three from the Radu Stanca Theater and one from the Foundation People for Arts.

The composition of these organizational structures of decision reveals some of the internal politics of coalition building: who was part of the coalition and who was not, who had more power than others. Also it is important to note that some of these structures are more important than others: the management board held the most power in this process since it established the coordinates of the application, while the management coordination task group was the second one in power since it was the group which put these coordinates in writing in their final and official form. Thus, taking the numbers and also the importance and

positionality of the actors and institutions in this configuration, the municipality appears as the leading institution in the power hierarchy of the coalition, with more than a third of positions and more importantly holding the position of the president of the association (the mayor Iohannis) and the position of the coordinator of the bidding project (Marius Constantin). The person in the latter position, Marius Constantin, was the one in charge with the writing of the application and one of the two who presented the application in front of the jury of the European selection panel. The fact that the municipality has the most important and the most numerous positions in the association contradicts the formal requirement of the EU to form an independent association, separate from the political and financial control of the local administration. The municipality legitimized its leading role through the fact that the bidding and organization of the ECC should be subordinated to the political as expression of popular will.

The other person which presented the application, Constantin Chiriac (vice-president of the Association and director of the Radu Stanca Theater), points toward the Radu Stanca Theater as the second local institution of importance for the bidding process (also the three positions out of nine in the management coordination task group), while the Brukenthal Museum appears as the third one (importance due to the numbers of positions in the three structures).

These findings should be interpreted as tendencies which point towards the inequality of power between partners in the coalition, as indicative elements of the importance of certain actors and institutions in the ECC coalition building process and not as descriptive of the internal workings of the bidding coalition, of how the coming together across institutional lines was happening, since the association described in the press and in the application documentation (2004) was more of a formality which needed to be implemented in the future and was implemented. In the bidding phase, the representatives of these different institutions

had four “rounds of public meetings and debates”, in which the municipality and the cultural institutions came with ideas, outlines and budgets for the projects which could be included in the ECC project. These hasty meetings were being held in the municipality building and were coordinated and supervised by the municipality and more precisely by the mayor. The suggestions for the ECC concept and cultural projects were centralized by the management coordination task group which was dominated numerically by the municipality and by the Radu Stanca Theater and coordinated by a representative of the municipality (Marius Constantin). After centralizing the suggestions of the meetings, this task group decided which cultural projects and which concepts should be included and which should not be included in the final form of the bidding application.

The time constraints legitimized not just the exclusion of the population and of independent cultural artists as active participants in the coalition and not just the emphasis on established cultural institutions from the local level and on the municipality as the leading institution in charge of the preparation for the bidding application and its implementation (since its control over the formal local governmental machinery claimed to express popular will), but it also legitimized the hastiness, the authoritarianism and the lack of consistent debate regarding the need to pursue the title, the identity and concept for Sibiu as ECC which characterized these meetings held between representatives of the municipality and of major cultural institutions. Since the composition of the coalition and the discussion meetings were influenced and directed by representatives of the municipality and of established cultural institutions like the Radu Stanca Theater and the Brukenthal Museum, it could be argued that the final form of the application was greatly influenced by a handful of actors and institutions. Thus, the need to write the bid at the last minute influenced and more importantly legitimized how the coalition was formed to pursue the ECC policy and also the concept and form the application took.

The theme proposed in the application (2004) was *Cultures Hand in Hand towards the Future* and the ECC in Sibiu was meant to be “a celebration of cultures living together, of unity in diversity” (later, the slogan of ECC became *City of culture. City of cultures*). The ECC application stressed the long urban history of Sibiu characterized by multiculturalism in which Romanians, Saxons, Magyars and Romas lived together peacefully, with an emphasis on the German heritage of the city and on the contribution of the German colonists to the city's history and development. Sibiu was always used in association with the German name of the city, Hermannstadt, and presented as being the easternmost city part of the European family since the 17th century and as the meeting point of European civilizations with Sibiu acting as the gate between East and West.

Moreover, the power inequalities between actors and institutions in the bidding coalition and the existing urban regime shaped the concept which the coalition put forward in the application. The internal politics of the bidding coalition and the existing governing arrangements also influenced the emphasis put on the German heritage of the city and on the connection with Western Europe through the German speaking cultural sphere. As was already presented, the final form of the application was greatly influenced by a handful of actors and institutions, especially by the municipality, the Radu Stanca Theater and the Brukenthal Museum. Thus, the power inequalities between actors and institutions in the bidding and later in the implementation coalition and how the coalition was formed influenced the message which came across and which was legitimized with historical arguments. The emphasis on the German heritage can be partly explained through the fact that the bid was written by representatives of the City Hall with support from Luxembourg after a series of hasty meetings with the major cultural institutions, meetings dominated by the already mentioned institutions.

The municipality as part of the already existing urban regime used the ECC bid

application to maintain and cement the pro-market imaginary of the urban regime and its characteristic set of stable arrangements between the governmental and nongovernmental institutions. The document for the bidding application reaffirmed the pro-growth imaginary and the commitment of the urban governance structure to attract investors (by referring to the new industrial developments and to the production of the strategy of development) and framed the pursuing and implementation of the ECC title as “coming into a synergic effect with our development efforts” (Association Sibiu ECC2007 2004:10), as a continuation of the already existing strategies for development.

As was already presented, the core of the urban regime was characterized by close working relations between the formal local government structures led by a German-ethnic mayor who was endorsed by the German Democratic Forum, and the foreign business community around the German Economic Club. The emphasis on the German heritage of the city which characterized the ECC in Sibiu and the possible success of the bid and of the implementation of the title could benefit the urban regime in this form: it had the possibility to legitimize the German Democratic Forum as the appropriate party to control the formal machinery of local government and the possibility to cement the position of the German Economic Club at the local level and to attract other German and German-speaking investors around the Club and thus with investments in Sibiu.

In the bidding phase, the moment most clear of the link between the urban regime in this form and the ECC title was when the municipality of Sibiu was visited mid-February by the ambassadors of France and Germany who discussed with the mayor about their utmost support for Sibiu as the ECC in 2007 and the opportunities which the municipality offers to foreign investors in the then-recent developed Western Industrial Zone where four German and two French investors were already present. The effects of the interaction between the urban regime and the bidding and implementation coalition will be later presented when

talking about the implementation of the ECC policy and about its effects on urban governance.

The leading role which the municipality played in the ECC bidding and the influence of the urban regime on the bidding with its emphasis on the German heritage can explain also the power hierarchy of cultural institutions in the ECC coalition and why cultural institutions, like the Brukenthal Museum for example which itself emphasizes the German urban history and heritage of the city, were better positioned in the hierarchy of power in the bidding coalition. Also, the prominence of the German heritage and of the urban history of the city of Sibiu explains why institutions like the ASTRA Museum Complex which stress the rural Romanian history and heritage, although also a national museum, were disadvantaged in the bidding and also implementation coalition. Also, later, the effects of the interaction between the urban regime, with its actors and institutions which can greatly benefit from the German image of the city, on the changing position of the cultural institutions will be presented.

When it comes to the hierarchy of cultural institutions in the bidding coalition, it becomes obvious that the multiculturalism heralded in the application for bidding is in fact an emphasis on the urban German history when the city was inhabited mostly by Saxons merchants and a downplay of the Romanian heritage and history of Sibiu and its surrounding areas which were inhabited mostly by Romanian peasants and shepherds. This was the issue of a conflict in the association which started in March 2004 before the bidding itself, but after the bidding application was already finished and submitted. Corneliu Ioan Bucur, the director of the ASTRA Museum Complex, challenged the representation put forward by the ECC bidding coalition by raising the issue that the ECC in Sibiu should also include the surrounding rural area of Sibiu and address the relationship between the rural and urban area, the interaction between the city and its hinterland. He argued that the presenting the city only through the German heritage of Sibiu would limit the ECC project only to the center of the

city. This was a conflict which questioned what the proper representation of the city is and what is the proper concept which the bidding coalition should have put forward, and also it questioned the effects and the materiality of the representation which was articulated. Moreover, since the representation of reality articulated in the bidding application favored some actors and institutions and not others as it was shown already, the issues raised by Bucur were articulated against this representation which disadvantaged ASTRA Museum Complex, the museum where he was director, and by suggesting a representation which would benefit also the museum he represented. The issue was not solved and later Bucur resigned from the association which he argued was a highly authoritarian environment where the municipality was deciding what and how things should happen. Needless to say, the ASTRA Museum was one of the losers of the ECC bidding and implementation because of German emphasis of the programme and because of the open conflicts between Bucur and Iohannis, between the representative of the museum and the representative of the leading institution in charge with the ECC programme. This aspect will be discussed in more details when the effects of the interaction between the urban regime and the bidding and implementation coalition will be addressed.

4.2. The Bid Selection Panel

The first part of this chapter presented how the internal politics of the bidding coalition and its interaction with the existing urban regime shaped the process of writing the bidding application. This section will present how the bidding itself went and will briefly analyze the interaction of different scalar agendas in this bid and also the reasons for its success in the EU panel.

On the 5th of April, a panel of European experts was organized in Brussels for the

selection of the ECC for the year 2007 for which only Sibiu and Luxembourg were participating as the representatives of each countries. In almost two weeks, the panel issued a report which recommended to the Council of Ministers of Culture that they nominate the two cities for the ECC title.

It is important to note that among the reasons which account for the successful process of the bidding, the way the title was pursued and articulated by the local coalition is not the only one. The bidding was made possible due to how the agendas and interests of actors and institutions from different scales, for example from Luxembourg and EU level, interacted with each other and overlapped. This points to the fact that non-local actors and institutions can influence urban governance and the possibility and success of coalitions to pursue certain entrepreneurial strategies.

As was already mentioned in the previous chapter, the interests and agenda of the Luxembourg officials influenced greatly the possibility of pursuing the ECC title. In the bidding phase in Sibiu, the Luxembourg officials and institutions influenced the coalition building process and more precisely how the application for the title was framed and articulated at the local level. The support offered by Luxembourg materialized not just in front of the European selection panel, but also in trainings and knowledge sharing for the writing of the ECC bid between the bidding coalitions in each city. At the end of February, the municipality sent two local representatives in Luxembourg for trainings and in a couple of days two representatives from the ECC association came in Sibiu in order to help the technical task group to write the needed materials for the application, to provide an appropriate framework, language, guidelines and tips and tricks for the writing process of the bid. Also, the local coalition in Sibiu wrote the application in dialogue with the application of Luxembourg, in line with the myth of common origins and the thesis of dialectal similarity between the Saxon and Luxembourgian language. Thus, the application written by the

coalition from Sibiu was in line with the agenda of actors and institutions from Luxembourg.

Although both the bid of Sibiu and the bid of Luxembourg were accepted, there was a difference of degree regarding the acceptance of the two bids: “The Panel agreed unanimously to recommend to the Institutions of the European Union that Luxembourg host the ECC in 2007 (...). They recommend also to support Sibiu/ Hermannstadt as a ECC in 2007 (...), provided that a number of substantial improvements in the areas commented upon were achieved by 2005” (Jauregui et al 2004:9). Thus, the proposal for Sibiu was accepted only if considerable improvements were done until February and initially it encountered certain resistance among the panel: the panel applied an extra clause “in order to safeguard the high standard of the ECC event” (Selection panel 2004:8); ironically, the EU also applied a safeguarding clause when Romania was integrated into the EU structures. This is was the solution adopted since the panel was reluctant to offer the title to Sibiu because of a variety of reasons: first, the country which will host the ECC in 2007 was decided since 1999 and that country was only the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, second, a EU decision from the year 2003 stated that the new member states of the EU (new due to the 2004 enlargement) can apply for the ECC only after the year 2009 (EC 2003). At the moment of the bidding, in 2004, Romania was not part of the EU and applied for the ECC in 2007 although new member states were not allowed to do that before 2009. Legally, Sibiu's nomination was made possible by the Article 4 of the 1999 Decision which stated that “European non-member countries may participate in this action” (European Commission 1999:4), but the support from Luxembourg in the selection panel was an important factor for the acceptance of the bid. Moreover, the message of the application for the ECC responded to the EU requirements regarding the ECC policy and the broader European cultural policy: the bidding application used the widespread narrative of historical cultural diversity and of multiculturalism as strategies for place marketing in order to meet the requirements of EU

institutions and to be integrated into the process of “building an united Europe” and to respond to the EU “unity in diversity” discourse regarding culture.

The acceptance of the EU panel to offer the title to Sibiu did not have to do only with the support from Luxembourg and to the narrative of multiculturalism of the application, but also to the agenda of the European Commission to improve its image and to build a sense of belonging with the EU in a future EU member state through an insignificant amount of funding for the ECC, almost 1.2% of the total spending for the ECC programme (Rotariu 2007). Moreover, the year 2007 was presented as an exceptional year for the ECC programme because it represented an “East-West European experiment”. Both bids portrayed their partnership as a meeting point of European civilizations with Sibiu acting as the gate between East and West and as aiming “at the higher goal of acquainting and bringing closer Western and Eastern Europe as a cornerstone to European integration”(2004:2). The possibility of the European Commission to spread the image of the EU in Eastern Europe in a future member state and to participate in the first ECC experiment which unites the East and the West represented the point where the interests and agendas of the EU selection panel of experts, the Luxembourg and Sibiu bidding applications and representatives overlapped.

Thus, it is not just the application which was shaped by the requirements of actors and institutions from Luxembourg and from the EU level, but also the success of its bidding was influenced by the fact that the application, as the message and final product of the bidding coalition, was in line not just with the Luxembourgian agenda, but also with the “unity in diversity” and multiculturalism discourse of the EU and with the broader agenda and legitimization needs of the EU institutions in Eastern Europe through the proposition of undertaking “an East-West European experiment”.

4.3. *The European Capital of Culture, Regimes and Urban Governance*

This part will present how the implementation of the programme was made possible by the interaction of institutions and actors from the local and national scale and what were the effects of the ECC title on the urban regime, more precisely what were the consequences on urban governance of the interaction between the bidding and implementing coalition and the existing urban regime.

If the state was somehow bypassed before the success of the bidding for Sibiu in the EU selection panel, the situation changed in the implementation phase of the ECC title. In the bidding phase, the presence of the state was limited to the correspondence between the Luxembourgian Ministry of Culture and its Romanian counterpart when the invitation from Luxembourg was officialized. Also, the bid was presented first at the Romanian Ministry of Culture which then sent it to the EU selection panel, since the EU requirements stated that the central authorities of the state should sent the application for the ECC to the EU. Thus, although the ECC policy creates a possibility of partnership and overlapping of agendas between the EU and the local level by bypassing the national level, the approval or involvement of the state, even just formal, is necessary. This minimal involvement of the state before the bid itself changed to a role of the state as a provider of funds and more importantly to the role of the state as a mediator.

In February 2005, the Ministry of Culture established a special department which had to deal only with the ECC programme: the department was called “the Compartment Commissar for the programme Sibiu ECC 2007”. Later, in May 2005, the programme was included in the list of projects of priority for the national interest and in the cultural strategy of public diplomacy of Romania, inclusion realized by the Ministry of Culture and by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Moreover, in 2005, Sibiu became included in the National

Programme for Tourism Promotion (Nistor 2007). These measures were justified by the needs of the state to present to the EU a Romanian model city in the same year, 2007, when Romania became a member state of the EU. Thus, the state framed these measures as strategic for the country's EU inclusion through the ECC, programme considered to have an important role in legitimizing Romania's place within the EU: the European-ism of the programme was mobilized to promote the state interests in the post-socialist image repackaging of the state and to legitimize the political and legislative measures taken and the funds offered for the ECC programme.

Firstly, the state provided the legal framework by enacting new rules and legislation necessary for the functioning of the ECC and its coalition: regarding the public – private partnership, the establishing of the commission for the evaluation of cultural programs, regarding the legal framework of *Sibiu ECC 2007 Association*. Moreover, the state issued a decision in 2005 which changed the ownership of some plots of the Sibiu airport from the state control to the control of the county administration. Thus, the urban regime gained a new infrastructural resource through this change of ownership and control rights over the airport plots from the public domain of the state to the public domain of the county of Sibiu and under the administration of the County Council of Sibiu, change of ownership and control which was linked with the infrastructure needs of a successful ECC programme.

Secondly, the state financed almost 56% of the costs of the programme: for the cultural programme and cultural events and institutions, for renovation of houses in the historical center, for the marketing campaign, for the infrastructure (for the modernization of the train station and for extending and renovating the airport).

Throughout this programme, the local governance of Sibiu attracted state subsidies and benefited from political and legislative measures which improved the competitiveness of the city and its image for foreign investors and more broadly for the EU. Through these

measures, the state increased the existing territorial inequalities. Thus, the production of inequalities and the changes in the urban hierarchy were built on existing cleavages produced through the emphasis on cities with German heritage because of the postsocialist image repackaging of the state. During the implementation of the ECC programme, the role of the state as a mediator and its regulations meant for improving the competitiveness and image of Sibiu maintained and increased existing territorial inequalities between urban areas. The same could be said about the role of the EU to create and maintain inequalities through its funds and policies.

In order to present the effects of the implementation of the ECC title on the urban regime, it is important to discuss the interaction between coalition formed for the ECC programme and the existing governing arrangements. The ECC title and its European-ism presented as necessary for state legitimation provided the local governance structure with another pretext to pursue development, to continue programs of development in that form, to cement the pro-market imaginary and orientation of its policies. Moreover, due to the narrative of success which emerged from the overlapping of interests and agendas of actors and institutions from different scales, overlapping which was already presented, the ECC programme appeared as a demonstration of the fairness and effectiveness of the governing arrangements of the urban regime and secured the urban regime in its form.

The implementation of the ECC programme with its emphasis on the German heritage of the city had effects on urban governance. More precisely, the increased portrayal of Sibiu as a historical German town part of the European sphere benefited and cemented the urban regime on multiple levels: an electoral benefit at local, regional and national level for the actors and parties involved in the ECC bidding and implementation (a benefit which secured the control of the local government), an economic benefit for actors and institutions from the urban regime and a legitimation benefit regarding the effectiveness of the past and future

measures of the urban regime.

Since the paper draws a difference between the urban regime and the coalition for the bidding and implementing, it is important to clarify that cultural institutions did not form part of the urban regime, but that the cultural institutions, which benefited and secured the governing arrangements of the urban regime with its specific image, agenda and imaginary, were better positioned after the implementation of the ECC. Thus, the ECC coalition was mostly formed of actors and institutions which were already part or could benefit the urban regime, whereas the actors and institutions which opposed it, lost resources and legitimation after the implementation of the ECC. The winners and losers of the ECC programme could be established using this logic: the winners were the ones already part of the urban regime or the ones which could secure its agenda and image in the ECC programme and urban governance, whereas the losers were the ones not part of the governing arrangements or the ones which opposed, either directly or indirectly, the image, interests and agenda of the urban regime in the ECC in particular and in urban governance in general.

Among the losers of the ECC, the following could be mentioned: the population of the historical center⁵, independent cultural artists and cultural institutes like the ASTRA Museum Complex whose specific ran contrary to the emphasis on the German heritage and whose

5 According to the reports (2007) and periodical assessments of the Association for Urban Transition, the population inhabiting the main streets and plazas of the historical centre is decreasing. Clear signs of gentrification could be seen: increasing commercial pressure in the centre and problems related with the quality of life (especially the noise issue) have driven away the majority of inhabitants, especially the young one with children. The majority of the remaining ones are old people living by themselves. Moreover, GTZ which started renovating in 2000 acted as a spear point of gentrification with its projects of regeneration, renovating “a house here, another there in order to induce competition among neighbours”. According to the Eurisko report (2008) and to the reports of the National Union of Real Estate Agents (Gicu 2008; 2009), the ECC contributed to the raise in the level of rents and price for apartments and houses especially in the historical centre (although the tendency of raising rents and prices in real estate is characteristic of the national level). Even if the price of houses and rents grew in the centre, the population with its socio-demographic composition and economic situation could not take advantage of this price and rent increase (only 30% of the real estate proprieties in the historical centre are owned by individual persons; the majority of them are old people with an economic condition ranging from low to medium). The actors and institutions which benefited the most from the investments in cultural distinctiveness which produced monopoly rents in the centre, the ones which benefited the most from the raising rents and the raising price of apartments and houses due to the national situation in real estate and to the influence of the ECC title for the real estate market in Sibiu were “the Evangelical Church, the Orthodox Church, the Catholic Church and some really important people; all of them own almost 70% of the centre of Sibiu” (Gicu qtd. in Deleanu 2007).

representative had a open conflict with the representative of the municipality, the leading institution in charge with the ECC. The local hierarchy of the cultural institutions which is a synonym for the power hierarchy of those cultural institutions in the bidding and implementation coalition became entrenched after the ECC: the institutions and their cultural events which were better positioned in the power hierarchy of the coalition gained more power, visibility and resources after the ECC. The opposite aspect is applicable for institutions which did not have an advantageous position; also, no new important cultural actor and institution appeared on the local sphere. The power ranking of the cultural institutions established after the ECC becomes obvious when an analysis of the municipality's budget for culture is made. For example, the association *The Order of Knights from Sibiu*, established by the director of the Municipal Cultural Center, received half of the money allocated for culture in 2010, meaning almost 448.000 Euro, whereas ASTRA Museum Complex received almost 4.000 Euro (Colibaba 2010).

One of the categories of winners of the ECC are the cultural institutions which promoted the German heritage (like the Brukenthal Museum and the Evangelical Church) or the ones which were placed under the authority of the municipality and with which they worked closely for the bidding and implementation of the ECC programme (like the Radu Stanca Theater and the Municipal Cultural Center).

Moreover, studies done by *the Center for Studies and Research in Culture (CSCDC)* in 2007 and 2008 regarding the cultural vitality of Romanian cities shows that culture is not a domain supported and backed up with considerable funds by the municipality of Sibiu when comparing with other Romanian cities. According to reports of the CSCDC (2007a; 2008a), the small budgetary spending for culture (per inhabitant and also its share out of the local budget) in the city of Sibiu shows that public authorities do not manifest an interest and support for culture and for the development of culture. In these reports, Sibiu is placed on the

12th place in 2007 and the 10th place in 2008 according to the “cultural vitality” index developed by the Center and which includes the spending and support of local authorities as one of the dimensions of the index. These results are even more surprising when taking into account the fact that Sibiu was the ECC in 2007 and that it had received enormous funds for the development of cultural programs and events⁶, but the results lose their contradictory and surprising feature when thinking about the constant criticism with which this type of urban entrepreneurial strategy was and is faced: that the ECC “has more to do with the interests of capitalism and politics than culture” (Mooney 2004:331).

In this light, the rest of the winners of the ECC described below do not appear as surprising and point towards the material benefits which the coalition and urban regime had due to having culture in common and due to investments in cultural distinctiveness which characterize programmes or strategies like the ECC. These actors and institutions were already part of the urban regime with its pro-market imaginary and they were compatible with the image, interests and agenda of the urban regime in the ECC in particular and in urban governance in general. Thus, according to the statistics of the Trade Register Office in Sibiu, almost 75% of the companies owned by foreign investors in Sibiu were German citizens and the year 2007 brought more funds and investments in Sibiu, therefore increasing the position of Sibiu within circuits of investment flows; from this perspective as well, the ECC maintained and increased the existing inequalities in urban hierarchy. Also, according to the statistics of the General Direction of Public Finance from Sibiu, in 2007, the local income of the budget of the municipality raised with 84% compared with the year 2004 when Sibiu won the bid; compared with 2006, the local income of the budget raised in 2007 with 12%⁷. The municipality of Sibiu is one of the most self-sustained municipalities in Romania (self-

6 In Sibiu, the ECC did not produce a shift in the governance of culture and did not push culture up the public funding scale or up the agenda of local governance.

7 According to the Municipality of Sibiu, “the principal source of the increase of the local budget is the increase in the mass of taxation from foreign investments” (2008:5).

sustained in relation with the state governmental structure), with almost 77% of its 2009 budget derived from taxes from the foreign investors in the Western Industrial Zone .

According to the reports made by the Center for Studies and Research in Culture (CSCDC), tourist companies (hotels, pensions and tour-operators) and transport companies were the ones which had the more to gain due to the ECC (CSCDC 2007; 2008; Darasteanu 2007). This explains why starting with 2008 the municipality established a *Tourism Promotion and Development Office*: not just attracting industrial investors, but also tourism, became one of the entrepreneurial strategies sought by the municipality. Therefore, after the implementation of the ECC, tourism became a focus of the urban regime.

The fact that the ECC, its bidding and implementation, as a shared task undertaken by various actors and institutions was a socially formidable task (especially for a Romanian city which gained the title before Romania entered the EU and hosted the title in the same year with the country's integration into the European structures) gave rise to a narrative of success, to a shared sense of accomplishment and self-congratulatory rhetoric, especially among the ones which pursued the bidding and organized the programme and which were in leading power positions in the coalition.

The argument that the ECC as a shared task among local actors and institutions of the coalition secured the urban regime in its form is based on the fact that the task of bidding and implementing the programme “brought the elements of the coalition into complex and repeated interactions that did indeed built a foundation and habits” for a future cooperation (Stone 1989:36). The ECC brought “a better collaboration between institutions” and a situation where conflicts appear rarely between the County Council, the Prefecture and the Municipality (Pop 2010). Moreover, the ECC did not bring just psychic benefits related to the shared sense of accomplishment and benefits regarding the smoother interactions between different actors and institutions, but also the above presented material benefits and benefits at

the electoral level.

The local elections in June 2004 and the ones in June 2008 for the mayor office, Local Council and County Council demonstrated an increased support for the German Democratic Forum party and its representatives. The successful bid of Sibiu in April 2004 before the elections and the implementation of the programme in 2007 proved to be beneficial on the electoral level since they legitimized the effectiveness of their governance. The mayor Iohannis was reelected both in 2004 and in 2008 with over 80% of the votes from the first round. The electoral benefit for Iohannis, which it was conferred by the ECC and by the effectiveness of the entrepreneurial strategies of the urban governance, did not manifest just at a local level, but also national with his participation in the national elections as a potential candidate for the prime-minister of Romania. Thus, the positive image of the ECC programme, in general and in Sibiu, legitimized not just the urban regime with its arrangements and the coalition which implemented it, but also the political actors involved which heavily capitalized upon the success of the ECC. Iohannis is the political actor which gained the most popularity from the ECC, but other state and local personalities tried to seize and use the European-ism of the programme and its national and European visibility for their political and public image, although not with so much success as him. In 2008, Iohannis was awarded by the Ministry of Culture for the success of the ECC programme and nominated “The Most Important Person of Culture of the Year 2007” (“Omul de cultura al anului 2007”).

Regarding the party level, if in the 2000 elections the Forum obtained 6 positions out of 25 in the Local Council, in the 2004 and 2008 elections 16 and 14 positions were obtained out of 23. In these elections, the German Democratic Forum obtained more than the majority of positions and thus the control over the decision-making process in Local Council. Although, the control did not depend anymore on the support from other political parties, the

Forum shared a part of its political power with other local parties: “the Forum offered support for other local Romanian parties to obtain positions of leadership and execution (e.g.: deputy mayors of the city of Sibiu and deputy presidents of the County Council)” (Vasiliu 2009:131-2). This mechanism of sharing minimized the possibility of conflict between political parties over the control of the local government.

Moreover, in 2008, a representative of the German Democratic Forum, Martin Bottesch, was elected as the president of the County Council. In this way, in the present, the Forum has control over the most important positions in the formal governmental structure relevant for the decision-making process and policy-making which can affect the local level: not just the mayoralty and Local Council are relevant, but also the County Council and the local structure of government of the surrounding area in the county (eg.: the Local Council of Sibiu and the County Council make partnerships with other Local Councils in the case of the development of industrial parks). Regarding the surrounding area of Sibiu, Dragoman (2009) noted the increased “dissemination of the image and of the spread of the successes of the Forum in the county of Sibiu” (130), for example in cities like Medias and Cisnădie (with mayor from the Forum since 2004), and also the spread of the Forum's influence on the regional level, in localities from different counties, Satu Mare and Caras Severin. In 2008, the influence of the Forum spread more at the county level (it included the city of Avrig which elected a Forum candidate as mayor) and at the regional level (including other localities from the Satu Mare county). In brief, with the 2004 and 2008 elections, the Forum's influence spread both at the local level (increasing the number of votes from the population for the mayor office and the positions occupied by Forum candidates in the Local Council and in the County Council) and also at a regional level (increasing the number of localities from the Sibiu County with a Forum mayor and the inclusion in the sphere of influence of the Forum not just the Sibiu county, but also the Satu Mare and Caras Severin counties). In the media,

the increasing influence of the German Democratic Forum was sometimes called “the model Iohannis” (when a city, a locality chooses an ethnic German, the candidate put forward by Forum).

Moreover, the emphasis on the German heritage and identity of the city legitimized the correctness and fairness of the German Democratic Forum and its representatives to control the formal machinery of local government. Thus, the increased influence of the German Democratic Forum in the formal governmental structures (mayoralty, local council, county council) secured the urban regime in its form, especially the governmental side of the urban regime and the control of local government for facilitating decision-making.

The material and electoral benefits derived from the interaction between the urban regime and the coalitions for the ECC bidding and implementation are increasingly enmeshed with benefits regarding the legitimation of the ECC coalitions and more importantly of the effectiveness and correctness of the entrepreneurial mode of governance pursued by the urban regime. The narrative of the success of the ECC in particular and of the urban development in general legitimized the benefits and winners of the coalition process and of the urban regime and the close working core between the municipality controlled by the German Democratic Forum and the group of investors around the German Economic Club, relation which characterizes the urban regime. Moreover, the narrative of ECC as a success story and broadly of Sibiu as a model of development legitimized not just past strategies and policies like the ECC and the industrial parks built between 2001 and 2003, but also legitimizes future plans related with the development of other industrial parks in Sibiu and in the surrounding area of Sibiu (e.g.: in Cisnădie, Medias, Avrig, another one in Sura Mica), the increasing emphasis on tourism and the development of new projects of infrastructure (which would link the train station with the airport and the industrial zones with each other) in order to benefit both the tourist strategy and to maintain and attract investors.

The argument that success stories appear due to the overlapping of interests and agendas of actors and institutions from different scales does not imply that the ECC in Sibiu was only an account of how different interests were harmonized and it was not only an account of how the interests and agendas of actors and institutions from different scales nicely conjoin with each other, but also an account of struggle, conflict and suppressed alternatives, especially for actors and institutions with insufficient resources. Regimes are not only about how powerful actors and institutions with sufficient resources and with similar or complementary interests and agendas came together, but also how certain regimes practice a politics of exclusion vis-à-vis groups with insufficient or with inappropriate resources for the urban regime (like the population, independent cultural artistic, cultural institutions with a unsuitable specific for the image pursued by the coalition and regime).

Conclusions

This paper evolved from the theoretical claim that urban governance is socially produced by the interactions between scales, by the overlapping of interests and agendas of actors and institutions from different scales. In the studies of urban governance, discussions focus mostly on how a coalition of actors and institutions was formed at the local level and gained the capacity to govern a city and to implement various redevelopment projects or on how the contextual forces and the wider socio-economic changes related to neoliberal restructuring limit and shape the redevelopment strategies which can be sought and limit also the capacity of the local structure to pursue them.

Moreover, the increasing influence of supranational intergovernmental regimes, like that of the EU institutions with its policies and regulation, on urban areas and on the capacity and possibility of the local structure of governance to implement restructuring projects is another variable which should be accounted in studies of urban governance. Although changes in urban governance are characterized by an increased decentralization and autonomy of the local level and by an increasing influence of supranational actors over urban areas, the state remains an important actor which acts as mediator and can enhance the competitiveness of certain areas and make possible certain entrepreneurial strategies of development for certain cities and not for others.

Studies which deal with projects of redevelopment rarely address in a joint effort all these aspects, although urban governance and the success of its strategies are heavily dependent on the interscalar relations and on the overlapping of interests and agendas between scales. For this reason, this paper brought together urban regime theory and a multiscale perspective to focus on the urban governance in Sibiu, on the local coalition

which undertook an entrepreneurial strategy through the bidding and implementation of the European Capital of Culture policy and on the relation between the structure of urban governance and the ECC coalition.

The analysis started with describing the invitation from Luxembourg's officials that Sibiu will participate with the city of Luxembourg in the bid for the ECC 2007 title.

The first part analyzed the structured context of the invitation from the different scalar and interscalar relations and tried to answer the question why Sibiu was invited to apply along with the other city. Designed by EU bureaucrats in order to improve the image of the EC and to foster a sense of belonging among the citizens of the member states, the ECC policy has a vaguely defined European dimension, vague due to the fact that the involvement of the EU into the cultural matters of a country is highly contested by the member states. Although European cultural policies are highly problematic from this perspective, the ECC policy managed to flourish over the years due to its vague definition of the European dimension and to the possibility of using the European-ism of the programme for other interests and agendas than the ones of the EU dealing with the politicization of culture: the local governance structure can legitimize the pursuing of urban development through the ECC and various national governments can make claims related to their national identity and state legitimacy.

Thus, with its emphasis on the myth of common origins between Sibiu and Luxembourg, the use of the ECC by the Romanian and Luxembourgian government responded to complementing, although usually competing, agendas: Luxembourg officials, in order to express a nostalgia for a mythological golden age whose expression was meant to help reinforce Luxembourgian nationalism, and Romanian officials, in order to stress the historical and cultural ties of Romania with Western Europe. Usually, the expression of the nationalism of a country through founding myths provokes reactions from the state officials

of the other country, but this was not the case in this situation: 2004 was a year when Romanian state officials made efforts to join the EU and a link which stressed the Western commonality with one of the founding states of the EU could only prove useful for improving the image of Romania and the possibility to further its goals. It is important to note that this post-socialist repackaging greatly benefited Sibiu which gained leverage and competitive advantage in relation with other cities due to pre-2004 measures of the state which promoted its Germanness.

Moreover, the same thing could be said about the measures of cultural diplomacy undertaken by state officials which became increasingly intermingled with practices which encouraged economic development through investments from the German speaking cultural area in Sibiu. Around 2000, influenced also by the previous described state measures, a significant number of German investors appeared in Sibiu and opened the German Economic Club (DWS). Also, with the beginning of the year 2000, institutions like the Academy for German Civil Servants and the German Society for Technical Cooperation (GTZ) started projects of modernization of the infrastructure, of the historical center and of the administration. The 2000 local elections were won by a German ethnic mayor and the formal structure of local government was controlled by the German Democratic Forum. All these institutions, local or non-local, influenced the urban governance of the city, the German image of the city and put the bases for its move towards an entrepreneurial approach to governance and towards the formation of an urban regime.

When the invitation from Luxembourg's officials was made in 2004, the urban governance in Sibiu was characterized by an urban regime with a pro-market imaginary and orientation; moreover, the core of the urban regime was constituted by a close working relation between the local governmental structures and the foreign business community around the German Economic Forum. In this context of urban governance, the ECC

represented a strategy which could further secure and legitimize the pro-market imaginary, the entrepreneurial strategies and the core of the urban regime through the increased emphasis on the German heritage of the city.

The second part of the analysis focused on the post-invitation time period on two aspects: how the application and implementation were pursued by different actors and institutions from the local and national scale, and how the ECC coalition interacted with the already existing urban regime and what were the consequences of this interaction.

The invitation to apply for the bid was given to the mayor of Sibiu and it required that the bidding documentation is done in less than two months. These two aspects influenced greatly how the bid was pursued at the local level and how local actors came into a coalition to articulate and later implement the ECC: the municipality became the leading institution in charge of the bid and the implementation of the ECC; the requirement for a hasty bidding writing process greatly limited the possibility to protest or contest the need to pursue the ECC bid or the concept and identity of the city which the bid put forward.

The haste also limited the type of actors and institutions involved and legitimized this politics of exclusion of the coalition formed for the ECC: the population of the historical center and independent cultural artists were neither consulted, nor part of the meetings when the application for bidding was discussed; the municipality preferred to work with established local cultural institutions, with representatives of the media and of tourist companies from Sibiu. Even with these limited number of actors and institutions, the bidding coalition had a power hierarchy in which the municipality had the leading role in deciding the ECC concept for the city and in which cultural institutions that were under the authority of the municipality or that emphasized the German heritage through its specific had a superior position in the coalition comparing with institutions that were not part of the local structures of government and that did not emphasize the German heritage.

It is important to note that the ECC coalition is different from the urban regime: throughout the bidding and implementation of the ECC programme, the members of the coalition - which were not part already of the urban regime or which did not or could not emphasize the German heritage of the city – were the losers of the ECC, while the opposite is true for the winners of the ECC at the local level. The ECC as a socially formidable shared task further secured the urban regime in its form and brought not just psychic benefits related to a strong sense of accomplishment among the actors and institutions which worked for it, but also material, electoral and legitimation benefits. The emphasis on the German history and heritage of the city could and it did benefit the urban regime in its form: the concept of the ECC cemented the local position of the German Economic Club by consolidating its existing image and by attracting more German speaking investors; moreover, the emphasis of the ECC concept on the German history of Sibiu could and it did bring electoral benefits to the local governmental structure and its representatives: to the mayor and to the German Democratic Forum, at local, regional and national level. The narrative of the success of the ECC in particular and of the urban development in general legitimized the benefits and winners of the coalition process and of the urban regime.

The success of the bid in the EU selection panel and more broadly the success of the ECC at non-local levels was made possible not just through the fact that the message and concept of the bid responded to agendas and interests of powerful actors and institutions from the local and national level, but also because the concept of Sibiu as ECC 2007 benefited from support from non-local actors (eg.: Luxembourg's officials) and because it was in line with the Luxembourgian agenda, with the EU discourse of multiculturalism and “unity in diversity” and also with the legitimation needs of the EU institutions in the new member states from Eastern Europe.

Moreover, the success of the ECC programme as a strategy of urban development is

explicable also through the role of the state in the implementation phase of the title: the central structures of government provided a legislative framework for the ECC coalition and also considerable state subsidies for the ECC. Through these measures, the state further increased the competitiveness of Sibiu and maintained and increased the inequalities in the urban hierarchy, produced through the emphasis on cities with German heritage because of the postsocialist image repackaging of the state.

The narrative of the success story of Sibiu as an ECC and of the Sibiu model of urban development comes indeed from the overlapping of interests and agendas of actors and institutions from different scales. But the analysis of a success story of this type through the lenses of urban governance and multiscalarity is not just an account of how different interests were harmonized, but an account of how powerful actors and institutions with sufficient resources and with similar or complementary interests and agendas came together and exclude other. Moreover, the narrative of success points towards issues of legitimation and to how actors and institutions with power and resources and which benefited from the overlapping of their interests and agendas legitimize their benefits and also the politics of exclusion which they practiced towards certain groups and actors with insufficient or with inappropriate resources for the mobilization and exchange of resources on which every urban regime is based. Therefore, the success story of an entrepreneurial strategy and of an urban regime points towards the harmonization of the scalar interests of the powerful, but also to issues of conflict and suppressed alternatives, especially for actors and institutions with insufficient visibility or resources.

Furthermore, the narrative of the success of Sibiu as ECC in particular and of its urban governance in general acts, especially at the local level, as a legitimation device of the coalition and of the urban regime for the benefits obtained and for the exclusions practiced. But it is important to note that success stories migrate and that its legitimation function can be

employed at a different scale for other purposes than for elections or for legitimating the benefits obtained by the actors and institutions in the urban regime. Other local governmental structures see Sibiu as a reference point and as a model which they try to emulate, both regarding its performance as a ECC or its performance in urban governance in general. For example, Sibiu is used as a model by Romanian cities which announced their candidacy for the 2020 ECC title. Moreover, Sibiu is sold as a model by the actors and institutions which were involved in the bidding and implementing coalition and which try to secure positions as cultural experts. Answering the questions related with how the narrative of success of Sibiu as ECC and of its urban governance is used in other cities, countries and in other contexts would require a different research, although the current one can provide an important starting point since the research questioned the mythological character of the success of Sibiu as ECC and of Sibiu as model of development and since it showed how and why these narratives of success emerged.

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