

Cultural and Creative Industries as a Source of Regional Development in Gabrovo Region

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(Summary)

Cultural and creative industries are commonly associated with expectations of economic development, job creation, and promotion of civic participation grounded in creativity and innovation, using culture as an “input” in addressing contemporary societal challenges. The concept of cultural and creative industries originated in the 1940s with Adorno and Horkheimer’s entirely critical stance toward the culture industry, which, in their view, undermines the elitist character of culture (Horkheimer, Adorno 1999). The concept subsequently evolved through the British model of creative industries and Throsby’s concentric circles framework (Throsby 2008: 147–164), eventually becoming a preferred instrument for the democratization of societies and cultures, aligned with the conditions of the market economy and the EU’s “Green Paper. Unlocking the Potential of Cultural and Creative Industries” (COM (2010) 183 final).

However, to what extent are these expectations realistic and achievable in a regional context with regard to fostering regional development? Moreover, are cultural and creative industries capable of consolidating local communities around shared values and objectives, stimulating regional innovation and integrated territorial initiatives and investments, as well as ultimately enhancing a region’s visibility and attractiveness at both the national and supranational levels? These are among the key issues addressed in the article, highlighted in view of their public significance for sustainable regional development, particularly in Gabrovo Region, within the context of a market economy and Bulgaria’s membership in the European Union.

Keywords: cultural and creative industries; regional development; regional innovation; integrated territorial initiatives; regional branding

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