

**BUCHAREST AS A HISTORIC URBAN  
LANDSCAPE: TOWARDS A HERITAGE CENTERED  
URBAN PLANNING APPROACH**

By

Catrina Mănăilă

Submitted to

Central European University

Department of Medieval Studies

*In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts degree in  
Cultural Heritage Studies: Academic Research, Policy, Management.*

Supervisor: Dóra Mérai

*Vienna, Austria*

May 2021

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Chair, Examination Committee

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External Reader

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External Supervisor

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## Author's declaration

I, the undersigned, **Catinca Manaila**, candidate for the MA degree in Cultural Heritage Studies: Academic Research, Policy, Management declare herewith that the present thesis is exclusively my own work, based on my research and only such external information as properly credited in notes and bibliography. I declare that no unidentified and illegitimate use was made of the work of others, and no part of the thesis infringes on any person's or institution's copyright. I also declare that no part of the thesis has been submitted in this form to any other institution of higher education for an academic degree.

Vienna, 27 May 2021

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Signature

# Abstract

This work began after observations of the poor state of conservation of built heritage in historic inner-city neighborhoods of Bucharest (Romania). The main aims of research were to investigate the effects of urban change which shaped the present form of the city and to create an area study, which, contextualized from both heritage and urban planning perspectives, would assess the applicability of international standard-setting frameworks. The first chapter analyzes the development of the Romanian capital, with an emphasis on architecture and spatial planning, concluding that intangible aspects of urban heritage were maintained within the confines of the built environment. The analysis of the heritage protection and urban planning policies in Chapter 2 highlighted the non-critical approach of authorities, which limits the positive impact of heritage policy in complex urban areas. The UNESCO Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) was used to frame sustainable perspectives for neglected inner-city neighborhoods. Finally, this thesis offers a set of grounded recommendations for HUL application, which would increase stakeholder dialogue, build actor capacity and increase civic engagement in heritage conservation, all contributing to slowing the further decay of the urban built environment.

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Finally, I dedicate this work to each of my Romanian friends who hate Bucharest passionately but hosted me in the city during my fieldwork and supported me regardless.

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# List of Abbreviations

1. AHR – Adaptive Heritage Reuse
2. AHD - Authorized Heritage Discourse
3. CHS - Critical Heritage Studies
4. ELC – European Landscape Convention
5. EU – European Union
6. HUL – Historic Urban Landscape
7. ICOMOS – International Council on Monuments and Sites
8. INP – *Institutul Național al Patrimoniului*, National Heritage Institute
9. NGO – Nongovernmental organization
10. OAR – *Ordinul Arhitecților din România*, The Order of Romanian Architects
11. PIDU – *Plan Integrat De Dezvoltare Urbană*, Integrated Urban Development Plan
12. PMB – *Primăria Municipiului București*, the Bucharest municipal hall
13. PUG – *Plan Urbanistic General*, General Urban Plan
14. PUZ – *Plan Urbanistic Zonal*, Zonal Urban Plan
15. UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

# Introduction

*"While cities might share in the process of urbanization, the things that really stick with us when we think about any given city are its idiosyncrasies, precisely those things that cannot be abstracted. Not only is a city made by real, material processes that make it individual, but also its cultural life and image are distinctly its own."<sup>1</sup>*

Conservation of urban heritage is not anymore solely in the purview of monument protection authorities. As international documents have been stating for decades, safeguarding cultural heritage is a matter of human rights, and its appropriate management is a key component of sustainable development.<sup>2</sup> Cities in particular form one of the most at-risk contexts for heritage, under pressure from both international phenomena such as globalization, and local development impetus.<sup>3</sup> Recent scholarship in both heritage and urban studies stresses the need for a multi-layered and interdisciplinary approach to conceptualizing heritage, integrated within a wider process of encouraging participation of the entire society.<sup>4</sup> A significant gap exists between international conservation discourse and local implementation practices across the world, due to the complexity of integrating new concepts into existing policies. While some states have integrated this view into their policies as part of reform projects early on and with

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<sup>1</sup> Sam Grinsell, "The City Is a Lie," Digital magazine, aeon, 30 July 2020, <https://aeon.co/essays/cities-are-a-borderland-where-the-wild-and-built-worlds-meet>.

<sup>2</sup> United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, "Convention Concerning The Protection Of The World Cultural And Natural Heritage" (UNESCO General Conference, 1972), <https://whc.unesco.org/archive/convention-en.pdf>; Sophia Labadi et al., "Heritage And The Sustainable Development Goals: Policy Guidance For Heritage And Development Actors" (International Council on Monuments and Sites - ICOMOS, 2021), [https://www.icomos.org/images/DOCUMENTS/Secretariat/2021/SDG/ICOMOS\\_SDGs\\_Policy\\_Guidance\\_2021.pdf](https://www.icomos.org/images/DOCUMENTS/Secretariat/2021/SDG/ICOMOS_SDGs_Policy_Guidance_2021.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> International Council on Monuments and Sites - ICOMOS, "Charter For The Conservation Of Historic Towns And Urban Areas (Washington Charter 1987)," (ICOMOS General Assembly, 1987).

<sup>4</sup> Joar Skrede and Sveinung Krokann Berg, "Cultural Heritage and Sustainable Development: The Case of Urban Densification," *The Historic Environment: Policy & Practice* 10, no. 1 (2 January 2019): 87, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17567505.2019.1558027>.

good results, structural factors have prevented others from achieving the same outcomes.<sup>5</sup> In the latter category, the most recent developments in heritage protection are disseminated by non-state actors and are often local and project based.<sup>6</sup>

The unevenness of knowledge transmission and progress regarding the integration of heritage into urban policies forms the general context which motivated the theoretical approach of this research. The rising interest of the heritage community in the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape (HUL Recommendation) from 2011 provided a framework for this work. Furthermore, empirical observations in Bucharest (Romania) brought to attention the impact of the discourse/implementation dissonance upon the built environment in historic areas. Thus, this thesis aims to first analyze the local situation in Bucharest, creating an area study to be contextualized from both heritage and policy perspectives. Second, it seeks to investigate the effects of urban change which shaped the present form of the city, in order to assess potential applications of international heritage planning standards.



Figure 1: Bucharest in context. On the left, Solacolu Inn is marked in the map of Downtown Bucharest. Source: Google Maps.

Downtown Bucharest (Fig.1) is not what the literature would call a 'human friendly

<sup>5</sup> K. Clark, "Power of Place - Heritage Policy at the Start of the New Millennium," *The Historic Environment: Policy & Practice* 10, no. 3–4 (3 July 2019): 255–81, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17567505.2019.1696549>.

<sup>6</sup> Graham Fairclough et al., "The Faro Convention, A New Paradigm For Socially - And Culturally - Sustainable Heritage Action?," *Культура/Culture*, no. 8 (2014): 13-4.

city'.<sup>7</sup> There is little pedestrian freedom and even less accessibility, it is dirty, noisy and chaotic, and most buildings in the city center are in a constant state of disrepair. And yet, navigating its core areas is intuitive, exhilarating and interesting for the average newcomer; there is a sense of discovery and exploration which only a city which has narrowly – and not unscathed – escaped the clutches of excessive systematization can offer. From this perspective, it is more human scaled than most other higher regarded capitals of Europe; and like a human, it forms an interesting study despite – and perhaps because – of its flaws. However, heritage in complex historic areas of the city center of Bucharest are not efficiently managed through existing policies. To illustrate this problem, I will briefly discuss the example of *Solacolu Inn* at Calea Moșilor 134 in the historic core of Bucharest (Fig.2).

Built in 1859 by the Solacoglu brothers of Istanbul on what had been at the time one of the main commercial arteries of Bucharest since the Middle Ages, the building is representative of local space-use practices.<sup>8</sup> It presents a continuous street front facade in a style which mixes early Eclectic and Neo-Classicist elements and a large interior courtyard. Functionally, it served mixed residential, economic and commercial purposes, housing a pasta factory in the back buildings, street-facing commercial space and living quarters. The Inn was nationalized during the Romanian socialist regime (1947-1989), maintaining a residential function until the 1980's, after which it was abandoned. After the collapse of socialism, the building was listed as a historic monument of local importance.<sup>9</sup> However, its return to the original owners caused

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<sup>7</sup> Francis Tibbalds, *Making People-Friendly Towns: Improving the Public Environment in Towns and Cities*. (Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 2012), 7, <https://public.ebookcentral.proquest.com/choice/publicfullrecord.aspx?p=178477>.

<sup>8</sup> Daniela Tutunea-Costin, "Hanulu Solacolu, Casa de La Răscruce de Lumi; Analiza Complexă Și Premizele Restaurării" [Solacolu Inn, the House from the Crossroads of Worlds; a Complex Analysis and the Premise of Restoration], *Revista Monumentelor Istorice* 69, no. 1–2 (2000): 141.

<sup>9</sup> Historic monuments in Romania are divided in two categories: A – national importance and B – local importance. For details see "Lege nr. 422 din 18 Iulie 2001 privind protejarea monumentelor istorice" [Law nr. 422 Concerning the Protection of Historical Monuments], Title II, Chapter 1, Art. 8, 1(a), 2001, [https://en.unesco.org/sites/default/files/rom\\_lege\\_422\\_romorof.pdf](https://en.unesco.org/sites/default/files/rom_lege_422_romorof.pdf).

it to enter in a complicated legal regime with an unclear responsibility for its conservation.<sup>10</sup>

Lack of funds and inefficient stakeholder dialogue led to the decay of the monument to a state of pre-collapse.

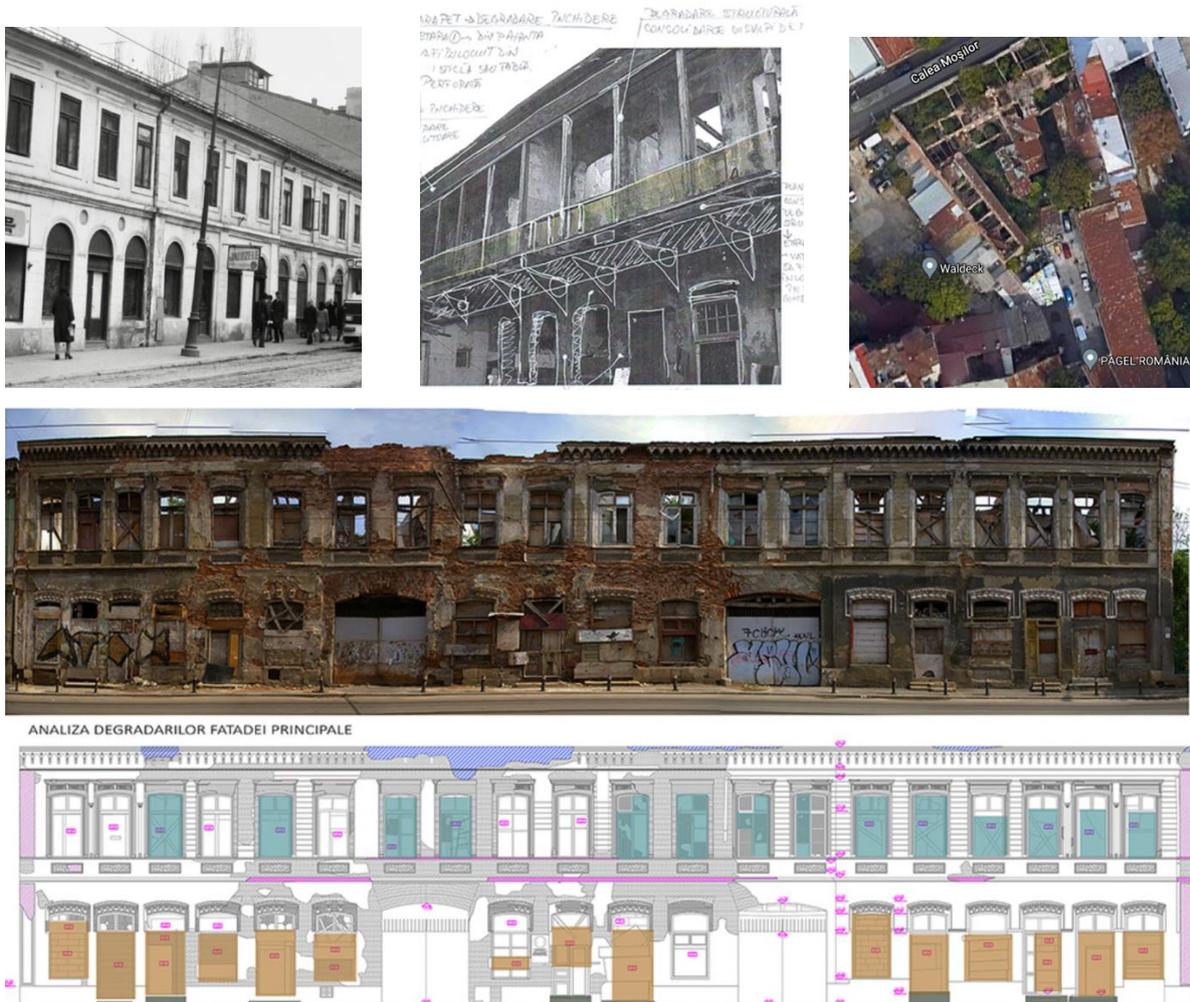


Figure 2: Solacolu Inn. Source: Mădălina Roșca and Corina Toader, "Hanul Solacolu Proiect de Restaurare [Solacolu Inn Restoration Project]," Departamentul Istoria, Teoria Arhitecturii și Conservarea Patrimoniului Universitatea de Arhitectură și Urbanism "Ion Mincu," accessed May 22, 2021, <http://madaelena123.weebly.com/restaurare-hanul-solacolu.html>.

Unfortunately, this constitutes the norm in the neighborhood of Calea Moșilor, although the entire street front is listed as a historic ensemble, and the zonal urbanism plans classify the area for maximum protection. This situation is repeated in many other historic areas of the city,

<sup>10</sup> IJC, "Bucuresti: Cum a Ajuns Hanul Solacolu, Monument Istoric de Secolul XIX, o Ruină. Cum Poate Fi Salvat?" [Bucharest: How Solacolu Inn, a Nineteenth Century Historic Monument, Became a Ruin. How Can It Be Saved?], justitiecurata.ro, 2017, <https://justitiecurata.ro/bucuresti-cum-a-ajuns-hanul-solacolu-monument-istoric-de-secolul-xix-o-ruina-si-ce-se-poate-face-pentru-salvarea-cladirii/>.

because the urban management environment is not well integrated with heritage protection policies.

Some legislative steps have been taken to initiate reform in the Romanian heritage field by introducing a new Code of Heritage (*Codul Patrimoniului*), which proposes a set of principles in line with the recent international heritage discourse, followed by comprehensive policies and legislation appropriate to each facet of cultural expression.<sup>11</sup> However, since 2016 progress on its legal status and implementation has not been made. Moreover, Bucharest is run by an outdated General Urban Plan (*Plan Urbanistic General* – PUG) made in 2000. The more recent *Plan Integrat de Dezvoltare Urbana* (PIDU – Integrated Urban Development Plan), which concerns the city center and was supposed to aid in managing the core urban area according to international standards, acts mostly as a rubber stamp used for requesting European Union (EU) funding and its provisions are not implemented, as there are almost no incentives or regulatory mechanisms to motivate Romanian authorities to do so.<sup>12</sup> Despite progresses made in the management of historic city centers regarding participation in Romania, in Bucharest urban planning remains a mostly top-down affair, principles other than residents’ perception and experience guiding administration.<sup>13</sup> On the other hand, the body of research work available in Romania regarding cultural heritage, and particularly built heritage, follows disciplinary lines, and very rarely engages in multidisciplinary inquiry. This situation forces heritage practitioners and NGOs to develop individualized approaches and processes, which presents a challenge for integrated development.

This thesis serves to further the discourse on the necessity of a contextualized study of

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<sup>11</sup> “HOTĂRÂRE nr. 905 pentru aprobarea tezelor prealabile ale proiectului Codului patrimoniului cultural” [Decision nr.905 for the approval of the initial proposal of the Code of Cultural Heritage project], Pub. L. No. 905, MONITORUL OFICIAL nr. 1.047, 27.12.2016 (2016), <http://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocument/185068>.

<sup>12</sup> Marcel Ionescu-Heroiu et al., “Enhanced Spatial Planning as a Precondition for Sustainable Urban Development,” Romania Regional Development Program (World Bank, 2013): 90, <http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/782491468296462975/pdf/Full-report.pdf>.

<sup>13</sup> Gabor Sonkoly, “The Meanings of Historic Urban Landscape,” Réseau Français Des Instituts D’études Avancées, 10 December 2012, <http://rfiea.fr/articles/meanings-historic-urban-landscape>.

heritage in Romania by answering the following research questions:

- 1. What local elements must be considered when determining a heritage value framework in the historic areas of Bucharest?**
- 2. Why are current policies ill-equipped to safeguard the urban heritage of Bucharest?**
- 3. How can recent developments in heritage management theory be adapted to the Romanian capital in order to remedy current status of historic areas?**

The thesis will demonstrate that local heritage values are not adequately represented in current policy, resulting in a grave degradation of the built environment, and propose a meaningful integrated heritage planning approach in Bucharest.

The challenges of such an approach are complex. On one hand, financial resources are comparatively lower in Bucharest than in other European capitals, the city budget being a cementitious political issue.<sup>14</sup> Not having the capacity to allocate sufficient funds to conservation, it will be argued here that *Primăria Municipiului București* (PMB/ the Municipality) should seek to maximize existing resources for safeguarding the built heritage in its purview by facilitating inter-institutional dialogue of its administrative bodies, as well as mobilize partnerships with civil society organizations and citizens.

## **Thesis Approach**

There has long been a debate within the field concerning the definition of a set of principles to underpin the international discourse of cultural heritage. A working definition used in this

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<sup>14</sup> Robert Kiss, “Consiliul General a Adoptat Bugetul Capitalei. Veniturile Și Cheltuielile Au Fost Reduse Cu Câte Un Miliard de Lei” [The General Council Adopted the Capital’s Budget. Income and Spending Were Reduced by a Billion RON Each], News Agency, Digi24, 7 May 2021, <https://www.digi24.ro/stiri/actualitate/politica/consiliul-general-a-adoptat-bugetul-capitalei-veniturile-si-cheltuielile-au-fost-reduce-cu-cate-un-miliard-de-lei-1520973>.

thesis, building upon international conventions, can be summarized as

“a form of inheritance to be kept in safekeeping and handed down to future generations [...] and it is both a symbol of cultural identity [...], and an essential element in the construction of that group’s identity [...] and is some kind of added value which carries an emotional impact”<sup>15</sup>

Taking into account communities as the determinant actor, this official conceptualization led to the recent – and almost universal – orientation towards a value-based definition of cultural heritage. Values here will be understood as assessments by particular groups attributed to cultural objects. The sum of values constitutes the *cultural significance* of an object, thus qualifying it for conservation.<sup>16</sup> This significance is usually the underlying assumption behind monument protection policies and was traditionally determined by experts such as art historians and archaeologists.

For a long time, this meant a historicization of heritage as a legacy of the past, and an aesthetically superior one, distant from current concerns; an approach now conceptualized as the *Authorized Heritage Discourse* (AHD).<sup>17</sup> This view draws on established authorities determining the interpretation of the past and what of it is to be valued by society. Criticized for turning a blind eye to both inclusivity and multidisciplinary nuance, it is no wonder that in contemporary heritage research, the classical approach has become increasingly outdated and gradually replaced by approaches belonging to the term *Critical Heritage Studies* (CHS), which seeks to deconstruct long-held assumptions about cultural objects. A critical approach to

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<sup>15</sup> For definition see Janet Blake, “On Defining the Cultural Heritage,” *The International and Comparative Law Quarterly* 49, no. 1 (2000): 63. For international consensus see United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, “WHC.”; ICOMOS, “The Nara Document on Authenticity,” 1994, <https://www.icomos.org/charters/nara-e.pdf>; Australia ICOMOS, “The Burra Charter (The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance),” 1999, [https://australia.icomos.org/wp-content/uploads/BURRA\\_CHARTER.pdf](https://australia.icomos.org/wp-content/uploads/BURRA_CHARTER.pdf).

<sup>16</sup> Randall Mason and Marta de la Torre, “Assessing Values in Conservation Planning: Methodological Issues and Choices,” Research Report, *Assessing the Values of Cultural Heritage* (Los Angeles: The Getty Conservation Institute, 2002): 13, [https://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications\\_resources/pdf\\_publications/pdf\\_assessing.pdf](https://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications_resources/pdf_publications/pdf_assessing.pdf).

<sup>17</sup> Laurajane Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, Reprinted (Routledge, 2009).

heritage considers discourses in the fields of memory, economics, sustainability and identity, integrating and highlighting the role of the field in broader debates.<sup>18</sup> Despite the increasing popularity of critical discourse, adopting an exploratory position which mediates diverging academic heritage discourses can be more productive in analyzing the practical management of a historic city.<sup>19</sup> When it comes to applying these theories to urban studies, this mediating view of heritage is remarkable in that it allows the capture of local specificity, while directing thoughtful development. In a city with a centuries-old history, we move around the same streets, often sleep in the same rooms, and walk in the same parks as the generations before us. Not only is the historic built environment a link to our past, but it also has a lasting influence on current behaviors and lifestyles. It is curious how often traditional urban living as a form of heritage – for heritage it is, in a critical understanding of it as a process of experience –, is overlooked in the documents tasked with safeguarding.<sup>20</sup> In this direction, the approach in this thesis allows for some assumptions of value, as they are conventionally held, while at the same time exploring the socio-cultural and historic factors which determined them.

Central and Eastern Europe makes an interesting study in both the wealth of historical and cultural layers, as well as in having gone through traumatic breaks in cultural principles in recent history. Oftentimes, a reduced institutional capacity as a result of regime change left the developing countries in the region less well adapted to adopt innovator positions in cultural debates, relegating their policy regimes as complying as much as possible with international standards.<sup>21</sup> In countries like Hungary and the Czech Republic heritage became an economic resource for development, prioritizing material aspects of conservation and management, a

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<sup>18</sup> Tim Winter, “Clarifying the Critical in Critical Heritage Studies,” *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 19, no. 6 (September 2013): 541, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13527258.2012.720997>.

<sup>19</sup> Christoph Brumann, “Heritage Agnosticism: A Third Path for the Study of Cultural Heritage,” *Social Anthropology* 22, no. 2 (May 2014): 180, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1469-8676.12068>.

<sup>20</sup> Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, 29.

<sup>21</sup> Monika Murzyn-Kupisz, “Heritage Transformation in Central and Eastern Europe,” in *Ashgate Research Companion to Heritage and Identity* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008).

strategy which brought about gentrification and intensified social conflict, particularly in historic inner-city neighborhoods.<sup>22</sup> In Romania, however, dysfunctional urbanism policies led to the decay of inner-city neighborhoods, reducing the functional size of historic centers:

“Dysfunctional urbanism often reflects such key elements as short-term profit imperatives, an element of corruption, and uncertainty about future development strategies and options [...] coupled with the inability of many residents, commercial enterprises, community groups, technologists and environmental activists to have a considered input into the future configuration of urban space.”<sup>23</sup>

In Bucharest, this situation concentrated economic activity in the touristic Old Town while depriving the surrounding historic neighborhoods of productive activity, decreasing coherence and cohesion, key elements of urban livability.<sup>24</sup>

As recent scholarship of urban studies is increasingly focused on reaching goals of social sustainability, the heritage discourse contributes to these goals by highlighting the irreplicable social function cultural expressions play in society.<sup>25</sup> As material and immaterial heritage is inextricably linked to identity and community, fully integrating its preservation into urban planning is paramount to reaching a harmonious environment. Furthermore, as heritage is generally understood as an inheritance of the past to be transmitted forward to future generations, it follows that the essence of heritage is its role as a connection between past, present and future.<sup>26</sup> Therefore, sustainability in all forms should be a general direction of conservation efforts.

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<sup>22</sup> György Enyedi and Zoltán Kovács, “Social Sustainability of Historical City Centres in Central Europe—an Introduction,” *Discussion Papers*, no. Special (2006): 15.

<sup>23</sup> Ioan Ianoș, Anthony Sorensen, and Cristina Merciu, “Incoherence of Urban Planning Policy in Bucharest: Its Potential for Land Use Conflict,” *Land Use Policy* 60 (January 2017): 101–12, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landusepol.2016.10.030>.

<sup>24</sup> Rachel Kaplan and Stephen Kaplan, *The Experience of Nature: A Psychological Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Pr, 1989), 66, [https://www.hse.ru/data/2019/03/04/1196348207/%5BRachel\\_Kaplan,\\_Stephen\\_Kaplan%5D\\_The\\_Experience\\_of\\_\(b-ok.xyz\).pdf](https://www.hse.ru/data/2019/03/04/1196348207/%5BRachel_Kaplan,_Stephen_Kaplan%5D_The_Experience_of_(b-ok.xyz).pdf).

<sup>25</sup> Luciana Lazzarotti, “The Resurge of the “Societal Function of Cultural Heritage.”An Introduction,” *City, Culture and Society* 3, no. 4 (December 2012): 229–33, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ccs.2012.12.003>.

<sup>26</sup> Blake, “On Defining the Cultural Heritage”: 84.

“Theoretically, the landscape could unite the levels of local practices by the inclusion of the individual (through his or her view), the community (through its value-bound definition) and the society (by taking the genius loci into account).”<sup>27</sup>

The concept of the city as a landscape could provide the necessary knowledge to fulfill these goals. In the HUL Recommendation, it is precisely a bottom-up cultural value creation process which is encouraged, targeting the social function of heritage as a driver for livability. As the goal of this thesis is to provide a framework to reorient heritage perceptions in Bucharest towards a sustainable urban development goal, and ingratiate this perception into planning and policy, it is crucial to adopt a theoretical basis which takes into account “the various ways in which heritage now has a stake in, and can act as a positive enabler for, the complex, multi-vector challenges that face us today, such as cultural and environmental sustainability, economic inequalities, conflict resolution, social cohesion and the future of cities [...]”<sup>28</sup> Because civic engagement, knowledge and planning, and financial tools proposed in the HUL recommendation, as well as its framework for regulatory systems aim to engage all local stakeholders in heritage conservation and positively impact all scales of urban experience (institutional, social and individual), this approach was chosen as a premise for this research.

The first chapter, *Historic Urban Configurations* will elaborate on the evolution of the city with a focus on traditional neighborhood units, outlining the values imbedded in the urban profile. The second chapter *Policy Evolution* will discuss the institutional developments that led to the decay of built heritage in inner-city neighborhoods, including a cross-examination of monument protection legislation and urbanism policies. Therefore, after establishing the cultural values attribution in Bucharest, as well as its current policy regime, the final chapter of this thesis *Towards a Historic Urban Landscape Approach* will inquire whether the HUL toolkit has potential for implementation in Bucharest. There exists an opportunity for this

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<sup>27</sup> Sonkoly, “The Meanings of Historic Urban Landscape.”

<sup>28</sup> Winter, “Clarifying the Critical in Critical Heritage Studies”: 533.

discourse to be disseminated locally, as new urban plans are currently under assessment and in the process of update. The added value of this research is its practice-oriented aims and specific focus, possibly contributing to real change in the city by laying the groundwork to mobilize further specialized inquiries.<sup>29</sup>

## Methodology

Between research, documentation and active engagement lie the media of experience; the city as seen by filmmakers, novelists and cultural journalists. Bucharest has been in this way ‘seen’ perhaps more than it has been ‘researched’. This thesis aims to bridge the interpretative gap between the organic manifestations of life in the historic parts of the city and the official heritage discourse by sourcing its analysis in a comprehensive study of both. Therefore, the present work will employ a complex methodology, each section adopting methods appropriate for answering individual research questions.

The scope of the work does not allow a comprehensive analysis of the heritage situation of the entire city of Bucharest; however, its urban structure supports a localized focus. This thesis will deal with the historic city center of Bucharest for multiple reasons. First, “the spatial organization of the traditional city and the transformation of this structure become the historic core of the today's modern city,” making the central area a productive space to track evolution and assess to what degree heritage has survived.<sup>30</sup> Second, the generally poor state of conservation of the historic center justifies the necessity to bring it under closer inspection. Finally, this area has been chosen because the traditional urban fabric has been conserved

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<sup>29</sup> Marc Antrop, “A Brief History of Landscape Research,” in *The Routledge Companion to Landscape Studies*, ed. Peter Howard et al., Second edition, Routledge Companions (London New York: Routledge, 2019), 12.

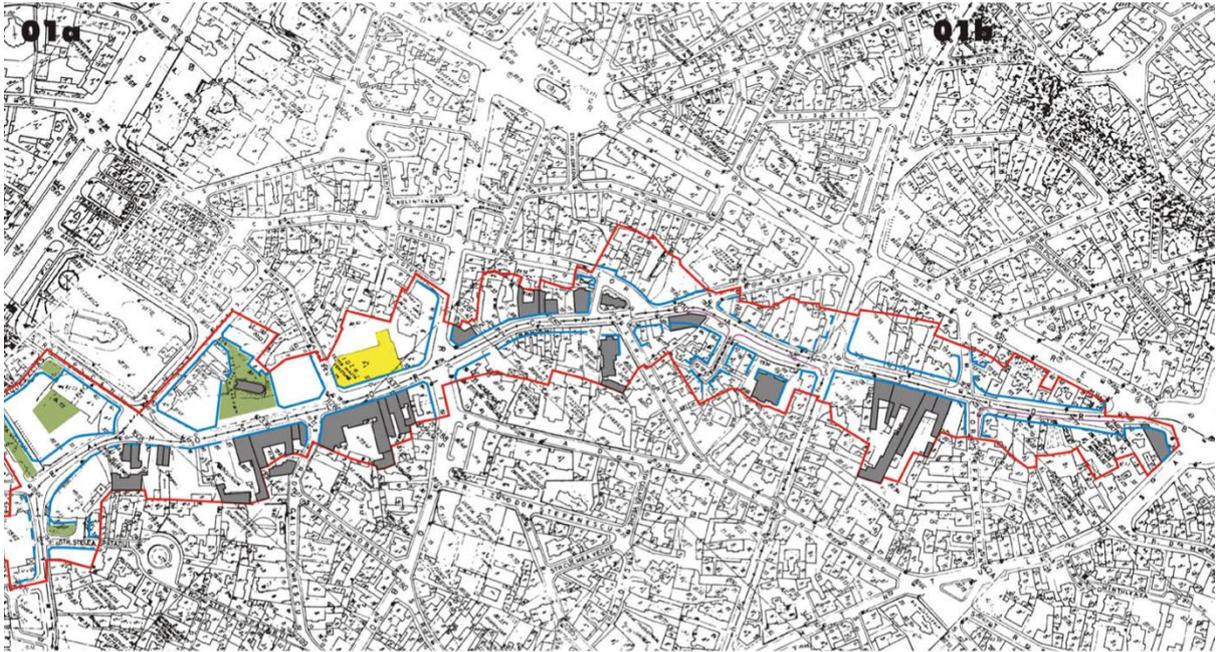
<sup>30</sup> Kayvan Karimi, “Urban Conservation and Spatial Transformation: Preserving the Fragments or Maintaining the “Spatial Spirit,”” *URBAN DESIGN International* 5, no. 3–4 (December 2000): 221–31, <https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.udi.9000012>.

almost entirely, which is not the case in most of the urban territory. The continuity of the built environment is a key premise around which intangible aspects can be determined. Furthermore, current monument protection and urban policy documents which coordinate urban management place the historic center under a particular protection regime, subdividing it in protection zones defined by urbanistic and architectural character. These arguments support a case study approach to analysis, allowing to demonstrate both local specificity and the effects of policies.

Thus, the case study for this thesis will be focused in Calea Moșilor, a traditional commercial street and its immediate surroundings which date back to the period when Bucharest was a medieval market town. Architecturally, the area presents examples from most, if not all, eras of the city, structured around the traditional urban fabric which consists of narrow winding streets. The continuous street front of Moșilor is protected as a historic ensemble, and most buildings are individually inscribed historic monuments. From an urbanism perspective, Calea Moșilor is safeguarded through a Protected Area Zonal Urbanism Plan (PUZ – *Plan Urbanistic Zonal*) with a maximum degree of protection qualifier (Fig.3), which involves enhanced conservation regulations.<sup>31</sup> As the example of Solacolu Inn illustrated in the beginning, the poor state of conservation of this area, despite its status and especially compared with the more well-maintained surroundings, this neighborhood makes an intriguing study.

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<sup>31</sup> “Regulament Zona Protejată Nr. 01 Stradă Tradițională Comercială Calea Moșilor Subzona Cp1c” [Protected Area Regulations Nr. 01 Traditional Commercial Street Calea Moșilor Subarea Cp1c], (Primăria Municipiului București, 2000), <http://urbanism.pmb.ro/duat-su/zone%20protejate%20-%20prescriptii/zone%20protejate%20-%202000/01mosilor.pdf>.



*Figure 3: Calea Moșilor protected area limits with historic monuments marked in gray. Source: PMB, Protected area regulations Nr. 01 PUZ, 2000.*

Focusing on the case study area, for the purposes of the first chapter, the picture of the cultural inheritance of Bucharest reflected in its historic built environment will be constructed around a framework based on close reading and interpretation of primary sources. A chronological analysis of urban development will be traced from maps, historic urban plans and official documents. Further detailed information will be sourced in scholarly secondary literature. Of note here are monographies of the city, as Bucharest benefits from a rich tradition of local history writing, which will form the historical basis of the analysis. This type of historical information is a part of urbanism documentations; however, it informs them only regarding historical and architectural significance. This thesis will examine the available resources by a chronological content analysis, bridging the interpretative gap between history, material reality, and intangible aspects of Bucharest urban culture which have been transmitted to the present.

The chronological design will be duplicated in the second thematic section, in order to investigate how cultural heritage values had been determined and safeguarded by relevant

Romanian authorities until the present. A documentary analysis method will be applied to source documents, including legislation, public policy documents and programmatic texts by authority figures, in order to determine the evolution of the AHD. In parallel, I conducted field observations between February 2020 and April 2021 to determine the real state of conservation of the case study area, serving as a premise for analyzing the practical outcomes of the approach of administration. The observations followed a cataloguing method, inventorying each individual construction which appears in the PUZ along a set of indicators:

- Architectural style and period
- Function: residential/commercial/mixed-use (detailed)/cultural/religious
- State of conservation: very good/good/bad/collapsing
- Occupancy: in full use/partial use (residential/commercial/other)/empty/abandoned
- Monument status: yes/no.

Additionally, observations included the architectural profile of different sections of the neighborhood, the intensity of economic activity (for example, how many shops were in or out of business, number of cafes, restaurants, and services), transport links, the availability of cultural facilities in proximity and visible challenges (notably cleanliness and the presence of squats). This information contours the urban profile of the area, which will be analyzed considering historical development and comparatively with similar broad observations of the surroundings. Interpretation of material will be made by contextualization within both Romanian and international research.

A challenge presented by the restrictions incurred due to the pandemic was the inability to study the social profile of Calea Moșilor through interviews. As the social manifests itself in a city as a network of connections, people knowing each other and meaningfully engaging with each other, mapping the extent and depth of local attachments and community would have

added to the value of this research.<sup>32</sup> The foot-traffic and economic activity could not be determined with any real certainty either. Nevertheless, by studying the area in comparison with neighboring quarters with a similar development and policies, the relative socio-economic deprivation of Calea Moșilor could be determined. The challenges were mediated by an in-depth mapping of the socio-cultural opportunities in the neighborhood.<sup>33</sup>

The final thematic section of the thesis will employ documentary analysis methods in an exploratory research approach, arguing the suitability of HUL tools implementation. The reduced research area benefits prospective applications from a resource perspective, the possibilities for knowledge creation by promoting heritage as a driver for area revitalization possibly outweighing the costs of tentative policy implementation. As a mixed-use area, the residential space configuration in Calea Moșilor supports its conceptualization as a traditional neighborhood with potential for community formation – a conducive environment to analyze the potential social benefits of HUL application. The concept of place attachment and the sense of community it fosters can also be applied in the present debates of conservation and protection of these heritage rich areas, as an encouragement for revitalizing communities and encouraging their participation in planning. As a deliverable of this research project, a set of recommendations grounded in the argumentation of the analytical sections will be formulated for short to medium term application in the case study area by policymakers in order to prevent further degradation of the historic built environment, as well as to safeguard genuine expressions of the urban intangible heritage of Bucharest.

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<sup>32</sup> Jane-Frances Kelly, *Social Cities* (Grattan Institute, 2012).

<sup>33</sup> For an interactive map see <https://www.google.com/maps/d/edit?mid=1Cg1T3hWbsR02V1-nEg-qxgHrkPPskHM7&ll=44.43411563438099%2C26.110112049999987&z=16>.

# Chapter 1: Historic Urban Configurations

*“We live in a city we do not understand and for that reason we do not know how to take care of it, and we oftentimes place it on development directions which should have always remained foreign to it”*

-Nicolae Iorga<sup>34</sup>

The profile of the built environment in Bucharest can be defined by analyzing the evolution of the city in the previous three centuries. The historical forces which dictated the socio-political organization of Romania in the Modern Era must not be understated as configurators of the urban environment. If, in the early years, the sprawl of Bucharest was dictated by its growing economy as a trade center, later, increasing land prices and political dynamics of the elites controlled the definition of habitation areas and levels of occupancy. The first urban planning efforts in the capital city took place in the late nineteenth century after the unification and independence of the state. Political instability was caused by the conflict between Ottoman oversight and local interests, and this resulted in weak administrative institutions, which were not able to carry out large scale projects in the city.<sup>35</sup> Furthermore, initial urbanistic regulations were centered more on modernization and ‘beautification’ of the city, rather than urban scale systematization.<sup>36</sup> As it will be argued through an overview of the grand city plans, the mapping of the city was always done as a work of documentation of already existing structures, rather

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<sup>34</sup> Nicolae Iorga, *Istoria Bucureștilor* [History of Bucharest], 3rd ed. (București: Vremea, 2015).

<sup>35</sup> Ioana Maria Petrescu and Bogdan Constantin Stanciu, “Building Projects in Bucharest at the Turn of the 20th Century between Delay and Abandonment,” *Caiete ARA. Arhitectură. Restaurare. Arheologie.*, no. 3 (2012): 155–71.

<sup>36</sup> Dan Berindei, “Modernizarea Bucureștilor În Secolul al XIX-Lea” [The Modernisation of Bucharest in the Nineteenth Century], *București - Materiale de Istorie Și Muzeografie* 24 (2010): 10–1.

than a tool for systematization, as the core structures of the urban environment had already by that point developed. Following the way political and socio-economic forces manifested on the urban built environment, it is possible to express that the evolution of the city was organic.<sup>37</sup> What is particularly interesting is that, in contrast with other European capitals, even though there were constant modernization works for almost the entire previous two centuries, urban scale systematizing undertakings were absent until the second half twentieth century. This allowed for the historic street pattern to be maintained in many areas of the city center, while, in the absence of restrictive building regulations, a patchwork of architecture spanning four centuries of stylistic changes now forms the urban environment in downtown Bucharest.<sup>38</sup> In this chapter, I will track the historical evolution of the city in relation to spatial planning and with particular interest towards how the relationship between society and architecture shapes current understandings of heritage. After determining the character of the built environment, the following chapters will explore its interpretation as the object of heritage conservation policies.

## 1.1. Spatial evolution pattern and topography.

Features of the built environment, while in themselves a testament to the complex history of a place, are situated at the confluence of both social phenomena and individual histories. An old house is not only remarkable through its architectural features, but also as a space where generations of people lived and interacted in, built relationships, and shaped their surroundings from.<sup>39</sup> The flurry of human activity concentrated in buildings and spilling out into the streets

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<sup>37</sup> Hanna Derer, "Building Urbanity in Bucharest," *SITA – Studii de Istoria Şi Teoria Arhitecturii*, no. 3 (2015): 49.

<sup>38</sup> Cezara Mucenic, "Arhitecţi Şi Case În Bucureştii Secolului al XIX-Lea - Alexandru Orăscu Şi Anton Onderka" [Architects and Houses in the Bucharest of the Nineteenth Century - Alexandru Orăscu and Anton Onderka], *Bucureşti - Materiale de Istorie Şi Muzeografie* 15 (2002): 251.

<sup>39</sup> Steen Eiler Rasmussen, *Experiencing Architecture*, 33rd printing (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2005), 5.

and public spaces of a city generates certain habits, patterns of interactions between people and space. Bidding ‘good day’ to the lady selling flowers on the corner, a polite nod to a neighbor, or meeting others walking their dog in the local park are things we take for granted today, however, it is hard to imagine them without the physical space where they habitually occur.<sup>40</sup> Not only is the historic built environment a link to our past, but it also has a lasting influence on current behaviors and lifestyles. As “the basic principle behind all connective structures is repetition”, the memory embedded in our shared living environment is maintained by repetition within the constraints of the built surroundings.<sup>41</sup> It has been well known in modern architectural theory that the topography of the urban environment dictates how people behave and how welcome they feel in the streets, and the heritage field is catching up to this realization.

The social-behavioral aspects are part of the urban history as much as the architecture, and the character of a locality, which the international heritage community aims to preserve, was conceptualized as *genius loci*: the way intangible aspects mix with an environment and give it a ‘feeling’ of authenticity which sets the locality apart.<sup>42</sup> As it is stated in the Nara Document from the International Council On Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), the authentic cultural or social history contained by a heritage element can be sourced in “[...] form and design, materials and substance, use and function, traditions and techniques, location and setting, and spirit and feeling [...]”.<sup>43</sup> On the one hand, the structural elements of **form and design** can be understood as signifiers of history. They are distinguishable features of the urban space, such as street placements and the density of the urban fabric, imprints of developmental stages of a society -of history- onto physical space. Thus, they form the grand narrative of a

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<sup>40</sup> Richard Grassby, “Material Culture and Cultural History,” *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 35, no. 4 (2005): 593–4.

<sup>41</sup> Jan Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization: Writing, Remembrance, and Political Imagination* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

<sup>42</sup> Michael Petzet, “Genius Loci – The Spirit of Monuments and Sites,” in *16th General Assembly of ICOMOS (The Spirit of Place, Quebec, 2008)*, [http://openarchive.icomos.org/243/1/inaugural-Vortrag\\_Petzet.pdf](http://openarchive.icomos.org/243/1/inaugural-Vortrag_Petzet.pdf).

<sup>43</sup> ICOMOS, “Nara Document.”

city's evolution. In addition, the **materiality** of architectural elements present in these configurations are also significant for the cultural history of a particular place. The styles are a good indicator of how fashionable urban residents were, and what cultural influences they subscribed to, while the materials used – the level of care and investment in construction – suggest the cultural commitment of society.<sup>44</sup> For example, the influence of French culture in the second half of the nineteenth century in Bucharest begun with political ties and continued with French architects designing the most emblematic public buildings in the city (Fig.4), and gradually introducing to the townhouses of the bourgeoisie Neo-classicist and Eclectic styles, to the extent that the city was known to the world as ‘Paris of the East’, and the French association has remained ingrained the Romanian cultural memory.<sup>45</sup>



*Figure 4: CEC Bank building, completed in 1900 in an eclectic style by French architect Paul Gottreau. Picture by author.*

On the other hand, the material environment reflected in architecture was always in close relation to intangible aspects of urban life. The early constructions served the mercantile character of the city (inns, shops, etc.) and made use of public street space to display and sell wares and was dictated by traditional use practices. In the later centuries, while architecture

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<sup>44</sup> Leila W. Kinney, “Fashion and Fabrication in Modern Architecture,” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 58, no. 3 (September 1999): 473, <https://doi.org/10.2307/991541>.

<sup>45</sup> S. Kallestrup, “Romanian “National Style” and the 1906 Bucharest Jubilee Exhibition,” *Journal of Design History* 15, no. 3 (1 January 2002): 147–62, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jdh/15.3.147>.

began to follow Western fashions, it was often described as a thin veneer of civilization over a society still archaic in **substance**, clinging to its traditional lifestyle and customs.<sup>46</sup> These historic lifestyles have a lot to offer to contemporaneity, as their presence is still guiding the local identity of residents through being imbedded in collective memory and projected in popular culture. It is difficult to accurately pinpoint these legacy aspects, but some of them will become apparent through the following analysis.<sup>47</sup> The persistence of traditional space use practices and local lifestyles throughout periods of modernization and despite active suppression later, justifies their integration into any attempt to understand the city. Public **settings** which have been significant for the development of Bucharest for the past three centuries, such as markets, squares and public gardens constitute valuable urban social spaces. All these aspects can be integrated into a broad understanding of the **spirit and feeling** of the city, which can be not only safeguarded from the identity loss incurred by modernity and neoliberal economic development, but also used as a guide for an organic urban evolution guided by the interplay between the genuine living needs of the residents and the formative influence the built environment exerts upon them. The following sections will analyze the formation process of Bucharest's urban environment considering these concepts, determining how each element became the forbearer of the present-day urban heritage.

### 1.1.1. Form and design

Bucharest was first attested as a settlement in 1459, specifically appearing as *Cetatea București*, a citadel containing mainly the royal court, encircled by fortifications. This area will become the fixed point around which the city would develop for the future half millennium.<sup>48</sup> The early

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<sup>46</sup> Adrian Majuru, "Radiografia unei Modernizări. "Ulysse de Marsillac, Bucureștiul În Veacul al 19-Lea, Meridiane, București, 1999"" [X-ray of a modernization. "Ulysse de Marsillac, Bucharest in the nineteenth century"], *București - Materiale de Istorie Și Muzeografie* 16, (2000): 373–5.

<sup>47</sup> Oana-Diana-Elena Popescu-Coliban, "Bucureștii de Dincolo de Timp" [Bucharest from beyond Time], *București - Materiale de Istorie Și Muzeografie* 30 (2016): 396.

<sup>48</sup> Constantin C. Giurescu, *Istoria Bucureștilor din cele mai vechi timpuri până în zilele noastre* [History of Bucharest from the oldest times until our days], 1st ed. (Bucharest: Editura pentru Literatură, 1966), 42-9.

settlement evolved in units resembling a traditional Romanian village: a central public space occupied either by a church (if the settlement was large enough), or a marketplace, around which shops and homes were located according to no particular pattern other than the one defined by necessity and land suitability for human activity. Similarly, in medieval and early modern Bucharest, settlements known as *mahalale* appeared around the royal court. They were areas of habitation segregated by, and usually bearing the name of, the trade or ethnicity of the inhabitants, and are attested as official administrative units since at least the seventeenth century.<sup>49</sup> The previously described spatial distribution pattern was repeated in the inside topography of the *mahalale* themselves, borrowing not only the sprawl of a traditional village (church/market square in the center, surrounded by houses in a non-planned distribution), but also the rurality of the lifestyle.<sup>50</sup> A great boom in secular architecture took place in the seventeenth century, as a result of the economic and cultural enrichment of the city, determining wealthy merchant homes and palaces of the boyars to spring up around the city's many churches.<sup>51</sup> As tradesmen were obligated by law to sell their wares only on particular streets, the segregation of the *mahalale* into close knit communities was solidified, determining localized uses of space, which were clearly identifiable by archaeological and historical studies.<sup>52</sup> Furthermore, this demarcation of areas of habitation also had a great impact on their individual socio-economic development and importance in the urban life of Bucharest, imbuing

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<sup>49</sup> *Mahala* (plural *mahalale*) means “neighbourhood” in Turkish, and it is a bureaucratic term borrowed in Romanian during the Ottoman administration of the lands, referring at the time to habitation areas of the city, insofar as they were separated from each other. It was used in official documents, publications, as well as colloquially until the nineteenth century with the original meaning. In the following decades, as Western European (particularly French and German) political influence replaced that of the Ottoman Empire, and modernisation efforts initiated historical and scientific work on local history, the term received a negative connotation, implying an area of a particularly backward and oriental type. The term is used in modern vernacular Romanian as synonymous with “slum”, however, in this work it will be used in its historic context.

<sup>50</sup> Iorga, *Istoria Bucureștilor*, 71-4.

<sup>51</sup> Giurescu, *Istoria Bucureștilor*, 77.

<sup>52</sup> Ioan Cojocaru, “Materiale Privind Dezvoltarea Industrială a Orașului București În Perioada Regulamentului Organic Și În Anii Premergători Unirii Principatelor (1821-1859)” [Materials Concerning the Industrial Development of the City of Bucharest in the Period of the Organic Regulations and in the Years Leading up to the Unification of the Principalities (1821-1859)], *București - Materiale de Istorie Și Muzeografie* 1 (1964): 177.

each self-contained unit with particular character.

An important administrative separation between the proprieties inside and those outside of the limits of the burgeoning city can be considered a direct influence on the expansion of this type of habitation unit. The inside of the *târg* [market]<sup>53</sup> area was the direct propriety of the ruler, and those who owned property here owed tax money directly to the Court, while the *afară* [‘outside’ (of the *târg*)] area was comprised of grand estates of the nobility and the Orthodox Church.<sup>54</sup> The more the city was growing, land *inside* was purchased by influential landowners, and the townsfolk who were affected by rent increases and forced relocation, moved increasingly outwards.<sup>55</sup> What this expansion meant for the spatial evolution of the city was that the rural space-use habits of the townsfolk migrated with them, creating an expanding the puzzle of *mahalale*, each a self-contained unit of lifestyles and occupations. Even though, as decades passed, the *mahalale* near the city center had more cosmopolitan lifestyles than those at the periphery, those looking to modernize the city still regarded them as remnants of an ‘oriental’, rural lifestyle. The lingering traces of unorganized urbanity became the subject of the idiosyncratic discourse of the ‘Balkan’ character of Bucharest, which holds a place in interpretation of the urban culture of the city to this day.<sup>56</sup>

It is particularly the archaic organization of public and private space use whose relationship with lifestyle is worth analyzing as a valuable piece of Bucharest’s urban heritage.

In a description published in a weekly Parisian paper by Charles Doussault, a Frenchman

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<sup>53</sup> *Târg* in modern Romanian means market, however the term was historically used as synonymous with town or settlement, the latter use being employed here.

<sup>54</sup> Paul I. Cernovodeanu, “Considerații Privitoare La Organizarea Administrativă a Orașului București În Secolele 16-17” [Considerations regarding the administrative organization of the city of Bucharest in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries], *București - Materiale de Istorie Și Muzeografie* 1 (1964): 169, 172.

<sup>55</sup> Liviu Ștefănescu, “Proprietatea funciară în epoca precapitalistă” [Landed property in the precapitalist era], *București - Materiale de Istorie și Muzeografie* 1 (1974): 81. “Constantin Mavrocordat hotăra la 1745 ca la toți aceia care aveau case pe pământul mănăstirii Radu Vodă, însă nu în târgurile cele dinlăuntru, ci prin mahalale [...] să fie chiria a tot anul.” My emphasis and translation.

<sup>56</sup> Błażej Brzostek, “Romania’s Peculiar Way in the Landscapes of Bucharest, 1806–1906,” *Acta Poloniae Historica* 111 (1 January 2015): 107, <https://doi.org/10.12775/APH.2015.111.05>.

visiting the city in the mid nineteenth century, “the mahala is not a suburb, [...]: it is a square, a set of winding streets, shady paths, outside the noisy life, the bustle of the city; small quarters sown into the gardens and hidden under the trees.”<sup>57</sup> The urban organization in *mahalale* was maintained over the following centuries, and, despite several systematization efforts, the traces of these settlements can be observed in the urban fabric today. Avenues were built around and across the small neighborhoods, and even though some modern urban palaces and apartment blocks were constructed, traditional housing and land use patterns were maintained in significant proportion.<sup>58</sup>

This peculiar evolution of the urban space where the land was modernized but not systematized resulted in what can be in the present day called central peripheries in the urban fabric.<sup>59</sup> When modern liberal professions and a rising middle class appeared in Bucharest, central *mahalale* changed their primary function from economic to residential. Nevertheless, the built environment remained largely unchanged.<sup>60</sup> Because of the transformation of these *mahalale* into affluent central areas, public services and facilities were introduced, but they were spared of larger urban developments in the following century. However, as the economic and social poles of the city shifted as we draw closer to the present, such places were left behind and became functionally peripheral despite their location. While in their formation period these localities distinguished themselves by the close social and economic ties of their residents, in recent decades depopulation and underdevelopment mark the landscape.

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<sup>57</sup> Charles Doussault, “Les Ranges et Les Titres En Valachie,” *L’illustration*, 1 July 1854: 7. “Le mahala n’est pas un faubourg [...] c’est une place, un ensemble de rues tortueuses, des chemins ombrages, en dehors de la vie bruyante, du mouvement de la ville; des petits quartiers semés dans les jardins et caches sous les arbres.” My emphases and translation.

<sup>58</sup> Florian Georgescu, “Marele Plan al oraşului Bucureşti ridicat de Maiorul Borroczyń între 1844-1846” [The Grand Plan of the city of Bucharest made by Major Borroczyń between 1844-1846], *Bucureşti - Materiale de Istorie şi Muzeografie* 1 (1964): 39.

<sup>59</sup> Muzeul Municipiului Bucureşti, “Periferii Centrale Ale Bucureştiului [Central Peripheries of Bucharest],” Project Website, ARCUB, accessed 26 May 2021, <https://arcub.ro/eveniment/periferii-centrale-ale-bucurestiului/>.

<sup>60</sup> Adrian Majuru, *Bucureştii mahalalelor, sau periferia ca mod de existenţă* [Bucharest of the *mahalale*, or the periphery as a way of life] (Bucureşti: Compania, 2003), 33.

Because the local residential and compact architectural profile was kept (Fig.5), the way people live in these areas in small ways still resembles that of even centuries ago. For example, the importance of gardens shaded by ancient trees as guardians from busy streets, gathering spaces in private courtyards to meet with neighbors and friends and enjoy a beer on a hot summer day, is not a significant part of the lifestyle of people living in the modern parts of the city, while it is central to the life in such a neighborhood. The historic neighborhoods of the city center are, furthermore, socially peripheral compared to the modern city in the sense that they allow a lifestyle which is not often associated with the heart of a large urban space.



*Figure 5: Amadeo Preziosi, General View from Colțea Tower, Watercolour, 1868.*

Stepping behind the central avenue into a former *mahala* is not only an incursion into a separate space reminiscent of a decidedly less modern settlement – a different city all-together –, but also different time by virtue of the historic ambiance. Besides these considerations, however, there are less favorable aspects also present in these areas: the infrastructure and

localization are causes for their decay and endangered status. As economic liberalization and development were prioritized in the past three decades, the resulting land speculation gravely encroached upon the patchwork urbanism policies and brought gentrification and depopulation to inner city neighborhoods. From a heritage conservation standpoint, the problem extends twofold: the loss of character and *genius loci* by the diminishing of the intangible character which only a living community can preserve, and the degradation of built heritage, considering not only listed historic monuments, but also their context and relationship with the vicinity. The contrasts between a central avenue and the area behind are often jarring, causing issues for social cohesion and quality of urban life, aspects which are heavily dependent on a harmonious built environment.

Thus, I argue that because of the impact of its layout on social life extending into the present and shaping aspects of urban life, the *mahala* as a heritage urban unit can be analyzed as a source for both determining the heritage values present in underdeveloped historic neighborhoods in central Bucharest, as well as a resource of development potential by virtue of its cultural significance. The following sections will build on this premise by defining the character of the built environment in one such unit – the *Calea Moșilor* traditional neighborhood, and analyzing the intangible cultural aspects associated with it, demonstrating the importance of historic neighborhoods in creating the present day understanding of the urban heritage of Bucharest.



twentieth century where traders and peasants from Moldavia and north-eastern Walachia came with their goods and products. Among of the most active and successful traders were the Armenians, who had strong communities in Moldavia, and many settled in the Moșilor area, where they erected the largest Armenian church in South-East Europe.

The earliest documentation of the Moșilor fair and the commercially active road that led to it dates from the eighteenth century. It has experienced a spectacular development after the unification of the Principalities of Walachia and Moldavia in the aftermath of the Crimean War in 1859. The architecture thus very much reflects an effervescent commercial past, with interesting examples of trader houses built in a multitude of vernacular and elevated styles.<sup>62</sup>

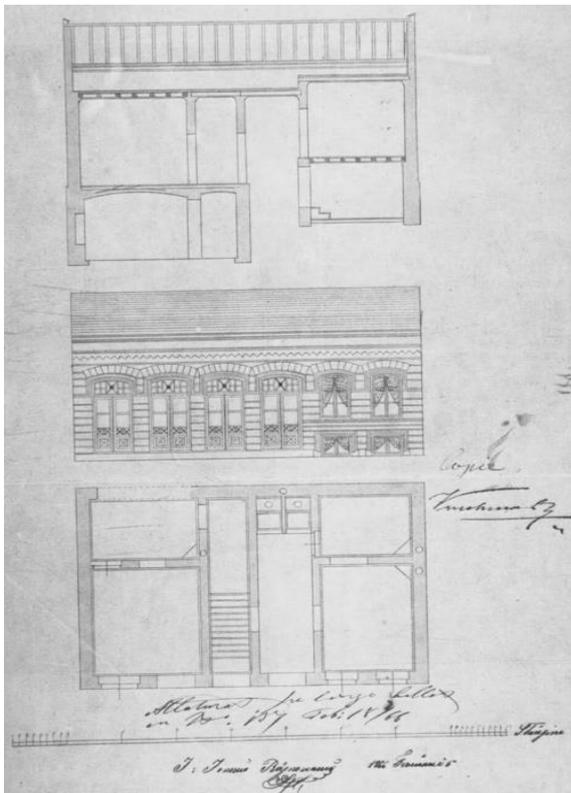


Figure 7: Mahalaua Sfântul Ghorghe Nou, 1866, Cezara Mucenic Archive, <http://www.arhivacezaramucenic.rhabillage.ro/?product=1866-mahalaua-sf-gheorghe-nou>.

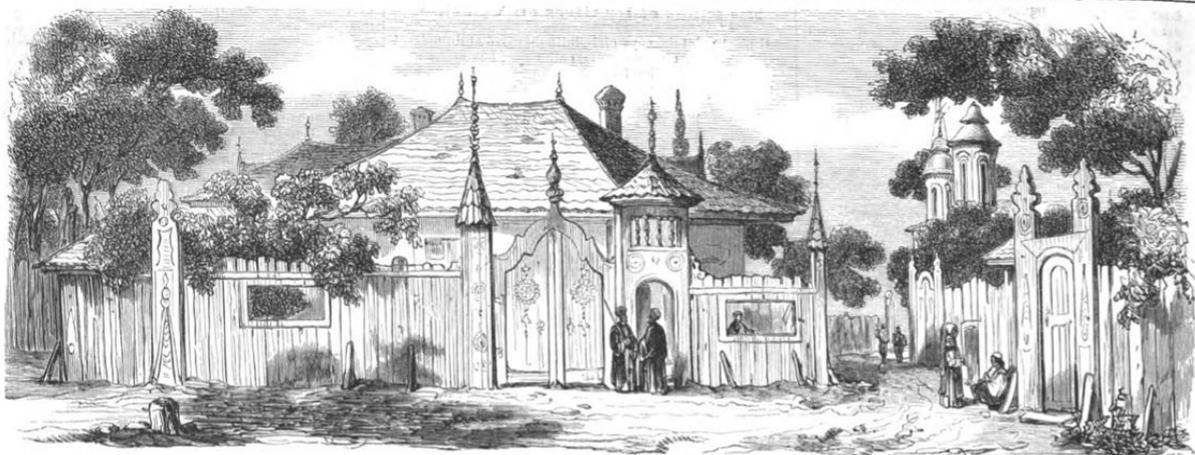
The *mahalale* surrounding this road: Răzvan [named after the builder of the parish church], *Armenească* [Armenian], *Sfântul Gheorghe Nou*, *Sfântul Gheorghe Vechi* [New Saint George and Old Saint George, after the local parish churches] and *Stelea* [named after a medieval army commander] have also mostly retained their historic topography. Despite being some of the oldest ones on record, the continuity of their urban form since the eighteenth century is why they will be used to illustrate the typical architecture (Fig.7) and urban lifestyle which can in the present be interpreted as heritage.

<sup>62</sup> Andreea Apostu, “O Plimbare Prin Târgul Moșilor” [A walk in the Moșilor fair], *VIA București* (blog), 28 May 2015, <https://viabucuresti.ro/o-plimbare-prin-targul-mosilor/>.

Contemporary documents attest a bustling commercial activity in the Old Saint George *mahala*, identifiable by the street names which were given to the corresponding trades practiced there: wool processing, barbers, bead makers, dairy merchants and locksmiths, to name a few. This was also the most populous of the central areas, making it an excellent starting point for analyzing the layout of such a space.<sup>63</sup> In the eighteenth century, many of the city's merchants begin to buy their previously rented inner-city proprieties from the boyars, showing their growing economic standing in the expanding capital (Fig. 8). Their exalted economic power translated into the modernization and reconstruction of dwellings to reflect the higher status, marking the beginning of the locally specific pattern of space use in architecture. At this time, many prosperous shops and establishments (such as inns, drinking and dining halls), particularly in the Răzvan and Old Saint George *mahalale*, exhibited in an incipient form what would be the defining architectural feature of this area: the multiple use public building, including commercial spaces, lodgings, storage and residential quarters for the owners.

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L'ILLUSTRATION, JOURNAL UNIVERSEL.



La Mahala de la Steia, à Bucharest.

Figure 8: The Stelea Mahala in Bucharest. Doussault, *Les ranges et les titres en Valachie*: 8.

This layout rooted in the need to utilize the limited land as much as possible, and it resulted in an organic blend of the public and private spheres of life.<sup>64</sup>

<sup>63</sup> Majuru, *Bucureștii mahalalelor*.

<sup>64</sup> Ștefănescu, "Proprietatea funciară": 82, 84-5.

The arrival of a significant Jewish community particularly shaped the area around the Old Saint George *mahala*, settling near the main commercial street, the Bridge to the Outer Town, where the merchants and craftsmen dealing with the royal court lived, solidifying the vicinity as one of trade. Later, at the end of the Oriental period and the beginning of Westernization trend in the nineteenth century, Ashkenazi communities moved to the same part of Bucharest from Poland. They were the first to practice street commerce and *en-gros* sales, as well as modern trades, such as metal working and fine cloth production and processing.<sup>65</sup> Their presence will play an important role in the life of the city, especially at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries, bringing a much needed urban and bourgeois impetus to a largely traditional settlement, particularly in architecture. What Jewish merchants bring as a distinctive touch on the urban fabric in the early stages of development is the popularization of the dual-purpose individual building (Fig.9). With commercial space facing the street and living quarters in the back, or, in the case of the wealthier merchants, ground floor shops and apartments upstairs, these buildings became endemic to the areas the community inhabits.



Figure 9: Listed historic monuments illustrative of the dual use building at Calea Moșilor 82-84, neighboring an abandoned Synagogue. Image by author.

<sup>65</sup> Felicia Waldman and Anca Ciuciu, *Stories and Images of Jewish Bucharest* (Bucharest: Noi Media Print, 2011), 88.

The appearance of the commercial urban areas cannot be understood without the Jewish presence, which at the time was evident in the nomenclature of the streets – *Palestine St.*, *Synagogue St.*, *Spanish St.*, *Israeli St.* <sup>66</sup> When, due to both fires and evolving urban needs, the large semi-public inns and establishments were being replaced by modern notions of individuality and privacy, some of their social functions transferred to the dual-purpose buildings. Residential buildings with street-facing shops or establishments were attested since the end of the eighteenth century, on both sides of the Bridge to the Outer Town. Their presence signified the crystallization of the defining architectural typology of the city. <sup>67</sup>

These constructions, as well as their distribution in the street network, were accurately recorded for the first time during the years following the Organic Regulations. These were laws of a constitutional character elaborated during the administration of the Romanian Principalities of Walachia and Moldavia by the Russian Empire between 1829 and 1834. Widely considered as marking the beginnings of the modernization period of the Principalities, the laws represented away from the ‘oriental’ archaic lifestyles and socio-cultural organization which constituted the norm, even in the capital city, under the Ottoman administration. According to the Regulations, the authorities were induced to conduct ample and thorough cartographic and census projects, in order to comply with the new territorial administration policies. One of the first attempts at a management plan for Bucharest was its division into five administrative sectors, named *Culori* (colours), and the appointment of bureaucratic bodies responsible for managing public spaces and facilities. <sup>68</sup> They were first recorded by the Grand

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<sup>66</sup> Viorel Mionel, “Mahalalele bucureștene. Individualizarea unui tip istoric de segregare” [The *mahalale* of Bucharest. The individualization of a historic type of segregation], *Bucureștii Vechi și Noi* (blog), 27 January 2013, <https://www.bucurestivechisinoi.ro/2013/01/mahalalele-bucurestene-individualizarea-unui-tip-istoric-de-segregare/>.

<sup>67</sup> Liviu Ștefănescu, “Aspecte Ale Vieții Sociale În Orașul București În Perioada de Trecere Spre Capitalism” [Aspects of social life in the city of Bucharest in the period of transition to capitalism], *București - Materiale de Istorie Și Muzeografie* 2 (1965): 31–6.

Ștefănescu, “Proprietatea funciară”: 89.

<sup>68</sup> Robert Sabotici, “Local public administration under the Organic Regulations,” *Sfera Politicii* 24, no. 3 (December 2018): 135-8.

Plan of Major Borroczyn, drawn between 1844 and 1846, as an important step in the modernization efforts dictated in the “Regulation concerning the state of health, beautification and guarding of the good organization of the city of Bucharest”, a policy adopted by the city’s decision making body since 1831.<sup>69</sup> This first comprehensive plan of the city was to form the basis for all further development.

As these policies were chiefly concerned with issues of public administration, health and management due to the political drive to improve the living standards in the capital, the Plan was meant to serve as an assessment of the situation. Moreover, the hurry to improve living standards meant that resources were poured into modernization of infrastructure and services, rather than large scale territorial systematizations, which justifies Ulysse de Marseillac’s descriptions of still dirty, tiny, winding streets more than thirty years later.<sup>70</sup> After a great fire gravely affected central Bucharest in 1847, the residents of the Old Saint George area were given permission to rebuild their destroyed proprieties only in accordance with the Borroczyn plan (which precisely recorded building alignments and pavement widths, for example), in an attempt not to thwart any ongoing large scale administrative projects by changes in the street network and functions.

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<sup>69</sup> Georgescu, “Marele Plan”: 39. “Regulament pentru starea sănătății, înfrumusețarea și paza bunei orânduiei în Politia Bucureștilor.” My translation.

<sup>70</sup> Ulysse de Marsillac, *Bucureștiul în veacul al 19-lea* [Bucharest in the nineteenth century], ed. Adrian-Silvan Ionescu (Bucharest: Editura Meridiane, 1999), 95.

Such reconstructions after the fire account for the predominantly nineteenth century architectural aspect of the city center as older constructions were replaced (Fig.10). Rebuilding also meant the continuation of the particular placement and setting of buildings which maintained the *mahala* units through the Modern era. The introduction of streetlights, stone pavements, water management systems, and later even electric trams occurred in Bucharest without irreparable harm to its historic urban fabric, as opposed to cities which followed Haussmann’s Parisian model of modernization and systematization for which the new paradigm replaced the old almost in its entirety.<sup>71</sup> Thus, the beginnings of urban planning in the Modern era ‘captured’ the traditional administrative units and maintained their core characteristics, preserving the localities and their setting for posterity.



Figure 10: Top: A copy of the full Borroczyn Plan, emphasizing the level of recording detail. Bottom: 1. Plate Nr. 51 of the Plan, showing Solacolu Inn.; 2. The same place in the present, image from Google Earth; 3. Google Streetview capture of the same place.

<sup>71</sup> D. P. Jordan, “Haussmann and Haussmannisation: The Legacy for Paris,” *French Historical Studies* 27, no. 1 (1 January 2004): 87–113, <https://doi.org/10.1215/00161071-27-1-87>.

### 1.1.3. Materials and substance

The traditional structure of the small shops and homes of the early nineteenth century was not very durable and susceptible to weather damage and fires, as it was built oftentimes of wood planks with shingle roofs. Furthermore, the modest capacities and appearance of this type of architecture was no longer reflective of the abundance and prosperity of trade of later decades, and thus the social standing of the inhabitants. These represent the main factors accounting for the very few remaining traditional dwellings in the contemporary landscape.<sup>72</sup> Nevertheless, while the building materials changed to reflect technological and economic progress, the *spatial reality* of city life changed very little, as most architectural changes took the spatial distribution and already formed neighborhoods as given and worked with them and around them. Furthermore, in the years after its appointment as capital of the newly independent Kingdom of Romania in 1877, Bucharest thrived as a center of commerce between its former administrator, the Ottoman Empire, and Western countries.

This growth facilitated a social transformation as the profile of the city changed from a supplier of goods to a consumer: merchants became tradesmen and businessmen, their newfound prosperity allowing them to build better constructions and to afford to ornament them by the fashions of the day. At the same time, there was a great increase in population through migration, which gradually filled the empty land areas in the city, contouring the image of a bustling city, rather than an overgrown village. Nevertheless, the great influx of people from the countryside, and their taking residence and building homes in (what are presently) central areas contributed to the very slow pace of modernization in reaching residential areas.<sup>73</sup>

As urbanism projects by the central administration at the end of the nineteenth century often

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<sup>72</sup> Anca Badea, "Hanuri Bucureștene" [Bucharest Inns], București - *Materiale de Istorie și Muzeografie* 21 (2007): 219.

<sup>73</sup> This was due to a set of laws and regulations passed in 1895, which settled the city's boundaries and allowed settlement only inside these boundaries in an attempt to reduce sprawl.

lacked funds, coordination, and planning, they were in large numbers abandoned. The demand for new projects allowed private realtors and private persons to build in most areas of the city with abandon, causing the city to maintain “*its oriental aspect more so than its counterparts in the South-East*”, states an article on the social makeup of Bucharest in the Encyclopedia of Romania in 1938. The same author claims that “straight avenues built in a unitary style are few; while the streets between them, even with their modern constructions, kept both their age-old tangle, as well as the locals’ insistence upon having a courtyard”.<sup>74</sup> This caused the archaic *mahalale* and the lifestyle associated with them to persist, even under the aesthetic improvements of a modern European capital. I argue that that, on one hand, the architectural approach to individual buildings maintained the spatial structure associated with traditional social values well into the twentieth century and, on the other hand, the lack of interference in the organization of public spaces in the historic center by planning authorities allowed these areas to develop organically, without any major disruptions which could be observed in other European capitals. These factors will prove the most significant in the modern day understanding of not only built urban heritage, but also of the social history on which intangible aspects are built upon.

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<sup>74</sup> Anton Golopenția, “București - Înfățișare Socială” [Bucharest - Social Makeup], in *Enciclopedia României* (Bucharest, 1938), 555. “Arterele drepte și complet clădite cu stil unitar sunt puține; străzile dintre ele, deși cu case recente, au păstrat atât întortochea Bucureștilor dinainte vreme cât și năzuința locuitorilor lui de a avea o grădină.” My translation.

For the issue of building typologies and the prevalence of gardens in the preferences of Bucharest locals was analysed in a comprehensive study of housing types in Romania, see Cincinat Sfințescu, “Locuința În România” [Housing in Romania], *Urbanismul În România*, 1933.



Figure 11: Mincu house. Top: exterior, archive image from 1911. Bottom: interior courtyard, 2017. Right: original interior of the salon, archive image. Source: Sturdza, *Casa din București*.

The outcome of rebuilding after yet another earthquake in the late nineteenth century was that the traditional rural architecture was replaced by new, modern constructions.<sup>75</sup> Their remarkable architecture is a testament to the style of the times and the economic prowess of the builders, who dedicated large amounts of resources to aesthetic quality. Nevertheless, the placement of eclectic villas and modest Neo-Classicist houses in large courtyards for entertainment, and their interior design focusing on salons and reception rooms stand testament to the intermingling of social and cultural histories. Marseillac again describes these changes the city went through in the fifteen years he witnessed it between 1852 and 1877: the center transformed into one befitting a truly modern capital, “accessories of modernity”, such as architectural ornamentation, fashions and ambiance (the opening of hotels, cafes and restaurants) giving the impression of a modern city. He adds, however that, the material reality

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<sup>75</sup> Șerban Sturdza et al., *Casa din București: valoare prin restaurare* [Houses of Bucharest - value through restoration], 2019, 65-108.

of a cosmopolitan city is an image superimposed on habits which residents of Bucharest found hard to shake beer gardens with barbecues and Turkish drinks and desserts, cabarets and brothels, which prove that the substance of urban life had yet to change.<sup>76</sup> One such illustrative example is the fact that, even though modernizations in the 1880's introduced water distribution systems, they did not reach the winding streets of the *mahalale*. Even the boyars and rich merchants with houses as the one pictured above (Fig. 11) had to rely on well water for everyday use and were buying drinking water from street vendors named *sacagii* (Fig. 12).<sup>77</sup>



Figure 12: Water vendors in 1929, filling their barrels for distribution from a public fountain.  
Source: Apostu, *Sacagii, salepgii, limonagii*.

As the infrastructure was not improved over the following decades, this trade was allowed to persist until the Interwar era, giving the city an archaic air. Furthermore, it maintained the image of the traditional city in the memory of the inhabitants, prolonging the impact of such personified cultural artefacts.

The preservation of the substance of city life well into the twentieth century was made

<sup>76</sup>Majuru, "Radiografia Unei Modernizări".

<sup>77</sup> Andreea Apostu, "Sacagii, salepgii, limonagii" [Water vendors, salep vendors, lemonade vendors], *VIA București* (blog), 16 September 2019, <https://viabucuresti.ro/sacagii-salepgii-limonagii/>.

possible by a decision to not significantly modify the streets and to keep the old functions of the spaces. Thus, a pragmatic choice from an overburdened administration which could scarcely afford a complete overhaul, kept residential buildings with street-facing shops and business rooms and villas separated from the public road by lush gardens as the trademark of Bucharest. Besides the traits of individual architecture, the other significant keeper of Bucharest's cultural history was the design of its public spaces, squares, and gardens. A representative case for analysis is the Saint George Garden and adjacent public square: after the 1847 fire, the area around the *mahala*'s central church was cleared out and replaced by a public garden, with seating, lush vegetation and promenades. Contemporary documents attest a great attachment of the residents of nearby neighborhoods to this place; people said to have enjoyed it greatly in the evenings for gathering and socialization. Such public gardens were all over the city and served to aggregate local communities by being the host space of parties, celebrations such as weddings, or simply provided a recreational social space. While some such gardens were razed to make way for avenues or large projects in the city's core, the ones in this *mahalale* remained untouched, and others were built specifically with this social function in mind.<sup>78</sup>

Spurred by the social centrality of such gardens, cafés and confectioneries, restaurants and terraces sprung up around them, and became an integral part of urban life a century ago, in a period when Bucharest became known as 'The Garden City'. Oftentimes, while enjoying oneself in such places, one could catch glimpses of urban history, artefacts of the past personified in the street vendors selling Turkish deserts and drinks such as delight or baklavas, or *braga* and *salep* (Fig.13).<sup>79</sup> Such aspects are colorfully captured in many literary works, this

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<sup>78</sup> Cristina Woinaroski, "Istorie Urbană. Lotizarea și Parcul Ioanid din București în context european" [Urban History. Zoning and the Ioanid Park in Bucharest in an European context], *Anuala de Arhitectură București*, accessed 17 January 2021, <https://www.anuala.ro/proiecte/2014/carti/c03/>.

<sup>79</sup> George Potra, *Din Bucureștii de Altădată* [From the Bucharest of old], (Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1981).

era of transition holding a seemingly infinite charm reflected in the style of writing. A close inspection of such texts shows the evocative and nostalgic eye with which the authors fondly remembered the society of Belle Epoque Bucharest, even though (by their own admission), some of these aspects were far from ideally suited to nostalgic recollections. One such literary account, belonging to the opening of journalist and man-about-town Constantin Beldie's memoirs, captures the contrast between the real city and its romanticized image and is worth reproducing in full: "Life in Bucharest of the time [beginning of the twentieth century] was patriarchal, lazy, of good living and easy for everyone, and the city had the face of a somewhat wealthy market town, filled with migrants and because of them, a lot more colorful. [It

Rahaat... cu apă recee.



Figure 13: Man selling Turkish delight. Source: Potra, *Din Bucureștii de Altădată*.

contained] two different worlds which ignored each other from afar: one seemingly Europeanized by tastes, luxury, manners and parties, cosmopolitan by interests, vices and traditions, exposing its frivolity in a few establishments and exclusive clubs in a narrow rectangle of streets, the "Little Paris." Beyond it began suddenly the other world, that of the true Bucharest locals, residents of the mahalale who set foot on Calea Victoriei [main fashionable avenue] once a year on the Independence Day celebrations."<sup>80</sup>

<sup>80</sup> Constantin D. Beldie, *Caleidoscopul Unei Jumătăți de Veac În București (1900-1950): Și Alte Pagini Memorialistice* [The kaleidoscope of half a century in Bucharest (1900-1950) and other memoir pages], ed. Oana Bârna, Vintage (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2014).

As the city is a product of progress, it is understandable that former lifestyles of the inhabitants would not change instantaneously. Furthermore, the historic influence of village life, imbedded in the behaviors of locals over generations, could not have modernized quickly when their physical environment was also subject to a very gradual modernization process, allowing the essence of traditional life to linger.<sup>81</sup> The cultural legacy of the *fin de siècle* is constructed from such images, popularized by playwrights and authors, whose works ensured their transmission to the present. Alongside the architectural setting, these intangible legacies of urban history form the basis of the modern day understanding of the heritage of Bucharest. The material reality of the architecture not only makes the object of built heritage conservation but is also significant for intangible social history and its representation, and both must be considered by planning authorities when developing management strategies for the city. As the next sections will show, the symbiotic relationship between the environment as a physical space and the performative understanding of heritage composed of actual lifestyles and discourses about them analyzed thus far has been gradually encroached upon in the twentieth century and neglected in recent decades.

## 1.2. Heritage Configurations

### 1.2.1. Traditions

The introduction of modernist architecture in Bucharest in the years following the First World War signaled the beginning of a new urban paradigm, one which was – particularly technologically and socially – progress oriented. As it was already becoming ‘customary’ for the city of Bucharest, this shift did not introduce a definitive break with the past. The emerging

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<sup>81</sup> Louis Wirth, “Urbanism as a Way of Life,” *American Journal of Sociology* 44, no. 1 (1938): 1–24.

Modernist avantgarde existed in a dialogue with the then newly introduced Garden City discourse which had overtaken the city. This coexistence resulted in a mix of new styles and traditional aesthetics being adopted in new projects. On one hand, the fact that urban sprawl and low density was considered a remnant of the ‘oriental’ influence caused new projects to have a decidedly Western character, adopting luxury apartment buildings for the elites and modernist architectural styles in the city centre. On the other hand, new ideas concerning urbanism and housing, and particularly the Garden City Movement were imported into the city, especially in new low-income housing estates, organised and built in *lotissements* (Fig.14) all over the city by the “father of Romanian urbanism”, Cincinat Sfințescu.<sup>82</sup>

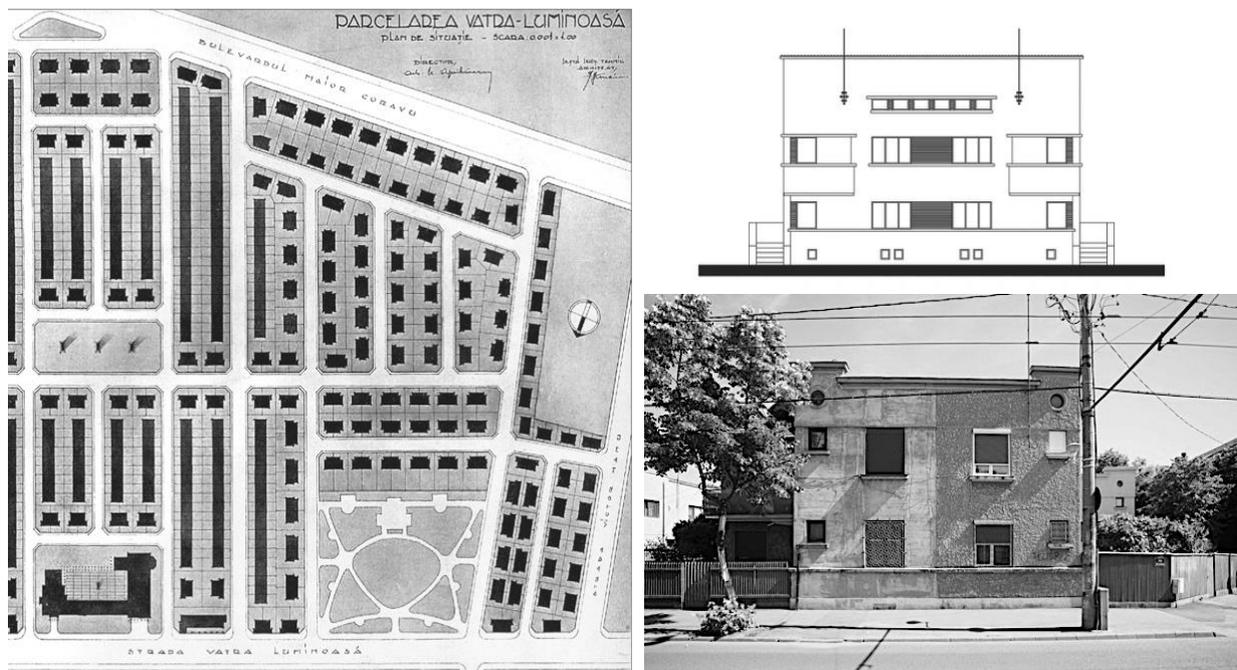


Figure 14: Modernist “house in a garden” in Vatra Luminoasă, a Garden City development. Source: Voinea and Calotă, “History for Inhabitants.”

He was up to date with the progresses made by the movement in Great Britain and brought

<sup>82</sup> Andrei Răzvan Voinea, “Think Piece - Garden City in Bucharest,” The International Garden Cities Institute, 2012, <https://www.gardencitiesinstitute.com/think-piece/think-piece-garden-city-in-bucharest>. Andrei Răzvan Voinea and Irina Calotă, “Istorie Pentru Locuitori. Parcelările Casei Construcțiilor În București” [History for Inhabitants. The Lots of the House of Constructions in Bucharest], Digital magazine, Zeppelin, n.d., <https://e-zeppelin.ro/istorie-pentru-locuitori-parcelarile-casei-construcțiilor-in-bucurești/>.

their building principles to the Municipal infrastructure companies in Bucharest.<sup>83</sup> As the prevailing definition of his time was that the main differentiation between a city and a village is the density of buildings, his work of urbanising Bucharest in effect began the subordination of social life to political goals by means of urban planning.<sup>84</sup> Nevertheless, even the new housing developments were conforming to the underlying local habitation ideal, the ‘house in a garden’, recalling the traditional space-use practices.<sup>85</sup>

The following Interwar years brought American and Western European business and investors to Bucharest, marking the beginning of the capital’s modernist venture. In a similar manner to how French diplomatic relations influenced Romanian society and culture in the previous century, the beginning of the twentieth brought about a closeness to the United States. The new architecture of this era was decidedly of Anglophone influence.<sup>86</sup> The strong economic ties with the US brought about also an adoption of ideas and trends, among which were modernist architecture and progressive urbanism ideals. Thus, visionary urban planners eager to break with tradition adopted in Bucharest administrative and residential buildings in the Art Deco style, placing them to frame the new wide central avenues, emulating the great American cities. The zoning regulations introduced in this period by the planning committees and restrictions placed on street vendors were a deliberate attempt to clean the look of Bucharest, from a scientific perspective, and often supported with economic or public health arguments.

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<sup>83</sup> Andreea Udrea et al., *Cincinat Sfîntescu: începuturile urbanismului românesc* [Cincinat Sfîntescu: the beginnings of Romanian urbanism] (Bucureşti: Editura Universitară Ion Mincu, 2015), 10.

<sup>84</sup> Cincinat Sfîntescu, “*Parcela și Blocul în Constituirea Orașelor*” [The lot and the block in the construction of cities], 1916, 16.

<sup>85</sup> Adrian Majuru, “Modele Ale Locuirii Urbane În Interbelic Și Influențe Ale Ruralului În Bucureștiul Contemporan” [Models of Urban Habitation in the Interwar Era and Rural Influences in Contemporary Bucharest], Digital Publication, *E-Antropolog* (blog), 1 January 2013, <https://www.e-antropolog.ro/2013/01/modele-ale-locuirii-urbane-in-interbelic-si-influente-ale-ruralului-in-bucurestiul-contemporan/>.

<sup>86</sup> Florin Machedon, Luminita Machedon, and Ernie Scoffham, “Inter-War Bucharest: City in a Garden,” *Perspectives* 14, no. 3 (January 1999): 250, <https://doi.org/10.1080/026654399364229>.

The concept of ‘modern luxury’ associated with the apartment blocks was successful for some social groups which embraced the spacious apartments, bought automobiles and contributed to the transformation of the city’s image (Fig.15). Nevertheless, while the upper classes traded the provincial restaurants and small shops for department stores and hotel cafes, in terms of lifestyle, most of the population of Bucharest maintained centuries old traditions, such as street processions at major holidays, and a taste for the beer gardens and leisurely ways of the previous century.<sup>87</sup>

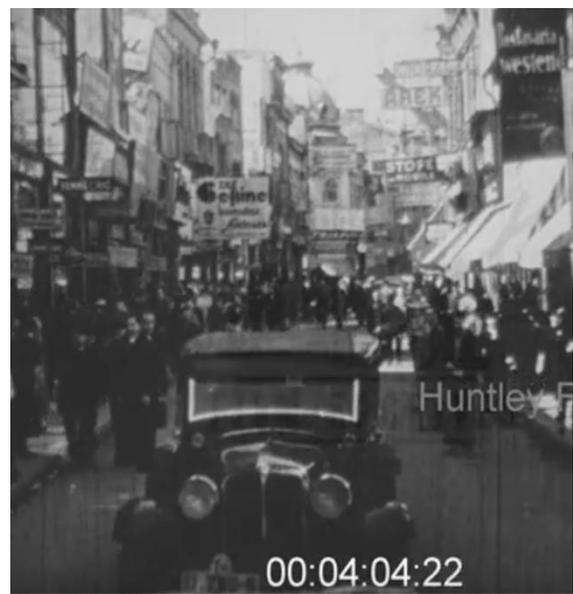


Figure 15: Two views from Bucharest in 1930. Source: Period film, accessible at: <https://www.huntleyarchives.com/preview.asp?image=1015000>

One interesting development was the adaptation of the Neo-Romanian architectural style (which was born of a wish for the material forms to reflect the essence of Romanian society, instead of Western empty imports and favored references to seventeenth century Wallachian artistic motifs) in a modernist interpretation by applying it to the collective apartment block.<sup>88</sup> Its architectural blend of historicist aesthetic and vernacular ornamental motifs were superimposed on modernist structures (Fig. 16). Reinterpreting Western form through local

<sup>87</sup> Alexandrina Nicolae, “Viața Cotidiană În Bucureștiul Primului Deceniu Interbelic” [Daily Life in Bucharest in the First Decade of the Interwar Era], *București - Materiale de Istorie Și Muzeografie* 14, no. 43 (2000): 303–32.

<sup>88</sup> Kallestrup, “Romanian “National Style” and the 1906 Bucharest Jubilee Exhibition”.

tradition became an aesthetic leitmotif of the city, and a valuable part of its heritage.



Figure 16: Art Deco and Neo Romanian syncretism. Source: Valentin Mandache.

Proponents of modernism in Romania had a desire to change the character of the city in theory but, placing modernism in the *mahalale*, it took over influences of traditional styles, both in architectural ornamentation and spatial organization, as well as in the urban lifestyle. Despite numerous project proposals, research and propaganda materials by the local authorities, particularly Cincinat Sfințescu and modernist architect Marcel Iancu, head of the Association for the Urbanism of

Bucharest, the pathos of reshaping the city into a coherent unit was slowed down by the resilience of the locality. The great social attachment to local environments is a consequence primarily of demographics, as the multitude of ethnic, regional and professional groups documented in the capital for centuries were still very much present in the Interwar years, and the vibrant communities imparted to the *mahalale* they settled in their own traditions and culture.<sup>89</sup> Even in an age when people became hyper attentive to culture, and Western outlooks were embraced by the elites, traditional urban life exhibited a high degree of inertia.

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<sup>89</sup> Nicolae, “Viața Cotidiană”: 305.

A fantastic example of this phenomenon was the Moșilor fair (Fig. 17 and Fig. 18). Continuing the memory of the medieval market held at the outskirts of the city, this event marked the beginning of summer for the inhabitants of Bucharest and was immensely popular until the eve of the Second World War. The area at the end of Calea Moșilor was bought and systematized by the public authorities to specifically serve the market space, imagined as a modern exhibition place.<sup>90</sup> Despite efforts to ‘sanitize’ the image of the fair, colorful accounts of the proceedings remain in the cultural memory through literary accounts by some of the greatest authors of the day. Vendors sold pots, pans and all sorts of wares and mixed with shoppers from all walks of life, Romani travelling bands and circus performers in a stifling smell of barbecued sausages and baked goods.<sup>91</sup>



Figure 18: Moșilor fair in Fredi Wahnig, *Planul Municipiului București* [Plan of Bucharest Municipality], 1:15000 (Bucharest: Fundația pentru Literatură și Artă “Regele Carol II”, 1934).



Figure 17: București: Vedere Din Moși [Bucharest: Postcard from the fair], n.d., Postcard, n.d., Biblioteca Metropolitană București.

The fair is nothing but another example of the modern being adapted into the vernacular, rather than transforming it, this time in terms of urban lifestyle, rather than architecture. The first three decades of the twentieth century remained in Romanian cultural memory as a ‘Golden Age’ of development, both social

<sup>90</sup> Ofrim et al, *Străzi vechi din Bucureștiul de azi*, 182.

<sup>91</sup> Tudor Arghezi, *Cu Bastonul Prin București* [With a Walking Cane through Bucharest] (Bucharest: Editura pentru Literatură, 1961).

and economic. In the capital city, it marked the beginnings of urbanism in the modern understanding and an increased preoccupation of the public with their environment, as esteemed mayor Dem. Dobrescu put it “*we had to declare a cruel war upon the [B]alkan aspect of our city*”<sup>92</sup>. Though they won the battle of cleaning the city and paving the roads, the authorities lost the war of cultural transmission, as, from a socio-cultural standpoint this was an era where the past and present intermingled, rather than conflicted, in both material and social realities.

### 1.2.2. Use and function

A look at the present-day map of Bucharest would not show any of these aspects. Half of the former *Podul Târgului de Afară* is no longer represented in the urban landscape and neither is the fair area discussed before. In the place of the Northern half of Calea Moșilor, instead of a continuation of the architectural profile of a ‘traditional merchant street’, there is a sudden break in the landscape when ten stories apartment blocks suddenly replace the modest architecture, flanking a four-lane avenue.<sup>93</sup> This type of jarring contrast can be observed in many areas of the city, especially at the edge of the ‘core zone’, and it is the result of fundamental changes in Romanian society in the latter half of the twentieth century (Fig. 19). After the Second World War, Bucharest became the capital of the Romanian Popular Republic, a totalitarian state ruled by a centrally coordinated power structure guided by Soviet models. As ideology and its political applications act through public administrations, they constitute major anthropic factors influencing an urban environment. If in the earlier decades, the state proved inefficient in managing the unruly development of Bucharest, the Communist Party controlled the city with a ‘concrete fist’.

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<sup>92</sup> Dem. I. Dobrescu, “Cum Vor Fi Bucureștii În Viitor?” [How Will Bucharest Be in the Future?], *Realitatea Ilustrată*, 19 February 1934.

<sup>93</sup> “Regulament Zona Protejată Nr. 01 Calea Moșilor.”



too low to bear the influx of workers coming to the capital, high-density housing became a must. Large areas outside the immediate center were developed in this way, including the northernmost half of Calea Moșilor. Infrastructure had to serve the developing heavy industry and new mobility needs of the population, another relatively sudden development which required large scale interventions in the urban environment. To this end, for example, the area of the Moșilor Fair which had been particularly styled for the purpose (see Fig.9 above), was transformed into an underpass/overpass for heavy traffic and metro station at the end of the 1970's.<sup>96</sup> The suppression of community formation and local character by championing uniformity and mass culture was a staple of the Stalinist era in Bucharest. The city developed at a scale much larger than the human inhabitants – guided by ideology rather than resident-focused – which affected the patterns of space use. Of course, as captured in a chastising documentary from 1963, this did not stop people freshly moved to high rise apartments from the countryside to raise geese on their balconies, but this type of continuity manifestation was denounced as “boyar behavior.”<sup>97</sup> People from low income *mahalale* were moved to the new apartment complexes as well, when their dwellings were demolished for development, breaking up the tight knit community units, which had formed by common identity ties decades, if not centuries earlier. In another documentary film from 1971, several women watch a recording from a decade prior taken in such a *mahala* and they identify the people and places depicted while the narrators adopt a bewildered and critical tone towards the “abject filth” people were living in before the modernizations of the regime.<sup>98</sup>

<sup>96</sup> Nicoleta König, “Șantierele Patriei VIII” [Construction Sites of the Fatherland 8], *Comunismul În România* (blog), 3 February 2015, <http://www.comunismulinromania.ro/index.php/santierele-patriei-viii/>.

<sup>97</sup> Alexandru Boianu, *Casa noastră ca o floare* [Our house like a flower], (Bucharest: Studio Alexandru Sahia, 1963), <https://sahiavintage.ro/film/?movie=1469>.

<sup>98</sup> Eugenia Gutu, *După zece ani* [After ten years], (Bucharest: Studio Alexandru Sahia, 1971), <https://sahiavintage.ro/film/?movie=1469>.

Secondly, not only the traditional use of space in the city was turned on its head, but also any organic urban manifestation or development was replaced by a completely centralized planning. Functions of buildings had to reflect the tenets of socialism. Publications from the time espouse the values which the environment housing the ‘new man’ must embody, forwarding an urbanism subjugated to political goals. Thus, a functionalist approach to space-use was undertaken, denying the multilayered character of space use of previous decades. One of the pillars of the regime’s approach to the urban fabric was the demolishing of “inadequate building stock”, constituted by the “tentacular extensions” of main avenues. Their replacement was to come in the form of taller constructions, able to maximize the economic potential of the land.<sup>99</sup> While the low-income slums were removed entirely (Fig. 20), the more affluent central areas were somewhat spared by the wrecking-ball, in notable cases because of the intervention of historians working for the Municipal Museum arguing for the value of architectural heritage and the preservation of history. However, not even the city center was spared entirely, as “the tendency to ‘hide’ historic buildings in the shadow of dominant verticals i.e., the tower blocks” caused an accentuation of the contrast between the straight, gray, and orderly street fronts and the houses behind them.<sup>100</sup>



Figure 20: The Floreasca slum, before and during the forced relocations. Source: Eugenia Gutu, *After ten years* (Studio Sahia, 1971)

<sup>99</sup> Traian Stănescu, “Dezvoltarea Oraşului Bucureşti În Anii Socialismului” [The Development of Bucharest in the Years of Socialism], *Bucureşti - Materiale de Istorie Şi Muzeografie* 9 (1972): 423.

<sup>100</sup> Liliana Iuga, “Negotiating Building Preservation and Urban Redevelopment in Socialist Romania. The Case of Dimitrov Street in Iaşi,” *Archiva Moldaviae*, no. 9 (2017): 374.

The larger bourgeoisie homes which were not demolished saw a complete change in function from a family residence to a semi-communal housing establishment when they were used as housing for new urban residents.<sup>101</sup> On one hand, the fact that usually the former owners had to share what was once their propriety with several other families was not conducive to friendly social connections, as the situation was seen as an intrusion and the newcomers were often of different social backgrounds.<sup>102</sup> On the other hand, the disputed ownership status, shifting space functions and the precarious financial situation of the people living in such houses, which make up most of the historic neighborhoods this paper is concerned with, resulted in a multi-level degradation of heritage. Specifically, the material condition of the buildings deteriorated for lack of responsibility for upkeep, and more generally, the social structures and lifestyles associated with urban forms which formed the intangible aspects of heritage (such as the mixed-use architecture, or the socially functional garden), were nearly forced out of public life.<sup>103</sup>

### 1.2.3.Spirit and feeling

When regime change came through the Revolution in 1989, the living memory of the times before the socialist regime was already almost gone, and pragmatic concerns took precedence over maintaining what was left of the history of the city. This era of the development of Bucharest as it pertains to heritage is characterized by efforts of decentralization on the macro level, and of propriety market liberalization and restitution efforts in the micro scale. The

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<sup>101</sup> Lavinia Stan, "The Roof over Our Heads: Property Restitution in Romania," *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics* 22, no. 2 (June 2006): 184, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13523270600661011>.

<sup>102</sup> Bogdan Iancu and Cosmin Manolache, "Living in Disputed Spaces. Nationalized Houses, Retrocessions and Evictions in Bucharest," 2015.

<sup>103</sup> Bogdan Iancu and Cosmin Manolache, "Și Ei Ziceau: "Se Preia de Popor!" Coabitare Și Bricolaj Locativ În Case Naționalizate" [And They Said: "It's Being Requisitioned by the People!" Cohabitation and Residential Bricolage in Nationalised Houses], *Zeppelin*, n.d., <https://e-zeppelin.ro/si-ei-ziceau-se-preia-de-popor-coabitare-si-bricolaj-locativ-in-case-nationalizate/>.

prevailing discourse of Bucharest in this era was that it represented an unfinished city, where there is always something left to fix because no regime could give it a definitive form, but whereby far the most destructive influence was that of totalitarianism.<sup>104</sup> This discourse encouraged an exacerbated trajectory of development by allowing the market to direct urbanism. The multiplicity of space use was one of the most affected urban heritage aspects during this period. As previously established, one of the core values of the studied area was its capacity to satisfy a multitude of needs for the residents: social, commercial and residential; arguably the foundational element of cultural specificity in inner city neighborhoods. As these areas were avoided by investors due to unclear propriety rights and incoherent policies, services developed in clusters in places with cheaper land. Thus, the commercial needs came to be satisfied by hypermarkets and malls, impossible to compete with by local shops.<sup>105</sup> Renters were driven out by the central area price premium towards affordable housing in the sprawl, dramatically reducing the stable population. The effects of such unregulated liberalization led to the increasingly impersonal landscape showing symptoms of structural crisis associated with the shrinkage process (uneven development, activities closing, depopulation), a loss of character and spirit.<sup>106</sup>

In the Moșilor neighborhood, the changes of the recent decades make the actual experience of the landscape much different than what the historic built environment is capable of offering. Despite its rich cultural legacy and significant number of listed proprieties, the entire area is today in an advanced state of disuse, disrepair and abandonment. Romania only regulated by law the restitution of abusively confiscated propriety in 2001, as politicians struggled to decide

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<sup>104</sup> Corina Iosip, “Perspective Teoretice Privitoare La Viitoarea Structură Urbană a Capitalei Și Concursul București 2000” [Theoretical Perspectives Regarding the Future Urban Structure of the Capital and the Competition Bucharest 2000], *București - Materiale de Istorie Și Muzeografie* 13 (1999): 354.

<sup>105</sup> Mariana Nae and David Turnock, “The New Bucharest: Two Decades of Restructuring,” *Cities* 28, no. 2 (April 2011): 211-2, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2010.04.004>.

<sup>106</sup> Alexandru Bănică, Marinela Istrate, and Ionel Muntele, “Challenges for the Resilience Capacity of Romanian Shrinking Cities,” *Sustainability* 9, no. 12 (9 December 2017): 3, <https://doi.org/10.3390/su9122289>.

between demands for respecting private propriety rights and evicting tenants. Some claimed that the centrally located historic proprieties were signifiers of the ‘ideal’ Interwar era Bucharest, which the new administrators should attempt to return to by restoring the historic spatial use and values.<sup>107</sup> By the time this conflict over the city’s direction was officially settled, the unclear legal situation left many of the proprieties in historic neighborhoods empty, many of them listed historic monuments. Their degradation due to the inability of actors to maintain them, or even sell them to those who could, accentuated the depopulation trend in these areas. As the abandoned proprieties often became squats, particularly evident during field observations in the Moșilor area, the general attractiveness of the neighborhoods dropped, despite their historic significance and heritage potentials. While Calea Moșilor suffers from neglect, some parts of the adjacent Jewish neighborhood are unsafe and derelict. At this level, it becomes apparent that a continued interpretation of built heritage through usage is necessary for its maintenance to acceptable standards. Due to the prevalence in the collective imaginary of the ‘historic center’ as only the area surrounding the medieval Court, heritage conservation efforts focused on developing this more marketable district.<sup>108</sup>

It is during this rather turbulent time in the history of the city that the public obtained a clearer image of the heritage of Bucharest. Through multiple episodes of loss, selective and random destruction, the urban fabric itself, together with a deeper understanding of the city’s memory landscape, finally begin to take their place next to architectural significance on the value-assessment perspectives. Furthermore, the fact that many urban functions have already been moved elsewhere bodes well for restoring the historical values of the historic neighborhoods of central Bucharest.

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<sup>107</sup> Stan, “The Roof over Our Heads”: 181, 186.

<sup>108</sup> Liliana Dumitrache and Mariana Nae, “Urban Regeneration and Affective Connections to Place in Bucharest City Centre,” *Analale Universitatii Bucuresti*, 2013: 190-2.

## Chapter 2: Policy Evolution Troubleshooting

*Bucharest is a city of contrasts, an amalgam of tradition and the avant-garde, blended in a unique way, a rough-cut gemstone waiting to be transformed into a highly polished diamond.*<sup>109</sup>

Throughout the years, each subsequent administrative regime of Romania had a different view for the development of its capital as a symbol of power. As the previous section illustrated the evolution of the rich cultural and historical material present on the ground, this chapter will provide an analysis of the management of urban heritage in the city. By drawing on an institutional historiography of heritage discourses, the argument of this chapter is that the current policy is leaning too heavily on the established tradition and losing sight of the character of what it is supposed to be protecting. The following analysis is grounded in the understanding that heritage is a malleable concept whose interpretation changes through contact with different actors through time. A particularly useful method of analysis is to view the process of heritage policy development through the lens of the objects' instrumentalization as a sector, factor, and vector within planning, proposed by Janssen et al.<sup>110</sup> In this view, heritage is interpreted by an actor as a sector when it is entirely separate from urban planning and as a factor when it is used as a resource for regeneration. Ultimately, the vectorial approach to heritage appears to be the most promising, as culture is seen as the determinant of development directions. Thus, the most successful policies for managing urban change are those which engage people to care about

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<sup>109</sup> Iulia Gramon-Suba and Chris Holt, "Turning a Gemstone into a Diamond: A Green Design and Branding Strategy for The City of Bucharest," in *International Place Branding Yearbook 2012 Managing Smart Growth & Sustainability*, ed. Frank M Go and Robert Govers (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), <https://link.springer.com/openurl?genre=book&isbn=978-1-137-28255-2>.

<sup>110</sup> Joks Janssen et al., "Heritage as Sector, Factor and Vector: Conceptualizing the Shifting Relationship between Heritage Management and Spatial Planning," *European Planning Studies* 25, no. 9 (2 September 2017): 1654–72, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09654313.2017.1329410>.

their environment, and affective connections of this sort are formed through participation and identification with the issue. This approach is pertinent for this thesis both in focus, as the goal of this paper is to address the shortcomings of administrative heritage management approach in Romania, and in the proposition of a mixed-mode framework of heritage management which builds on existing knowledges and avoids creating a new orthodoxy, which in Bucharest would destabilize the situation further.

The first section of the chapter will draw on historical materials such as programmatic documents and materials published by influential actors to illustrate the different views the administration had of the city, and how these aspirations impacted the interpretation of heritage as a sector, separate from urban planning and deeply rooted in historicist approaches. The conclusions regarding the establishment of the Romanian form of authorized heritage discourse drawn from this analysis will aid in continuing the argument in the second section, which will constitute an analysis of the current policy and the discourse it is built on, analyzing the tension between the sectorial AHR and civil society voices which showed greater openness to viewing heritage as a factor of regeneration. Lastly, this second chapter will conclude with an assessment of the set of governing policies and argue for their update to reflect both the rich history of the city, as well as the needs and aspirations of its residents. I will argue for the inclusion of a transdisciplinary and participative facet of meaning making through viewing heritage as a vector, an approach which is almost non-existent in Bucharest. Reflected throughout will be the consideration that a significant gap exists between the aspirations of planners and local politicians and the implementation of universalist policies, a gap in which built heritage and its connected intangible and social manifestations have endured, but not thrived.

## 2.1. Policy discourses

### 2.1.1. Beginnings of monument protection

The concern with safeguarding culture became a vital part of state policy after the unification of the Romanian Principalities, in order to promote the ideas of national unity and further the political goals of the forming nation. In order to justify the Unification to the Ottoman Empire and to garner international support, ethnic and cultural arguments were some of the most strongly presented, particularly the practice of Orthodox Christianity and speaking the same language in the whole territory. An Honorific Commission of Monuments in the Country was formed by decree in 1874, which appealed to local authorities to submit culturally significant sites to the central office for the formation of a Register of Public Monuments.<sup>111</sup> The most significant impact of this endeavor was the concern of the Commission with the medieval monastery at Curtea de Argeș, where Eugène Viollet-le-Duc was contacted for consulting on the restoration works.<sup>112</sup> One of his students, Auguste Lecomte du Nuöy was sent to oversee the restoration, and stayed in the country for the rest of his life. Criticized now for destroying valuable layers of history from medieval monuments, his influence in the restoration movement in Romania is most significant for solidifying stylistic value as the driver of conservation practice. The criticism he received during his lifetime was directed towards his work on religious sites, other restorations being overlooked for “not having any cultural value at the time, [as they were] not religious buildings.”<sup>113</sup> Thus, the incipient form of heritage protection policy was primarily focused on religious sites of historical significance to the nation, and their

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<sup>111</sup> Horia Moldovan, “André-Emile Lecomte Du Nuöy: Medieval Architecture at the Beginning of Romanian Modernity”, *Caiete ARA. Arhitectură. Restaurare. Arheologie.*, no. 6 (2015): 159.

<sup>112</sup> On Viollet-le-Duc see Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc and M. F. Hearn, *The Architectural Theory of Viollet-Le-Duc: Readings and Commentary* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1990).

<sup>113</sup> Peter Derer, “Cazul “Lecomte Du Nuöy.” Demers Analitic Privind Intervențiile Sale Asupra Monumentelor” [The Case of Lecomte Du Nuöy. Analytic Inquiry Regarding His Interventions on Monuments], *Revista Monumentelor Istorice* 61, no. 2 (1992): 68.

management consisted of restorations.<sup>114</sup> The expert architects and leading cultural figures of the Commission adopted the scientific methods of historic restoration, when the doctrine of Viollet-le-Duc fell out of favor in the final decades of the nineteenth century.<sup>115</sup>

As a consequence of the independence of the Kingdom of Romania in 1877, the authorities assumed a clear responsibility over the cultural legacy of the nation, and the leading intellectuals of the country became preoccupied with (re)discovering traditional values, to the end of asserting state legitimacy. From this environment of both political and cultural elites concerned with forwarding national goals, in 1892 the first monument protection mechanisms were codified into law by Royal Decree and the Commission of Historic Monuments under a state ministry is formed and officially tasked with putting together the inventory of monuments. Due to the system of governance of the times and the still relatively small number of local professionals in the field, the heritage conservation movement in Romania began as a highly centralized and expert-led institution, often led by architects and archaeologists. For this reason, it is not hard to understand how the conservation of architecture in the nineteenth century depended almost solely on principles of historical significance: “in a historic building we do not only admire the material form, but perhaps more the memory of some illustrious man, a shining epoch or its value for art history.”<sup>116</sup> Additionally, there was at this time in history a lingering importance given to artistic value from the times of championing stylistic unity, an approach criticized in later periods for the damaging effects of its purism on an

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<sup>114</sup> Cezara Mucenic, “Legislația Privind Monumentele Istorice Din România 1892-1992 [Legislation Concerning Historic Monuments from Romania 1892-1992],” *Revista Monumentelor Istorice* 61, no. 2 (1992): 15; The 1892 Decree specified in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Article that such edifices can be “monasteries, churches and private or public houses, with the condition that the latter have also artistic values in addition to historical significance”.

<sup>115</sup> Cristina Ionescu, “Influența Doctrinelor de Restaurare, de La Sfârșitul Secolului al XIX-Lea Și Până La Cel de-al Doilea Război Mondial, Asupra Restaurării de Monumente Istorice Din România. [The Influence of Restoration Doctrines, from the End of the Nineteenth Century until the Second World War, on the Restoration of Historic Monuments in Romania]” 64, no. 1–2 (1995): 112.

<sup>116</sup> N. Gabrilescu, *Privire Generală Asupra Monumentelor Naționale Și Mijloace de a Împiedica Distrugerea Lor [General View of National Monuments and Ways to Prevent Their Destruction]* (Iași, 1889): 19.

eclectic built environment such as Bucharest.<sup>117</sup>

In the capital specifically, the main challenge at this time was to maintain historically significant monuments while modernizing the city to the standards demanded by the Government, at the behest of European integration. The political goals of urban change further encouraged the clash between the traditional lifestyles of the capital city and the francophone aspirations of the elites, which were an object of public contention since the Unification. As the capital of Wallachia, Bucharest was the economic centre of the country, but the Moldavian capital of Iași was much more culturally significant, with a rich religious heritage. Thus, the capital status of Bucharest created a tension between the modernization imperatives and the necessity to assert itself as also a culturally significant city. This tension translated into the policy approach to monuments and culture, the latter half of the nineteenth century being a period which sees not only the replacement of much of the early civil architecture of Bucharest, but also the building of some of its most iconic structures, beckoning the Parisian era of the city. The framework for monument protection established the clear separation of the domain from urban planning: one was a noble pursuit of the historically trained, while the other was the responsibility of progressive politicians.

### 2.1.2.Planning the modern city

Towards the turn of the century, as the Neo-Romanian architectural style was at the height of its popularity in the capital city, the French influence transcended cultural transmission and manifested into the urbanistic policies of Bucharest. Following the Unification of the historic provinces of Wallachia, Moldavia and Transylvania following the First World War, Bucharest

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<sup>117</sup> Ioan Opreș, “Despre Evoluția Conceptelor de Conservare Și Restaurare a Monumentelor Istorice” [On the Evolution of Historic Monuments Conservation and Restoration Concepts], *Revista Muzeelor Și Monumentelor - Monumente Istorice Și de Artă* 14, no. 1 (1983): 8-9.

became the state capital of a multicultural kingdom. New legislation and policies were issued in the heritage management field, the most significant development being the establishment of the National Commission of Historic Monuments as an independent body supervised by the Ministry of Culture, which was tasked with “the conservation in good conditions and restoration of historic monuments using scientific methods.”<sup>118</sup> The subordination of the Commission to the agenda of the state was minimized in this period by the 1919 legislation concerning monuments, which allows the institution to directly appoint a majority of its members and the president. This allowed for greater autonomy in policy formulations, and the formation of specialist bodies to carry out the activities of the institution, such as an architecture bureau, archive and library.<sup>119</sup> A significant step forward by this new institutional arrangement in terms of policy was the introduction of the concept of ‘protection area’ around monuments in order to preserve their context.<sup>120</sup> However, this did not change the guiding professional principles of the institution – historical significance and artistic value – as the renewed national ethos after the Unification reinforced the focus on heritage elements most common on the entire territory of Greater Romania: religious monuments.<sup>121</sup>

What allowed for the relatively well-preserved urban fabric in the neighbourhoods close to the centre of Bucharest was the fact that the former *mahalale* evolved around churches from the early periods of the city. The concern with these edifices and their context on behalf of the heritage authorities due to their significance for the national identity, together with the fact that many of these central areas had evolved to be affluent residential neighbourhoods with

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<sup>118</sup> I. C. Filitti and I. V. Gruia, “Administrația Centrală a României” [Central Administration of Romania], in *Enciclopedia României*, 1938, 292.

<sup>119</sup> Mucenic, “Legislația Privind Monumentele Istorice”: 16.

<sup>120</sup> “Back Up - Valorificarea Arhivei Istorice a Comisiunii Monumentelor Istorice” [Back up- Valorification of the Historic Archive of the Historic Monuments Commission], Government Website, Institutul Național al Patrimoniului, n.d., <https://patrimoniul.ro/noutati/item/929-back-up-valorificarea-arhivei-istorice-a-comisiunii-monumentelor-istorice-pest-18-000-de-documente-din-704-dosare-ale-arhivei-comisiunii-monumentelor-istorice-disponibile-online>.

<sup>121</sup> Sanda Ignat, “Inventarul CMI (1892-1947) al Monumentelor [The Inventory of the Commission of Historic Monuments (1892-1947)],” *Revista Monumentelor Istorice* 61, no. 2 (1992): 22.

exemplary architecture, meant that the modernizing works and alteration to the city in the first half of the twentieth century were directed elsewhere (Fig.21).

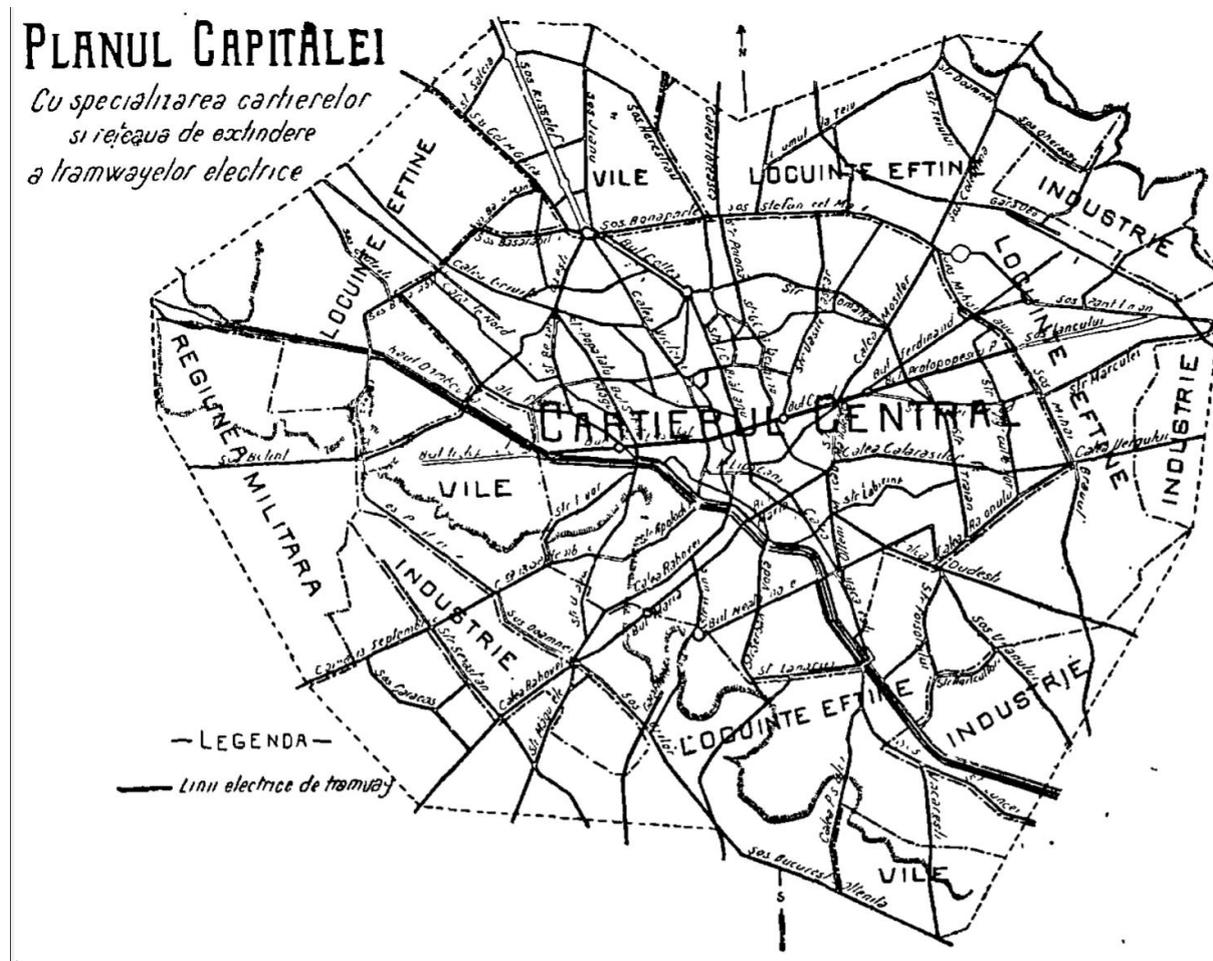


Figure 21: 1916 functional zoning, with a delineated Central Area where modifications were not permitted. Source: Cincinat Sfințescu, "Studiu Asupra Planului General de Sistemare al Capitalei Urmărit de Un Anteproiect de Lege Asupra Stabilirii, Construirii, Dezvoltării Și Sistemării Comunelor [Study Regarding the General Plan of Systematization of the Capital, Followed by a Legislative Proposal Concerning Defining, Building, Developing and Systematizing the Commons]" (Bucharest: Primăria Capitalei - Direcțiunea Generală Tehnică, 1916): 25.

Already apparent is the imbedded value system in heritage policy which would carry on for the rest of the 'short twentieth century': prioritizing landscapes of wealth and favouring artistic principles over use value. For example, some Early Modern traditional constructions (craftsmen workshops, inns and homes) are conserved as part of the landscape of the core Old Town, but similar constructions elsewhere inhabited in almost the same fashion until after the Second World War were systematically removed.

Nevertheless, this period brought about developments in the manner in which heritage authorities were involved in urbanistic decision-making. In Bucharest, the Heritage Commission began to share policy-making responsibility of heritage protection with the Mayor, who had “a right to issue directives regarding urbanistic and cultural actions in the entire territory of the city.”<sup>122</sup> A regulation in 1913 settled that the budget for administration of monuments was to be composed from a combination of state and local funds and private donations, entangling cultural and urban administrations.<sup>123</sup> The designation of responsibility for urban concerns almost exclusively to some form of central authority, with a consultative role of the Monuments Commission marks this period as one of intense changes in the city. Even though it brought about an institutional closeness of monument protection and planning, it subordinated the former to the latter. At this point “planning [...] was seen as a controlled architecture, equal to the spiritual aspirations of society,” so even though some of the historic urban fabric was preserved, the city was evolving around them.<sup>124</sup> This marked the beginning of the decline of inner-city neighborhoods, as the city began to develop social and economic functions and frameworks around them, effectively excluding the most idiosyncratic parts of the city from actively participating in urban processes in the future. As the main policy of the administration at the time was the removal of ‘Balkanism’ from Bucharest, as illustrated in the previous chapter, policies concerning new housing justified the building of orderly *lottissements*, and an increased concern with setting up beautiful public spaces. Public gardens and parks were carefully landscaped, and squares were adorned with works of public art. The street and the park as public spaces reflected the Western and modernist ideals of planners, attempting to shift the paradigm of urban living from the existing one centered on the individual home. However, as demonstrated in Chapter 1, traditional mentalities and habits did not change

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<sup>122</sup> I. C. Filitti and Vântu, “Administrația Locală În România [Local Administration of Romania],” in *Enciclopedia României*, 1938, 309.

<sup>123</sup> Mucenic, “Legislația Privind Monumentele Istorice”: 16.

<sup>124</sup> Machedon, Machedon, and Scoffham, “Inter-War Bucharest”.

at the expected pace, increasing the gap between the aspirations of policy makers and the needs of the residents, confirming the sectorial approach of policymakers towards urban culture.

### 2.1.3.Socialist paradigm shift

While the previous paradigms of urbanism and architecture adapted their structural vocabulary at least somewhat to the locally specific ideal model of urban living – the urban villa and the blockhouse both were reflections of the ‘house in a garden’ model –, dialectical relationships between authorities and other actors in decision-making ceased almost completely in the decades after the Second World War.<sup>125</sup> It is notable that in 1943, an address by the Mayor of Bucharest to the Commission points out their belief that it is not only churches which should be inscribed on the monument list.<sup>126</sup> Between 1944 and 1947, castles, mansions and boyar’s villas are listed, reflecting a growing concern with civic architecture, motivated by its destruction in the war. Nevertheless, the Historic Monuments Commission in its pre-war form was disbanded in 1948, as the Communist Party finally took full control of state institutions. In 1952, the State Committee for Architecture and Constructions was created, which was responsible for implementing the new socialist systematization plans.<sup>127</sup> The General Plan of Systematization and Socialist Reconstruction of Bucharest published in 1952 proposed the increase of population density and eliminating the contrast between central and peripheral neighborhoods, as well as the ‘valorization of historic and architectural monuments,’ effectively subordinating monument protection to urban planning.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> Majuru, “Modele Ale Locuirii Urbane”.

<sup>126</sup> Oliver Velescu, “Inventarierea Monumentelor Istorice Din România. Perspective Istorice.” [Cataloguing Historic Monuments in Romania. Historical Perspectives.], *Buletinul Comisiei Monumentelor Istorice*, no. 1–2 (2012): 121.

<sup>127</sup> Alexandru Panaitescu, “Consacrarea Fracturii - Momentul 1952” [Enshrining the Fracture - the 1952 Moment], Digital magazine, *Arhitectura*, 19 December 2016, <https://arhitectura-1906.ro/2016/12/consacrarea-fracturii-momentul-1952/>.

<sup>128</sup> “Hotărârea Comitetului Central al P.M.R. Și a Consiliului de Miniștri al R.P.R. Cu Privire La Construcția Și Reconstrucția Orașelor Și Organizarea Activității În Domeniul Arhitecturii” [Decision of the Central Committee of the Romanian Workers Party and the Council of Ministers of the Romanian Popular Republic Concerning the

Most monuments on the existing register (classified by architectural, historic, artistic and archaeological value), which in Bucharest included twenty-four non-religious buildings, were nationalized in 1955.<sup>129</sup> The list was not published, as many of the listed buildings, such as former aristocratic mansions were used in improper manners, such as collective farm headquarters, hospitals or even storage. The seizing of private propriety in the same year aided in the application of systematization plans for cities, many of which did not recognize any significant value in historic city centers and promoted their partial or total transformation, which included the re-settlement policies analyzed in Chapter 1 section 2.2., besides other large-scale systematization works. This “policy of the new state was felt in everyday life through the required space use, which is reformulated, re-coded and re-functionalized.”<sup>130</sup> As

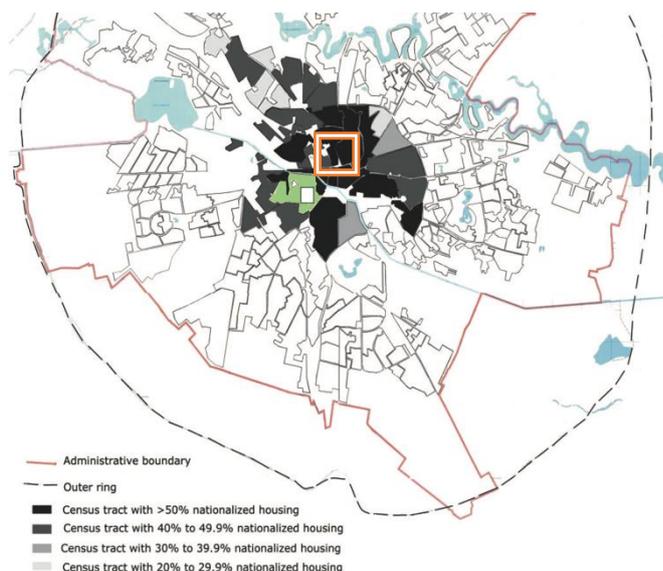


Figure 22: Housing nationalization in 1950s Bucharest.  
Source: Chelcea, *The “Housing Question”*

can be observed from Fig. 22, Calea Moșilor was among the central areas with the highest number of nationalized proprieties, since the socialist policy sought to eliminate the “cosmopolitan and imperialist architectural expression.”<sup>131</sup>

Despite several changes to the distribution of responsibilities, a

functionally autonomous body concerned with monument protection will not be in existence

Building and Rebuilding of Cities and the Organisation of Activity in the Field of Architecture], *Scântea*, 14 November 1952, Biblioteca Metropolitană București.

<sup>129</sup> Mucenic, “Legislația Privind Monumentele Istorice”: 14.

<sup>130</sup> Iancu and Manolache, “Living in Disputed Spaces. Nationalized Houses, Retrocessions and Evictions in Bucharest.”

<sup>131</sup> Liviu Chelcea, “The “Housing Question” and the State-Socialist Answer: City, Class and State Remaking in 1950s Bucharest: Housing Nationalization in 1950s Bucharest,” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 36, no. 2 (March 2012): 283, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2427.2011.01049.x>.

until 1971, when the Monuments Commission is reinstated. In 1974, the State Central Direction for National Cultural Heritage is also formed and declared as the decision-making body responsible for monuments.<sup>132</sup> Nevertheless, these institutions lost touch with conservation doctrines, as all their work is subordinated to approval by the Council of Ministers, the executive body of the centralized state. There appears during this time a definitive separation at the policy level of heritage and urban concerns, the former only appearing in the discourse insofar as it could promote some political agenda. The latter were completely “focused on the needs of the worker.”<sup>133</sup>



Figure 23: Church being moved away from oncoming demolitions for a new Civic Center, 1982. Source: Dinu Lazăr, “Translatarea Bisericii Schitul Maicilor [Moving the Nun’s Hermitage Church],” *Bucureștiul meu Drag*, June 1982, <https://bucurestiulmeudrag.ro/fotografii>

The policy of the national socialist regime of Nicolae Ceaușescu (1967-1989) had the goal of reconstructing the capital city, so that “in 1985 will have become, a *modern, socialist city*, worthy of the epoch of the multilaterally developed socialist society”.<sup>134</sup> In the wake of a devastating earthquake in March 1977, the opportunity arose to implement this policy on a large scale. In terms of monument protection, despite the dissolution of the Historic Monuments Direction, there were several innovative efforts to preserve churches from the path of demolitions

by placing them on rails and moving them further away (fig. 23). More interestingly, there was

<sup>132</sup> Mucenic, “Legislația Privind Monumentele Istorice”: 14.

<sup>133</sup> Gordon Church, “Bucharest: Revolution in the Townscape Art,” in *The Socialist City: Spatial Structure and Urban Policy*, ed. R. A. French and F. E. Ian Hamilton (Chichester ; New York: Wiley, 1979), 493–506.

<sup>134</sup> Maria De Betania Uchoa Cavalcanti, “Urban Reconstruction and Autocratic Regimes: Ceausescu’s Bucharest in Its Historic Context,” *Planning Perspectives* 12, no. 1 (January 1997): 85, <https://doi.org/10.1080/026654397364780>.

an implicit recognition of the values the traditional architecture and urban fabric of Bucharest; the dictator specifically wished to destroy certain bourgeoisie neighbourhoods which had formed strong community bonds in a systematic phenomenon of urbicide.<sup>135</sup> While the Uranus Quarter was levelled for building the House of the Republic (Fig. 24), residential areas in the central north of the city, such as the surroundings of Calea Moșilor which had been affected by the earthquake and where communities and bourgeoisie character had been reduced through the pointed resettlement policies of the previous dictator, were not prioritized.

#### 2.1.4. Transitional policy



*Figure 24: Uranus neighborhood before, during and after transformation. Source: @uranusdisparut, <https://www.facebook.com/uranusdisparut>*

Policymakers in the cultural sector of the post socialist period were confronted not only with the challenge of remedying the damage suffered by built heritage during the previous decades, but also tasked with deciding on a conceptualization of heritage suitable to the goals of the new democratic path. Romania went from centralized planning to no planning in a very short time span.<sup>136</sup> Thus, policies concerning the preservation of urban heritage which came into effect in the first decade of transition are a result of immediate responses to issues as they arose. The

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<sup>135</sup> Martin Coward, *Urbicide: The Politics of Urban Destruction*, Routledge Advances in International Relations and Global Politics 66 (London: Routledge, 2009).

<sup>136</sup> Ionescu-Heroiu et al., “Enhanced Spatial Planning”: 49.

main concern of the authorities was to reinstate the National Commission of Historic Monuments, Ensembles and Sites (CNMASI) and the Direction for Historic Monuments, Ensembles and Sites (DMASI) as independent bodies in 1990 with decision making and executive powers, moving firmly away from the political monopoly over culture. The legislation concerning historic monuments from 1991 widened the scope of the heritage authorities' activity, by introducing "ambiental, architectural and urbanistic ensembles" as a protected category which included historic city centers, parks and historic gardens.<sup>137</sup> What stands out in this period "is a major increase in the heritage stock in Bucharest, due to the inclusion of many residential buildings, almost inexistent category-wise in 1955, to that of buildings belonging to twentieth century modern heritage or to that of industrial heritage buildings."<sup>138</sup> However, this inventory severely lacked documentation of small scale civic architecture, an absence identified by researchers since the 1970's, which caused the traditional neighborhoods analyzed in this thesis to be almost ignored by monument protection policies in the first period of liberalization.<sup>139</sup> At the micro-level, the absence of regulatory policy allowed for renovations, expansions and modifications to the historic building stock, especially to benefit the commercial function of spaces, a "transient, temporary, opportunist, quick fix in the image of international commerce and speculation."<sup>140</sup>

On the macro-scale, during this time, the Order of Romanian Architects (OAR) became an important actor in policy elaboration, as this professional entity is a collaborator in writing both heritage protection legislation, and urban planning standards.<sup>141</sup> As the regime change left most

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<sup>137</sup>Mucenic, "Legislația Privind Monumentele Istorice":15.

<sup>138</sup> Sergiu Nistor, "The Management of the Romanian Built Heritage and the Evolution of the Number of Historic Buildings in the List of Historic Buildings," *Transsylvania Nostra*, no. 3 (2014): 32.

<sup>139</sup> Paul Petrescu, "Cartiere Bucureștene Cu Locuințe Vechi [Bucharest Neighbourhoods with Old Houses]," *București - Materiale de Istorie Și Muzeografie* 8 (1971): 180-2.

<sup>140</sup> Ernie Scoffham, "Modernism Sustained: Bucharest in the 1930s and 1990s," *The Journal of Architecture* 4, no. 3 (January 1999): 325, <https://doi.org/10.1080/136023699373864>.

<sup>141</sup> Alexandru Beldiman, "UAR, Octombrie 1990-Octombrie 1999, Primii Ani de După Revoluție" [the Union of Romanian Architects. October 1990-October 1999, the First Years after the Revolution], Digital magazine,

of the city in an unclear legal framework concerning propriety ownership and development strategies, the city center already affected by demolitions and unfinished socialist systematization works was made even more vulnerable to market forces (Fig. 25).<sup>142</sup> In the first decade of transition, the urban heritage in Bucharest was acutely affected by the threats identified in the Amsterdam charter concerning European architectural heritage twenty years prior “Urban planning can be destructive when authorities yield too readily to economic pressures and to the demands of motor traffic [...] Above all, land and property speculation feeds upon all errors and omissions and brings to naught the most carefully laid plans.”<sup>143</sup>



Figure 25: *Calea Moșilor 136, traditional nineteenth century commercial buildings “adapted” to the capitalist market. Image by author, February 2021.*

The administrative disorganization and economic pressures resulted in no clear policy strategy for either heritage management, or urban planning, despite efforts by the architect’s guild to organize international competitions for plans of ‘healing’ the city.<sup>144</sup> In this vacuum,

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Arhitectura, 22 December 2016, <https://arhitectura-1906.ro/2016/12/uar-octombrie-1990-octombrie-1999-primii-ani-de-dupa-revolutie/>.

<sup>142</sup> Sorin Gabrea, “București 2000,” Digital magazine, Arhitectura, 3 February 2020, <http://arhitectura-1906.ro/2020/02/bucuresti-2000/>.

<sup>143</sup> “European Charter of the Architectural Heritage” (ICOMOS, 1975), <https://www.icomos.org/en/charters-and-texts/179-articles-en-francais/ressources/charters-and-standards/170-european-charter-of-the-architectural-heritage>.

<sup>144</sup> Roann Barris (Casper), “The Rape of Bucharest,” Digital magazine, ArtMargins Online, 20 December 2001, <https://artmargins.com/the-rape-of-bucharest/>.

investors and developers profited from the abandonment of buildings following the long and complicated process of propriety restitution. As former owners could not be found, or no longer could afford to maintain houses in the historic center, the 1990's brought a change in the residential character of inner-city neighborhoods, including Calea Moșilor, where field observations determined that most early buildings were either uninhabited, or completely abandoned. Furthermore, the economic potential of the central location attracted the building of office buildings in the typical nondescript kitsch style of the era, the cheap constructions not respecting the architectural profile or functional characteristics of the area (Fig. 26).<sup>145</sup>



Figure 26: Both sides of Calea Moșilor 86, in the “Calea Moșilor architectural ensemble” listed area. Source: Google Maps, 2019.

## 2.2. Current policy

The adoption of comprehensive legislation in 2000 (the Law of Territorial Organization and General Urban Plan of Bucharest – *Plan Urbanistic General PUG*) and 2001 (Law of Monument Protection) was meant to also regulate the gap which had formed between planning

<sup>145</sup> Augustin Ioan, “Urban Policies and the Politics of Public Space in Bucharest,” in *The Urban Mosaic of Post-Socialist Europe: Space, Institutions and Policy ; with 25 Tables*, ed. Sasha Tsenkova and Zorica Nedovic- Budic, Contributions to Economics (Heidelberg: Physica-Verl, 2006), 342, 346-7.

and heritage management. The development of policies in the twenty-first century was guided by ratification of international standard setting documents and hopes of European integration. Therefore, the ratification of the 1985 Granada Convention in 1997 manifested in Bucharest through integrating studies and considerations of built heritage into the urban planning process.<sup>146</sup> The main aims of urbanism pertaining to cultural heritage as recognized in the fundamental law of territorial organization are to protect the urban landscape and ensure its use as a resource for bettering living standards.<sup>147</sup> Although multiple international documents and policies have been adopted and promoted in Romania, affecting Bucharest specifically from the early 2000's until today, the effectiveness of their implementation at various levels of governance is still a matter of concern and debate.<sup>148</sup> As far as policy is concerned, there are few available sources apart from broad strategic documents. One such document is the Strategy in the Field of National Cultural Heritage for the period 2016-2020 which promotes an integrated approach to heritage management as a resource for social integration, its provisions being implemented by the central authority, the Ministry of Culture, through regional offices and the National Heritage Institute (*Institutul Național al Patrimoniului* – INP) as an executive body.<sup>149</sup>

At the level of Bucharest, a similar document is the Bucharest Cultural Strategy 2016-2026 which analyses the ‘cultural ecosystem’ of the capital and approaches the “city as an ecosystem”, arguing for the inclusion of culture as a strategic factor of development. It

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<sup>146</sup> “Lege Nr. 157 Din 7 Octombrie 1997 Privind Ratificarea Convenției Pentru Protecția Patrimoniului Arhitectural al Europei, Adoptată La Granada La 3 Octombrie 1985” [ Law Nr. 157 Concerning the Ratification of the Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe], Pub. L. No. 157 (1997), <http://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocument/11857>.

<sup>147</sup> “Lege Nr. 350 Din 6 Iunie 2001 Privind Amenajarea Teritoriului Și Urbanismul” [Law Nr. 350 from June 6th 2001 Concerning Territorial Organization and Urbanism], Pub. L. No. 350, § 13 (2000), <http://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocument/29453>.

<sup>148</sup> Loes Veldpau, Federica Fava, and Dominika Brodowicz, “Mapping of Current Heritage Re-Use Policies and Regulations in Europe. Complex Policy Overview of Adaptive Heritage Re-Use,” *Organizing, Promoting and Enabling Heritage Re-Use through Inclusion, Technology, Access, Governance and Empowerment*, December 2019: 155.

<sup>149</sup> Veldpau, Fava, and Brodowicz, “Mapping of Current Heritage Re-Use Policies”: 156.

identifies the center-periphery imbalance, recovering urban space by the inhabitants and urban heritage as an untapped identity resource as the main issues the city is faced with in the present.<sup>150</sup> The strategic goals in this document can be summarized as:

- Integrating culture as an engine for urban development
- Revitalizing built heritage
- Activating neighborhoods
- Public and built space as a cultural act
- Ensuring access and participation.

Despite the forward-looking goals of the strategic documents, the primary executive bodies whose attributions affect the management of built heritage in Bucharest function on an assessment basis grounded in the traditional heritage recognition discourse; that is to say, they are concerned with listed monuments and their protection areas exclusively.<sup>151</sup> This situation is caused by the fact that they still function on the legislation from 2000/2001, which has been updated only sporadically and without a clear strategic vision since. Furthermore, their activities are dependent on other governance levels for the framework of activity. The offices concerned with material management of urban monuments must follow nationwide policies and legislation given by the central administration, the Ministry of Culture.

The municipal Culture, Education and Tourism Office is relying on constant dialogue with civil society in order to determine the approach to developing heritage promotion and maintenance projects and finding funding strategies. The dispersed organizational responsibility for issuing policies concerning cultural heritage is affecting on one hand, the

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<sup>150</sup> ARCUB, “Strategia Culturală a Municipiului București 2016-2026” [The Cultural Strategy of the Municipality of Bucharest 2016-2026] (Consiliul General al Municipiului București, n.d.), [http://strategiaculturalabucuresti.arcub.ro/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Strategia\\_culturala\\_supusa\\_aprobarii\\_web.pdf](http://strategiaculturalabucuresti.arcub.ro/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Strategia_culturala_supusa_aprobarii_web.pdf).

<sup>151</sup> “Hotărâre privind Regulamentul de organizare și funcționare al aparatului de specialitate al Primarului General al Municipiului București” [Decision concerning the Organisation and Functioning Regulations of the Specialty Apparatus of the General Mayor of Bucharest], Pub. L. No. 219 (2020), [https://doc.pmb.ro/institutii/primaria/rof/HCGMB\\_NR\\_219\\_52\\_2020.pdf](https://doc.pmb.ro/institutii/primaria/rof/HCGMB_NR_219_52_2020.pdf).

efficiency of safeguarding policies. On the other hand, it limits the success of integrating heritage into the matrix of urban life as an essential component, as functional aspects of planning are done in accordance with the PUG and do not involve most of the municipal offices (Fig. 27).

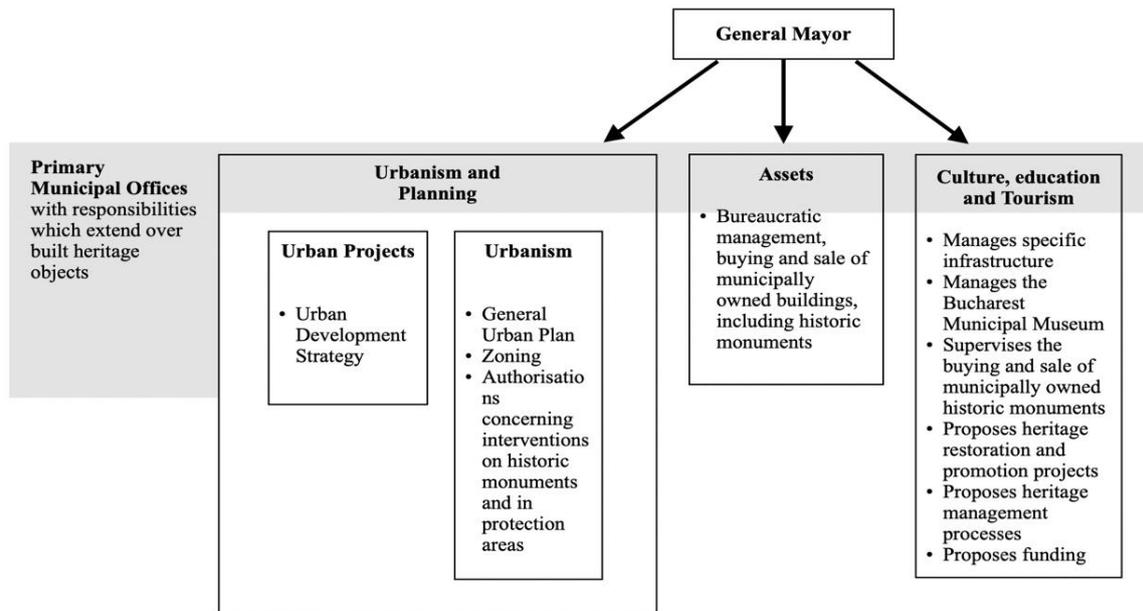


Figure 27: The organizational structure responsible for built heritage management in the central administration of Bucharest, according to official documents. Visualization by author.

The fundamental document by which the city of Bucharest is administered is the PUG which went into effect in 2000 and was intended to last for ten years. This urban planning tool is a complex set of policies, laws and studies which are supposed to govern every aspect of the urban configuration. As it pertains to heritage management, based on this plan the historic areas are drawn on a map and managed and building regulations, landscape management and area development are guided by functional zoning. It is relevant to discuss it here in both theory and practice, in order to draw some conclusions about the interconnected nature of urban planning and heritage management, and how this configuration affects the situation of the historic built environment on the ground.

In theory, the PUG was elaborated based on research conducted by researchers at the prestigious Ion Mincu University of Architecture. In principle, it draws on national development strategies and takes into account not only existing policy, but also some research done expressly for the purpose. The latter consisted of sociological studies with samples of the population and experts (planners and architects), who were asked to identify the major issues with the city and who they thought responsible. One of these studies is a survey, or ‘barometer of public opinion’ as it is named in the documents, which is meant to measure the popular opinion concerning the gap between their aspirations and the situation on the ground. Besides the fact that this documentation was done in the 1990’s and does not reflect recent changes, the methodology of these studies is also unclear. The documents themselves make no thorough explanation of the research methods or data collection, leading any interpreter to wonder whether they functioned as a consultative basis for policymaking, or their role was rather more that of offering a token of citizen consultation and participation.

The supporting documents of the PUG are nevertheless valuable because they show that the interviewed public recognized the value of a human scale environment and prefer the urban configuration present in much of the central historic areas, expressing an overwhelming preference for the ‘house in a garden’ traditional configuration.<sup>152</sup> While the initial legislation takes this into account, subsequent policy changes and urban developments left historic neighborhoods in such a state as to be almost uninhabitable. The architects and planners interviewed also expressed a wish for more specialized planning and a greater representation of culture in urbanism, but heritage or monuments are not mentioned even once. This shows a significant discrepancy between the existing legislation and the strategic goals, allowing for

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<sup>152</sup> Alexandru Sandu et al., “Planul Urbanistic General Al Municipiul București Etapa Finală, Mapa 2: Situație Existentă 1. 10. Necesități Și Opțiuni Ale Populației” [General Urban Plan of the Municipality of Bucharest Final Stage, Stage 2: Existing Situation 1.10. Necessities and Options of the Polulations], (Universitatea De Arhitectura Și Urbanism „Ion Mincu” – Centrul De Cercetare, Proiectare, Expertizare Și Consulting, 2000), [https://doc.pmb.ro/servicii/urbanism/pug/docs/a1\\_10socio\\_a3.pdf](https://doc.pmb.ro/servicii/urbanism/pug/docs/a1_10socio_a3.pdf).

the further deterioration of the historic built environment. Furthermore, people identify the most desirable neighborhoods in the city those with ‘historic’ architecture, which is well maintained, with green spaces and a harmonious environment, particularly regarding building heights and style. Residents were very much intuitively aware of the heritage values analyzed in Chapter 1; however, the conflict with the neo-liberal city development discourse prevented these concerns from being reflected in the PUG.

In practice, the plan itself was only supposed to serve for a period of five to ten years, recognizing that, as the country adhered to international organizations as part of the transition and integration process, changes would have to be made in order to comply with international standards, and modernize planning policies. Twenty years and multiple legal extensions later, the Bucharest PUG still stands as the guiding law of urban planning and management. The outdated nature of its provisions, relevant perhaps for a turn of the millennium city eager for economic growth and less so for a wishfully sustainable capital city of a modern EU country, allowed for layers upon layers of amendments, additions and provisions, not all of which beneficial. Some of the worst suited seemed to affect built heritage in particular and target central Bucharest specifically. As previously outlined, the low-rise residential neighborhoods of winding streets and inner courtyards, crossed occasionally by a commercial street such as Moșilor were considered less of a cultural testament to the hundreds of years of history, and rather more as underdeveloped slums, in need of modernization and development. And development came, in the shape of glass office buildings and concrete parking lots, visually harming the integrity of the landscape, and altering the functional role of the neighborhood.<sup>153</sup> These aspects should have been regulated in detail by the more detailed PUZ, subdivisions of the PUG which regulate building parameters, authorizations, functional areas and, more

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<sup>153</sup> Roha W. Khalaf, “The Search for the Meaning of “Compatibility” between New Construction and Heritage in Historic Areas: An Exploratory Study,” *The Historic Environment: Policy & Practice* 7, no. 1 (2 January 2016): 60–80, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17567505.2016.1142698>.

importantly, oversee the management of Protected Built Areas. In the focus area of Calea Moșilor, several policy and legislative levels intersect sectoral PUZ for districts 1, 2 and 3, the PIDU, the Historic City Centre protected area, and more than five protected built areas. Each of these consist of individual regulations, which are at best confusing, and at their worst, at odds with each other.

## **2.3. Troubleshooting**

Presently, the urban policy in Bucharest reflects the emphasis on the influence of the municipality in deciding the direction of the city, as the institution which issues strategic documents, and approves changes to the PUG and PUZ. The convoluted nature of responsibility and the lengthy administrative process significantly burden any intervention by civil society actors, limit the effectiveness of heritage protection legislation and allow for corrupt activity to bypass the legal procedures. This sub-chapter will analyze the impact of current policy on relevant stakeholders in Bucharest and argue that issues arise due to the inability of current regulations to gauge group interests and mediate conflicts.

### **2.3.1. Fundamental issues**

The core problem in policies governing the management of urban built heritage in Bucharest is their long overdue re-assessment. On one hand, the position of the historic built environment as a sector of planning limits the possibility of any heritage interpretation outside of the imposed standards. Having clearly delineated historic areas and protection zones, while technically necessary in urban planning, can prove a hindrance to updates, reinterpretations and participatory meaning-making practices. In a field which is internationally accepting a co-creative approach to urban design, the plans of Bucharest remain conspicuously behind by

maintaining an expert-led spatial interpretation.<sup>154</sup> Due to the fact that urbanism research and plan development is done from the central budget of PMB, policy development is subordinated to a certain degree to the political inclinations of the mayor and councilors, which so far have been prioritizing economic development. Interested actors such as propriety developers only treat measures codified into law by national authorities and executive decisions by local governance bodies as non-consultative, thus any gaps in the normative texts leave a significant leeway for abuse. For this reason, in 2021 the new elected administration voted to freeze all the sectoral PUZ plans, due to amendments to them by the previous Mayor.<sup>155</sup> These provisions were said to have been politically motivated and aid real estate investors in destroying parks and unethically demolish buildings in protected areas (Fig. 28).<sup>156</sup>

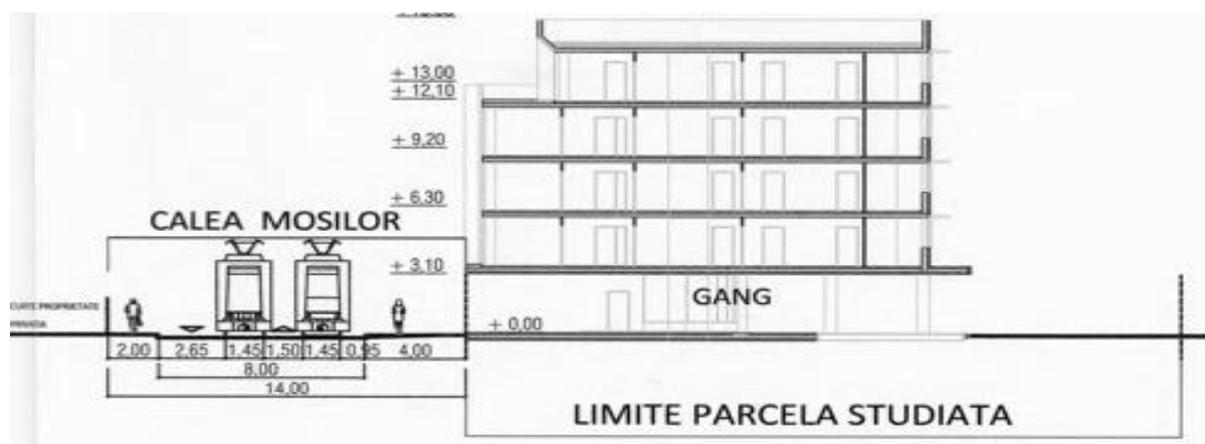


Figure 28: The kind of disruptive projects authorized under the current (cancelled) zonal plans. Source: PUZ Moșilor 60.

<sup>154</sup> Jeremy Wells, “In Stakeholders We Trust: Changing the Ontological and Epistemological Orientation of Built Heritage Assessment through Participatory Action Research,” 2015, 254.

<sup>155</sup> Catiușa Ivanov, “Șansa Ratată a PNL Și Perpetuarea Dezastrului Urbanistic Din București” [A Missed Chance by the National Liberal Party and the Perpetuation of the Urbanistic Disaster in Bucharest], *HotNews.Ro*, 26 February 2021, <https://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-opinii-24630211-opinie-sansa-ratata-pnl-perpetuarea-dezastrului-urbanistic-din-bucuresti.htm>.

<sup>156</sup> Catiușa Ivanov, “FOTOGALERIE O Frumoasă Casă de Lângă Biserica Sfântul Iosif Din București a Fost Pusă La Pământ / Autorizația a Fost Dată În 2019 de Primăria Capitalei” [Photogallery: A Beautiful House near St. Joseph Church in Bucharest Was Demolished/ The Authorisation Was Issued in 2019 by the City Hall], *HotNews.Ro*, 25 February 2021, [https://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-administratie\\_locala-24628065-fotogalerie-frumoasa-casa-linga-biserica-sfantul-iosif-din-bucuresti-fost-puta-pamant-autorizatia-fost-data-2019-primaria-capitalei.htm](https://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-administratie_locala-24628065-fotogalerie-frumoasa-casa-linga-biserica-sfantul-iosif-din-bucuresti-fost-puta-pamant-autorizatia-fost-data-2019-primaria-capitalei.htm).

The majority of the plans are now pending a complete overhaul, and during this time all authorizations will be given by the municipality on a case-by-case basis. While this is a step towards rectifying the harmful effects of previous policies, the general management of Bucharest legally reverts to the – outdated – provisions of the PUG.<sup>157</sup>

As the interests of the municipality as a stakeholder are to a degree politically motivated, it is important to further policy developments which consider other actors involved, in order to promote an integrated urban development to avoid such breakdowns in the future.

The experts involved in managing Bucharest’s built heritage fall into two categories: planners and heritage specialists. In recent years, there has been a convergence of their concerns noticeable in their individual media statements and publications. The OAR specifically, through their publication *Raportul pentru București* [The report for Bucharest], conducted an ample analysis of the urban environment, considering governance, planning, heritage, quality of public space, community and identity. From the first pages of the latest report (2018), the professional organization states that there has been a disappointing lack of communication with PMB, but the informative materials were written in a dialogue with the heritage authorities, such as INP.<sup>158</sup> From this we can surmise a coagulation of the interests of expert actors, whose goals lie in advising the municipality to formulate policies in accordance with the latest professional management standards. They observe that the inflexibility of existing policies led to irreversible losses in protected urban areas. On one hand, “interventions to historic monuments (A and B category) are controlled at the national level and can only be done with

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<sup>157</sup> Catiușa Ivanov, “Nicușor Dan Despre Suspendarea PUZ-Urilor de Sector: Nu Urmează Apocalipsa! Pentru Proiectele Rezonabile Vom Da Aprobări Punctuale / Urbanismul Din Ultimii Ani, o „golănie”” [Nicusor Dan about the Adjournment of Sectoral Urbanism Plans: The Apocalypse Is Not Coming! For Reasonable Projects We Will Issue Individual Approvals / Urbanism in the Previous Years as ‘Hooliganism’], *HotNews.Ro*, 24 February 2021, [https://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-administratie\\_locala-24626227-nicusor-dan-despre-suspendarea-puz-urilor-sector-nu-urmeaza-apocalipsa-dupa-suspendarea-puz-urilor-sector-revenim-pug-pentru-proiectele-care-sunt-rezonabile-vom-aprobati-punctuale.htm](https://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-administratie_locala-24626227-nicusor-dan-despre-suspendarea-puz-urilor-sector-nu-urmeaza-apocalipsa-dupa-suspendarea-puz-urilor-sector-revenim-pug-pentru-proiectele-care-sunt-rezonabile-vom-aprobati-punctuale.htm).

<sup>158</sup> Ordinul Arhitecților din România, “Raportul pentru București 2018 [Report for Bucharest 2018]” (Ordinul Arhitecților din România, 2018): 4-5.

the approval of the Ministry of Culture [...including] changing the function or the purpose of the monument, even temporarily,” which made possible an artificial selection of buildings fit for restoration, while condemning others to degradation due to the overbearing bureaucracy.<sup>159</sup> On the other hand, the emphasis of urbanism regulations and public attention on listed buildings, the integrity of the wider landscape has not been given due precedence. This led to a degradation of the environment, as well as to a loss of confidence by the local inhabitants in the effectiveness of governance.<sup>160</sup>

In Calea Moșilor, the conflict between heritage protection and urbanism policy is best reflected by the complete abandonment of ground floor shops in most buildings. The advanced state of degradation of the built environment motivated a policy in 2016 to evict such establishments from all buildings with seismic risk, with the goal of encouraging owners to participate in rehabilitation efforts. However, this policy has proven to be an almost complete failure, resulting in abandonment and further degradation.<sup>161</sup> In this case, the needs and interests of small business owners as a local stakeholder have been disregarded by a blanket policy, harming not only the economic profile – itself a heritage aspect – of the area, but also the urban vitality and the local actors’ level of participation in urban matters. It is beyond the scope of this paper to analyze the value and formation of local economic actors, but the presence and maintained character of local businesses has been proven to be essential in area revitalization and combating gentrification in the long term.<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>159</sup> Veldpaus, Fava, and Brodowicz, “Mapping of Current Heritage Re-Use Policies”: 158.

<sup>160</sup> Ordinul Arhitecților din România, “Raportul pentru București 2018”: 18-9.

<sup>161</sup> Thomas Dincă, “După Un an, Autoritățile Recunosc Că Scoaterea Firmelor de La Parterul Blocurilor Cu Risc Seismic a Fost Un Eșec. În Urmă Au Rămas Spații Mizere Și Pline de Graffiti” [After One Year, Authorities Recognize That Evicting Businesses from the Ground Floor of Buildings with Seismic Risk Has Been a Failure. Behind Them Remained Dirty Spaces Full of Graffiti], Profit.ro, 20 November 2016, <https://www.profit.ro/stiri/social/foto-dupa-un-an-autoritatile-recunosc-ca-scoaterea-firmelor-de-la-parterul-blocurilor-cu-risc-seismic-a-fost-un-esec-in-urma-au-ramas-spatii-mizare-si-pline-de-graffiti-16049509>.

<sup>162</sup> Yingjie Hu and Emma Morales, “The Unintended Consequences of a Culture-Led Regeneration Project in Beijing, China,” *Journal of the American Planning Association* 82, no. 2 (2 April 2016): 148–51, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01944363.2015.1131130>.

The group who has suffered most from the lack of stakeholder dialogue are the local residents. Under pressure from external factors for almost a century, communities in historic neighborhoods in Bucharest are hard to map. Some areas benefit from cultural ties to form local bonds, such as the old Armenian quarter where a multiethnic festival took place every year in pre-pandemic times celebrating local heritage.<sup>163</sup> Other places, such as the neighboring Jewish quarter benefit from a healthier building stock, which enables long-term habitation, as well as from the cultural capital of institutions located there, notably INP, synagogues and a prestigious high school. Even with these resources, local resident communities in central historic neighborhoods are understudied and underrepresented in governance, due to their heterogenous character and usually ‘invisible’ ties.<sup>164</sup> In the studied neighborhoods, such ties may manifest between residents of the same building or alley, those who frequent the same local church or use the public transportation. They may not be actively participating as a community actor on the urban scale, but there exists a potential for collaboration, even in the least developed areas. One such instance is the case study area which sits geographically between the two aforementioned historic quarters. Despite morphological and cultural closeness, due to its dual commercial and residential profile Moșilor has been disproportionately affected by the passage of time under inefficient policies. The entire length of the street front is a listed historic ensemble and around it forms a maximum protection level buffer zone PUZ. This high level of protection regulations made it difficult for residents to maintain proprieties to the heritage standards, resulting in either abandonment or improper building modifications, as people were pushed to choose between a long and costly legal process or the solving of immediate problems, such as building insulation. Documentation efforts show a staggering 92% of buildings in the

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<sup>163</sup> “Festivalul Strada Armenească” [The Armenian Street Festival], [stradaarmeneasca.ro](http://www.stradaarmeneasca.ro), n.d., <http://www.stradaarmeneasca.ro/concept/>.

<sup>164</sup> Maxime Felder, “Strong, Weak and Invisible Ties: A Relational Perspective on Urban Coexistence,” *Sociology* 54, no. 4 (August 2020): 675–92, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038519895938>.

protected area, including almost all historic monuments and buildings proposed for listing to have such modifications (such as air conditioning units and pipes on the façade, PVC glazing), which do not follow regulations, but respond to real lifestyle needs of the residents (Fig. 29).<sup>165</sup>

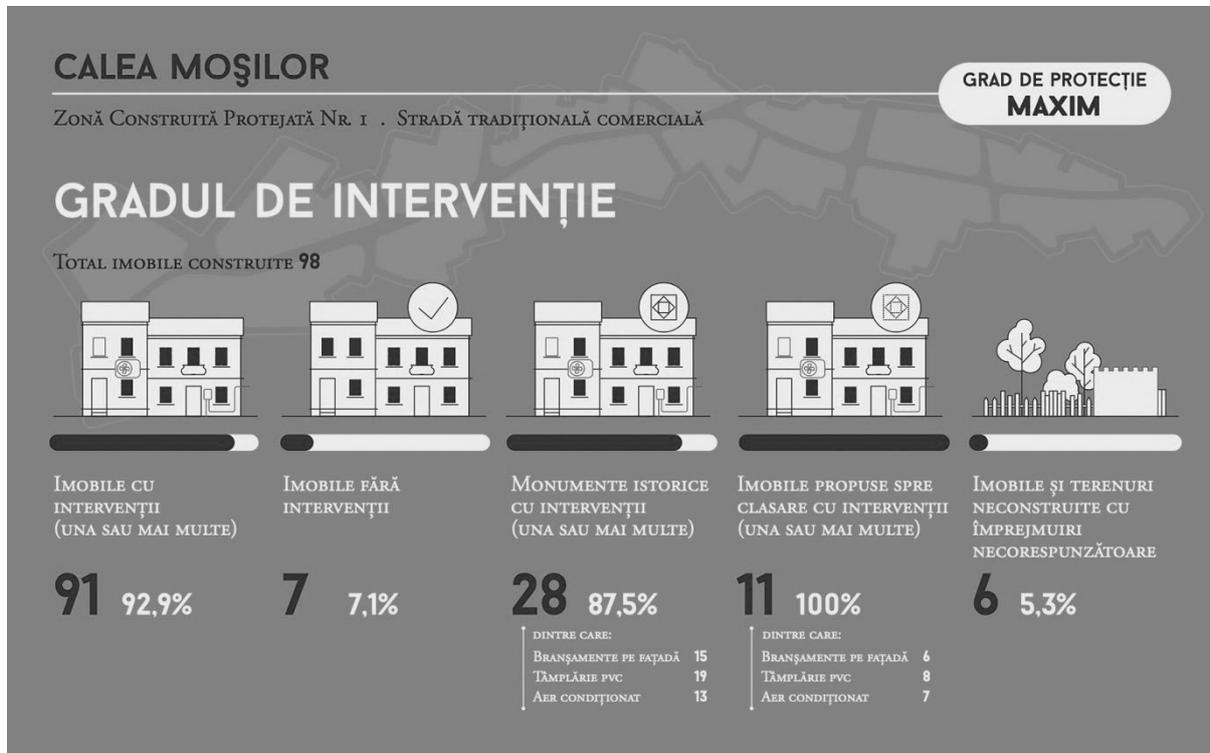


Figure 29: Degree of intervention in Moșilor area (from left to right: Buildings with interventions, buildings without interventions, historic monuments with interventions, buildings proposed for listing with interventions, empty plots). Source: catalogbucuresti.ro

While in recent years non-governmental stakeholders have been increasingly more visible in the discourse regarding urban matters in Bucharest, their own interests limit impact in high-risk areas such as Moșilor. NGOs typically have service provision, advocacy and monitoring functions in an urban environment.<sup>166</sup> Specifically, organizations have taken on specialized tasks such as inventorying of the historic built environment, as is the case of the *Catalog*

<sup>165</sup> Raluca Trifa, “Studiu Privind Zona Construită Protejată Nr. 01 Calea Moșilor” [Study Concerning the Protected Built Area Nr.01 Calea Moșilor ], Project Website, Catalog București, n.d., [https://catalogbucuresti.info/cb/wp-content/uploads/00\\_Studiu-ZCP-01-Calea-Mosilor.pdf](https://catalogbucuresti.info/cb/wp-content/uploads/00_Studiu-ZCP-01-Calea-Mosilor.pdf).

<sup>166</sup> Holvert Hung, “Governance of Built-Heritage in a Restrictive Political System: The Involvement of Non-Governmental Stakeholders,” *Habitat International* 50 (December 2015): 65, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.habitatint.2015.08.006>.

*București* platform by ARCEN, aiming to drive forward the process of heritage management. Along with other NGOs, such projects draw attention to the poor state of conservation of buildings, as well as issues of public safety due to seismic risk in historic neighborhoods, socio-cultural capacity building in underdeveloped districts and local memory conservation.<sup>167</sup> The important work of such organizations is nevertheless concentrated around places with not only inherent potential, but also possibilities to forward the agenda of the organization. Due to their volunteer-based operations and the dependency on their success to attract funding for projects, NGOs would not strategically benefit from undertaking work in areas in a particularly precarious situation or lacking any infrastructure to support change. Thus, due to the urgency of rehabilitation works, the complicated legal situation and the lack of a visible local community to engage, there has only been tangential work done in Moșilor, despite the overwhelming wealth of historical significance and cultural value for the city.

### 2.3.2.A grounded assessment

Field observations conducted in Moșilor highlight the tangible impact of an incoherent, overbearing and inefficient urban policy regime. This section will succinctly outline a list of the most salient issues present in the case study area, illustrated by concrete examples from the ground. Although some of these conclusions have been already identified by the municipality in the PIDU since 2011, the urbanism documentation proves circumspect in formulating any approach particular to Moșilor, due to its precarious condition.<sup>168</sup> An argument will be made for the potential of a vectorial heritage approach for saving this area from further decay.

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<sup>167</sup> “Antiseismic District,” NGO Homepage, ARCEN, n.d., <https://www.arcen.info/antiseismic-district/@evreiescdisparut>, “Cartierul Evreiesc” [The Jewish Quarter], Social Media Profile, Facebook, n.d., <https://www.facebook.com/evreiescdisparut/>.

<sup>168</sup> Synergetics Corporation et al., “Plan Integrat de Dezvoltare Urbană Zona Centrală București” [Integrated Urban Development Plan Bucharest Central Area] (Primăria Municipiului București, 2011), [http://urbanism.pmb.ro/duat-su/dezbatere%20publica/pidu/intentie/pidu\\_bucuresti\\_optimizat.pdf](http://urbanism.pmb.ro/duat-su/dezbatere%20publica/pidu/intentie/pidu_bucuresti_optimizat.pdf).

The most striking aspect of the study area is by far the emptiness. In both residential and commercial spaces there is an observable state of abandonment, made clear by the out of business signs and boarded up windows. In terms of residential spaces, the low rate of occupancy can be attributed to the lack of area vitality, as well as the general derelict appearance of the streets. A study of propriety values on Calea Moșilor shows that both rental and purchase prices are nearing double the city average, a premium which is not justifiable for an area with few services and lacking in infrastructure. Due to the residential unattractiveness, there is little incentive for outside actors to pursue economic and socio-cultural activity in the area, creating a vicious cycle which led to almost complete area abandonment.

An analysis of the ratio of unoccupied buildings shows that those with a commercial function were more prone to dereliction. As one progresses north on the street, the low rise nineteenth century dual-function constructions give way to interwar era apartment blocks, both architectural typologies exhibiting out of business ground floor shops with barricaded windows laden with graffiti. There are no leisure spaces, such as the restaurants or cafes so prevalent in neighboring areas, nor other significant points of interest which may draw the attention of a visitor. The quality of public space in the area has suffered immensely from the general disinterest. The streets are dirty and unkept, cars are parked haphazardly on too-narrow sidewalks and there is a constant danger of some decorative plaster or balcony to collapse and injure passers-by. It is not just the historical building stock which suffers from abandonment, but also the newer office buildings and parking lots, some of which have become squats. Overall, the low level of building occupancy exists in a mutually determinant state with the low area vitality and the attractiveness of public space, posing a major challenge for revitalization.

The dangerous state of conservation of the Moșilor street front can be considered the prime determinant for the overall dismal aspect of the entire protected area. As monument protection

policies fail to be implemented, urbanism regulations allow for alterations to the urban fabric by demolitions and strategic abandonment, resulting in exist empty lots which stand as reminders of buildings that collapsed and were not profitable for being rebuilt.



*Figure 30: Calea Moșilor 92, building on the right was refurbished but is still unoccupied. Picture by author.*

Some buildings in the section closest to the city center have already made the object of consolidation works, although they too stand empty (Fig. 30). In April 2021 PMB launched public consultations for an ambitious project, the Municipal Restoration Program, which aims to restore historic monuments and buildings in architectural ensembles and protected urban areas from city funds, regardless of whether they are in public or private ownership.<sup>169</sup> Nevertheless, the proposed methodology approaches the program based on voluntary submission of the monument's owner, followed by an assessment before introduction to the

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<sup>169</sup> Primăria Municipilui București, “Proiect de hotarare pentru aprobarea Programului Municipal de Restaurarea imobilelor monumente istorice și a imobilelor aflate in ansambluri de arhitectura și zone construite protejate de pe teritoriul Municipiului București” [Project for decision regarding the approval of the Municipal Restoration Program for historic monuments and buildings in architectural ensembles and protected built areas on the territory of Bucharest], (Serviciul Transparență Decizională, 5 April 2021),

list. The buildings are then to be prioritized based on the degree of intervention urgency and their significance. While this program can have immense positive impact on restoring properties with well-meaning, but technically and financially ill-equipped owners, and will see the reduction of public safety concerns associated with seismic risk, it is not an effective tool to save the areas most at risk (Fig.31).



*Figure 31: A common occurrence in Bucharest. Pictures courtesy of Razvan Gemanaru, 2021.*

Litigious properties are not considered, and as shown, they form a significant category of the built heritage. Furthermore, the evaluation process favors properties where the owner can offer co-financing of works. Buildings with higher use potential and multiple functions are also favored.<sup>170</sup>

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<sup>170</sup> Primăria Municipilui București, “Municipal Restoration Program”: 27.

This situation does not encourage a productive dialogue with owners of properties in historic protection areas who have so far shown no interest in restoring or re-functionalizing the buildings. This program, if approved, will represent a valuable tool in the sustainable development of the city, as one of the initiators claims, “it is the first time we see heritage as a resource instead of a problem”.<sup>171</sup> What underlies the problems, however, is the fact that built heritage is part of a larger matrix of issues affecting the sustainable development of historic neighborhoods. Making buildings safe is an important step of the process, but it needs to be addressed in tandem with the lack of socio-cultural opportunities surrounding listed monuments and missing lively communities to sustain any quality interventions on the long term.

My fieldwork shows that the case study area and its neighboring protection zones are similarly rich in historic monuments, but the neighborhood is singularly affected by the lack of any other opportunities (Fig.32).

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<sup>171</sup> Catiușa Ivanov, “Primăria Capitalei a Lansat În Dezbatere Programul Municipal de Restaurare: Imobilele de Patrimoniu Ar Putea Fi Restaurate de Instituție, Pe Propria Cheltuială, Apoi Redate Proprietarilor” [City Hall Launched for Public Debate the Municipal Restoration Program: Heirtage Buildings Can Be Restored by the Institution at Their Expense, Then Returned to Owners], News Agency, HotNews.ro, 5 April 2021, [https://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-administratie\\_locala-24713046-primaria-capitalei-lansat-dezbatere-programul-municipal-restaurare-imobilele-patrimoniu-putea-resturare-institutie-propria-cheltuiala-apoi-redate-proprietarilor.htm](https://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-administratie_locala-24713046-primaria-capitalei-lansat-dezbatere-programul-municipal-restaurare-imobilele-patrimoniu-putea-resturare-institutie-propria-cheltuiala-apoi-redate-proprietarilor.htm).

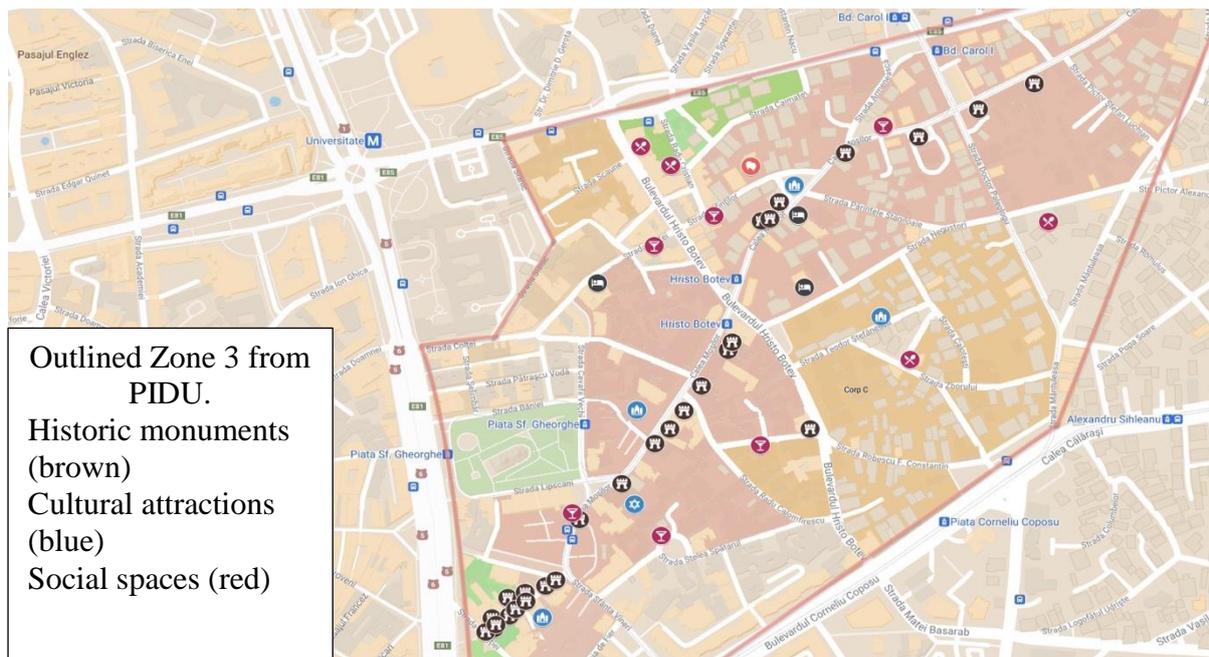


Figure 32: Calea Moșilor: The red, orange and green spaces have been painted based on the gravity of the situation of built heritage, as observed during fieldwork. Map by author: <https://www.google.com/maps/d/edit?mid=1Cg1T3hWbsR02Vl-nEg-qxgHrkPPskHM7&usp=sharing>

While Negustori and Mântuleasa have similar architectural profiles to Moșilor, also suffer from depopulation, demolitions and alterations, the presence of points of interest, such as shops, showrooms, offices and leisure facilities seems to have encouraged greater attention to area management. They are, thus, much cleaner and significantly safer and enjoyable areas, despite being less than a minute walk from Moșilor main.

The social pattern of interaction with the environment has completely altered since the previous century, gardens and entryways are no longer used as transition spaces from the street, but are boarded up by tall fences, aggressively drawing a line between the unsuitable public space and the retreat into private. This makes apparent the disillusion of residents' expectations, outlining the gap between their preferences and the actions of public policymakers. The area also exhibits the tangible results of the differences between expectations of heritage experts and those of local actors, visible in the individual, usually unsanctioned, modifications to the built environment (Fig. 33). The lack of dialogue between these stakeholders is evident.



*Figure 33: Moșilor and Mântuleasa. Pictures by author.*

Finally, on the macro level, the conflicting values and interests of economic, policy-making and residential actors makes building reuse significantly harder to bring about, even though the empty building stock offers significant potential for developing place-making tools from the ground up. As the practice of urban management does not reflect even the tentative strategic goals of participation and engagement from the programmatic documents, cooperative endeavors for cultural revitalization seem far away for an area such as Moșilor.

### 2.3.3. Sustainable perspectives contextualized

An effective management solution for the analyzed area must aim to reduce the local negative impact of stakeholder conflicts. It should also aim to align their interests towards the goals of sustainable urban development. In the European context, common themes of most new urban policy directions are the multiplicity of use and localized solutions, and the “emphasis is on the spill-over effects of cultural heritage projects which are linked to e.g. regional development

strategies in collaboration with other sectors and disciplines.”<sup>172</sup> It would be in the general policymakers’ interest to align their output to international progressive strategies and approaching urban heritage as a driver for increasing urban living standards would increase citizen confidence in the authorities at a local level. According to recent research, sustainable development in historic areas must go beyond conservation, integrating all layers of existing heritage in a management process which considers the complete matrix of uses and spaces (social, cultural, and infrastructural). It must also consider the strategic role of the neighborhood in question within the larger urban context. In the case of Calea Moșilor, the main avenue has a rich history of economic function supported by the historic built environment infrastructure and the convenient mobility links; thus, it can act as a focal point for a heritage-driven management strategy. Its delineation is also justified by the state of conservation and reduced building use, aspects which require immediate attention.

Such an area can be productively approached in a polycentric development framework within the city, shifting some of the socio-economic functional pressure from the Old Town to the benefit of adjacent areas with sustainable development potential. Romania is already involved in action plan development actions at the European level towards this goal, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector of Bucharest making the object of a specific network plan involving developing partnerships for a circular economy.<sup>173</sup> International networks such as URBACT can be valuable capacity building resources for the Bucharest administration, as laudable examples of historic area preservation by cities such as Rome, Italy or Bath, United Kingdom have adopted polycentric development in some form in their strategic Master Plans, to insure a uniform urban

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<sup>172</sup> European Parliament. Directorate General for Internal Policies of the Union., *Best Practices in Sustainable Management and Safeguarding of Cultural Heritage in the EU :Research for CULT Committee*. (LU: Publications Office, 2018), 5, <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2861/25066>.

<sup>173</sup> Irina Panait, “23 de Rețele de Planificare a Acțiunii Sunt Gata Pentru Faza 2! ” [23 Action Plan Networks Are Ready for Phase 2], URBACT, 13 May 2020, <https://urbact.eu/23-de-rețele-de-planificare-acțiunii-sunt-gata-pentru-faza-2>.

development path.<sup>174</sup>

On one hand, it is possible to achieve sustainable management processes at a micro-local level through administration of local resources and cooperation between actors of different sectors. Such a unit would preserve the traditional urban form with all its benefits, while being independently managed within the urban matrix.<sup>175</sup> This approach would be particularly suited in Bucharest, which exhibits strong area differentiation and specificity, which current policies are struggling to preserve. Furthermore, tackling urban units would also foster efficient resource management. Thus, the city requires a locally tailored policy approach suited to the level of intervention necessity and local context. It should also integrate heritage, where appropriate, as a vector of development of sustainability. Encouraging civic engagement and participative co-creation of urban space would ensure long-term maintenance. Some of these urban needs have already been identified in the proposal for a dynamic PUG which divides Bucharest by neighborhoods. The proposal recognized the locality as the reference urban unit and supported ‘heritage as vector’-based development. Nevertheless, it has failed to be legally adopted as a strategy in its entirety, as strategies for a new PUG are still being developed.<sup>176</sup>

Given the awareness among Romanian policymakers of some of the issues Bucharest is facing, and the general openness of society towards finding a sustainable solution, it is an

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<sup>174</sup> Jukka Jokilehto, “Evolution of the Normative Framework,” in *Reconnecting the City: The Historic Urban Landscape Approach and the Future of Urban Heritage*, ed. Francesco Bandarin and Ron van Oers (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2015), 216.

<sup>175</sup> Primož Medved, “A Contribution to the Structural Model of Autonomous Sustainable Neighbourhoods: New Socio-Economical Basis for Sustainable Urban Planning,” *Journal of Cleaner Production* 120 (May 2016): 22, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2016.01.091>.

<sup>176</sup> Tiberiu Florescu, “Nominalizare PUG Dinamic” [Nomination Dynamic General Urban Plan], Competiton Website, Bienala Națională de Arhitectură 2018, 2018, <https://www.uar-bna.ro/2016/proiecte/141/>; Florin Bălțeanu, “Început de “Bucharest Dynamic Marster Plan” [Beginings of “Bucharest Dynamic Marster Plan”],’ *Observatorul Urban București*, 15 January 2014, <http://www.observatorulurban.ro/inceput-de-bucharest-dynamic-marster-plan.html>; Catiușa Ivanov, “Odiseea Noului Plan Urbanistic General: De Ce În București Se Construiește După Planurile de Acum 20 de Ani” [The Oddisey of the New Genral Urban Plan: Why in Bucharest They Are Still Building after Plans from Twenty Years Ago], News Agency, HotNews.ro, 4 March 2020, [https://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-administratie\\_locala-23699451-odiseea-noului-plan-urbanistic-general-bucuresti-construieste-dupa-planurile-acum-20-ani.htm](https://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-administratie_locala-23699451-odiseea-noului-plan-urbanistic-general-bucuresti-construieste-dupa-planurile-acum-20-ani.htm).

auspicious period for new ideas to enter the discourse of urban change. New strategic developments are being introduced at the international level from which Bucharest could benefit with thoughtful and contextualized implementation. The following chapter will outline the development of a landscape approach to the urban environment, which focuses on the human scale. A set of suggestions will be offered for a possible implementation direction, by adapting the toolkit introduced by UNESCO in the Historic Urban Landscape Recommendation in 2011. It will follow its principles, tools and challenges as they pertain to Bucharest, and conclude with concrete steps which PMB as the main planning actor can take towards the revitalization of Calea Moșilor, as a pilot area for polycentric management.

## Chapter 3: Towards a Historic Urban Landscape Approach

Throughout the centuries, Calea Moșilor has served as an important economic axis for the city, characterized by its eclectic use and architectural character. It is functionally and aesthetically distinct from its surroundings, and because of its particular role in the city, subsequent policy regimes have struggled to conceptualize its specificity as a resource within the neo-liberal paradigm. For this reason, it has fallen into disrepair, and, despite its central location, it is functionally underused and has lost its social energy. This chapter will argue for the evolution of its aesthetic distinctiveness (as recognized in monument protection policies), into a landscape management approach, which aims at harmonizing all the local layers of meaning and potential. Thus, the first section will outline the evolution in thinking about landscapes which made possible the current standards of interpretation, key among which the European Landscape Convention (ELC) and the UNESCO recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape (henceforth HUL recommendation). Human perception and experience are seen as fundamental processes of knowledge formation, justifying both area definition and a participatory management approach. The argumentation will analyze the applicability of this toolkit in Bucharest by contextualizing its tools and processes in the local framework. Further, locally specific challenges which may arise will be evaluated considering existing systems and local opportunities, resulting in an assessment of sustainable perspectives for Calea Moșilor. Finally, the chapter will conclude with summarizing the benefits of an implementation of HUL tools at the neighborhood scale for engaging local stakeholders, creating knowledge and encouraging partnerships and issuing a set of concrete suggestions for implementation. This conceptualization would ensure a sustainable conservation of the built environment in the case

study area, as well as generate transferable management and administration skills for the local community and the authorities.

### 3.1. Contextualizing landscapes

The case study area can be defined as a distinct unit in terms of architecture, the present-day urban fabric having been shaped by centuries of socio-political and cultural changes in the Romanian capital. Thus, Calea Mosilor constitutes a landscape composed of layers of meaning contained within the physical space, distinguishable from both the crowded center, and the quiet residential surroundings. The theory of ‘landscapes’ has evolved from, and was always in relation with, the scenic qualities of our surroundings.<sup>177</sup> First approached in visual art, “[a] landscape expresses the (visual) manifestation of territorial identity” and conceptualizing a particular area as one serves to identify it as a point of reference by description of its characteristics.<sup>178</sup> Such a place can be thus experienced via the senses and have an impact upon individuals. Added social and artistic associations complete the matrix of landscapes as composed of natural, cultural and scenic aspects. On one hand, the emphasis on experiencing the visual scenery implies the subjective experience of a landscape by various actors and supports its conceptualization as a continuously evolving interpretative process. As the theoretical movement regarding landscapes began with a rural focus in an identity-based appreciation and was later driven by concern with the loss of traditional manifestations, there was a greater emphasis on human-led processes as factors in the morphology of the environment. Thus, researchers began to focus on historical approaches, identifying the “genesis of the landscape and its meaning as heritage.”<sup>179</sup> Therefore, in recent decades landscapes are thought of not only as existing in a continuous process of physical and

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<sup>177</sup> Ervin H. Zube, James L. Sell, and Jonathan G. Taylor, “Landscape Perception: Research, Application and Theory,” *Landscape Planning* 9, no. 1 (July 1982): 1–33, [https://doi.org/10.1016/0304-3924\(82\)90009-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/0304-3924(82)90009-0).

<sup>178</sup> Antrop, “A Brief History of Landscape Research”: 2.

<sup>179</sup> Antrop, “A Brief History of Landscape Research”: 9.

interpretative transformation, but also as a social construct laden with symbolic meanings. The analysis in the first chapter of this work aimed to track the physical transformations of space in Calea Moșilor in relation to the symbolic meaning of the area as a type of spatial organization fundamentally traditional to Bucharest. Its development from a *mahala* to a commercial center is as much reflected in the physical landscape, as it is in the urban memoryscape, a composite image which includes both tangible and intangible dimensions.<sup>180</sup>

Issued as part of the UNESCO World Heritage Convention, the most influential formal definition of landscapes takes into consideration the aforementioned aspects in developing the concept of ‘cultural landscapes’:

“combined works of nature and of man [which] are illustrative of the evolution of human society and settlement over time, under the influence of the physical constraints and/or opportunities presented by their natural environment and of successive social, economic and cultural forces, both external and internal.”<sup>181</sup>

By placing an emphasis on the interaction of actors, objects and process in time, this definition underpins the later importance placed on cultural heritage as an essential component of the human experience. The process of landscape perception has ramifications in human behavior, and particularly in human well-being, the visual state of the city being an issue often remarked upon by Bucharest locals.<sup>182</sup> The ability to make sense of a landscape is crucial for a sense of identity and comfort in a living environment, as the cognitive associations of perception have “functional significance for individuals.”<sup>183</sup> This approach formed the basis of

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<sup>180</sup> For “memoryscape” definition, see Toby Butler, ““Memoryscape”: Integrating Oral History, Memory and Landscape on the River Thames,” in *People and Their Pasts*, ed. Paul Ashton and Hilda Kean (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2009), 225, [https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230234468\\_13](https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230234468_13).

<sup>181</sup> United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, “Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention” (World Heritage Centre, 10 July 2019), <https://whc.unesco.org/en/guidelines/>: 20.

<sup>182</sup> Cristian Ciobanu, “Studiu de Geografie Mentală În Municipiul București” [Study of Mental Geography in the Municipality of Bucharest], 2011, <https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.12454.83522>.

<sup>183</sup> Harry Heft, “Affordances and the Perception of Landscape: An Inquiry into Environmental Perception and Aesthetics,” in *Innovative Approaches to Researching Landscape and Health: Open Space: People Space 2*, by Catharine Ward Thompson, Peter Aspinall, and Simon Bell (New York: Routledge, 2010), 18.

much of the management and design of landscapes in recent decades, as it facilitates a dialectical associative relationship between the environment and the outcomes of its perception.<sup>184</sup> As urban designers tended to view the object of their work from the outside, it was a key element of more recent programmatic texts to emphasize engagement with local residents and stakeholders, as chief drivers of space creation.

The ELC definition reflects this change, and defines the landscape “an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors.”<sup>185</sup> It contains a reference to an organized territory which is defined by social perception, recognizing the relevance of scenic quality for people. The definition is inclusive enough as to allow a wide variety of manifestations, most importantly for this work – urban landscapes. As the world is abound with diverse landscapes, a zoomed-in analysis of the urban scale can provide just as many individually identifiable landscape units, interconnected and composing the whole city.<sup>186</sup> This diversity justifies the introduction of heritage as an essential component of multiple existing urban landscapes, facilitating local identities, both social and visual. Applying a landscape lens to Moșilor has the potential to be culturally transformative for the area and its surroundings, as a deeper understanding of local values can rediscover its identity and promote the co-creation of a local identity by local actors. The most readily researchable component of the cultural significance of the area’s heritage has been previously determined to lie in its environment preserving most of the city’s temporal layers in terms of urban development, architecture and space use. Besides this socio-cultural value, other significant meanings attributed by stakeholders complete the value-framework of the landscape.

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<sup>184</sup> Catherine Ward Thompson, “Landscape Perception and Environmental Psychology,” in *The Routledge Companion to Landscape Studies*, ed. Peter Howard et al., Second edition, Routledge Companions (London New York: Routledge, 2019), 20.

<sup>185</sup> Council of Europe, “European Landscape Convention” (Council of Europe, 2000), <https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/rms/0900001680080621>.

<sup>186</sup> Jokilehto, “Evolution of the Normative Framework”.

However, they can only be determined by inquiring further into the context and engaging local actors in order to determine the value assessments they make of their environment.<sup>187</sup>

### 3.1.1.HUL

Considering the necessity to popularize a grounded value-based approach to landscapes, in 2011 UNESCO issued the HUL Recommendation, a cornerstone document for the way cities are perceived and managed. It recognizes that landscapes are never in stasis, so by analyzing the city as a landscape, it is viewed as a process of interaction between human actors and the environment, influenced by historical and cultural factors.<sup>188</sup> This document encourages member states to implement policies which approach the city in a comprehensive way, which goes beyond architectural conservation and “consider[s] the interrelationships of their physical forms, their spatial organization and connection, their natural features and settings, and their social and economic values” in support of sustainable urban development (Art.5). The definition of a historic urban landscape is “the urban area understood as the result of a historic layering of cultural and natural values and attributes, extending beyond the notion of “historic centre” or “ensemble” to include the broader urban context and its geographical setting” and considers topography and land use patterns as key elements for conservation (Art.8-9). By adopting an area definition based in perceptible environmental elements, it encourages non-expert actors to participate in the creation of heritage space, which has benefits for community formation and empowerment. In turn, this process supports social sustainability in neighborhoods such as Calea Moșilor because it coagulates a local community actor which in the future would be able to articulate interests and participate in governance.

The wholistic approach reinforces the aims of the ELC, specifically promoting the value of

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<sup>187</sup> Mason and de la Torre, “Assessing Values in Conservation Planning: Methodological Issues and Choices”.

<sup>188</sup> World Heritage Committee, “UNESCO Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape,” 2011: 1, <http://whc.unesco.org/uploads/activities/documents/activity-638-98.pdf>.

implementing policies towards a ‘landscape quality objective’ which reflects the aspirations of the public. Furthermore, the policy directions promoted by the HUL recommendation encourage authorities to “integrate landscape into its regional and town planning policies and in its cultural, environmental, agricultural, social and economic policies, as well as in any other policies with possible direct or indirect impact on landscape.”<sup>189</sup> Even from the research for the PUG in the 1990’s resulted a marked preference of the Bucharest public for dividing the city by neighborhoods.<sup>190</sup> This is reflected in the unaccepted proposal for a dynamic PUG (Fig. 34) and, at a civil society level, in NGOs organizing their projects within neighborhood/former *mahalale* thematic areas.<sup>191</sup>

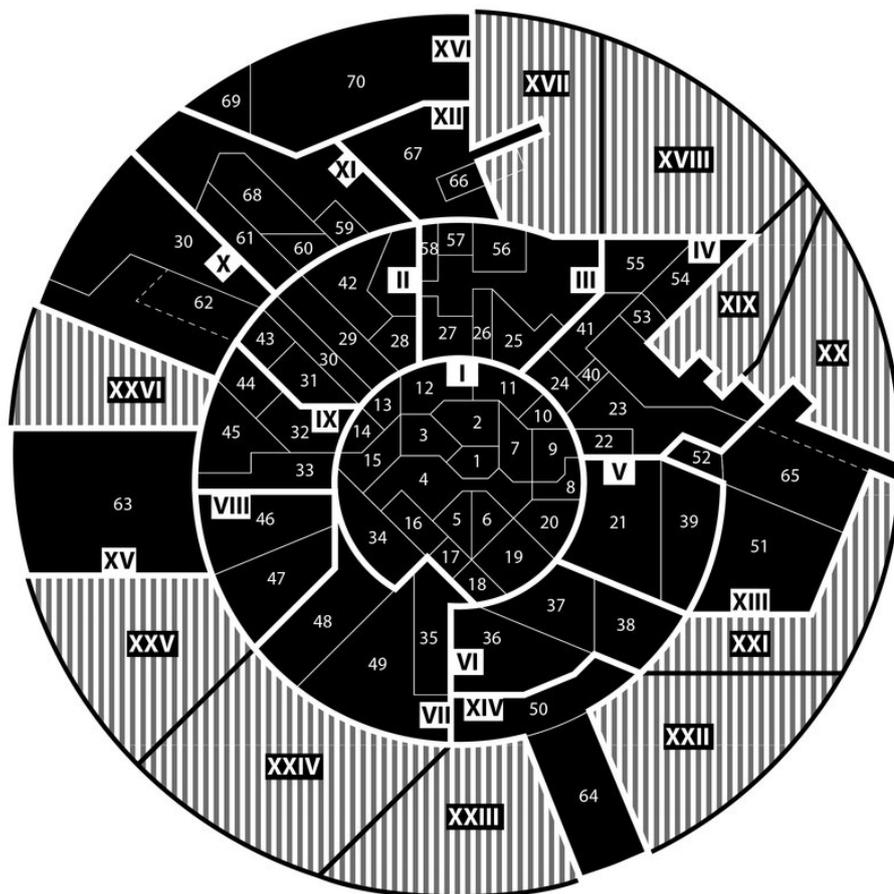


Figure 34: Dynamic PUG proposal. OAR, Raportul pentru București 2018.

<sup>189</sup> Council of Europe, “European Landscape Convention”.

<sup>190</sup> Sandu et al., “PUG Necesități Și Opțiuni Ale Populației”: 10.

<sup>191</sup> ARCEN, “Cu Bastonul Prin București -Trasee Culturale Pietonale” [With a Alking Cane through Bucharest - Cultural Pedestrian Walking Tours], Project Website, ARCEN, accessed 26 May 2021, <https://www.arcen.info/cu-bastonul-prin-bucuresti>.

As “the separation between historic areas and the rest of the city [...] is seen today as a risk as well as a waste of an important stock of knowledge and experience,” the HUL approach proposes a management of change towards a sustainable paradigm. Furthermore, it is novel in the way the proposed tools do not historicize heritage, instead considering all aspects of the built environment both historic and contemporary as inhabiting the city simultaneously. By valuing the environment in its entirety there is a proposed attempt at harmonizing the management of such layers. As examples of conservation and refurbishment, examples of adaptive heritage reuse (AHR) in the urban landscape can successfully mediate historic and use values with cultural and creative functions.<sup>192</sup> In this way, historic areas are not separated from urban economic processes, encouraging local attraction of quality investment and thus decreasing contrasts and inequalities between areas.<sup>193</sup>

Moreover, the HUL approach **stresses the social function of heritage** and proposes a recognition and identification of a layered and interconnected matrix of values which are present in a city.<sup>194</sup> By improving the general perception of an area, diversities of socio-cultural expression can develop both endogenously by a thriving community, and exogenously by stakeholders involved in local processes. Ultimately, through HUL implementation, urban heritage can be productively managed as a driver for livability, balancing the needs of current and future generations. In order to ensure wide adoption of sustainable goals people need to experience some positive impact of their application, which would ensure wide and lasting social support for thoughtful change.

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<sup>192</sup> “The Historic Urban Landscape,” The Historic Urban Landscape, accessed 26 May 2021, <http://www.historicurbanlandscape.com/index.php?classid=5352&id=29&t=show>.

<sup>193</sup> European Parliament. Directorate General for Internal Policies of the Union., *Best Practices in Sustainable Management and Safeguarding of Cultural Heritage in the EU: Research for CULT Committee*. (LU: Publications Office, 2018), 11, <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2861/25066>.

<sup>194</sup> Manal Ginzarly, Claudine Houbart, and Jacques Teller, “The Historic Urban Landscape Approach to Urban Management: A Systematic Review,” *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 25, no. 10 (3 October 2019): 999–1019, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13527258.2018.1552615>.

### 3.1.2.Tools

These general directions and fundamental principles serve as guidelines for defining a historic landscape. Once the question of ‘what do we want for this area?’ arises, the formulation of a vision and an action plan is aided by the HUL toolkit; a set of sectors to target by policy makers in order to ensure the creation of a sustainable management framework. The proposed tools concern civic engagement and its creative integration in the planning process, offer strategies for developing regulatory mechanisms and methods of monitoring. Most importantly, by recognizing that every historic urban landscape is unique, the proposed toolkit is adaptable to context, supporting local capacities and highlighting area-specific resources.<sup>195</sup>

Empowerment lies at the foundation of civic engagement, as a process which commends and encourages meaningful participation. Awareness raising campaigns and working directly with local communities are powerful tools used in the HUL framework, which focus on relationships rather than objects.<sup>196</sup> Documentations of local experiences can incite renewed attachments to place, which in the case of Calea Moșilor may unearth what is left of the local memories regarding the transformations of the area. Furthermore, by disseminating such knowledge, a heritage community which “consists of people who value specific aspects of cultural heritage which they wish, within the framework of public action, to sustain and transmit to future generations.”<sup>197</sup> Social cohesion can be achieved through encouraging people to come together, thinning the boundaries between individuals’ private values and their manifestations in the public sphere. Diversity within urban areas can be discovered and fostered

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<sup>195</sup> Ana Pereira Roders, “The Historic Urban Landscape Approach in Action: Eight Years Later,” in *Reshaping Urban Conservation: The Historic Urban Landscape Approach in Action*, ed. Ana Pereira Roders and Francesco Bandarin, vol. 2, Creativity, Heritage and the City (Singapore: Springer Singapore, 2019), 23, <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-8887-2>.

<sup>196</sup> Julien Smith, “Civic Engagement Tools for Urban Conservation,” in *Reconnecting the City*, ed. Francesco Bandarin and Ron van Oers (Oxford, UK: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, 2014), 222, <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118383940.oth>.

<sup>197</sup> Council of Europe, “Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society,” 27 October 2005, Art.2, <https://rm.coe.int/1680083746>.

by the authorities, and their facilitator function in conflict mediation between actors becomes more meaningful.<sup>198</sup>

Such actions taken enhance the development process of knowledge and planning tools, supporting the integrative nature of the HUL approach. Going beyond the ‘historic center’, a system of knowledge accumulation applicable to areas around it can greatly aid in their conservation as integral parts of the urban landscape by creating an acceptable equilibrium between planning and development.<sup>199</sup> Tools such as digital processing of mapping and inventory data of the built environment and GIS systems can be used for comprehensive SWOT analyses which aim to bridge the gap between heritage conservation expertise and urban planning policies.<sup>200</sup> This process was demonstrated to be much needed in Bucharest, as this work only outlined the cultural layers of Calea Moșilor and their unsustainable managing in broad strokes. Even an incremental implementation of such tools, some of which are already at the disposal of the Municipality (documentary resources, infrastructure for digital mapping), would bring the situation in Moșilor in the public discourse. If even minimal steps such as facilitating decisional representation and organizing working groups are taken towards an open dialogue between planners and stakeholders, more contextually responsive measures can be taken. This would be particularly useful at present, while the zonal plans are suspended, and policies are under revision.

Mainstreaming a heritage planning approach, even at the reduced scale of one neighborhood, would increase exposure to cultural innovation-driven development.<sup>201</sup> As the HUL Recommendation builds on existing international documents and their principles,

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<sup>198</sup> Smith, “Civic Engagement Tools for Urban Conservation,” 227.

<sup>199</sup> Jokilehto, “Evolution of the Normative Framework,” 213.

<sup>200</sup> Jyoti Hosagrahar, “Knowledge and Planning Tools,” in *Reconnecting the City: The Historic Urban Landscape Approach and the Future of Urban Heritage*, ed. Francesco Bandarin and Ron van Oers (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2015), 250-8.

<sup>201</sup> European Parliament. Directorate General for Internal Policies of the Union., *Best Practices in Sustainable Management*, 17.

adopting its principles within the existing regulatory framework in Bucharest would not impede the ongoing process of reform.<sup>202</sup> On the contrary, the heritage management approach at a national level could also benefit from a localized implementation experience, and the urban management tools developed in the capital can be adapted to various local contexts all over the country within the same legal framework. For example, the local space-use preference of ‘house in a garden’ observed in previous chapters can function as a regulatory tool within the HUL framework, as it represents an endogenous preference for conservation of the traditional built environment. If traditional regulations and traditional systems should be harmonized by area-contextualized zoning regimes, a greater degree of stakeholder compliance can be achieved.

It is not only compliance to normative standards, however, that makes the goal of the analyzed toolkit. Managing stakeholder interests and facilitating productive dialogue between them is a crucial element which makes a tangible transition from principle to visible impact. Most important for this part of the process is finding the appropriate financial tools, which can motivate stakeholders to cooperate, but not be too costly to the public sector. At the scale of individual buildings and owners, there exist already in Bucharest possibilities for support in conservation. However, such measures are not sufficiently popularized, and function only from a monument protection perspective. Instead, the HUL framework proposes that “financial tools should be aimed at building capacities and supporting innovative income-generating development, rooted in tradition,” meaning that in order to revitalize an area, investments and socio-economic partnership models should also be considered.<sup>203</sup> For example, in Calea Mosilor, office buildings or socialist-era administrative units stand empty and may have a big

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<sup>202</sup> Adi Sela Wiener, “The Historic Towns And Town Centres Concept And The UNESCO Recommendation On The Historic Urban Landscape: Is It A Natural Continuum Or Have We Gone Too Far?” (MA Thesis, New Brunswick Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, 2013), <http://orcp.hustoj.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/2013-thesis-The-historic-towns-and-town-centres-concept-and-the-UNESCO-recommendation-on-the-historic-urban-landscape.pdf>.

<sup>203</sup> World Heritage Committee, “HUL Recommendation”.

potential for reuse, if an open line of dialogue existed between developers and the municipal administration. As they do not fall under direct monument protection policies, and are valuable for their placement in context, their “insignificance [can open] up a space for uses and interactions not regulated by heritage claims and constraints,” thus even though some aspects have been deemed insignificant in the AHD, does not mean that they are futureless.<sup>204</sup>

The HUL toolkit opens historical structures for temporary use, **encouraging conservation through continued use of the built environment** by a variety of actors, until a long-term sustainable framework can be developed. It can act as a strategic approach for community capacity building: generating durable skills for participation and representation. By encouraging diversity of use and interpretation of historic environments, stakeholders can be offered strategic benefits for complying with regulations or conducting creative and productive activity in historic urban landscapes. Given time and with competent monitoring, this approach can result in not only self-sustainable urban units, but economically productive and attractive spaces.<sup>205</sup>

### 3.1.3.Challenges

Even though scholars and practitioners are increasingly promoting the benefits of the HUL approach, one of its main challenges remains **making impactful change happen from discourse to application**. As the toolkit recommendations operate on multiple scales and involve a transdisciplinary approach, they have proven particularly difficult to operationalize, as observable from the still small number of cities which adopted it.<sup>206</sup> In Vienna, one of the

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<sup>204</sup> Tracy Ireland, Steve Brown, and John Schofield, “Situating (in)Significance,” *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 26, no. 9 (1 September 2020): 826-9; <https://doi.org/10.1080/13527258.2020.1755882>.

<sup>205</sup> European Parliament. Directorate General for Internal Policies of the Union., *Best Practices in Sustainable Management*, 9.

<sup>206</sup> Manal Ginzarly, Claudine Houbart, and Jacques Teller, “The Historic Urban Landscape Approach to Urban Management: A Systematic Review,” *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 25, no. 10 (3 October 2019): 1000, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13527258.2018.1552615>.

pioneers of the concept, a culture of shared responsibility for heritage maintenance resulted from urban policies. Additionally, the Austrian experience produced the programmatic Vienna Memorandum regarding heritage management.<sup>207</sup> Other cities which are less well connected to the latest innovative practices, or lack the administrative capacity or funds, have seemingly struggled to integrate their planning and heritage management to the recommended degree.<sup>208</sup> Romania can be considered a latecomer to the landscape discourse, having yet to publicly approach any mention of HUL. It has ratified the ELC in 2000, but only in 2016 took some of the first legislative steps towards reform of heritage management. Adopting a new ‘Code of Heritage’ was meant to bring about the alignment of professional values, decision-making, policy and practice of the heritage field in Romania with the most recent international advancements and paradigms. While the proposal, which integrates heritage management within the paradigm of sustainable development was adopted, its content is still in an incipient form and its provisions regarding landscape are limited to vague references to ‘natural’ and ‘cultural’ features without further elaboration.<sup>209</sup> As the process of reform in the heritage field is ongoing, there exists a unique opportunity to integrate the provisions of the HUL recommendation in the new approach, benefitting from knowledge contained in the UNESCO implementation monitoring reports, and learning from international experience, as many Eastern European member states with similar contexts have participated in UNESCO’s HUL monitoring process.<sup>210</sup>

Even if state parties are open to innovative heritage discourse, the translation of policies into practice is hardly ever uniform as it is dependent on the capacities of local actors. It has

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<sup>207</sup> United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, “Vienna Memorandum on “World Heritage and Contemporary Architecture - Managing the Historic Urban Landscape,””20 September 2005, <https://whc.unesco.org/en/documents/5965>.

<sup>208</sup> Pereira Roders, “HUL Eight Years Later,” 35.

<sup>209</sup> “Hotărâre nr. 905 pentru aprobarea tezelor prelabile ale proiectului Codului patrimoniului cultural” [Decision nr.905 for the approval of the initial proposal of the Code of Cultural Heritage project].

<sup>210</sup> UNESCO World Heritage Centre, “The UNESCO Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape Report of the Second Consultation on Its Implementation by Member States, 2019” (Paris: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2019).

been shown that Bucharest planning is inefficient in overseeing good practices all over the city when there are conflicts of interest with other actors with impact on built heritage. At this time of prospective reform in the city, adopting justifiable value-based principles in any new urban plans to be done would constitute a strategic choice for the municipality. Testing the HUL discourse and tools in an area with an urgent need to be dealt with would positively reinforce public opinion in favor of policymakers and ensure medium term conservation prospects for Moșilor. The language and process of policy can be adapted to the assessed knowledge of the actors most influenced, making participation and compliance more accessible and therefore, more sustainable.<sup>211</sup> The Code of Heritage proposes such a scalar framework of cultural policy, thus making possible a further closeness of discourse, policy and practice.

As Romania is taking the first tentative discursive and regulatory steps towards more sustainable urban planning, of most concern to the case study area approached in this work is the resilience of old principles of historic conservation within the conceptual landscape. Built heritage in Calea Moșilor lost considerably less ground to unchecked economic development than to neglect by protection mechanisms. As mentioned in Chapter 2, section 2.3.1., the core principles and value assessments which guide conservation are decided at a national level and imply a long political process. As they are very slow to evolve organically, the growing importance of sustainable urban and social development, in which heritage plays a driver role, must be highlighted in the public sphere in order to drive change. By conducting small scale ‘experiments in application,’ the benefits of revising the heritage framework processes can be instrumentalized, as well as providing real opportunities for “smart, inclusive and sustainable development.”<sup>212</sup>

Small but complex areas like Moșilor are ideal for developing a management process,

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<sup>211</sup> Antrop, “A Brief History of Landscape Research,” 19.

<sup>212</sup> European Parliament. Directorate General for Internal Policies of the Union., *Best Practices in Sustainable Management and Safeguarding of Cultural Heritage in the EU: Research for CULT Committee*. (LU: Publications Office, 2018), 7, <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2861/25066>.

a challenge which often requires a great deal of trial and error. At very little risk, an extremely useful body of knowledge can be generated by HUL tools implementation. The initial stages of area research may facilitate network and partnership formation between institutions, as well as linking the administrative and human scales of the city. Actions such as temporary uses and adaptive reuse, as well as having the area under supervision, can prevent long term pitfalls of redevelopment such as gentrification.<sup>213</sup> Stakeholders in Bucharest - particularly heritage professionals and architects - have shown initiative and availability, and non-state actors already provide much of the knowledge and research opus in the city, thus co-opting them and unifying creative efforts would be both beneficial and feasible.

### 3.2. Suggestions

In *Downtown is for People*, Jane Jacobs articulated the attributes which to this day are established to construct a lively and welcoming city, among which the most important are walkability, aesthetic variety in the landscape, mixed use of space and public spaces which encourage interpersonal connections.<sup>214</sup> These characteristics are visible in the winding streets, varied architecture and diverse functional spaces found in downtown Bucharest. Calea Moșilor offers opportunities for public space creation and creative re-use, entertaining the possibility of completing the image of a model area. In order to reach a goal for neighborhood change, it is important to consider the determinant factors of landscape preference: coherence, legibility,

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<sup>213</sup> Even though AHR itself can trigger gentrification through reconfiguring the social makeup of an area, it may be possible to mitigate its negative consequences through close supervision. For an overview of current debates, see: Chiara De Cesari and Rozita Dimova, "Heritage, Gentrification, Participation: Remaking Urban Landscapes in the Name of Culture and Historic Preservation," *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 25, no. 9 (2 September 2019): 863–9, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13527258.2018.1512515>.

<sup>214</sup> Jane Jacobs, "Downtown Is for People," in *The Urban and Regional Planning Reader*, ed. Eugenie L. Birch, 1st ed. (Routledge, 2008), 124–31, <http://innovationecosystem.pbworks.com/w/file/attach/63349251/DowntownisforPeople.pdf>.

complexity and mystery.<sup>215</sup> “The legibility and mystery variables both point to the potential importance of navigation through the landscape (as opposed to simply viewing it as a static image), and mystery is [...] a quality that draws the perceiver into the scene with the prospect of more information.”<sup>216</sup> To improve coherence, there must be a drive for a harmonious environment, particularly in terms of architecture, in order to reconcile the expectations of those who perceive it with their experience. Complexity means ‘not a sterile environment’ and can be achieved by multiple space uses and diversity of expressions of life. As such, both the structure of the city and the way it is experienced are paramount for constructing an enjoyable historic urban landscape; the traditional neighborhood is compact, diverse (live, work, shop, recreate, educate) and provides the means for community creation (social structures determined by infrastructure). It is possible to create this type of environment in Moșilor by building upon existing policies, such as the Municipal Restoration Program and making knowledge of existing financial tools more accessible. Towards this goal, I suggest three directions for applying HUL tools to the area: inspiration, exploration and translation, which “[focus] on the identity and values embedded in any city [...], these are a key determinant of quality of life, while in economic terms they can be a strong component of competitiveness in the global marketplace.”<sup>217</sup>

### 3.2.1. Inspiration

The first set of recommendations are concerned with beginning the process of creating a vision of and for the studied neighbourhood. This thesis demonstrated that there is a rich historical material at disposal, as well as existing resources for a comprehensive study of the present

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<sup>215</sup> Kaplan and Kaplan, *The Experience of Nature*, 66.

<sup>216</sup> Thompson, “Landscape Perception,” 21.

<sup>217</sup> Ron van Oers, “Conclusion: The Way Forward: An Agenda for Reconnecting the City,” in *Reconnecting the City*, ed. Francesco Bandarin and Ron van Oers (Oxford, UK: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, 2014), 317, <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118383940.oth>.

urban typology. In order to complete the landscape perspective, authorities – as the driving actor of urban change – must aim to investigate intangible heritage aspects of localities and identify context-specific challenges and opportunities. As urban change “is a dynamic process, which implies knowledge-based involvement and empowerment of the local community, guided in concert with competent professionals and administrators,” the dissemination of acquired knowledge must take place in order to foster stakeholder dialogue.<sup>218</sup> The first required action is the translation of the HUL recommendation into Romanian and bringing its discussion on the agenda of meetings of the municipal and national authorities. An awareness raising campaign focused on understanding local landscapes can foster civic engagement and reach local commitment through visual cues and social media communications. A public outreach of this kind would inspire the public to rethink their environment and open a dialogue between the administrators and the residents. In Bucharest, this has a high potential for application because visual materials and research are readily available for use and consultation. Furthermore, social media and modern communication channels are free, and actors (municipality, professional outreach, NGOs, personal networks and interested persons) can make use of each other’s networks. Second, sociological surveys must complement historic studies and mapping as part of implementing HUL knowledge and planning tools, either officially organized or via social media, a process which has the bonus of creating an ongoing engagement mechanism.<sup>219</sup> Knowledge used in urban management can be enriched by crowdsourcing by topic and by area, following the example of *Uranus Dispărut*, a project mapping memory of residents of a demolished neighborhood (Fig. 35).<sup>220</sup>

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<sup>218</sup> Jokilehto, “Evolution of the Normative Framework,” 215.

<sup>219</sup> For a similar method already developed, see CLIC Consortium, “Perceptions Mapping In CLIC Cities,” Project Website, CLIC, accessed 26 May 2021, <https://www.clicproject.eu/perceptions-mapping-in-clic-cities/>.

<sup>220</sup> Ioana Pelehatăi, “Uranus Atunci, Uranus Acum: Răzbunarea Fantomelor Orașului” [Uranus Then, Uranus Now: The Revenge of the City’s Ghosts], Digital magazine, Scena 9, 12 November 2019, <https://www.scena9.ro/article/uranus-acum-expozitie-mnac-casa-poporului>.



*Figure 34: Image from the exhibition "Uranus Acum" [Uranus Now]. Image by Vlad Dumitrescu.*

### 3.2.2.Exploration

The knowledge-generating process of the 'inspiration' stage can then function as a platform for deepening the urban experience. On one hand, the dissemination channels can also function as mediums for attracting interested parties from outside the targeted area, increasing visibility of the discourse. On the other hand, once the communication channel with residents is opened, they can be engaged in actively experiencing the landscape. Thus, the exploratory direction of action would consist in organizing site visits, getting to know and experience the areas in question, contributing to the participation-based learning of participants, as well as knowledge exchange between them and the organizers. This action can be the result of a partnership between the municipality and NGOs with a history of organizing thematic walks (Fig. 36).

The main quantifiable benefit is that the activity is approachable by non-experts and accessible to local communities. Furthermore, qualitative benefits can be derived through the direct exposure of the public to urban issues. Making people physically present, able to experience

and have a direct dialogue may eliminate treating heritage management as a distant concern.



*Figure 35: Guided walk in Bucharest. Picture by author.*

The contrasts between Calea Moșilor and its surroundings can be highlighted, and by involving a diverse public, multiple viewpoints can be considered as a result of this measure. Several such exploratory incursions can result in creating a vulnerability assessment of the area. By looking at existing vulnerability assessments in published reports, there is a noticeable pressure on the well-known Old Town to support most of the productive output of the ‘historic city center’ although the actual historic center is much larger.<sup>221</sup> This keeps establishments in very poorly maintained historic buildings, prioritizing economic productivity over closing down for

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<sup>221</sup> Asociația pentru Protecția și Documentarea Monumentelor și Patrimoniului din România, “Patrimoniul Bucureștiului Raport 2008-2012” [Heritage of Bucharest Report 2008-2012], Platform for Bucharest - Stronger Voices (Bucharest), 16, accessed 20 May 2021, <https://propatrimonio.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Raport-Patrimoniul-Bucuresti-2013.pdf>.

restorations. By cross-referencing studies of different areas, projects and developments can be (re)directed more evenly, increasing urban cohesion, and more efficiently managing historic areas.

### 3.2.3. Translation

The final suggested direction for action targets the process of transforming newfound knowledge and increased awareness into concrete management plans. A community-oriented planning approach can be built on established dialogues, by instrumentalizing attachments to history and heritage and using them productively to plan for the future. As the goal of urban planning should be to make places people want to be, revitalizing Calea Moșilor with the heritage of its landscape in mind would mean giving back some of its traditional functions, making it a neighborhood where people want to reside and enjoy. According to the public space inventory and zoning distribution in the urbanism documentation, the Moșilor area does not have allotted public commercial areas or cultural establishments, but its surroundings include schools and commercial profile high schools, alongside a significant number of squares. The PUZ of the main street must be reconsidered taking into account historical studies, as well as sociological data, an argument put forward not only in this paper, but also in assessments of the urban conditions in Bucharest by the OAR.<sup>222</sup>

The PUZ stipulations must include both the customary space-use regulations, as well as strategic development plans; something which is not currently the case in Bucharest. This suggestion can be supported by a simultaneous application of the HUL financial tools, ensuring a convergence of capital and culture in the focus area. Merchants and small business owners (micro business enterprises) form the social centers of a community and encouraging this type

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<sup>222</sup> Ordinul Arhitecților din România, “Raportul pentru București 2018”: 15.

of activity would not only transform the neighborhood into an inviting place, but the retail and commercial spaces can serve as gathering points, where relationships between residents can form and develop. This type of development can also attract tourists which would not otherwise leave the Old Town to visit the area. By appealing to European and national funding schemes, a consensus which encourages responsible business practices can be strategically planned for the revitalization of Moșilor. Finally, as some reform is beginning to take place in the administration of Bucharest even now, authorities can ensure meaningful consultation and citizen participation in planning by facilitating workshops, conferences, professional working groups and public consultations.

## Conclusion

This thesis began the work of reconceptualizing the way stakeholders can think about Bucharest by suggesting a landscape-based understanding and providing an argumentative analysis. A recently adopted paradigm, the urban landscape approach is becoming the norm in planning, as it champions sustainable solutions adaptable to local contexts and sensitive to cultural specificities. As noted by numerous Romanian scholars, the historic evolution of Bucharest is marked by the polycentric development of traditional settlements, the *mahalale*. Customarily, at the core of the traditional neighborhood lies the rural configuration of a ‘business center’ which phases out into residential sprawl. The *mahalale* of Bucharest evolved around both the market *and* the Church, a suggestive closeness of economic and cultural life of the early city. The organic evolution of the city embedded its cultural and social history in the very fabric of the streets and the structures of its buildings. A history of the formation of this landscape was conducted in the first chapter, outlining as heritage elements urban morphology, architectural profile, cultural specificity and traditional urban manifestations in the merchant street of Calea Moșilor.

Selected as a case study for the entire work, the aspect of this historic area is suggestive for the impact of over a century of conservation policies on urban built heritage. The prioritization of Early Modern era churches by nineteenth century monument protection authorities resulted in a conservation of the traditional *mahala* layout. Planners of the same era modernized the city center as much as possible, resulting in the rapid development of the commercial space. This context allowed for the architecture in Moșilor to reflect the prosperity of its inhabitants, displaying a wealth of eclectic and neoclassical dual-purpose buildings. The early twentieth century saw the first works of urbanism in Bucharest, inspired by modernist ideals. Attempts by policymakers to sanitize the city affected manifestations of its intangible

heritage, such as the ubiquitous presence of street vendors and travelling musicians, however traditional space-use patterns in residential areas remained. During the socialist regime, built heritage suffered under systematic neglect and demolition, sanctioned by powerless or absent monument protection bodies. Inner city neighborhoods declined under inappropriate housing policies and lack of economic and social development strategies. In the years after the collapse of the regime, uncertain ownership of previously nationalized historic building stock and land speculation by developers led to the further degradation of the historic city center, a context which resulted in the relative abandonment of Calea Moșilor, once a vibrant commercial route.

Having established the relevance of Calea Mosilor within the urban matrix, as well as having brought to attention the causes of its poor state of conservation, the second chapter further analyzed the placement of the area in the present-day heritage policy context. I have demonstrated that urbanism plans in Bucharest are outdated, not only legally, but in terms of their principles. Moreover, the lack of dialogue between the competent municipal authorities, heritage protection bodies, and civil society renders the values of urban heritage inscribed into legislation insufficient to capture complexities of landscape such as those in Calea Moșilor.

The final chapter proposed a conceptualization of the case study area as a Historic Urban Landscape, a modern framework for sustainably managing urban heritage. The initial section outlined the developments leading to the adoption of the Historic Urban Landscape approach as a new urban conservation paradigm. The proposed toolkit supports a wholistic approach from which the case study area would benefit, considering the previous analysis of policy shortcomings in Romania. The rich history of the street supports as a recourse a ‘heritage as vector’ action plan for revitalization. Taking into account the mixed-use functions of the built environment, the proximity to major urban social and economic hubs and the high potential for reuse, it is the conclusion of this thesis that such an area can support a convergence of capital and culture. With minimal intervention for its modern components and rehabilitation

of the historic built environment, such a transformation would ensure area sustainability and reintegrate it in the center of Bucharest.

This research was motivated by empirical observations of the peculiar contrast between the state of conservation of Calea Moșilor and its surroundings. The main aims of the thesis were to create an area study which would justify it as a unit of analysis and to investigate the effects of urban changes which led to its present state. The added value of the paper lies in defining local heritage as a fundamental step towards managing a sustainable city and providing suggestions on how to proceed. The dissemination of this analysis can aid in popularizing the HUL concept among influential actors in Bucharest and the existing heritage community in Romania, adding a critical component to the existing heritage discourse. By exploring history, management and perspectives, I believe this work can act as a starting point of inspiration for action, ultimately to argue that, with open dialogue, solutions can be found for even the most neglected historic districts.

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