Culture, Heritage and Territorial Identities for Urban Development

Edited by
Andreea-Loreta Cercleux, Jörn Harfst and Oana-Ramona Ilovan

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Andreea-Loreta Cercleux
Jörn Harfst
Oana-Ramona Ilovan

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Editors

Andreea-Loreta Cercleux
Faculty of Geography and
Interdisciplinary Center of
Advanced Research on
Territorial Dynamics
(CICADIT)
University of Bucharest
Bucharest
Romania

Jörn Harfst
Institute of Geography and
Regional Science
University of Graz
Graz
Austria

Oana-Ramona Ilovan
Faculty of Geography and
Territorial Identities and
Development Research
Centre
Babeş-Bolyai University
Cluj-Napoca
Romania

Editorial Office
MDPI
St. Alban-Anlage 66
4052 Basel, Switzerland

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About the Editors

Andreea-Loreta Cercleux

Andreea-Loreta Cercleux is Associate Professor PhD Habil. at the University of Bucharest, Faculty of Geography and Interdisciplinary Center of Advanced Research on Territorial Dynamics (CICADIT), Bucharest, Romania. Education background: University of Bucharest, graduated in 2002; Master degree in 2003; PhD Degree in Geography in 2008; Habilitation in doctoral studies in Geography in 2017. Work experience: Faculty of Geography, University of Bucharest since 2004. Current and previous research interests: graffiti and street art; deindustrialization; tertiarization; urban regeneration; interculturality; industrial heritage. Andreea-Loreta Cercleux is director of three research projects, author of three books, co-author of eight books, coordinator of three volumes and author/co-author of more than 100 articles. Memberships of professional societies: The International Committee for the Conservation of the Industrial Heritage (TICCIH), since 2021; European Association of Geographers (EUROGEO), since 2021; Geobalcanica, since 2019; Association de Science Régionale de Langue Française (ASRDLF), since 2019; Professional Association of Urban Planners from Romania (APUR), since 2013; Regional Studies Association (RSA), since 2010; Professional Association of Geographers from Romania (APGR), since 2009; Geographical Society of Romania (SGR), since 2005.

Jörn Harfst

Jörn Harfst is a research associate at the Institute of Geography and Regional Science at the University of Graz since 2012. He holds a PhD from the University of Hannover (Germany) and has studied both at the Universities of Hamburg (Germany) and Southampton (UK). He has a long professional track-record in project management and European cooperation initiatives, also in his previous employment at the Leibniz-Institute of Ecological Urban and Regional Development (Germany). His research interests are regional development, governance and European cohesion. In this context, he has published extensively on the topic of structural change in industrial regions of Europe. He is a member of the Regional Studies Association.

Oana-Ramona Ilovan

Oana-Ramona Ilovan is associate professor, Ph.D., and the director of Territorial Identities and Development Research Centre, affiliated to the Faculty of Geography, Babeș-Bolyai University Cluj-Napoca (http://itd.territorial-identity.ro/en/itd-english/). She is the founder and editor-in-chief of the scientific journal Territorial Identity and Development (since 2016) (https://territorial-identity.ro/). Her main research interests are from the fields of Regional Geography and Cultural Geography: territorial identities, place attachment, cultural landscapes, participatory processes, gender studies and urban development. Her research is based mainly on qualitative methodology. She published three books, over 120 scientific articles and coordinated over 20 collective books.

Preface to "Culture, Heritage and Territorial Identities for Urban Development"

The economic globalization has generated faster rhythms in cities'adaptation to novelty and has consequently triggered custom urban restructuring and regeneration policies and practices. From the 1970s onwards, many towns and cities have experienced deindustrialization processes, while seeing a gradual growth of tertiarization and diversification of services, including cultural ones. Until then, culture in relation to cities'development was important, especially from a historical perspective, in terms of its influence on urban forms and characteristics. With the different, both positive and negative, effects introduced by new cultural interpretations of cities (e.g., culture in public spaces, cultural and creative industries, culture as marketing tools, cultural commodification, etc.), the concept of culture has become increasingly associated with urban image and identity. In finding solutions within regeneration processes, policies often rely on tools from the cultural and creative fields. Additionally, built material and immaterial heritage can have significant roles: e.g., by converting heritage sites and buildings through cultural projects or new functions, or capitalizing on specific traditions and place memory for local identity and place attachment.

This Special Issue focuses on cultural approaches in connection with urban development and gather contributions from various research fields. The volume addresses researchers and academics from social sciences who are interested in topics such as: cultural activities and their role in urban development; cities (re)constructing their identity; culture as a relevant component of current spatial planning policies; urban strategies, attracting creative people; urban image, heritage and culture; culture, local memory and local identities; heritage and industrial culture; subcultures within cities and processes of urban change.

Andreea-Loreta Cercleux, Jörn Harfst, and Oana-Ramona Ilovan

Editors

Editorial

Cultural Values, Heritage and Memories as Assets for Building Urban Territorial Identities

Andreea-Loreta Cercleux [1,2,*], Jörn Harfst [3] and Oana-Ramona Ilovan [4,5]

1 Faculty of Geography, University of Bucharest, 010041 Bucharest, Romania
2 Interdisciplinary Center of Advanced Research on Territorial Dynamics (CICADIT), University of Bucharest, 010041 Bucharest, Romania
3 Institute of Geography and Regional Science, University of Graz, Heinrichstrasse 36, 8010 Graz, Austria
4 Department of Regional Geography and Territorial Planning, Faculty of Geography, Babeş-Bolyai University, 400006 Cluj-Napoca, Romania
5 Territorial Identities and Development Research Centre, Babeş-Bolyai University, 400006 Cluj-Napoca, Romania
* Correspondence: loreta.cercleux@geo.unibuc.ro

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Urban culture has undergone significant transformations under the impact of globalization in the last decades. These changes have generated differentiated challenges for various territorial identities. Besides new or revived economic activities, the dynamics of socio-economic transformations in urban areas, often in the framework of restructuring and regeneration processes, have meant an effervescence of cultural activities. With more accelerated socioeconomic dynamics, the role of culture in urban development has grown progressively. In most cities, there can be noticed a sedimentation of a cultural sector that has improved creativity, tourism and, eventually, local economy and urban image. For certain urban areas, multiculturalism and intercultural communication has led to sur-passing cultural differences and exchanging cultural values and artifacts [1]. In this parcourse, societies are undergoing an identity change or revival and the concept of culture becomes related to material and immaterial heritage, place attachment and identity in urban policies. For instance, the industrial heritage of a place is both a material by-product of the past as well as a social construction [2], with cultural tourism now meaning more than a visit to historic places but also discovering the identity of territories and participation in shaping a positive image of a city on a global scale [3]. On the other side, these developments also include processes such as gentrification and touristification, which in turn change local identities [4]. Culture and identity are never entirely separable in the sense that beliefs, practices, and other components, signifying the respective culture, must also serve as an identity function for those who participate in the culture, and, at the same time, no group can be expected to be culturally homogeneous [5]. The communication revolution introduces new forms in the process of changing faiths, values, and traditions in the modern world [6].

The contributions in this volume reflect these broader themes and underpin their meaning with practical case studies. Overall, the articles collected here have a strong focus on Central and Eastern Europe, including eight articles from this part of the continent, with one additional article from the UK and one from Russia. This Special Issue thereby might reflect the radical changes in this area since 1990 and their impact on relationship between culture, heritage, memories, and urban spaces.

At the center of the articles are people from the cultural sector, inhabitants, tourists, museum curators, and urbanists alike, underlining the diverse groups of people identified by the authors as relevant in the field of culture, memories, and identities. Interconnected, most of the articles follow a qualitative research approach often applying mixed methods, such as stakeholder interviews and questionnaires. Moreover, some of the authors also back up their research with reference to visual arts, mapping, and ethnographic approaches, in that way making this Special Issue rich in the use of different methodological tools and approaches.

This choice of methods is obviously linked to the different topics selected by the authors. Thematically, this Special Issue spans a wide arc across different fields and aspects connected to the role of culture, heritage, and identities. The vast majority of these contributions address the urban space as a concrete space wherein these subjects are played out, either through more site-specific aspects [7–9] or as whole town ensembles and 'heritagescapes' [10–13]. The remaining contributions take a broader perspective on wider cultural aspects [14], the cultural sector itself [15], and specific heritage institutions [16].

Many of these contributions look at the connection of an (often) Soviet/socialist past with a post-Soviet/socialist future, discussing aspects of built environment and especially its interrelation to memory and identities [7,10–13]. All these contributions pose the question of how the material or immaterial elements of a bygone era still resonate in contemporary urban spaces and what kind of relevance these elements have, also in the context of shaping alternative narratives of urban past, present, and future [11]. Additionally, some contributions mark out the present and future potentials of culture, memories, and identities for tourism [8,12,16].

The articles of this Special Issue are part of a larger theoretical discourse on the meanings of place for urban territorial development. Place/territorial identities, with their powerful representations (i.e., in the form of material cultural landscapes themselves or as visual imagery) [17–21], based on heritage and memory [22–25], are manifested through development processes that strongly connect the past to the present [26]. In addition, place meanings are tied to development practices based on people's place attachments [27,28]. Therefore, both territorial identities and place attachments should become more relevant when reshaping the research agenda and development policies [29,30]. Culture through any of its components is a big player in this context, as the contributions in this Special Issue demonstrate.

Overall, this Special Issue shows the variety of approaches when mapping out the connections between urban spaces and culture, identities, and memories. These questions seem to be especially relevant in times of political, economic, and social changes and therefore need to be re-explored and re-assessed constantly by research.

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Article

The (Un)Changing Political Economy of Arts, Cultural and Community Engagement, the Creative Economy and Place-Based Development during Austere Times

Daniel H. Mutibwa

School of Cultures, Languages and Area Studies, University of Nottingham, Nottingham NG7 2RD, UK; daniel.mutibwa@nottingham.ac.uk

Abstract: This article explores arts, cultural and community engagement (ACCE) in the context of enduring austerity in England. Working with a methodically crafted synthesis of theoretical perspectives drawn from (1) the critical political economy (CPE) tradition, (2) the sociology of cultural production, (3) cultural studies and critical strands of community development scholarship, and (4) pertinent discourses on the creative economy and place-based development, the article reviews the political, economic and institutional ecosystem within which a bottom-up approach to ACCE operates. Making use of ethnography for data-gathering, the article explores how three carefully selected case studies respond to the demands and pressures generated by, and associated with, corporate interest and top-down, policy-driven subsidy—including how such responses shape and position the work of the case studies in the contemporary creative economy and local place-based development. The article argues that ACCE contributes meaningfully to the development of self-governance and organic growth through egalitarian cross-sectoral alliances and cultural and social entrepreneurship. However, this happens only if the said ecosystem genuinely supports equality and social justice. Where such support is non-existent, established hierarchies perpetuate domination and exploitation. This stifles wider creative and cultural engagement on the terms of communities.

Keywords: critical political economy; creative economy; arts; culture; social justice; ethnography; community enterprise; cross-sectoral partnerships; self-governance; austerity

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1. Introduction

This article explores the current state of arts, cultural and community engagement (ACCE) in the context of enduring austerity in England. The article conceptualises ACCE as a realm of varied activity in which individuals, communities, publics and organisations play a role in determining and shaping their local cultural provision to foster communal growth and to deliver a range of benefits in their urban locales [1,2]. Following acknowledgement of the main versions of ACCE that exist, the article specifically focuses on the brand of ACCE that employs a community-driven, bottom-up approach to, and hybrid mode of, creative and cultural engagement—some of whose main aspirations, visions and values are rooted in the 'radical' and 'alternative' modes of cultural production originating in the countercultural era [3–6]. Working with a methodically crafted synthesis of theoretical perspectives drawn from (1) the critical political economy (CPE) tradition, (2) the sociology of cultural production, (3) cultural studies and critical strands of community development scholarship, and (4) relevant discourses on the creative economy and place-based development, the article reviews the political, economic and institutional ecosystem within which ACCE operates. Particular emphasis is placed on the demands and pressures generated by, and associated with, corporate interest and top-down, policy-driven subsidy. Employing ethnographic fieldwork for data collection, the article examines how a carefully selected sample of three case study ACCE organisations and their respective practitioners respond to the said demands and pressures, and the ways in which those responses shape and

position the work of the case studies in the contemporary creative economy and local place-based development.

The overarching finding is as surprising as it is illuminating. Despite austere conditions, where the political, economic and institutional ecosystem is genuinely changing in support of equity, fairness and social justice—it enables ACCE to contribute helpfully to the development of self-governance approaches, genuine empowerment, meaningful participation and organic growth on the terms of individuals, communities and publics in their urban locales. This is increasingly happening in the context of multistakeholder alliances in a scope broader than appears to have been the case in the past. This development is characterised by a threefold dimension: (1) it is clearly bucking the trend during these ongoing austere times, (2) it is showing huge potential for serving the creative economy and local place-based development in ways that individuals, communities and publics can identify with and relate to, and (3) it is pointing to the promise of sustaining organic, creative engagement and growth through cultural and social entrepreneurship. The said alliances, however, risk generating dependence. Conversely, where equality and social justice are disregarded in political, economic and institutional relations—ACCE is misappropriated to serve the ideologies and interests of established hierarchies comprising powerful elites, corporate business and bureaucratic actors. This points to neoliberal business as usual which not only stifles community-driven, bottom-up ACCE, but also perpetuates control, domination, exploitation and inequity.

2. Research Design, Method and Case Studies

This article discusses the austere environment and challenging political, economic and institutional ecosystem in which ACCE operates. In doing so, it explores the ways in which that environment and ecosystem are characterised by sometimes conflicting imperatives that pull in different directions. The article asks the following research questions:

(1) How are contemporary ACCE practitioners responding to the demands and pressures generated by, and associated with, corporate interest and top-down, policy-driven subsidy in their work?
(2) How do those responses shape and position the work of ACCE practitioners and their organisations in the contemporary creative economy and local place-based development?

Drawing on ongoing ethnographic research on modes of production and organisation in arts and cultural work in community settings in England[1], this article takes three organisations as case studies which display: (1) a demonstrable commitment to, and a strong track record of, engagement with local communities around the arts, culture, heritage, and place-based development, and (2) a subscription to the conceptualisation and role of ACCE as described under Section 3 below. In the capacity as a participant and non-participant observer in 2019 at the organisations specified below, I conducted interviews with three ACCE practitioners who hold organisational roles at leadership and management level. A key pattern that binds these practitioners together is that they belong in the communities and local urban environments in which their organisations operate. The semi-structured interviews as well as participant and non-participant observation were complemented by the study of accessible documentary evidence relating to the case studies encompassing annual company records, project information, newspaper articles, output reviews, websites, blogs, brochures, and social media presence where applicable. Later in the analytical discussion in Sections 7 and 8, the main websites and newspaper articles studied are cited. In compliance with the ethical terms under which access was granted to carry out this research, the real names of the interviewees—and those of their organisations—are presented throughout. The case studies comprise the *Black Sheep Collective* (BSC) in Wolverton (Milton Keynes), *Cambridge Community Arts* (CCA) and *Escape Arts* (EA) in Stratford-upon-Avon (West Midlands).

BSC is a community interest company (CIC)[2] that delivers a range of artistic and creative services to private and public organisations. Founded in 2013, BSC's services have encompassed research and development, consultancy, design and digital media, advice

and guidance, project and event management, evaluation, training and programming. BSC works to social progress indicators (SPI) understood as outcomes that create the conditions for communities and local urban places to reach their full potential and to enhance and sustain their quality of life. *Cambridge Community Arts* (CCA) is a not-for-profit company providing a programme of creative learning opportunities targeting people at risk of social exclusion. Since its inception in 2014, CCA's work has been built around a community learner-centred approach that not only uses creativity in all its forms to enable people to improve their health, but also helps them to set up self-run, creative clubs following completion of learning. The ultimate goal is to empower communities through capacity-building.

Registered as a charity in 2003—but technically in existence since 1997, *Escape Arts* (EA) uses the arts, heritage and culture to bring people together to improve wellbeing and to build strong communities. It achieves this not only through its creative health programme which it delivers with a number of cross-sectoral partners, but also through individual and collective storytelling as well as place-making initiatives. Of the three companies, BSC records ninety per cent trade income and ten per cent grant funding while CCA and EA—by virtue of their charitable status—secure their core income from state-funded grants. By design, the research presented here is limited to England. It focuses on ethos, values, practitioner motivations and expertise, practice, organisational development, modes of engagement and strategies for the negotiation of divergent imperatives at the centre of ACCE as (1) experienced and articulated by the practitioners under study, and as (2) identified and interpreted through the process of data analysis[3]. It also presents case studies that are reflective but not representative of ACCE. Nevertheless, generalisability is possible considering that emergent themes are likely to be of relevance to cultural engagement contexts elsewhere mediated by shared global political, economic and institutional relations.

3. Understanding Arts, Cultural and Community Engagement (ACCE)

I conceptualise ACCE as a sphere of activity in which 'the instrumental role of culture is [operationalised] in relation to community [with a particular] focus on issues around democracy and social inclusion, or [...] on inspiring individuals to engage with creative practice as a first step towards involvement in the creative economy' [7] and elsewhere. To Andrew Thompson—the former highest-ranking executive (2015–2019) at England's Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) which funds creative and culture-related research—ACCE is about harnessing 'the kinds of benefit that culture may have for society, for communities, for democracy, for public health and wellbeing, for urban life and regional growth' [2] (p. 5) in a way that other culture-based approaches and interventions may not be able to. Building on this, the Arts Council England[4] sees ACCE in action 'when communities are involved in shaping their local cultural provision, a wider range of people participate in publicly funded cultural activity [and] greater civic and social benefits are delivered [as a result of collaboration between ACCE practitioners and communities]' [8] (p. 37). Through ACCE work, '[c]ulture and the experiences it offers can have a deep and lasting effect on places and the people who live in them [something that] helps improve lives, regenerate neighbourhoods, support local economies, attract visitors and bring people together' [8] (p. 37).

There are several versions of ACCE that are impelled by a wide range of aims, desires, incentives and visions[5]. For instance, one version is state-led and takes a top-down approach to creative and cultural engagement [3,9,10], another is community-driven and typically employs a bottom-up approach [11–14], and yet the arts and cultural practitioner-led version fuses aspects of the first two approaches [15–18], thereby taking a hybrid format. Please see Table 1 below for a list of the overarching versions. The brand of ACCE that I am concerned with and analyse in this article typically exhibits the community-driven, bottom-up approach to, and hybrid format of, creative and cultural engagement—in part informed by 'radical' and 'alternative' approaches to producing culture dating from the countercultural era[6]. It comprises non-conventional processes, activities and projects that are aimed at change broadly considered, are inspired by a plethora of beliefs, values, meth-

ods and lifestyles—individual and collective alike, and tend to be critical, subversive and emancipatory in nature [14] (pp. 91–92) though not necessarily always so.

Table 1. Main versions of community engagement in cultural and creative engagement.

Key Features	Activist and/or Social Movement-Led	State-Led	Community-Driven	Arts and Cultural Practitioner-Led
History	Originated in, or has adopted ideologies, principles and values associated with, the countercultural era (1960s and 1970s).	Dates from the 1980s—often as part of public policy interventions led by established public cultural organisations and community development initiatives.	Earliest accounts of communities and publics engaging in activism and advocacy around the arts and culture can be traced to the 1980s.	Origins traceable to the 1980s with numerous variations in orientation, scope and practice.
Mission	Issue-based activism and advocacy characterised by critical, politicised and subversive interventions.	Informs public policy interventions on a project-by-project basis. Mostly characterised by depoliticisation.	Issue-based activism and advocacy characterised by critical, politicised and subversive interventions at certain times—and less so at others.	May combine elements of politicisation and subversion sometimes—and less so at others. Typically collaborative and happens on a project-by-project basis.
Approach	Mostly bottom-up but may exhibit loose top-down approaches on a case-by-case basis.	Mostly top-down but may display egalitarian elements on a case-by-case basis.	Mostly bottom-up but may exhibit loose top-down approaches on a case-by-case basis.	May combine both top-down and bottom-up approaches. Typically hybrid.
Structure	Mostly horizontal in alignment with alternative and/or radical-democratic traditions.	Mostly vertical (hierarchical).	Mostly horizontal (egalitarian).	May combine both vertical and horizontal modes of organisation.
Finances	Mostly reliant on free labour and volunteering, donations and sale of activist and/or social movement paraphernalia. May secure some state subsidy for less depoliticised work.	Reliant on state subsidy through grant monies and commissioned work—and may also benefit from some volunteering.	Mostly impelled by free labour, volunteering and state subsidy on a project-by-project basis.	May combine charitable, cultural and/or social entrepreneurship, state subsidy, free labour and volunteering.
Leverage	Mostly agile, flexible, versatile and affords autonomy but can be restricting in light of stark differences in opinions and views.	Mostly rigid, inflexible and restricting.	Mostly allows for agility, flexibility, versatility and autonomy but can be constrained by huge differences in outlook and perspectives.	Mostly agile, flexible, versatile and autonomous but can be constrained by factors at the macro, meso and micro levels.

This ACCE brand has been said to offer avenues and opportunities to pursue social, political, cultural, economic and health and wellbeing agendas and aspirations in a bid to effect change broadly defined by means of opposition and resistance as much as by participation and consent [19]. At its most effective, this form of ACCE has been found to mobilise communities and publics around shared affinities, needs and wants and to offer experiences and services that might otherwise be out of reach [5,14,20,21]. However, as with all engagement with the arts and culture, ACCE as conceptualised so far does not operate in a vacuum, but in a wider and specific ecosystem characterised by powerful

political, economic and institutional relations known to pull in different (and sometimes conflicting) directions. It is to the discussion of these relations that the article now turns.

4. The (Critical) Political Economy of Arts, Cultural and Community Engagement

The powerful political, economic and institutional relations mentioned above are best examined through the critical political economy (CPE) tradition which is a useful conceptual framework for exploring power relations, resource allocation and social justice considerations as they relate to the regulation, ownership, organisation, production, dissemination, consumption of, and engagement with, culture widely considered [22–25]. In the exploration of these key aspects, CPE distinguishes itself from other strands of political economy by moving beyond considerations of technical matters of control, competition, cost reduction and efficiency, funding, productivity and profit maximisation and engaging with basic moral questions of justice, equity and the public good [26–28].

From the perspective of the arts, culture, heritage, and place-based development, the aspects mentioned above have been studied through cultural polices and corresponding state support, organisational development and related business models, creative expression and associated artistic traditions, technologies, markets and texts among other things [6,10,18,20,29–33]. As ACCE has evolved over the decades, so have the perspectives informing CPE in an effort to account for the considerable changes that have displaced established and familiar ways of engaging with culture. Such changes have ranged from adjusting to the evolution of the structures, remit and ways of working informing ACCE to contending with the increasing influence of neoliberalisation ideology and related policy mechanisms to navigating the balance between local agendas and regional, national and global imperatives to negotiating emergent moral and ethical issues that result from an ACCE landscape in a state of flux [7,34–36].

CPE informs our understanding of how communities of practitioners and organisations championing ACCE deal with change and uncertainty in two interconnected ways. First, CPE approaches the analysis of ACCE at three levels, namely macro (industrial structure), meso (middle or intermediate sectoral formation) and micro (intra-organisational configuration) in its quest to offer a balanced analysis between neoliberal interests and associated capitalist enterprise on the one hand, and state intervention in the interests of the broader public good on the other [25,27,37]. Scholarship has consistently found that not only does the way in which resources are allocated always favour some (usually a privileged few) at the expense of others, but the mechanics behind this reinforce and sustain powerful elitist world views and existing capitalist structures at the macro level [23,38–41]. Second, in proceeding this way—CPE integrates other cultural, organisational and sociological theoretical approaches to probe the relationship between the structure of the cultural and creative industries and agency at the intermediate ACCE sector and micro-organisational levels while paying close attention to how output generation is affected [1,6,24,42]. I identify three such approaches—carefully crafted syntheses of which work particularly well for my purposes in this article namely (1) the sociology of cultural production, (2) cultural studies and critical strands of community development scholarship, and (3) pertinent discourses on the creative economy and place-based development.

Placing emphasis on conventions, practices, relations, resources and questions of equity at the intermediate (sectoral) and micro (organisational) levels, the sociology of cultural production examines how shifting production interactions and patterns shape the kinds of artistic outputs created and the range of experiences and modes of engagement generated. It focuses on work routines, practitioner motivations—including their beliefs, biographies, expertise and aptitude, creative expression and artistic traditions subscribed to within arts and cultural worlds of work [38,40,43]. The ways in which ACCE practitioners exercise individual and collective agency in their work worlds—both within and outside of institutional constraints—is of paramount importance. These practitioners forge, construct and iteratively revise their identities, legitimate the value of their work, devise strategies and practices to cope with constant change and uncertainty in the volatile political,

economic and institutional ecosystem mentioned earlier, and connect and interact with differently situated constituencies in ways that reveal much about the (un)changing politics and economics of ACCE—including its sometimes evolving relationship with dominant institutional forces [6,26,31,44,45].

A mix of selected perspectives from cultural studies and critical strands of community development scholarship also picks up the facet of agency. The perspectives look at how various constituencies such as individuals, communities and publics make connections between arts and cultural engagement and perceived forces of domination and oppression, attempt to resist such forces by appropriating engagement on their own terms, and contribute to struggles for alternative ways of doing things and broader social change [20,46–48]. In doing so, agency in this context pursues a threefold objective that analyses (1) the nature and meaning of the experiences, texts, discourses and services created—and how these are read, interpreted and/or interacted with, (2) the context within which these are consumed and/or engaged with, (3) and the profiles of the individuals, communities and publics at the centre of that engagement [49–51]. For Ledwith [52] (pp. 2–3), this engagement is 'founded on a process of empowerment and participation'—one that 'involves a form of critical education that encourages people to question their reality [beginning] in the personal everyday experiences that shape people's lives'. This engagement—as we shall see later—has at times taken a subversive approach to working and has affirmed visions and practices that demonstrably strive to promote a more just and egalitarian social and economic order in community and related place contexts.

Pertinent discourses on the creative economy and place-based development fit in here insofar as government policies support perceived innovative modes of ACCE as a means to revive the economic and cultural life of contemporary communities and local places [7,45]. The employment of ACCE in this way has been said to be a result of the fusion between culture, creativity and the economy that has foregrounded the role of creative industries in economic development and community and local urban renewal [33,53,54]. Drawing heavily on the concepts of the 'creative city' [55] and the 'creative class' [56]—both of which advocate a move away from industrial and post-industrial societies characterised by the production of goods to societies driven by the generation of ideas and innovation, this top-down approach has championed the need to develop creative solutions to the myriad challenges and problems afflicting communities and local places. This has involved harnessing local cultural infrastructure and resources to boost community and urban revitalisation and cultivating a distinctive image through innovative creative and cultural offerings [32,36,57,58]. The approach has also been closely connected to discourses of placemaking and/or place-based development [21,59] which view communities and local urban settings as 'demarcated space[s] of governance and regulation, [...] of shared cultural meanings that engender a sense of belonging, [and of] relational entit[ies] shaped by [their] relations with others within larger networks [and] the movement of capital and economic strategies' [60] (p. 2). To Courage [61] (p. 623), the interplay of these factors 'has an improvement function to better the material quality of public space [including] the quality of lives within it'.

Though desirable in many respects, critical voices have pointed to the instrumental, tokenistic and at times discriminatory nature of this approach. The critique has particularly taken issue with the approach's privileging of economic-driven interests, entrepreneurial agendas and commercially viable outputs over non-commodifiable outputs, experiences and modes of engagement [16,26,40,62]. It has been argued that the conception of the creative economy in this way has led to policy decisions that not only disenfranchise other types of cultural production and engagement—despite their proven contribution to the wider public good, but also neglect communities and local urban places perceived as deprived and unattractive [3,21,63,64]. In this narrative, the engagement with creative activity and culture is less about the pursuit of cultural forms and practices by communities and various publics in their own local urban ecologies and on their own terms, and more about top-down deployment of culture as part of government agendas to pursue economic

growth and sustainable development often in large metropolitan areas deemed conducive to economic investment and renewal [45,54,65].

In line with the neoliberal ideology mentioned earlier, this approach not only privileges the economic exploitation of creativity, culture, labour and resources (broadly considered) over community and cultural interests and needs in local urban settings, but also actively manages, regulates and orders those settings [9,22]. One consequence of this, Edensor and colleagues argue, is that '[c]ertain powerful groups [invariably] fix the meanings and functions of [the said settings] through a medley of strategies that [impose and extend domination]' [60] (p. 4). This raises the overarching question as to what the role of contemporary ACCE in the creative economy and local place-based development is shaping up to become under these circumstances—particularly during the current austere times? Before exploring this question from which the two key research questions formulated in Section 2 have been derived, I find it fruitful to proceed as follows. In the next section, I contextualise the austere environment in England. I hope this context will helpfully inform the reading of the considerable changes ACCE has gradually undergone thus far—and continues to undergo—as a result of the introduction of neoliberal policies, the gradual deconstruction of the welfare state and intra-sectoral turbulence. The said changes are presented in Section 6.

5. Austerity in Context

Whilst many media, public and industry discourses trace the emergence of austerity in England to the 2008/2009 global financial crisis, some prominent scholarly accounts see its origin in the extensive denationalisation programme undertaken by successive Conservative Party governments from the late 1970s and early 1980s onwards. Informed by neoliberalisation and associated capitalist practices, the said governments dismantled the public sector, minimised public provision, considerably reduced state support and committed to non-intervention in the capitalist market while simultaneously engineering privatisation and the mantra of individual freedom and responsibility [1,6,13,18,29,35,37,54,66]. By the mid-to-late 2000s, the said programme—which was inherited by two successive Labour Party governments and the Conservative Party and Liberal Democrat coalition—has been iteratively revised to respond to emerging, major challenges such as ongoing deindustrialisation. The result has been the emergence of a range of service industries, examples of which include information and communication technology, finance and hospitality among others. On the one hand, this phenomenon has often been credited with fostering increased growth in self-employment, higher levels of (individual) entrepreneurship and valuable contributions to the national economy. Indeed, as we shall see later, ACCE is emerging as a mode of cultural and social entrepreneurship that appears to balance the duality between economic benefits and social outcomes for communities and urban locales. On the other hand, it seems paradoxical that a much bleaker overall picture has been painted. Throughout the 2010s, personal incomes have gradually fallen as a result of the ever-rising high cost of living. Workers' rights have continually been undermined and eroded. Entrepreneurial opportunities have not been readily available to many—and where they have, success (however it is defined) has by no means been guaranteed due to limited or no state support. Unemployment has risen to levels not witnessed in the past. The gap between the wealthy and poor is reported to have dramatically widened—differentially affecting the standard of living and quality of life [3,23,67].

This state of affairs has been exacerbated in the aftermath of the UK's withdrawal from the European Union and the COVID-19 pandemic [64,68]. Where economic reforms have been undertaken (for instance, the introduction of the minimum wage), they have not been considered radical enough. Where state support has been offered, it has not only tended to be inadequate, but often comes with (neoliberal) strings attached [59,63,67]. A major consequence has been growing inequality and a strong sense of social injustice perpetrated by powerful neoliberal actors and capitalist forces. This structural configuration has meant that many individuals, communities and publics in various locales across England find

themselves closer to the lower end of the wealth-poverty spectrum, something that does not bode well for what an equitable and socially just society should look like. There have been repeated appeals to return to the kind of post Second World War British society that foregrounded principles of egalitarianism and universalism—reflected in the prioritisation of public provision of citizens' basic needs over capitalist interests [29,69,70]. The ultimate goal is to revivify the cultural, economic, political and social development of all [2,7,19,20,40]. For the arts and culture in particular, austerity has meant that mostly wealthy and middle-class individuals are able to engage with the sector—although successive, disproportionate cuts to state subsidy have adversely affected provision [64,69,71]. The key question has been how best to devise imaginative and practical approaches that not only help to trigger and sustain cultural and creative engagement for all, but also markedly and sustainably contribute towards improving the material and immaterial conditions of the citizenry during these austere times? This is the major challenge that the brand of ACCE at the heart of this article seeks to take on.

6. The Regulation and Framing of Arts, Cultural and Community Engagement

Across its history, ACCE has been plagued by misappropriation by established structures [4,6,70]. This has had dire ramifications. Whereas many ACCE practitioners dismissed state support during the late 1960s for fear of being co-opted into the Establishment, a gradual shift in attitude and perception in the 1970s and 1980s meant that so much ACCE came to be funded by public funding—and later business sponsorships—that the ACCE sector found itself heavily dependent on state-sponsored subsidy and corporate funds [4,5,29]. Unsurprisingly, successive subsidy cuts and the unpredictable and restrictive nature of corporate money—coupled with 'infighting, self-indulgence and obscurantism' [4] (p. 226) among other things—have crippled ACCE leading to a loss of autonomy and identity. This, in turn, has rendered ACCE 'relatively weak' and 'relatively fragile' [17] (p. 132), something that has been aggravated by even more 'de-priorit[isation] in recent rounds of austerity-driven spending cuts' [17] (p. 133). To borrow Neelands et al.'s words [1] (p. 14), 'further reduction from current levels of public investment will undermine [ACCE], creating a downward spiral in which fewer creative risks are taken, resulting in less talent development, declining returns and therefore further cuts in investment'. The reinvigoration of ACCE is said to be possible only if rendered 'an essential part of a new model of public services, one that is built on [wholly supporting community services]' and 'aligned with local priorities' [72] (p. 57). While this may sound plausible on the surface, it points to a top-down, elitist, homogenising, regulatory regime that not only disregards ACCE outside of the mainstream canon [54] (p. 66), but also sees it as a non-statutory service whose de-prioritisation and subsequent funding cuts attract less or no controversy [18,69,70].

It is no wonder, then, that ACCE has been left in a vulnerable position—one in which it has been compelled to forge cross-sectoral collaborations and partnerships to remain relevant and survive. However, this is not without its problems. Commentators have noted that ACCE is now 'framed in terms of [its] capacity to "fix" the "problems" [...] identified by the dominant culture' [73] (p. 72), is 'used to reach aims defined through social policy and corporate interest' [53] (p. 3), and is struggling to 'stay true to [its] artistic aims in the face of pressure to fit into frameworks imposed from outside' [17] (p. 133). This way of regulating and framing ACCE does inevitably 'play into the neoliberal trap that uses notions of community self-reliance as a justification for the withdrawal of state services' [7] (p. 5). Consequently, ACCE finds itself operating in a landscape ridden with 'conflicting logics and pressures' [74] (p. 127) and mediating work increasingly characterised by ephemerality, blandness, partial or whole failure, precarity and even the demise of scores of ACCE practitioners and organisations [7,13,14,69,70,75,76]. Against this background, the article picks up the overarching question posed earlier from which the two research questions presented earlier are derived. Responses follow in the next sections of this article.

7. Balancing Corporate Interest and Top-Down, Policy-Driven Subsidy in Contemporary Arts, Cultural and Community Engagement

In what follows, the article discusses how the practitioners and organisations under examination navigate political, economic and institutional imperatives that can sometimes pull in different directions when going about their day-to-day work. The discussion is structured as follows. Sections 7.1 and 7.2 respond to the first research question; Sections 8, 8.1 and 8.2 respond to the second research question and situate the discussion in a broader scholarly context. There are overlaps between Sections 7 and 8 which I hope to be able to highlight—and signpost—effectively when developing analysis. The conclusion is presented in Section 9 at the end.

7.1. Cross-Sectoral Partnerships and Responsible ACCE Growth against All Odds

ACCE practitioners under study in this article acknowledge the complexities and tensions that can emerge when caught between the demands and pressures generated by, and associated with, corporate interest and top-down, policy-driven subsidy on the one hand, and their ACCE work on the other. BSC, for example, takes a pragmatic approach when collaborating with corporate organisations. Of this, Danny Quinn—Executive and Artistic Director—remarks that 'we have corporate clients who love us because they can invest in us, they can see their pounds going into a social enterprise and filtering out to achieve SPIs [social progress indicators]'. Although Danny Quinn is fully aware that such clients tend to be driven by self-interest reflected in wanting to 'write a great CSR [Corporate Social Responsibility] report or demonstrate the value of their investment', what matters most is 'creating a social economy' in which diverse, cross-sectoral partners 'are buying into the idea of *Black Sheep*'.

Indeed, BSC appears to have honed its CIC model which it uses as a 'filter' to facilitate collaborative working amongst stakeholders who may have 'different ideals' and 'different values' in relation to what a consensual outcome might be—as Danny Quinn notes. He explains that BSC understands that its corporate clients 'may not understand the artistic value or the artistic merit or the cultural aspirations of [the company's] work' nor 'actually care about the art or who it impacts on' because '[t]hey work in numbers'. Danny Quinn intimates that the clients ask: 'Well—is it going to bring more people into my venue', or 'how much do I get for my pound?' BSC understands this 'corporate mindset' and 'works as a bit of a filter [before moving] from product to client, from art to audience [and doing this in a way that] translate[s] into languages [artists and clients] understand'. Consequently, 'the artist gets to do what they do, and the client gets what they want'—according to Danny Quinn. One of BSC's numerous projects that illustrates this way of working is *Fenceless Arts* discussed in the next subsection of this article. However, things do not always go swimmingly. Corporate interests—often driven by the neoliberalisation principles described earlier—can favour exploitative structures of control and domination. Those interests can also be obstructive, thereby posing a real threat to social enterprise and community-based agendas [13,52,72,77]. Danny Quinn agrees and remarks that:

> Sometimes things just don't work, sometimes you do have to walk away from things. More often than not, we've been lucky enough to not walk from a project because we've found a way to subvert it and change it from within... Our company being this filter, we [go]: 'okay well, we have the power to change the project a bit or change how the [stakeholders] interact, we have that power, and we should use that.

Cambridge Community Arts (CCA) has been undergoing a major period of transition underpinned by 'scaling up' and movement away from securing most of its core funding from state-sponsored subsidy to attempting to 'diversify [its] income revenue stream' according to Jane Rich—Founder and CEO. This has been reflected in the growth of personnel 'from one to six in five years'. While this is remarkable for a small organisation, it has not only 'put pressures on the development of internal systems and finances' as Jane Rich notes, but also threatened the organisation's existence which appears rather

incongruous. An illustrative example is a period in the organisation's past where 'for two years [CCA] had a quarter of the year with no income which had to be patched by a social loan' as Jane Rich reveals. This derived from the fact that the education-related, state-funded subsidy that CCA receives either 'is based on an annual contract [which] does not give security' or is available 'on a project-basis'. Gradually, however, CCA has worked 'to develop a secure service'.

Not only has CCA been adept at continually developing its programme of work around using arts and cultural activity to enhance mental health and wellbeing, but also at articulating the transformational impact of that work effectively. This has had a two-fold benefit: (1) CCA has attracted funding from multiple sources which has substantially boosted its profile, and (2) CCA's high profile within the communities and local places it serves and beyond has meant that its creative course offerings are perennially oversubscribed. This is helping the organisation to reduce dependence on state-sponsored subsidy and, by extension, thwart the impact of any strings attached. Of the organisational development and growth CCA is experiencing, the innovative strategies it is continually developing, and the benefits and impact it is generating for the individuals, communities and publics it serves, Jane Rich observes:

> I see it very much as an absence of any alternative similar provision. And the absolute desire of people to engage with others, engage with their creativity, do something positive [...] I think that the arts have been wiped out of the school curriculum. There is no community arts. There's some well-meaning arts organisations doing small projects. But that's kind of just parachute in, parachute out. There's no identity in that... And I think people are screaming to be creative [meaning CCA] can only grow.

This commentary conveys three important points: (1) it reinforces the vulnerable position discussed earlier that ACCE work has tended to find itself in in the past, (2) the prevailing circumstances, however austere and unpredictable, paradoxically present an opportunity for ACCE to grow, and (3) ACCE practitioners and the numerous constituencies they serve can utilise creativity and positivity in the context of cultural engagement to make a difference in their everyday worlds. The last two points are exemplified by Jane Rich's investment in an upskilling course at the London School for Social Entrepreneurs which not only taught her how 'to grow—and [to do so] responsibly', but also emboldened her to establish *Fenland Community Arts* (FCA)—a new arts and cultural organisation in one of Cambridge's neighbouring rural towns[7]. Modelled on CCA, FCA now serves 'a huge area of deprivation [known to have] the highest number of prescriptions for antidepressants in the UK [and struggling with massive cases] of mental health, unemployment and immigration'. Key to the establishment and hitherto success of FCA has been Jane Rich's skilfulness and resourcefulness in identifying and attracting support in terms of funding, resources and infrastructure. She particularly highlighted the exceptional support provided by the Richmond Fellowship—a national charity that specialises in supporting the delivery of public services such as housing, wellbeing and employment. All CCA's grant funding appears to align wholly with its ethos, values and practice. The same can be said of the income generated from course offerings which is reinvested in the organisation's artistic and cultural provision.

Similar to CCA, *Escape Arts* (EA) secures its core funding from state-sponsored subsidy. Like BSC, EA works with corporate partners and has been proficient not only at choosing them carefully, but also convincing them of the value of its ACCE work. EA has been highly successful in creating, managing and leveraging cross-sectoral partnerships around using creativity to bring people together to improve public health and wellbeing and to reap the kinds of benefit that Andrew Thompson earlier attributes to cultural engagement; facilitating community-building, boosting civic engagement, and improving local urban life and regional growth [2] (p. 5). Getting stakeholders—corporate and non-corporate alike—to pull together as a team as opposed to pulling in different directions ensures that EA can deliver its programme of work without compromising its values and practice since stakeholders 'have

the same ethos as [EA]' as Karen Williams—co-founder and CEO—notes. EA's approach is underpinned by stakeholders coming from the areas of education, health and wellbeing, housing and employment—'all bringing investment, staffing, so it brings the whole programme cost down and so it's much more sustainable' according to Karen Williams.

Whereas EA has been in a fortunate position to secure public subsidy along with corporate funds and resources that have consistently aligned with its ethos, two aspects are worthy of mention. First, at one point this culminated in a situation where the organisation became a victim of its own success. Second, prolific as EA is in attracting relatively large grant awards and corporate resources, such support has by no means been infinite. In 2014, EA secured a £1 million award from the Stratford Town Trust community challenge grant scheme to renovate a derelict, 15th Century Tudor pub and slaughterhouse which the organisation made its permanent home a year later[8]. While renovation was taking place, Karen Williams narrates that EA was awarded 'a big lottery community grant'[9] with which the organisation refurbished 'an old Warwickshire County Council bus which was due to be scrapped'. The result was 'this fantastic multimedia bus [which] goes out to lots of different festivals and events'. More on the 'multimedia bus' follows in the next subsection of this article.

A further Arts Council England grant was secured around the same time. With a small core team having to 'project-manage' the renovation work and grant awards simultaneously—including an attempt to scale up EA's heritage work with less funding than required, huge problems and tensions were inevitable. Karen Williams intimates that 'communications broke down because [EA] grew just too quickly, too suddenly [which] split the organisation', and that the situation 'took [EA] off in a whole new direction, from being a health and wellbeing charity to running a heritage centre with very limited funding because [EA] didn't get the full amount of the funding [it] needed for the business plan'. She adds that over 'the last two years [2017 and 2018], [EA has] worked so hard to get back to: "we are a creative health organisation [who] use the arts and heritage as tools for wellbeing"'. Indeed, a statement on the website of the heritage centre[10] reads: 'CURRENTLY CLOSED. The Heritage Centre is closed to the public until further notice as we are focusing on our charity projects and community workshops'.

By 'refocus[ing]' attention on its core 'objectives', clearly rearticulating its remit, and devising a strategy 'underpinning new partnerships and sustainability' as Karen Williams comments, EA has not only ensured its cross-sectoral partners understand and identify with its ACCE work, but they also profess to being in the partnership for the long haul. For Karen Williams, this allows for 'much more sustainable' ways of working that simultaneously keep possible, conflicting interests in check. This appears to have paid dividends. Similar to CCA which established FCA as we have seen above, EA has defied austere conditions by setting up a sister organisation named *Nuneaton Escape* (NE). Nuneaton is the largest town in Warwickshire[11] and is situated in the northern part of that county while Stratford-upon-Avon—where EA is based—is located in the south. NE, therefore, coordinates EA's work in Nuneaton and across North Warwickshire, something that appears to vindicate Jane Rich's observation above that there is a demand for community engagement with creativity and culture and an opportunity for ACCE work to grow—austerity notwithstanding.

Overall—and challenges aside, the organisational development and related growth exhibited by EA, CCA and BSC appear to suggest that they are thriving despite operating in an enduring austere climate and unpredictable, broader political and economic ecosystem. Above and beyond the increased opportunities for work—which appear to buck the general austere trend, the balancing act performed by these organisations evokes the concept of 'aesthetic paradigm' coined by Felix Guattari—and helpfully reinterpreted by Spiegel and Parent [48]. The narrative is that not only do the case studies embrace different 'ways of seeing and engaging with the world' [48] (p. 601), but they also enact 'experimentation with different kinds of social configurations, ways of working together and of imagining possible futures and modes of both self and collective realisation' [48] (p. 601). Such configurations at intermediate and micro levels of ACCE are reminiscent of alliances driven

by 'willed affinity' [43]) that holds those coalitions together until the next destabilising threats emerge from either fixed or changing political, economic and institutional conditions and relations that unsettle existing principles, practices and the very logic of organisational and production contexts.

7.2. Creative Communities, Empowerment and Enterprise

Earlier in the article, we saw how ACCE integrates the process of empowerment and participation informed by thinking and practice from critical community development literature [52,62]. Practitioners at BSC, CCA and EA promote empowerment and participation in different ways in their responses to the demands and pressures generated by, and associated with, corporate interest and top-down, policy-driven subsidy. BSC's flagship project titled *Fenceless Arts*, for instance, not only illustrates the organisation's skilful approach to balancing its ACCE work with corporate interest effectively, but it also highlights community empowerment and participation at its best. According to Danny Quinn, *Fenceless Arts* 'is a service' bought 'locally' from BSC by Centre MK—the biggest shopping centre in Milton Keynes[12] and the surrounding region—'to animate its space [through which] 25 million people walk [annually]'. Danny Quinn explains that it involves 'manag[ing] buskers, performers, community performance, community engagement, community sessions within [Centre MK which] want[s] to show that they are so much more than just another shopping centre—they're a destination, they're a place'. What started out as a 'trial month' for local and mostly under-resourced artists and cultural performers to 'animate the space' has grown into a five-year project that 'is now huge, [..] happens every day [and] [t]he funding invested in it by Centre MK has grown'.

Danny Quinn hinted at 'so many positives and so many outcomes [which have] changed [local performers'] lives' through personal empowerment. An illustrative example is 'one young lady who' initially played violin in her spare time because she had a full-time job. Danny Quinn narrates '[s]he now is a performer [...] on [the] programme every day of the week, has quit her job, because she is able to fund her art by selling her CDs, or even just busking or being involved in the project or getting booked by passers-by for events'. He adds that '[t]aking that leap for her must've been unbelievably scary, but that project gave her the arena to do that'. Interestingly, Danny Quinn does not see *Fenceless Arts* as being about BSC, but more about the local performers 'putting themselves out there'. He adds that BSC 'is there to help, [...] to coach and [...] to support, [but] not there to govern [because the project] is a whole self-governing system'—one that BSC clearly mediates to leverage the community's 'assets [...] in the public realm'. This points to a convergence of culture, (social) enterprise as well as economic and social benefits not only in the service of the wider community, but also by and for that community and its local creative economy. Figure 1 below shows a duo of local community belly dancers that perform regularly at Centre MK in the context of the *Fenceless Arts* project.

We have seen that CCA's programme of work is strongly supported by grant funding and reinvested surplus income. This has helped the organisation develop an approach that 'is continual rather than project-based'—according to Jane Rich. The approach is also informed by CCA's willingness to 'listen to learner feedback [which always] says: 'we wish it could be longer, we don't want this to stop'. Following experimentation with some post-course learning provision as a means of offering a route to progression, CCA established a 'Creative Clubs' initiative that enables learners either to set up or join existing clubs which are entirely self-run and independent. Beyond averting 'the cliff-edge at the end of courses' as Jane Rich puts it, the clubs play a vital role in helping learner cohorts to remain connected with each other and to support each other through shared activities and interests—insofar as their health and wellbeing allow.

Figure 1. A poster advertising the performances of a duo of community performers called 'Black Orchid' at Centre MK. Courtesy of BCA.

Of the Photography Club, for example—whose members did not know each other prior to the course and displayed 'very high levels of anxiety in the room', Jane Rich commented that the 'group has now been meeting for three years [during which] they have organised field trips and workshops that they run for each other by each other'. The group has grown so much in confidence that '[it] offers [its] services to local charities who require event photographers' (https://www.iclick4u.co.uk/ accessed on 17 May 2021) and holds annual exhibitions including work exhibited at the Tate Exchange in the context of a collaborative, installation project (https://www.kettlesyard.co.uk/events/tate-exchange-2 accessed on 17 May 2021). This clearly points to truly transformational development. Jane Rich remarks that this is just one of 'many examples of positive life changes from [CCA's] work [that enable] people to build on their strengths and gain skills that enable them to positively contribute [to their community]'. For her, this is clear evidence of how ACCE work 'provides the platform to healthier communities empowered by their own creativity'. Figure 2a,b below shows the website of the Photography Club at CCA. Club members have marshalled the creative writing skills and photography competencies they learnt into impressively productive activity which—even if charitable and non-commercial in nature—is not any less valuable than commercial photography.

(a)

(b)

Figure 2. (**a**) CCA Photography Club Website-1; (**b**) CCA Photography Club Website-2.

The same can be said of EA's work. Over the last twenty years, EA has been working closely with numerous communities to enhance their health and wellbeing. As in the case of CCA, communities served by EA have expressed their desire to continue engagement with creativity, culture and heritage work even after project-based activities have formally ended. For Karen Williams, constant questions such as 'can't we do this in the evening? And can't we do stuff on our own?' spur EA on to 'enabl[e] that to happen'. A key factor to this end has been a strong and collaborative working relationship informed by genuine democratic practice. Karen Williams explains that EA's work is 'always [informed by] either somebody's story or a community need' which sparks a collective thinking process that 'kind of grows with conversation' and 'consultation' with 'lots of stakeholders involved'. Following assessment of workload and feasibility she adds, EA undertakes 'a few pilot pieces of work [which may] lead to a grant application to underpin the project moving forward'. A case in point is a storytelling project led by a teenager named Bill Jones who interviewed twelve, local D-Day veterans in 2014 and produced a documentary honouring them and their contributions to Stratford and beyond. The film—which was very well-received according to Karen Williams—triggered the establishment of a group named 'Our Veterans & Interesting Pensioners' (VIPs) which not only shared and documented stories and memories of local people from past generations, but also inspired others in Stratford to tell their own (hi)stories. Karen Williams narrates that it was this sequence of events that, in turn, inspired the renovation of the dilapidated Tudor pub and slaughterhouse—a

site that not only has been so central to the everyday lives of past generations, but also embodies rich social and industrial (hi)stories of the town and region[13].

The 'multimedia bus' mentioned earlier and the 'big Lottery grant' that helped secure it were direct results of this approach. The mobility the bus affords has helped reach numerous deprived and isolated communities and local urban places that benefit from EA's work the most. A case in point is at Christmas when people from those communities—or others suffering acute levels of hardship—need genuine attention, empathy and 'a really lovely memory' as Karen Williams notes. She narrates that the bus is transformed 'into Santa's grotto' and taken to 'families who can't access a traditional grotto' or to children who are unable 'to leave the house' due to very serious health conditions. 2018 in particular 'was completely overwhelming [because EA registered] over 500 visits, 500 contacts [...] right across Warwickshire' as Karen Williams remarks. She says that not only does the bus visit families with members 'dealing with a terminal illness [who may] potentially [be spending] the last Christmas together', but also visits 'Warwick Hospital'. In 2019, the bus was taken to the Hospital along with a community choir for the first time. Figure 3 below shows the multimedia bus in action at a locale in Warwickshire.

Figure 3. EA multimedia bus on the move in Warwickshire. Courtesy of EA.

8. Contemporary Arts, Cultural and Community Engagement, the Creative Economy and Place-Based Development

Drawing on tried and tested as well as imaginative strategies, ACCE at EA is not only characterised by '[taking] art *to* the community [and] promoting art *in* and *by* communities' [29] (p. 113, *italics* in original), but also by mobilising people around the arts, culture, heritage and place-based development for instrumental purposes. Its caring, compassionate and nurturing dimension points to the range of benefits that cultural engagement offers—including community-building, capacity development and public health enhancement. EA's work with the veterans in particular captures this effectively and reinforces national and international research that has found that '[g]etting involved in creative activities in communities reduces loneliness, supports physical and mental health and wellbeing, sustains older people and helps to build and strengthen social ties' [8] (p. 33). EA has established a community hub that not only celebrates local creative and cultural activity, but also preserves local individual and shared memories and stories in a way that leaves a rich and vibrant legacy of past local cultural traditions to the town of Stratford-upon-Avon, surrounding local areas across Warwickshire and posterity.

The same can be said of the work by CCA and FCA. That work supports community groups at risk of exclusion and isolation to use creativity for individual and collective em-

powerment. In Fenland in particular, this ACCE work is being undertaken in communities and local areas whose ecologies—by the own admission of local and regional government authorities—experience 'little financial or infrastructure support [and] have limited access to arts opportunities [coupled with] untapped potential [but] where people want to come together, to celebrate and be inspired as a community' [78] (pp. 3–4). Following years of successive state subsidy cuts, state authorities have been reminded that '[t]hrough culture and creative activity, communities can be strengthened and connected more [and that those communities] have [the] willingness and energy to make things happen' [78] (p. 4).

BSC's programme of work has shown how barriers can be broken down among differently situated stakeholders through skilful marshalling of community assets and corporate resources for the public good. To borrow Cara Courage's words, the communities and publics that BSC serves 'create and recreate the experienced geographies in which they live [drawing on] a networked process "constituted by the socio-spatial relationships that link individuals together through a common place-frame"' [61] (p. 623). That process 'involves participation in both the production of meaning and the means of production of [their] locale' [61] (p. 623). This happens subversively sometimes and nearly always collaboratively. Here, ACCE work clearly demonstrates that various stakeholders in the context of collaborative ventures and partnerships 'are considered equal contributors' [11] (p. 165)—something from which two key inferences can be drawn.

8.1. A Favourable Critical Political Economy and ACCE as Cultural/Social Entrepreneurship

The following can be inferred from the collaborative nature of ACCE work. First, ACCE work encompasses the application of tried and trusted and innovative 'strategies for increasing the influence and responsibility of communities over the [determination of their everyday worlds], either directly or through involvement in cross-sectoral partnerships' [77] (p. 87). One such strategy is reflected in the cultivation of capacity-building to develop people's confidence, skills, knowledge, and critical and political consciousness [50,79]. For Ledwith [52] (p. 145), the ultimate goal is to achieve genuine empowerment and meaningful participation which involve believing in people and their abilities; trusting in people to develop goals and deliver on promises; creating opportunities for people to explore their (hi)stories, talents and interests; and instilling into people a sense of identity and personal autonomy. This is embodied well by BSC's *Fenceless Art* project at a collective level and the 'young lady' who elected to work full-time and independently on it at an individual level. Here, the participation in, and mediation of, creative and cultural activity 'connect income-generating activities and economic survival with cultural interests and talents' [54] (p. 69) in the service of the creative economy and local place-based development. This has two broader implications for fruitful, contemporary ACCE work.

Firstly, ACCE practitioners clearly 'work with communities to ensure that [ACCE] remain[s] inclusive and accountable to the wider community, that [the practitioners] are fair and transparent in their dealings, and that they empower community members to contribute to decision making about the direction of work' [77] (p. 115). Much of that work is characterised by self-governance and multistakeholder configurations as we have seen. Secondly, the ACCE work we have seen 'not only [points to] cultural entrepreneurs with economic advantages and/or aesthetic inspiration', but those entrepreneurs also embody strong 'moral-political and social values' [26] (p. 466)—in alignment with the mode of creative and cultural engagement championed by the critical political economy tradition. Here, ACCE work clearly reflects cultural and social entrepreneurship in the sense that alliances of 'skilled cultural operators' [80] (p. 64) not only engage in 'innovative activities and services that are motivated by the goal of meeting a social need', but also prioritise 'bringing about improved *social* outcomes for a particular community or group of stakeholders' [81] (p. 430, *emphasis* in original). These 'operators' are said to be adept at recognising opportunities to devise and offer novel, effective and valuable solutions to societal problems in ways that market-driven actors and their corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives are unable to [82]. In essence, the former 'have a cultural focus [that impels

them] to address unmet human and social needs' [81] (p. 442) followed by commercial considerations while the latter tend to foreground profitmaking at the expense of those very social needs.

Second—and as Danny Quinn remarked earlier, ACCE work can be 'subversive' which is reflected not only in 'small rebellions, critical alliances and alternative visions' [47] (p. 13), but also in 'micropolitical revolutions' which 'help individuals and groups transform the way they engage with the world in the hope of bringing about personal and collective change' [48] (p. 602). In doing so, ACCE work provides solutions experimented with, explored by and 'developed through democratic dialogue from within communities themselves' [51]. Additionally, such work provides not only a means of expressing both an individual and collective relationship to place, but also of enhancing awareness and appreciation of its heritage [21,76,83]. On this basis, then, such work should not be construed merely as the instrumentalisation of local creative and cultural activity intended to plug the holes left by deconstructed welfare services. Instead—and following Perry and Symons [54] (p. 72, *italics* in original), it should be understood as signalling 'not culture *for* community cohesion, but community *as* culture; not culture *for* sustainability, but sustainability *as* culture; not social entrepreneurship *for* cultural economy; but culture *as* social entrepreneurship'.

Seen this way, it can be argued that the critical political economy of ACCE is changing largely in favour of the aspirations, interests and needs of communities and publics. ACCE work—though not always smooth and unproblematic as we have seen—helpfully resources and sustains arts and cultural activity within communities and local urban areas in ways that are impactful and meaningful while ensuring durability. Communities, publics and urban locales are enfranchised through empowerment and participation on their own terms. Not only is this achieved through 'fostering local partnerships among different players to tackle place-specific issues', but also utilising 'spatial proximity, trust, face-to-face interaction and the sharing of common resources [to generate] opportunities for [democratic and sustainable] governance that do not exist at larger scales' [50] (p. 7). This state of affairs casts contemporary ACCE work in a light that suggests such work serves certain elements of the creative economy and local place-based development ventures well in terms of facilitating 'collaborative, citizen-led interventions that focus on place improvement, community capacity building and economic development, which can in turn feed into a larger strategy or objective' [61] (pp. 626–627). The ways in which this 'larger strategy or objective' conditions, manages and regulates ACCE work needs further critical interrogation.

8.2. ACCE in the Wider Political-Economic Constellation of 'Disequilibrium and Disorder'

Clearly, the ACCE work under exploration in this article is delivering a broad range of benefits for (and by) communities and local places—including the state, public institutions and corporate business. In doing so, the relations among these different stakeholders point not only to an ability to reconcile (sometimes differing) political, economic, institutional, social and intrinsic expectations and motivations for the benefit of the public good, but also paying particular attention to matters of equity and fairness in the process than has been the case in the past [9,69,70]. The result has been the development of 'investment strategies and interventions that are more responsive to local needs and demands [and are contributing] to natural organic growth in the vibrancy of [communities], towns and cities [as a result of] bring[ing] together new models of public and private partnership on a regional and city basis' [1] (p. 16). This leads Beth Perry [74] (p. 128) to predict that ACCE organisations and practitioners are poised to 'become more significant in contributing to social change in austere times'.

Whilst this is a very important development for the ACCE sector, the downside is that the state and corporate business appear to make use of ACCE 'as needed by the political and policy [and economic] demands of time and place' [2] (p. 18). For example, whereas the UK government understands the value of ACCE and has committed to funding it under various state initiatives—including the National Lottery Community Fund that supported

the refurbishment of EA's multimedia bus, local and regional government authorities are tasked with 'pick[ing] those firms that, with a bit of help, can attract private investment and unlock growth for the future' [84] (n.p.). In this scenario, ACCE practitioners and their organisations are often sidestepped. For instance, EA is placed at a huge disadvantage when it finds itself having to compete for state subsidy and corporate business support with very well established and powerful arts organisations such as the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust and the Royal Shakespeare Company—both of which are located within walking distance from its community hub, have very long histories and worldwide reputations, and are major drivers of local, regional and national employment and tourism[14].

It is fair to contend that these circumstances are borne out of ongoing pressure on public funding and corporate business support caused by persistent austerity. Politics, policy and economics at the macro level increasingly demand of arts and cultural organisations to take 'risks' and 'to become more dynamic [which] may involve organisations changing both their missions and their business models' [8] (p. 49). Furthermore, such organisations are being required 'to become more entrepreneurial and develop business models that help them maximise income, reduce costs and become more financially resilient [including] look[ing] for opportunities to share services and explore mergers with other organisations' [8] (p. 49). This one-size-fits-all approach is deeply problematic because it does not take into consideration the distinctiveness of individual ACCE organisations and the nature of the work they do. The tendency 'to treat them uniformly [by failing to] take [their] variety [and specific circumstances] into account' [9] (p. 79) is hugely unhelpful. We saw earlier how EA changed its mission and adopted an entrepreneurial business model—only to be compelled to close its heritage centre because its business plan did not receive full funding. Like EA and BSC, CCA receives state subsidy on a project-by-project basis which—when not forthcoming—leaves the organisation in a very vulnerable position. To be able to operate, ACCE practitioners and their organisations find themselves needing to respond imaginatively to be able to survive—an approach to work in the creative economy that is characterised by high levels of insecurity and precarity [85,86].

While sharing and leveraging community resources with Centre MK is working splendidly for BSC as reflected in 'the capacity to be economically innovative and creative' [2] (p. 7) and in exploiting 'new income streams, marketing [the organisation's] commercial potential and attracting private investors' [1] (p. 14), this invariably increases dependence—despite the democratic, meaningful, organic and place-based community participation we saw earlier. Here, community participation and communal enterprise are akin to freelance project work for large corporate business in the creative economy whereby ACCE practitioners and their organisations as well as communities and publics assume responsibility for any emergent risks and failings of commodified cultural engagement in very much the spirit championed by the neoliberal doctrine. In this context, openly critical, emancipatory and overly subversive forms of cultural engagement that pose a real threat to the dominant political, economic and institutional ecosystem through expression of perceived unorthodox and unpopular ideas, narratives and values are much less likely to be tolerated as voices and—what Nolan and Featherstone call—'spaces of antagonism' [87] (p. 351). If corporate business, private investors and the state withdraw from partnerships, ACCE work invariably struggles to survive.

To Chris O'Kane, the triad of macro politics, economics and corporate business 'serve[s] private interests and lead[s] to disequilibrium and disorder' [41] (p. 688) which engenders 'periodic crises that call for substantive state intervention' [41] (p. 690). However, 'the state intervenes in the name of an illusory common interest that attempts to contain and depoliticise [critical, emancipatory and subversive] struggle [thereby] reproducing capitalist society' [41] (p. 690). This has a key implication for ACCE work and relations among ACCE practitioners, the communities, publics and urban locales they serve—on the one hand, and stakeholders at the macro and meso levels on the other. Although we have seen that the case studies under examination in this article navigate divergent imperatives mostly successfully, the reproduction of capitalist society and growing influence of

associated private interests have been found to pose serious challenges to ACCE work in other national and global contexts as the following commentary offered by Cara Courage neatly captures:

> There is tension in some [ACCE] practice claiming both an economic and a community benefit, which may be mutually exclusive. There are also issues of capacity and practice standardisation: there is a danger that the practice becomes the sector's go-to one-size-fits-all solution to [ACCE], attractive to city authorities in a time of fiscal austerity, appealing to impoverished administrations as an attractive box-ticking and 'cheap' solution that acts as a salve to urban realm problems without any structural and meaningful change. [61] (pp. 627–628)

ACCE work in the position described here is misappropriated by dominant hierarchies in politics, policy, established institutions and corporate business to replicate dominant ideologies, modes of engagement and practices that undermine possibilities to mobilise and engage communities, publics and urban locales in critiquing and questioning the current societal order and related austere conditions. This ACCE mode clearly reflects a political economy that remains unchanged because of its disregard for power relations and associated matters of equity, fairness and social justice in the processes of engaging with culture creatively in the interests of the public good. That political economy measures ACCE in predominantly economic terms—seeing it as a series of instrumental ventures in the service of the creative economy and top-down regeneration agendas.

By contrast, the critical political economy of the brand of ACCE that is the subject of this article has shown that cultural engagement is embedded in the daily lives of the case studies and the communities, publics and urban locales they work with. This engagement is characterised by democratic practice, genuine empowerment, meaningful participation, self-governance, equity and fairness, affect and sense of place, and opportunities—all of which offer individual and communal possibilities that are sometimes commodifiable, and at other times less so. To varying degrees, we have seen that ACCE that is centred on equity and fairness enables communities, publics and local places to reclaim some autonomy and control over macro politics, policy and economics that invariably seek to manage, regulate and order cultural engagement based on established ideologies and elitist interests [9,10,18,64]. The understanding is that ACCE work is not driven (at least initially) by turning communities, publics and local places into resources to serve the creative economy per se, but by quotidian routines that contribute to the array of benefits that Andrew Thompson and Arts Council England highlight earlier in the article.

9. Conclusions

We have seen that corporate interest and top-down, policy-driven subsidy can enable but also constrain ACCE. In response to the demands and pressures posed, the ACCE practitioners and organisations under investigation in this article have demonstrated not only 'an understanding of the changing political economy as both representing new barriers and opportunities for advancing the causes of their organisations', but also shown remarkable resourcefulness to 'work in alliances and/or coalitions with other organisations both within and beyond the community' [50] (pp. 48–49). The brand of ACCE that has emerged is not to be seen as a substitute for withdrawn statutory provision whose task it is to address the perennial structural deprivation afflicting many communities, publics and urban locales. Instead, it should be understood as a truly bottom-up, collectively driven approach to, and hybrid method of, cultural engagement that embraces creativity and new ways of thinking and acting in empowering communities to critically examine their life experiences, to explore new ways of seeing the world, to tap into their potential, and to take responsibility. Its socially transformative power, cultural meaningfulness, 'moral-political' significance [26], 'social and moral' underpinning [37], positivity and inclination towards self-governance give people more control over many aspects which affect their lives in ways that—to paraphrase Jane Rich's words—cry out for people to be creative. A critical way in which creativity manifests itself is through the building of cross-sectoral alliances

that involve collaboration to achieve individual and collective objectives and outcomes. We have seen that this is realised through (1) recognising appropriate opportunities, and (2) employment of imaginative cultural and social entrepreneurial activities—both of which characterise 'social actors [that] give rise to new [configurations aimed at] challenging the status quo' [81] (p. 447).

To resource and sustain operation during these enduring austere and unpredictable times, contemporary communities, publics, local places and practitioners are being compelled to build resilience and iteratively develop 'their capacity to adopt new tactics in unfavourable situations' [49] (pp. 35–36). In doing so, ACCE work is drawing on the processes of empowerment and participation [52] and 'community conscientisation' [61] that, in tandem, stimulate 'desire to be involved in culture at a deeper level' [61] (p. 629). Here, the critical political economy of ACCE is largely working in favour of the aspirations, demands, interests and needs of communities, publics and urban locales—as the ACCE projects we saw earlier in the article demonstrate. This, however, cannot be said of instances where the political economy characterising ACCE fails to pay attention to aspects of equity, fairness and social justice. Although none of the case study organisations provided direct evidence of this, the article draws on very recent studies to argue that macro and meso politics, economics and corporate business misappropriate ACCE to reinforce and maintain the status quo. In such a political, economic and institutional ecosystem, powerful actors 'abhor the idea of letting citizens [take control of cultural engagement on their own terms because those actors] are absolutely convinced that an elite must decide [and] that [the elites] themselves belong to those chosen few, and that the decisions taken by them are far better than if they were left to the population' [9] (p. 74). Here, ACCE is essentialised and instrumentalised to give the illusion that cultural engagement is being deployed for truly community and place-based development when, in fact, it is 'a co-optation of [ACCE] to the agenda of marketisation' [54] (p. 65). Ultimately, this form of ACCE and its political economy remain unchanged—even in the context of enduring austerity that calls for deeper and more meaningful and sustainable transformations.

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Institutional Review Board Statement: This study was conducted in accordance with the Code of Research Conduct and Research Ethics of the University of Nottingham (https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/research/ethics-and-integrity/index.aspx#:~:text=The%20University%20of%20Nottingham\T1\textquoterights%20Code,university%2C%20including%20its%20international%20campuses). Approval was neither required nor sought.

Informed Consent Statement: Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

Data Availability Statement: Not applicable.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

Notes

1. At the time this article went to press, this ethnographic study—which began in May 2013—had examined 35 arts and cultural organisations across England. The examination encompassed participant and non-participant observation, a wide-ranging exploration of numerous documents and artefacts relating to the organisations and the sector, and 45 semi-structured qualitative interviews with sectoral practitioners.
2. Regulation and associated policy in the UK define a community interest company (CIC) as 'a special type of limited company which exists to benefit the community rather than private shareholders'. In essence, it is a social enterprise more of which is discussed in the latter sections of this article. See also https://www.gov.uk/set-up-a-social-enterprise (accessed on 13 July 2021).
3. An inductive approach to the analysis of interview, observational and documentary data was employed. Informed by grounded theory [88], the approach was utilised to pull out and categorise key information and themes, to make connections among them, to pinpoint recurrent connections, to make sense of them, and to offer explanations through formulating argument in Sections 7 and 8 of this article.
4. The Arts Council England is an executive non-departmental public body which champions, develops and invests in artistic and cultural experiences to enrich people's lives. Further information is available here: https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/arts-council-england (accessed on 17 July 2021).

[5] Table 1 summarises the general features of each of the versions of community engagement in cultural and creative engagement listed. As can be noted, the features blur and overlap in some instances—pointing to fluidity which characterises a continually evolving practice. For specific examples illustrating how the versions operate, see, for instance, [4–7,11–14,89].

[6] For a comprehensive discussion of this era and associated arts and cultural activity, see, for example, [4–6].

[7] Cambridge serves as the administrative capital of the county of Cambridgeshire which comprises five districts—one of which is Fenland. See https://www.britannica.com/place/Cambridgeshire (accessed on 7 March 2022) for more information.

[8] For media coverage of this renovation project, access https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/uk-england-coventry-warwickshire-30139255 (accessed on 18 January 2022).

[9] Additionally, known as the National Lottery Community Fund, this grant scheme funds projects in the arts, sport, heritage, charity, voluntary, health, education and environmental sectors that are considered to make a real difference to lives, communities and local urban areas across the UK. More information is available at: https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/ (accessed on 27 March 2022).

[10] The website can be viewed online at: http://www.oldslaughterhouse.org.uk/ (accessed on 11 April 2022).

[11] Details of the geography and size of the county of Warwickshire can be accessed here: https://www.britannica.com/place/Warwickshire and https://visit.warwickshire.gov.uk/ (accessed on 2 June 2022).

[12] Located about 80 km from northwest London, Milton Keynes is the largest city in the county of Buckinghamshire situated in southern England.

[13] The rich individual and community social and industrial (hi)stories researched and told by local people in Stratford with the facilitation of EA are available to view online at: http://www.oldslaughterhouse.org.uk/exhibitions/ (accessed on 11 April 2022).

[14] See, for instance, https://stratfordobserver.co.uk/news/overseas-visitors-returning-in-numbers-says-shakespeare-birthplace-trust-38983/ and https://stratfordobserver.co.uk/news/big-year-stratford-world-celebrates-shakespeares-legacy/ (accessed on 17 April 2022).

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Article

Graffiti and Street Art between Ephemerality and Making Visible the Culture and Heritage in Cities: Insight at International Level and in Bucharest

Andreea-Loreta Cercleux

Faculty of Geography and Interdisciplinary Center of Advanced Research on Territorial Dynamics (CICADIT), University of Bucharest, 010041 Bucharest, Romania; loreta.cercleux@geo.unibuc.ro

Abstract: The paper aims to analyze, on one hand, the evolution and interpretation of graffiti and street art phenomenon in the Romanian capital, Bucharest, and at international level, and on the other hand how this subculture is related to aspects of culture and heritage. The analysis of the evolution followed by graffiti and street art in Bucharest is doubled by the investigation of the messages transmitted in relation to the national and local culture and history, as street art may be seen as an efficient tool contributing to local cultural identity building. The methods used rely on a complex approach, combining observation and photos from field research, documentation, and data collection from different organizations and online communities. Street art works have various positive effects on the urban landscape, including in relation to culture and heritage in time. The results demonstrate that in Bucharest, street art contributes to highlighting mainly the key-moments and the personalities in culture and history that contribute to shaping a part of cultural identity.

Keywords: graffiti; street art; culture and heritage; cultural identity; Bucharest (Romania)

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1. Introduction: Understanding Graffiti and Street Art as Concepts and Urban Subculture

Graffiti, etymologically originating from the Italian word "graffiare" which means to scratch [1], is a very complex phenomenon. The history of graffiti may be associated to epigraphs and representations discovered in archaeological sites or on the walls of various buildings, which date from antiquity and are testimonies of the time in which they were carried out, as well as to hoboglyphs developed in the early 20th century in the USA during the great economic crisis of the 1930s. The so-called hobos, whose name means, in English, homeless people, were, in fact, a very specific type of homeless traveler, "nomadic" workers who voyaged without tickets on freight trains searching for a job, communicating with each other through various graphic signs [2,3]. These secret codes on trains and in train stations were intended to give information on the best places to camp or find a meal, or dangers that lay ahead [4]. Their representation was made not only on trains but, as in the case of contemporary graffiti, on buildings, telegraph poles, fences, gates, bridges, etc., through geometric shapes (circles, squares, rectangles, and triangles), numbers, arrows, and other type of lines. Hobo graffiti is a part of the larger overall history of graffiti, where wall markings are about illegally emplacing a name on property, symbolically stating their presence as a member of minority subculture [3].

Graffiti and street art, an important urban subculture in the 21st century, are nowadays almost pervasive in public spaces and represent an international phenomenon as a whole of artistic expression and a subculture referring to groups within a culture with shared values, behaviors, and sometimes experiences. The contemporary graffiti and street art phenomenon has known several main stages: the 1950s—an initial stage of using stickers was inspired by publicity methods, in which stickers are used to tag a surface without writing; these were usually designed and printed well ahead, containing traits of an artist's

style as well as their message [5]; the late 1960s—the first tags arise in Philadelphia [5,6] and are developed in New York City [7] as a need to develop a place for socialization or organization of groups at the level of large multicultural cities, based on the idea of creation and expression [8]; the 1970s—spraying of letters, nicknames, and tags (firstly in New York subway) come with more obvious challenges of defending public spaces from these inscriptions, followed by anti-graffiti laws; in certain areas, the lack of exhibition spaces in the 1970s is at the basis of the phenomenon explosion (e.g., in Berlin) [6]; the mid-1970s—stylistic standards, bombing methods, painting techniques, and aesthetic frameworks are evident and the representation supports are becoming more and more diverse, especially in New York: trains, bridges, walls, tunnels, windows, doors, derelict and abandoned buildings [9]; the 1980s—hip-hop, rap, punk, and rock culture enhance more durable to already existing political and social slogans; at the same time, new laws will join those adopted in the USA [9]; the mid-1980s—more laws restrict the sale of spray to minors; the 1990s—this new subculture is brought more in Europe, different types of American-inspired representations developing in European countries (Belgium, France, Germany, etc.) with postal stickers free of charge, development of tags, stencils graffiti, posters and stickers; as it happened in USA, in Europe more anti-graffiti laws were adopted in order to control the phenomenon, especially after 2000 (Germany, France, United Kingdom, Spain, Netherlands etc.); in the last two decades, graffiti evolves towards and together with street art.

In former socialist countries (Poland, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Romania, Bulgaria, etc.), graffiti and street art representations have become increasingly visible since the 1990s. Their spread did not happen in exactly the same order as in the country of origin, USA, when talking about media types, causal factors, and, therefore, typology of representations.

This artistic movement has developed in time into a sophisticated cultural phenomenon [10] from which street art detached. Even if street art emerged from graffiti, the boundary between these two ways of expression is very unclear. The differentiation between graffiti and street art is often arbitrary and lacks consistency [11]. Like any art, it can be subjective. Nevertheless, there are significant differences that separate the two currents which go beyond the main difference imposed by illegal actions, such as vandalism, versus authorized interventions, with the permission of buildings' owners or commissioned walls in street art projects. Subcultural graffiti is related to illegal interventions [12] or so-called "graffiti vandalism" to separate it from street art (or so-called "graffiti art" in the 1990s) [13]. However, street art, like graffiti, is more often than not done without permission and practiced by people coming from the graffiti subculture [11]. The other important differences may be seen in terms of: (a) beginnings—graffiti precedes and inspires street art; (b) visual representations and their interpretation—if graffiti typically relates to a range of practices from tagging to "pieces" with a focus on stylized words and text, very complex and difficult to be understood by the wider public, street art forms present a more public address, a broader set of artistic practices less tied to the subcultural practices and conventions associated with graffiti [11,14–16] or, otherwise, graffiti relies mainly on words (letters and sprays that give birth to different shapes and styles) compared to street art representations, which do not involve a decoding of letters as graffiti but of transmitted symbols and messages; (c) authors—although writers and street artists often share similar backgrounds [17], graffiti authors are mostly self-taught versus those of street art who require in general formal training and skills in painting and art; (d) impact in the landscape—some research focus on the valorization of the "street art" power to activate space versus increasing criminalization of "graffiti" [11]. At the same time, they have similarities when viewed in relation to development and affirmation: graffiti emerged both from inner city neighborhoods and peripheries as a type of self-expression for urban youth, similar to street art, which certainly is developing more in the central and semi central areas but for another reason. The city centers and nearby neighborhoods are areas that are intensively transited and visited. In this way, the respective representations become pieces of art in an open-air museum, so in places full of history and culture. As for temporality,

there are both similarities and differences. Indeed, both graffiti and street art are ephemeral, being placed in open spaces and, therefore, with a degree of resistance depending on a number of factors (weather conditions, colors' quality, local urban policies, subsequent interventions over works undertaken by the communities, etc.). However, while street art is in essence permitted, graffiti is often an act of resistance or challenge (e.g., illegal bombing etc.).

Graffiti representations, whether they are stencils, stickers, tags, etc. can be found in a wider range of media: fences, gangways, abandoned industrial buildings (temporary uses in brownfield areas), walls, high walls, depots, garages, shutters, billboards, fire alarms, including moving media such as cars, trucks, trains, or cargo ships [5,18]. In general, abandoned places are preferred because they may not imply authorization, or at least at first sight, and places in transition (neighborhoods). On the contrary, street art is more linked to commissioned walls and fences, sometimes in the framework of urban regeneration projects [18].

The evolution of graffiti phenomenon towards street art has led to the shaping of two perceptions of this subculture as mentioned above, which are not always correct—negative versus positive. Usually, graffiti has remained at the stage of stencils on various media and is seen in general as a form of vandalism on the building aesthetics and design features [12,19–21]. Street art is characterized by more esthetic representations, having fewer rules and a wide range of styles and techniques, sometimes combined and imported from graffiti. It becomes interesting when graffiti finds as media not only bare walls, but walls covered with murals that represent a piece of the local graffiti history and of this subculture as a whole: e.g., high-profile murals dedicated to 1984 Olympics [22].

Street art may be seen as a subversive art, the subversive being understood as the capacity to challenge the corporate regime of visibility, meaning "those social norms regulating visibility in the modern city, by appropriating public space in carnivalesque ways". This makes street art stand apart from official public art, while graffiti is at its very core [17]. These are related to urban art, a validated and acclaimed artistic field, referring to "a combination of techniques and pictorial formats (spray painting, stencil, reverse graffiti, stickers, etc.) generally associated with art practices developed originally in urban public spaces" [23].

2. Materials and Methods

The purpose of the study is to analyze the main differences in the evolution of graffiti and street art phenomenon, internationally and in Romania, with an in-depth investigation inside the Romanian capital, Bucharest, and from the perspective of the relationship in time between graffiti and street art/local culture and heritage. Culture and heritage are perceived as an important component of identity. The cultural dimension is important in the identity building, a complex and multifaceted process [24]. Beside referring to collective knowledge such as traditions, heritage, language, aesthetics, norms, and customs [25], the cultural identity is a social construct involving questions about conceptions, understandings, and lived experiences regarding the self in relation to others across time, space, and context [26]. The study does not aim to investigate the perception of this subculture in general, namely the appreciation of representations, where graffiti stops and street art begins, or the participants in this creative activity. To enable this international comparative analysis, the field research was limited to large and very large urban areas, capitals, or cities with a cultural function.

At a national level, Bucharest was chosen as a case study because it is the largest city and the capital of Romania, the phenomenon experienced here being the most dynamic evolution in time after 1990. In order to identify the progress trajectories, respectively, the similarities and differences in development and in relation to culture and heritage, the study relied on the following research questions: (1) What is the path of the international and national graffiti and street art phenomenon? (2) What are the main media for graffiti

and street art representations in the urban landscapes? (3) Where is the place of culture and heritage on different types of representations in Bucharest and in the messages transmitted?

In the process of finding the answers to these research questions, the methodological steps included: (1) Inventory of different components in the urban landscape with graffiti and street art works based on field research; (2) Typology of urban components hosting art works; (3) Interpretation of typology's different components (called in the article graffiti and street art media or new canvas) based on: similarities and differences in relation to most sought canvas; temporal discrepancies between international and local levels; place of culture and heritage among the topics addressed; (4) In-depth analysis of culture and heritage dimensions in the representations of graffiti and street art in Bucharest, with concrete examples in different areas.

The research methods included: documentation in scientific articles, books, and other publications for graffiti and street art analysis at international level and then in Bucharest [27–29] and mass-media; field research (observation and comparison methods) and photos taken in different moments and places with graffiti and street art between 2012 and 2022 as source material; collecting online data from different organizations, groups of interests and social media. In the description of the different art works, details were mentioned about the work, author, and year of execution. Despite assiduous research, unfortunately incomplete information was found in some cases. Where information was not identified, no data was mentioned below the photos.

3. Graffiti and Street Art—Approaches and Meanings

The scientific research about graffiti and street art phenomenon takes into account, to a large extent, aspects of legality, namely authorized interventions or acts of vandalism, but also social insight given its context of occurrence, from recognition of artistry to interpreting it as a sign of urban decay and disorder [30]. There is not much research regarding the impact that this phenomenon as a whole has in communities. Recent research is more about focused approaches in certain directions that help in understanding cities at a general level or in a city or community and analyzing graffiti works in particular, or in association with murals: e.g., a critical social and spatial practice, an alternative approach to cultural development by and for young people in areas marginalized by the mainstream practice of culture-led economic development, relying on different assets, like hip-hop etc. [31]; a way of communication [32]; spatial practices as markers of a globalizing and glocalizing world, in relation to migrants [33]; a feminist urban subculture and how women negotiate their place in the subcultures from different positions [34]; as a form of communication or advertising in a context where graffiti is seen as a sign of social disorder [30]; as contemporary forms of youth leisure: role of skateboarding, graffiti and the augmented reality game Pokémon Go, as youth leisure practices, in the restructuring of the urban imaginary and the production of the public space [35]; semiotics approach of street art from metaphoric point of view [36]; territorial approach: reappropriation and rearrangement of urban areas (e.g., in Berlin—after unification [37]); political graffiti [38].

To these, numerous analyses and volumes can be added that make a radiography of the phenomenon and present the situation of this movement at some moments in different geographical areas (from metropolitan cities to larger geographical areas, even global interpretations), e.g., [5,39–41]). Together with articles from the media (the first to pay attention to this phenomenon in the 1960s), these publications have the role of contributing to the promotion and recognition of this subculture and, usually, include a presentation of the works themselves accompanied by a short story of the authors and topics covered. It reveals the importance that media has had on the graffiti movement. Lately, online media has promoted this phenomenon considerably more, which proves that graffiti has always been dependent on communication.

However, graffiti and street art may be considered an art form, not just a subculture, as it is proven by an ongoing project put into practice in 2014 by a street artist, Julien de Casabianca, who goes further to state the place of this artistic current and creates a

bridge between art in closed and open spaces, supporting and promoting it from museums into the street, closer to people. Thus, in the period 2014–2022, within the project entitled ″Outings″, which consists in bringing paintings from museum walls into the streets, a series of representations in the form of murals of famous paintings were made in many cities from Europe, and also from America and Asia [42]: France (Paris, Montargis, Angers, Bordeaux, Orthez, Cugny, La Roche Sur Yon, Langres, Bayonne, Montauban, Ivry); Belgium (Brussels); Turkey (Istanbul); Germany (Berlin, Lübeck); Corsica; Switzerland; Scotland; several capitals of Central and Eastern European countries: Riga, Sofia, Belgrade, Zagreb, Ljubljana, Warsaw; USA (New York, Memphis, Galesburg, Jacksonville); Mexico (Torreon); Nepal (Kathmandu). Paste-ups in other cities around the world come in addition in the framework of the project.

Murals become a tool for making neighborhoods more attractive in many European cities (e.g., Belgrade, Kaunas, Gdansk, Antwerp, Ostend, Bristol, Malmo, Reykjavik, Budapest, Waterford) [43].

4. Results: Graffiti and Street Art at International and Local Level—A Comparative Analysis in Terms of Media for Works and Topics Related to Culture and Heritage

The representations chosen for the comparative analysis at an international and local level, Bucharest, are obtained in the field research and considered in a complex approach following the relationship with the territory. Thus, a series of particularities of the landscape in which street art representations are located are taken into account, including functional characteristics of the place and the degree of the buildings' conservation.

The countries from Eastern Europe did not follow all the distinct steps of Western street art [44]. From a temporal point of view, the beginning of contemporary graffiti and street art dates back around the 1960s in USA, compared to Romania, which knows the first steps of this subculture only with the transition to the capitalist system in 1990. During the communist era in Bucharest some repetitive political messages could frequently be found on different types of walls and fences. These promoted a political movement in the 1946 elections, which saw the installation of the communist regime in Romania the following year. Larger representations took the form of mosaic murals concerning messages about the economic status, prosperity, and progress of the Romanian people [18]. In Bucharest, graffiti emerges gradually as a form of expression, decoded as a new way of life as it was at its origins, less artistic at first, and in which authors are seeking to relate to a modern culture rather than to the idea of delimiting their territory and recognizing others. If its early evolution was difficult, Romania's accession to the European Union in 2007 opened new ways of asserting this subculture, from which street art becomes more visible. Therefore, street art is developing and gaining more consideration through the experience of international artists who paint murals in various projects, next to local artists. The projects are supported in general by the municipality, various institutions, associations, or private companies.

The ephemerality of the works and sometimes their overlap on the same media, elements that still characterize graffiti and street art, make an accurate analysis of their dynamics and typology in time and space impossible. The field analysis emphasized that the representations on different components in the urban landscape respond to various approaches and artistic experiences, including in relation to local and national culture and heritage. The research focused, as well, on those representations that do not transmit directly cultural and heritage messages, but which are found on media frequently encountered at both a national and international level.

The representations selected for the comparative analysis, international versus Bucharest (some of them are exemplified below—Figures 1–34), capture the main types of media on which graffiti and street art works find their place. Some media that appear mainly only in certain cities (e.g., shutters, stairs, etc.) were not taken into account in the comparative research. The selected photographs are part of the author′s personal archive, except for those of the trains wagons from the 1970s and 1980s of the Metropolitan Transportation

Authority (MTA) in New York, important to be integrated in the analysis of the phenomenon evolution. Despite some limitations in conducting a comparative scientific study of graffiti and street art at an international and local level (e.g., ephemerality of work arts, possible bias in relation to field research etc.), several relationships could be established and general findings could be obtained, starting with the repetitive media and paying attention to cultural and heritage aspects as well.

Regarding the first type of media identified, the wagons of the trains and subway system represented the starting step for this subculture in USA and for graffiti works (Figures 1–4). In time, this subculture moved in the interior, and nowadays, the mural mosaics in New York subway are the proof that identity is important, if we take into consideration the representations of some artists exhibited in various museums and, at the same time, art works in connection to culture and history in some subway stations. In Bucharest, subway coaches with graffiti (Figures 5 and 6) and street art projects carried out by the surface and underground transport networks in partnership with various institutions or private companies can be exemplified. In 2008, at the North Railway Station, Bucharest metroArt project took place, with thematic paintings on existing mosaic walls related to Bucharest architecture and various older or newer means of transport. In 2020, on the occasion of celebrating 561 years of documentary attestation of Bucharest, the City Hall conducted the "Bucharest—One Heart. One Story" project, during which seven trams on different routes in the city have been personalized with different themes to express a part of the capital's cultural identity. Carried out by the Center for Creation, Art and Tradition of Bucharest City Hall, the street artists had to express their perception about the public spaces and the architecture in Bucharest. On one tram, the representations of some emblematic personalities can be discovered: e.g., Queen Marie of Romania (1914–1927) (Figure 7), Mihail Kogălniceanu (Prime Minister of Romania in the second part of the 19th century), I. L. Caragiale (considered one of the greatest playwrights in Romanian language and literature), Toma Caragiu (a prolific Aromanian theatre, television, and film actor), and Ana Aslan (famous doctor who put the foundations of Romanian geriatrics and invented revolutionary products for treating diseases specific to the elderly). In 2020 and 2021, more street art projects were conducted in three other subway stations in order to add color to these urban underground spaces, sometimes accompanied by cultural elements. For instance, in 2021 at Ștefan cel Mare metro station, there was painted a mural as a tribute to Romanian champion canoeist Ivan Patzaichin who won the gold medal at Munich Olympics Games in 1972 (Figure 8).

Figure 1. MTA trains, New York, in early 1970s Source: [5].

Figure 2. MTA trains, New York, 1972 Source: [5].

Figure 3. MTA trains, New York, 1979 Source: [5].

Figure 4. MTA trains, New York, 1980s Source: [5].

Figure 5. Subway wagon, Line 4, Bucharest, no data (photo taken in 2014).

Figure 6. Subway wagon, Line 4, Bucharest, no data (photo taken in 2022).

Figure 7. 41 Tramway Line, Bucharest by Sweet Damage Crew, 2020 (photo in detail with the portrait of Queen Marie of Romania, taken in 2021).

Figure 8. Ștefan cel Mare metro station, Bucharest, Ivan Patzaichin by Obie Platon, 2021 (photo taken in 2021).

Regarding the media represented by educational units' high walls and fences, it records, all over the world, the widest range of topics addressed in relation to the different facets of education (Figures 9 and 10): environment protection, tolerance and communication, culture, including cultural personalities etc. Figure 9 represents the largest rendering of the campaign named "Education Is Not A Crime" across Harlem. It all started in New York City in the early 1980s, when large-scale murals saw the day as a collaborative work in Spanish Harlem. Graffiti Hall of Fame was the first legal venue with several large walls in a school yard. In Bucharest, in recent years, a number of famous street artists have been

involved in transmitting messages through street art not only on the walls of some schools or high schools but also on the corridors or walls of some higher education institutions. The messages can be related to education, history, artistic themes, or about humanity needs like respecting the environment more (Figures 11 and 12).

Figure 9. School in Harlem, New York by Elle, 2016 (photo taken in 2020).

Figure 10. Bohermore Community Centre, Galway, no data, 2014 (photo taken in 2019).

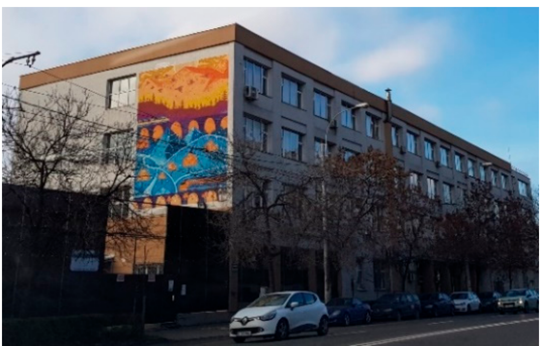

Figure 11. Grivița Mechanical Technical College, Bucharest by Score–KAPS, 2018 (photo taken in 2020).

Figure 12. CINETIC, National University of Theatre and Film "I.L. Caragiale", Bucharest by Pisica Pătrată, 2017 (photo taken in 2021).

However, perhaps the most popular category among street artists is given by different other categories of walls and fences that convey various messages: e.g., cultural identity in Quiberon, a century-old seaside resort and a former sardine port in Brittany with a mural showing fisher folk dancing in their normal costumes from the 19th century (Figure 13), representations related to the traditional port, local economic activities and personalities from different fields in Praia, Capo Verde (Figures 14 and 15), or just a piece of color to increase the visibility of old buildings representing an important stage in the history of the city in Budapest (Figure 16—the Fire Hall, situated next to an old and abandoned important building, Merlin Theater). At a national level, fences are hosting similar works, but those coming from graffiti component abound. Usually, the following general types of host fences are encountered as media: fences of some abandoned constructions, of former technical and industrial units (Figure 17), and along the railway and soundproof fences. Fences with street art representations emerged recently (Figures 18–20).

Figure 13. Quiberon, no data (photo taken in 2018).

Figure 14. Mural in Plato District, Praia, no data (photo taken in 2019).

Figure 15. Mural in Plato District, Praia, no data (photo taken in 2019).

Figure 16. Fire Hall and Merlin Theater, Budapest, no data (photo taken in 2012).

Figure 17. Former industrial fences in the North part of Bucharest, no data (photo taken in 2021).

Figure 18. Arthur Verona st., Bucharest by VVANDERBUTCH, 2019 (photo taken in 2021).

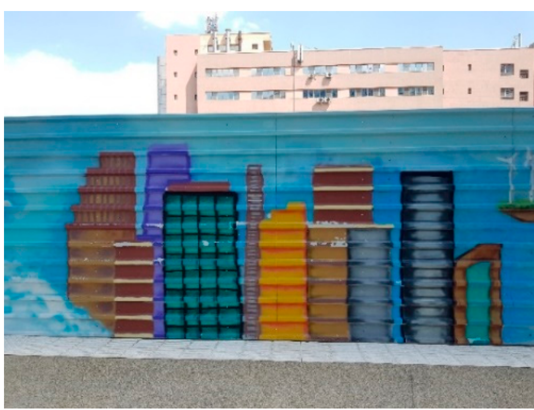

Figure 19. Campus 6.3. offices area, Bucharest, no data (photo taken in 2021).

Figure 20. Ion Creangă Theater, Administrative headquarters, Bucharest, no data (photo taken in 2022).

Regarding the residential buildings high walls, they are suitable for large-scale murals, the themes being very generous, including in relation to the local culture: e.g., the history of comics in Brussels with the mural "The Adventures of Tintin", a series of 24 comic book series created by the Belgian cartoonist Georges Remi, who wrote under the pen name Hergé (Figure 21); in Madrid, the life of the neighborhoods in the past can be admired on a mural representing thirty-six figures dressed in clothes from the beginning of the 20th century, along with numerous objects that remind us of how Sundays were when Rastro flea market was organized (Figure 22); in Galway, a mural which refers to the richness of the local literature, including a quote from a poetry of a Irish novelist, Dermot Healy (Figure 23). In Bucharest, more and more large-scale murals can be found, with various representations that bring color to the buildings partially or completely and are associated with some already reputable street artists: e.g., in the framework of the Street Delivery Festival (Figure 24) that takes place every year on Arthur Verona street, considered the start of street art in Bucharest [18]). In 2021, the largest mural from Bucharest was completed, an entire block of flats situated in a crowded intersection being painted during its process of thermal rehabilitation (Figure 25). However, the representations may also have a direct message to transmit: e.g., a mural that is part of the project "Murales para la Libertad" (carried out by the Embassy of Spain in Budapest, Sofia, and Bucharest) dedicated to the Spanish diplomats that helped save Jewish citizens during the second world war: to Jóse Rojas and Manuel Gómez-Barzanallana, ministers of the Spanish Legation in Romania between 1940–1945, who saved from extermination over 100 Sephardic Jews in Bucharest during the Second World War (Figure 26).

Figure 21. "The Adventures of Tintin of Hergé", Brussels by Oreopoulos G. and Vandegeerde D., 2005 (photo taken in 2015).

Figure 22. Mural Plaza de Cascorro, Madrid by Enrique Cavestany, 1983 (photo taken in 2022).

Figure 23. "But someone has missed the bend for home", Galway by Finbar247, 2015 (photo taken in 2019).

Figure 24. "I have a city", Arthur Verona st., Bucharest by Livi Po and other street artists, 2018 (photo taken in 2018).

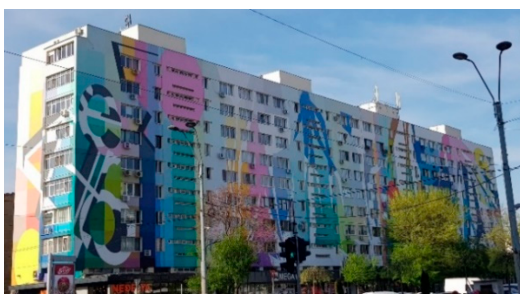

Figure 25. 42 Mărășești st., Bucharest by Dumitru Gurjii and Mircea Modreanu, 2021 (photo taken in 2022).

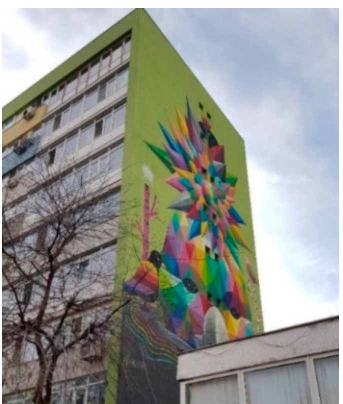

Figure 26. "Bird of Freedom Paradise", Unirii Square area, Bucharest by San Miguel Okuda, 2017 (photo taken in 2021).

Old and derelict (including heritage) buildings present an evident interest for graffiti and street art authors. Graffiti inscriptions on this category of media are less visible at international level especially when it happens to historical monuments because of the legislation that protects the built heritage by applying harsh sanctions: e.g., some small representations in the port area of Dublin—The British and Irish Steam Packet Company building or in Brussels—the old Belle-Vue brewery in Molenbeek, today reconverted in hotel. Sometimes, graffiti and street art come within functional reconversion projects and commissioned art works: e.g., in Milano, Fabbrica del Vapore, from production of rolling stock for trains and tramways to creative activities nowadays and a mural celebrating 20 years of freedom in South Africa and representing Nelson Mandela (Figure 27).

Figure 27. "20 Years of Freedom and Democracy", Milano by Pao Pao, Nais, Orticanoodles, and Ivan, 2014 (photo taken in 2018).

On the contrary, at a national level, the legal recognition of some buildings in the category of those that are and should be protected and preserved does not always weigh in the decision-making process of graffiti and street art. By abandoning them, they become an easier target of the graffiti and street art phenomenon. However, there are also positive examples in which old constructions find a new functionality, usually in the direction of creative industries, but remain at risk on long term: e.g., Republica ex-industrial platform, an important former steel pipe factory with a mural by Robert Obert and Pisica Pătrată (also known as Alexandru Ciubotariu) or Fabrica (Figure 28), a former socks factory that today hosts a club, together with creative activities.

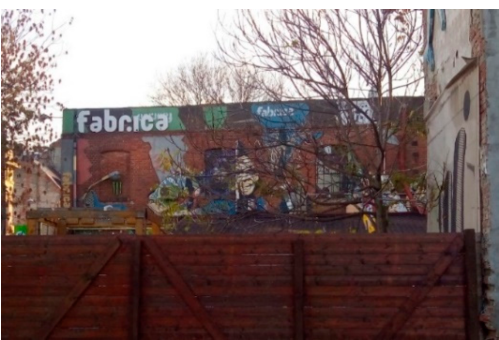

Figure 28. Fabrica Club, June 11 st., Bucharest by Valentino Vasile and other street artists, no data (photo taken in 2019).

Electric transformer stations are another common support for graffiti and street art in the last years, sometimes transmitting messages in relation to culture and heritage. Electricity transformation stations, together with distribution power stations, heating stations, and other elements of technical and municipal infrastructure, including garbage cans, have already become customary canvases for street art in Western Europe: e.g., in Berlin, within a bar that, before 1990, was a permanent representation of the Federal Republic of Germany (Figure 29), or in Dublin (Figure 30). In Veliko Tarnovo, Bulgaria, representations of the traditional costumes can be found on an electricity transformation station (Figure 31). In Bucharest, it can be mentioned a project carried out by an electricity supplier for the reintegration of old energy transformation stations in the Bucharest landscape and called "City of Energy": e.g., in an area with administrative, cultural, and tourism importance for the capital, on one energy transformation station, the pioneers of Romanian aviation were highlighted (Figure 32—Aurel Vlaicu, described below in the Discussion section); on another one, situated in an area of the city with the highest concentration of ITC multinational companies, the personalities are represented to whom a series of innovations are related to: Thomas Edison, Graham Bell, Nikola Tesla, and Guglielmo Marconi (Figure 33). Examples of the representations on this media have increased lately in Bucharest, many of them transmitting artistic messages or in relation to the city in general (Figure 34).

Figure 29. Schiffbauerdamm st., Berlin, no data (photo taken in 2018).

Figure 30. Dublin, no data (photo taken in 2019).

Figure 31. Veliko Tarnovo, no data (photo taken in 2022).

Figure 32. Aurel Vlaicu, Kiseleff Park, Bucharest by Fear and Suflo, 2014 (photo taken in 2017).

Figure 33. Under Pipera Bridge, Bucharest by Mihai Comănescu (Boeme), 2013 (photo taken in 2020).

Figure 34. Mihail Kogălniceanu Square, Bucharest, no data (photo taken in 2022).

The selected and presented above examples highlight the idea that the graffiti and street art phenomenon in Bucharest followed an approximately similar path to the international level. However, the more recent visibility of this subculture in Romania also explains certain disproportions given by a higher share of graffiti representations, more frequent cases of historical monuments with graffiti representations and unauthorized street art, but at the same time an effervescence of art works that emerge on all types of urban media. Evident differences can also be found: in the case of the walls or fences media, the cultural component is less encountered than at an international level; railroad graffiti is much less encountered than internationally, and rather on freight trains; instead, it exists on a certain subway line in Bucharest. In general, as for the European examples, many countries have pursued solid policies to stop the phenomenon on the trains and subway system wagons. In Romania, a law that will introduce harsher sanctions for unauthorized representations is in progress for approval.

As mentioned at the beginning of this section, the different representations chosen for the comparative analysis were studied and observed in a more complex approach, taking into account their relationship with the territory. The following conclusions could be drawn both at an international and local level: (1) There is a correlation between the functional state of the media, a good degree of buildings' conservation, and the legality of the interventions both internationally and in Bucharest. In almost all situations, the impact that the representations have in the territory is positive in terms of good image, social, and economic development; (2) When referring to low degree of buildings' conservation, neglected, abandoned, and non-functional spaces, the number of illegal graffiti and street art interventions is increasing. Less often, this type of intervention can lead to an increase in the visibility and appreciation of the area for future investments; (3) Regarding their location, the central areas have an advantage (less applied in the case of representations on educational units) and the works contribute to the growth of tourism in comparison to the media from the peripheries, rather associated to former industrial buildings where creative activities are currently carried out. However, it becomes difficult to analyze at a particular level and fully confirm these findings in the absence of databases, with details regarding graffiti and street art works and difficulties in obtaining information in the field for each case study.

5. Discussion

Having an impact on communities and intercultural exchanges, graffiti and street art reveal, through various representations, the historical, cultural, and heritage dimensions in contemporary spaces. The phenomenon facilitates the connection of some symbols from a local context to the neighborhood. Specific forms of cultural identity become more noticeable thanks to street art, which may contribute to recovering and developing urban areas with the support of the local population and associations [45]. The same reality starts to be more visible in Bucharest and proves, to a certain extent, the fact that the phenomenon of street art contributes to the identity saving of some areas of the capital. Examples of preserving or saving the cultural identity of a place can take many forms, from simple warning signs on the situations' gravity to cultural identity coagulation initiatives and, in the happiest cases, to projects implemented with positive results for the community. Street art, along with graffiti, tells stories of the city and they become, in many cases, a tool to regain it. Frequently, the motto for graffiti and street art is positive, seen to some extent as a realignment of the city as a place for people who live in it: e.g., a message on a wall in Bucharest says: "The city must be won back!". This means a further reappropriation of the city by the younger generation, who subject it to new challenges in its development and cultural identity.

Graffiti and street art can thus serve as a powerful means for reading, writing, and knowing the city [7]. Field research has revealed that street art pieces on topics related to local or national culture and heritage are not predominant in the city center but frequently appear on various media in the dormitory neighborhoods on the outskirts of the city. In addition to those mentioned in the results section, other examples can be highlighted for Bucharest. The central area can be exemplified in the following: on the wall of a block entrance near Nicolae Tonitza High School of Fine Arts are represented the Arch of Triumph from Bucharest, Intercontinental Hotel (a symbol for the capital architecture from the last 50 years and recently renamed Grand Hotel Bucharest) and the famous sculpture of Constantin Brâncuși, the "Endless Column" from Târgu Jiu, along with the Eiffel Tower from Paris, Big Ben from London, and skyscrapers from New York. Thus, the emphasis of the local cultural identity is doubled by the national one, and the representation of some internationally renowned architectural symbols can be translated by trying to highlight the importance of local ones, a way of saying that they are not inferior but connected and just as important and positioned accordingly alongside international benchmarks.

On the district heating stations media, portraits of Romanian personalities coming from different fields (political, cultural, artistic etc.) and their achievements are encountered: e.g., representations with Tudor Vladimirescu, a Romanian revolutionary hero on a district heating station from a neighborhood and the portrait of the sculptor Constantin Brâncuși and one of his worldwide known works of art, "Miss Pogany", on another one (Figure 35). The first mural representation of Constantin Brâncuși took place in 2016 on one of the walls of the Bucharest National University of Arts (UNArte) (Figure 36). Additionally, in 2016, in the yard of the University of Architecture and Urbanism Ion Mincu, the portrait of the architect that gave the name to this educational institution was painted (Figure 37).

On a mural painted for a pub in the city center of Bucharest one can admire street art pieces with Bram Stoker and Vlad Tepeș, the prince of Wallachia, who inspired his character Dracula (Figure 38). On a side of a socialist bloc of flats, one can observe at first sight the representations of a girl who shoots at the spindle, a theme inspired by the "evening sittings", small gatherings in the villages in which the participants work and spend time, telling stories and jokes. With a more detailed analysis of "Moira" by Recis, Sweet Damage Crew, the face of an old woman is also perceived, the message sent being related to the transmission of the customs' importance from one generation to another.

Figure 35. Brâncuși, Ștefan cel Mare neighborhood, Bucharest by Ortaku, 2018 (photo taken in 2021).

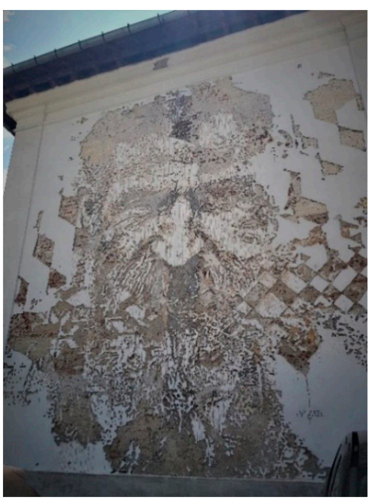

Figure 36. Brâncuși, UNArte, Bucharest by Vhils, 2016 (photo taken in 2022).

Figure 37. Ion Mincu, UAIM, Bucharest by Obie Platon, Sandu Milea Lucian, and Alex Brat, 2016 (photo taken in 2022).

Figure 38. Vlad Țepes and Bram Stoker, Știrbei Vodă st., Bucharest by Obie Platon, 2014 (photo taken in 2022).

Another example comes from the cinematographic Romanian history. In 2020, with the 100th anniversary of the first Romanian animated film, in the framework of the "Animest—International Animation Film Festival", organized in Bucharest, an exhibition was dedicated to the most important moments in the history of local animated cinema and hosted by the cultural hub BRD Scena9 Residence. There, Romanian cartoon characters in relation to the history of the Romanian cartoons by Sorina Vazelina, Gri, Suzi, and Jo were represented: the first cartoon character, the well-known old children's story transposed in animation and the evolution of films in socialist times (e.g., "Gopo's Little Man", the creation of Ion Popescu-Gopo, a prominent personality in the Romanian cinematography and the founder of the modern Romanian cartoon school, or "Mihaela and Azorel", a cartoon series from the 1970s and 1980s). The national symbols are accompanied by representations of some international animation characters (e.g., "Pinocchio") [18].

Murals of larger or smaller dimensions have spread as well in other areas of Bucharest: e.g., near the Romanian Orthodox Patriarchal Cathedral a paste-up as a tribute to two emblematic artists for the national culture can be found, Anda Călugăreanu and Margareta Pâslaru, an artwork signed by Sweet Damage Crew. On a transformation station located inside an important park in the northern part of the capital (and previously mentioned in the typology of media for graffiti and street art works) the pioneers of the Romanian aviation are highlighted (work of Fear and Suflo): Traian Vuia—inventor of the first aircraft with its own means of propulsion, with which he made the first flight in human history in 1906, rising from the ground by own means of the machine; Aurel Vlaicu—who designed the world's first metal-built aircraft before the WWI, named A Vlaicu III; Henri Coandă—the inventor of the jet plane in 1910 and of the Coandă effect that will be named after him a few years later.

On the 30th anniversary of the Romanian Revolution from 1989, two murals were painted in 2020 in the hall of the Faculty of History of the University of Bucharest, highlighting the Revolution moments (Figure 39) and the phenomenon from the University Square (Figure 40).

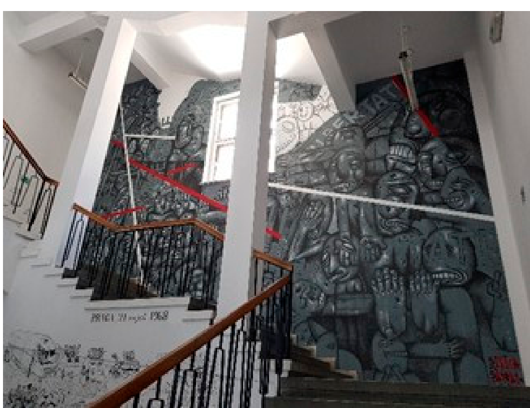

Figure 39. "Revolution from 1989", University of Bucharest by Pisica Pătrată, 2020 (photo taken in 2022).

Figure 40. "The University Square phenomenon from 1990", University of Bucharest by Elann, 2020 (photo taken in 2022).

The examples described above are relevant for both local and national culture and history and are starting to see the light of the day more and more in the last years in Bucharest. However, there are also examples in which the graffiti and street art phenomenon, with the participation of the civil society, becomes an instrument that raises an alarm signal regarding the architectural heritage of Bucharest. At an international level, the growing involvement of the civil society in the direction of street art is evident [46]. At Halele Carol, a former metal construction fabric opened at the end of 19th century and integrated today into a cultural and creative reconversion project, a mural was painted by Sweet Damage Crew in 2018 as tribute for the father of cybernetics, Grigore Moisil. On the ruined walls of the Marconi Cinema, an historical monument that should be preserved by law but which is gradually decaying, were made some representations in red color in 2016 by Pisica Pătrată in order to draw attention to its destruction, within the project co-financed by the Creative Cultural Industries Association, Arcub Cultural Center, and the City Hall in the framework of the program "Bucharest, in-visible city", and supported by the local economy and a school. The intervention aims to draw attention to the degraded built patrimony in a city which lacks renovation policies, as well to the decrease in the number of cinemas, some recently closed, representing a public danger [47]. Another example is the Capitol Cinema Garden, also an historical monument from the beginning of the 20th century, which fortunately was restored in 2021 [18], and together with it the street artwork made several years ago on the exterior metal door by Pisica Pătrată that became so a part of its history. However, the cinema room inside the building was definitely closed and a street artist from UK, J. Ace, raised an alarm signal regarding its degradation state, a cinema that, after documentation about its history, he compared to the old cinemas from New York. The artist

left behind small figurines pasted on the wall of the building as a tribute to Queen Elisabeth of Romania, who gave the name of the street where the former cinema is located, but also of the architect who rebuilt the façade of the cinema in the late 1930s, Henriette Delavrancea.

Although in general it is seen like a whole phenomenon, graffiti and street art, the present study considers the street art representations more than graffiti works because they allow a clearer and more obvious highlighting of the transmitted messages in relation to culture, history and heritage. The identity of a city changes under physical, social, sensory, and memory aspects [48]. Graffiti and street art phenomenon becomes a part of the local identity as the authors are transposing in their work style their insight and/or experience about or in relation to a subject, etc., or their so-called subcultural identity [49]. Therefore, the place does not only have spatial and structural characteristics but cultural and aesthetic expressions that play an important role in the urban image and the development of identity [50]. Culture may be seen as a resource and condition for economic improvement [51]. Moreover, graffiti and street art represent a visible communication tool that gives a chance to become a significant educational or knowledge tool. In Bucharest, the messages sent through street art works are more about the national cultural identity and its connection to the international one. One explanation may be given by a shorter history of this subculture compared to what happened internationally. Street art consequently acquires a double role: directly, it changes the urban image and sometimes the functionality of some areas (it was already demonstrated that public art contributes to the processes of urban restructuring [52]) and indirectly charges or solidifies the cultural identity of a place. Additionally, like traditional art, contemporary murals need to be preserved and restored [53]. Furthermore, street art can be theorized as a heritage experience in relation to embodiment, affect, and everyday performative practice, in the sense that people construct meanings and feelings about a street artwork [54]: it is not about a dichotomy between tangible and intangible heritage or people and object, but an inseparable relationship; street artwork life may be interpreted taking into account the rapport between the physical context and community [54]. Therefore, conservation refers as well to performative and experimental approaches that use material practice to test an artwork's potential as a heritage item and to study the interrelation between the object and the community [55]. The street art conservation requires a critical mass of people interested in its preservation, including digital mapping [56].

Following the analysis, and in order to answer more in detail to the research questions, it was stated that at the local level, street art representations are found both in non-functional or repulsive areas, related to the gray image of the socialist blocs and to a city whose socio-economic transition has left its mark on the architecture of the place, and places located in the city center in which they bring promotion, gradually becoming even more attractive and frequented, including for tourism purposes. A previous study has revealed the multidimensional importance of the street art subculture in Bucharest on economic, cultural, urban image, and perception levels [18] with the support of local authorities and different associations.

6. Conclusions

The present research highlights the place of the graffiti and street art phenomenon in the urban environments worldwide and in Bucharest as a subculture that contains cultural identity elements and diffuses local, national, and international messages. Thanks to more elaborated representations that bring it closer to art, street art conveys, in an artistical and easier form to understand, messages about cultural identity that graffiti transmits more simply and directly. The street art works contribute to the promotion of the Bucharest image and the local, national, or even international cultural heritage and, at the same time, participate in the aesthetic revitalization of the Romanian capital.

The history of graffiti from the first part of the article was considered essential to understand how the phenomenon evolved into its contemporary form. Bucharest is evolving

in the same direction as other European urban areas. At a European level, it is presented as an artistic movement, encouraged in cities in a legal framework.

The limits of the study can be associated with the ephemerality of graffiti and street art works that can diminish the importance of the analyzed scientific issue. Secondly, although at first glance the subjectivity of the chosen case studies or their number may be questioned, it is considered that they are adequate to create a relevant association between local and international levels and an important foundation for the street art and cultural identity analysis in Bucharest. Third, when it comes to smaller-scale media interventions from the category of technical and municipal infrastructure, it has been proved to be more difficult to find information about the year and author, especially at an international level, despite assiduous documentation, but not to be translated as being less appreciated than other graffiti and street art representations in the urban landscape. Future research will continue to deepen the identity elements found in graffiti and street art works in Bucharest and the impact they may have on the city's image and economy.

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Article

Soviet Heritage(scape) in Sillamäe: Documenting the Potential in an Emerging Tourism Destination

Saara Mildeberg * and Jaanika Vider

Centre for Landscape and Culture, School of Humanities, Tallinn University, 10120 Tallinn, Estonia
* Correspondence: saarah@tlu.ee; Tel.: +372-5590-3472

Abstract: In 2014, the National Heritage Board of Estonia began the procedure for declaring the town centre of the former Soviet secret uranium town of Sillamäe in Northeast Estonia a heritage conservation area. The process is expected to be finalised in 2023, making it the first area where Soviet architecture would be under protection in Estonia. By approaching the town theoretically and methodologically as a heritagescape where components of tangible landscape are used to create a distinct place of the past, looking at how the town's official development policy relates to the existing representations of the past in the town's memory institutions, and interviewing local stakeholders, this article provides a broader and more nuanced understanding of Sillamäe and its tourism potential. Sillamäe as heritagescape offers tourists the chance to experience a curated version of the Soviet era and contemplate on the legacy of nuclear industry, while remaining in the safety of a resort town in the periphery of the European Union.

Keywords: Soviet heritage; heritagescape; cultural tourism; industrial tourism; Northeast Estonia

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1. Introduction

> *"20 years ago, when people passed Sillamäe—nobody could see that [central] part of the town. They would all only notice the Brezhnev-era district, right. "This isn't a town, it's ... Are you joking, what are you talking about? We have driven [past Sillamäe] to Narva and back, and to St. Petersburg. It's such a horrible town. [...] There's nothing there."*—an independent tourism entrepreneur in an interview in Sillamäe, 14 September 2021.

In 2014, the National Heritage Board of Estonia began the procedure of declaring the town centre of the former Soviet secret uranium town of Sillamäe in Northeast Estonia a heritage conservation area. The procedure, which is based on the cooperation of heritage experts, state authorities, the local government, and local residents, is expected to be finalised in 2023. Once completed, Sillamäe town centre will be the first area where Soviet architecture would be under protection in Estonia. In this article, we use Sillamäe as a case study in order to examine the changing status of Soviet heritage in Estonia and its relevance for tourism. The town's complex identity is derived from its history as a holiday site for St. Petersburg's elites in the 19th century, as the secret elite town of the Soviet Union in the 1950s, and today as a Russian-speaking town in the industrial region of Ida-Virumaa, which has been described as "Oil Shale Land", symbolising the Soviet myth of progress [1] or a deliberately forgotten utopia [2]. Studies of changes in this part of Estonia have focused on the establishment of mono-industrial towns [3,4] and on the valorisation of the oil shale industry legacy, specifically on the recultivation and tourism potential of artificial landforms [5,6]. Our research adds to the existing scholarship a complex case study in which visions of a resort, unique Soviet architectural heritage, painful histories, and present day fears of marginalisation meet in one place.

Estonian Heritage Conservation Act defines a heritage conservation area as "an area, a historical settlement or a part thereof or a cultural landscape developed under the common

influence of the nature and human activities" which "may consist of buildings [. . .] and civil engineering works dating from one or several periods together with the archaeological layer, natural objects, street network, roads, land parcels and structure of buildings and plots characteristic of the area" [7]. The exact area to be included in the Sillamäe Conservation Area is still under negotiations, offering an opportunity to look at the town as a larger heritagescape and explore its potential before the contents and the borders of the Sillamäe Heritage Conservation Area are set.

Despite a large portion of Estonian cultural landmarks, such as castles, manors, and churches being of foreign origin [8], the conservation and restoration of Soviet-era architecture has thus formed a marginal part of heritage protection activities. A similar tendency has been observed in Lithuania, where the Soviet era is first and foremost associated with large-scale industrialisation and its side effects—destroyed landscapes, pollution, low-quality products, and huge industrial complexes—which are not regarded "heritageable" from a national point of view that favours the master narrative of a rural and agrarian country [9]. Soviet heritage can therefore be called "dissonant heritage" [10], or even "undesirable heritage", where the physical remains of the past offer up an identity that many of those in the present wish to distance themselves from, even while at the same time recognising it fully as a part of their history [11].

The status of Soviet heritage in Estonia, is closely linked to the social and cultural changes that accompanied the Soviet regime. After WWII, deportations in the 1940s were followed by the creation of collective farms and large-scale industries, the products of which were mostly exported to other areas of the Union. Prisoners of war labour and construction battalions were used to re-establish war-torn settlements, especially in Northeast Estonia, the Ida-Virumaa region, which had largely been destroyed as the frontline between the east and the west. In heritage conservation discourse in Estonia, Soviet heritage has been a controversial topic since 2004, after the Heritage Conservation Board commissioned architectural historian Mart Kalm to compile a systematic manual for the conservation of architecture designed in the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic (ESSR) [12]. The manual was preceded by Kalm's seminal overview of the 20th century architecture in Estonia [13]. Lack of attention granted to Soviet heritage in Estonia prior to this can be compared to the German response to Nazi heritage: calculated neglect, or "trivialisation" in the former German Minister of Culture Hermann Glaser's words [11]. The Estonian approach has been described as "silent revenge" on the Soviet era through its material heritage: the most visible and most vulnerable manifestation of the past with the possible and plausible explanation of a general national-ideological background that has simply preferred some periods to others [12].

Post-Soviet transformation of the political system allowed individual countries to de-communise—de-sacralise, cleanse, reinterpret, and re-signify—urban space, including industrial areas, which, as massive conglomerates of labour, had been a socialist *idée fixe* during the communist era [14]. The question of the future of Soviet heritage, or more specifically, Soviet monuments, resurfaced forcefully in 2007 following the conflict-ridden relocation of the 2-metre "Bronze Soldier" statue from Tallinn town centre to a military cemetery, and again in 2022 when, in response to Russian aggression in Ukraine, the government decided to relocate the Tank T-34 monument from Narva to the Estonian War Museum in Viimsi. In both cases, WWII monuments proved to be "polysemic, symbolising liberation, aggression and occupation" to the people living in Estonia [15] and embed conflicting identities and narratives of the past. In a country where roughly 69% identify themselves as ethnic Estonians, 24% as ethnic Russians, and 7% as others [16], it may be convenient to claim that most people identify themselves also with the post-communist, post-Soviet narrative, but as apparent from the public reactions to the removal and relocation of the "Bronze Soldier" and the tank, not everybody agrees: both events were widely covered in both press and social media by comments defending or condemning the decisions and their execution. Beyond the interpretation and appreciation of art and history, for a democratic society, there is another elephant in the room: destroying the heritage of

the preceding regime would be not be only denying history, but repeating a communist practice [17].

The National Heritage Board's decision to declare Sillamäe town centre a heritage conservation area can be seen as an important symbolic act, a paradigm shift in a region where Soviet heritage has put democracy to the test. Soviet heritage, which for a long while was delegated to the "profane" or dissonant category, something ignored or actively shunned, is now coming under official protection, thus again competing for the title of "sacred". Adding to the research and studies of Soviet heritage by Estonian historians, ethnologists, and heritage experts that have dealt with memorial sites [18], kolkhoz architecture in rural areas [19,20], art in military bases [21], and other elements across the country [22], we examine the varied heritagescape of Sillamäe, asking how the planned heritage conservation area and the town's development plans relate to the town's varied past and how its history is locally viewed and understood. Examining both the town's representation and the experience of being there, we argue that creating a coherent tourism image of Sillamäe has been a struggle between three main narratives: the uncomplicated history of a resort town, a mysterious industrial hub, and the best-preserved example of Soviet urban planning in Estonia. This is the first academic article to juxtapose different periods distinguishable in the history of Sillamäe with their tangible representations, focusing on the challenges of transitioning from a semi-closed socialist utopian town to a neoliberal and open tourism destination. Our multi-layered approach also introduces the perspectives of practitioners to the question of how less ideologically marked Soviet spatial heritage is valued in Estonia.

The article is divided into the following five parts: (1) an overview of the materials, methods, and conceptual framework used in our research and analysis; (2) results of the research, including an introduction to Sillamäe and the wider Ida-Virumaa region; (3) results of the research; (4) discussion of the results, featuring local stakeholders; and (5) conclusion.

2. Materials, Methods, and Conceptual Framework

This research was partially conducted in the framework of the EU HORIZON 2020 project Social and Innovative Platform On Cultural Tourism and its Potential Towards Deepening Europeanisation (SPOT). Analyses of policy documents on the local, regional, and national levels as well as field research including tourism surveys and interviews with stakeholders in the tourism sector were conducted as part of this project and inform our research.

In autumn 2020, Tallinn University conducted a survey among the inhabitants, visitors, and tourism entrepreneurs in Ida-Virumaa to map the current situation of cultural tourism in the region, followed by a round of stakeholder interviews in autumn 2021. Interviews were also conducted with the representatives of the regional Ida-Viru Tourism Cluster and Estonian Tourism Board. In total, 14 semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted in September and December 2021. For this article, five interviews are the most relevant. One in-depth interview with a representative of Sillamäe Museum and a local independent tourism entrepreneur were carried out at Sillamäe Museum. Four interviews were conducted online, with the following stakeholders: (1) the Town Government's Information and Marketing Specialist (in office 2018–2021), (2) a representative of the Ida-Viru Tourism Cluster, and (3) two representatives of Visit Estonia, the national tourism board at Enterprise Estonia.

In addition, participant observation fieldwork was carried out in Sillamäe in October 2020 and in February, June, July, and August 2021 (in total, over two months in the field), during which numerous unofficial conversations were held with the town's inhabitants and tourism stakeholders from the region. S.M. visited the town and its museum several times, participated in the Sillamäe Town Days celebrations in 2021, participated in the Heritage Conservation Area Working Group's meetings online, and attended the in-person consultation about the heritage conservation area with Sillamäe residents on 21 October 2021. During fieldwork, the heritagescape approach was applied as a method and conceptual

framework to analyse "how a site uses the components of its tangible landscape to create a distinct place of the past" by following three simple guidelines: boundaries, cohesion, and visibility [23]. A tourist destination is always framed by a specific, tourist gaze [24] and it is easy for the visitor to get stuck in the vicious cycle of circulating references, reproducing the same image that drew them to the place all over again [25]. The visitor's expectations, experiences, and relationships are influenced by specific behavioural patterns and cultural (re)presentation, even when they acknowledge and document their status as a guest [26]. Rather than assessing whether the site offers a "real", "good", or "bad" version of the past, the heritagescape approach allows one to notice challenges, assess the latent potential, and envision alternatives.

During fieldwork, the town museum emerged as a significant case study that embodies the possibilities, challenges, and conflicts of Sillamäe as a heritage and tourism destination. The museum is envisioned as a future "cultural, visitor, leisure and informal education centre that commits to the collection, preservation, research, exhibition and popularisation of the culture and history of the area" in the Sillamäe Town Development Plan 2022–2026 [27]. However, museums are never neutral. They are sites of memory that always tell only a part of the story, biased towards the preferences of the curator and the perception of the viewer, as they work "with the perceived and transformative power of objects that have been extracted from their original environment and re-inscribed into a symbolic landscape" [28].

3. Research Context: Ida-Virumaa

This chapter is divided into three sub-categories. Firstly, an introduction to the Ida-Viru County provides the broader context for the case study. Secondly, complexities surrounding Sillamäe are explained, tracing its extraordinarily fast development and special status back to natural resources. Thirdly, the contemporary idea of tourism as an economic diversifier in Ida-Virumaa is challenged through examples of its effect on the development of identity elsewhere, paving way for the application of the heritagescape method to reveal alternatives to the authorised discourse.

3.1. General—Ida-Virumaa

Sillamäe is the third largest town in Ida-Virumaa, the north-easternmost of Estonia's 15 counties. It is a region that covers 2972 km^2 and is situated on four terrain types: the coastal plain of the Gulf of Finland, the Viru limestone plateau, the Alutaguse lowland, and the coastal plain of Lake Peipus. Located in the periphery of the European Union and bordering Russia, it is home to approximately 138,000 people living in 7 towns, 12 smaller urban settlements, and 175 villages [16].

A defining feature of the region is its oil shale industry. The "brown gold", which is still mined in Ida-Virumaa today, has a long history in Estonia with the first written reports of oil shale findings dating back to 1777. The rise of the region's international reputation both as an industrial hub and seaside destination began with the establishment of the Baltic Railway (Baltisk (Paldiski) Tallinn—St. Petersburg railway line), completed in 1870. While the Russian Empire had little interest in the industrial exploitation of the novel source of energy, the railway links served the strategic interests of the Imperial fleet and economic interests of the Baltic German landholders and grain traders [29]. Passenger services were not the priority, but the railway connection to larger cities played its role in the Baltic seaside becoming a popular tourism destination among Russians—for example, before World War I, the leisure resort Narva-Jõesuu had 10,000–14,000 visitors per year [30]. Visits by foreigners continued in the early 20th century and even between the world wars, despite political obstacles [29].

The first oil shale factories were established in 1916 to help Russia survive the post-war fuel crisis by providing alternatives to coal [1]. During the first independent Republic of Estonia (1918–1940), local energy production became a matter of honour: although it was

established with the support of foreign investors, it was the first industry that the country could call its own. Systematic research into oil shale and its products ensued.

During World War II, shale oil was used by the occupying Germans until Estonia fell under the Soviet occupation. During the Soviet era, the share of heavy industry in Estonia increased considerably and when shale gas became the main energy source in St. Petersburg and towns in Northern Estonia, the demand for oil shale increased as well. Soviet Union's heightened attention to the energy sector and high centralisation resulted in pre-planned monofunctional settlements that had fundamentally different relations to their wider surroundings than the organically growing urban settlements in capitalist societies based on private interests [31]. The post-war boost of the oil shale industry affected the construction, development, and appearance of settlements restored in Ida-Virumaa after World War II: war-torn villages were clustered into industrial towns and new buildings were constructed to accommodate planned mass industry and associated workforce transferred to Ida-Virumaa from other Soviet states. This led to an 'urban anomaly' [3] in comparison with the rest of Estonia, where similar changes were happening on a much smaller scale.

Tourism was not an immediate priority after the war, so the "industrialisation" of tourism only started in the early 1960s [29]. Under Soviet rule, summer culture was reorganised along with other aspects of life. In the tourism sector, a sharp distinction was made between tourism and recreation. This was manifested in infrastructure: pioneer camps and sanatoriums accessible with special permits were built in seaside resorts and hiking trails were established for independent holidaymakers in sparsely populated rural areas [29]. The Baltic coast remained a popular destination for Soviet citizens, attracting people with its lengthy coastline, natural beauty, calm of the hinterland, cultural heritage of medieval towns, and reasonable vicinity to industrial centres, placing third in popularity after the Crimea and the Caucasian coasts [29].

3.2. Sillamäe Exceptionalism

While also defined by industry and Soviet history, Sillamäe followed a slightly different trajectory to the rest of the region and therefore occupies a somewhat exceptional position in Ida-Virumaa today. The town's uniqueness results from its location at the Baltic Sea and the geological composition of its ground and the Soviet interest in nuclear power, which is manifested in a well-preserved example of Soviet urban planning.

Sillamäe was first mentioned as a tavern called Tor Bruggen in 1502, along with the nearby Türsamäe, now a part of Sillamäe, in 1520. In the 17th century, Sillamäe and Kannuka were fishing villages. Türsamäe enjoyed a slightly higher reputation: in addition to fishermen's homes and facilities, it also hosted a manor (Türseli manor). In the late 19th century, Sillamäe and Kannuka became small resort villages among others, treasured for their tranquillity, refreshing sea waters, and the smell of pine trees. In 1928, to the dismay of holidaymakers, industrialisation arrived in the area in the form of an oil shale distillation plant established in Türsamäe by the Estonian Oil Consortium belonging to Swedish capital [32]. Oil shale was imported from the nearby Viivikonna mine and, from 1935, most of the oil produced was exported to Germany via Tallinn [33].

In World War II, the region, including Sillamäe, was heavily damaged. Almost the whole settlement, including the distillation plant was destroyed. The war in Europe ended in May 1945, but already during the 1944–1945 winter, a group of geologists from Moscow were sent to the area to research the possibilities of producing uranium from the black dictyonema shale. The first tests were conducted in Narva and, initially, the administrative centre of the production was intended to be set up there, but in 1947, importance was shifted to the objects in Sillamäe [3]. On 6 August 1946, the USSR Ministry of Internal Affairs issued a decree to establish a uranium mine and metallurgy factory on the site of the former oil shale distillation plant [32]. The uranium factory began its work in late 1948 [32].

The planning of the Sillamäe factory influenced the development of the whole region [3]. International importance of nuclear technology during the Cold War gave sites of nuclear production and the accompanying settlements a special status not only locally, but in the all-

union context. Similar importance has been observed in relation to 1950s "plutonium cities" in the USA [33,34]. Nuclear urbanism, or "urbanism without an outside" [31], was a specific mode of planning, which embedded nuclear sites into a "Cold War planetary infrastructural totality" characterised, firstly, by high risks and responsibility that accompanied such production; secondly, by institutional and normative isomorphism that was the result of a controlled distribution of workforce and strategic technologies; thirdly, by the exclave socio-spatial condition compensated to the dwellers through comfort and resulting in a specific kind of belonging and identity; and finally, the impossibility of full de-industrialisation due to high standards for dismantling nuclear facilities and but also their waste management requirements [31].

While Türsamäe on the western bank of the Sõtke river formed the industrial part of Sillamäe, Kannuka on the eastern bank formed its residential area. The residential area was planned according to an all-Union standardised project designed from 1946–1947 at Lengiproshaht, the Leningrad division of the State Design Institute of the USSR Ministry for Coal Mining [35]. The planning of the nuclear town included a large reorganisation of the local population, replacing native Estonians with highly skilled Russian-speaking newcomers, who, with their lack of Estonian language skills would pose no threat to the Soviet regime locally. Due to the high priority of the factory, the town was built relatively quickly and exceptionally completely, before the architectural principles changed in the mid-1950s [35]. In September 1950, the population of Sillamäe exceeded 10,000 [3]. By that time, Sillamäe had become a unique town in Estonia, featuring "70 two- and three-storey residential buildings, 280 one-storey residential buildings, a hospital complex of 12 buildings, several crèches and kindergartens, a high school, House of Culture, two cinemas, office building for the Executive Committee, several shops and canteens, and other objects" [3]. Due to secrecy, instead of the settlement's name, different code names, such as "paint factory", Combine No. 7, Factory No. 7, Enterprise P.O.B. 22, Enterprise P-6685, or simply Plant No. 1 were used to refer to it [32]. The use of the dictyonema shale was discontinued from 1 July 1952 due to it being less efficient compared to richer ores imported from Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and elsewhere [32]. Even though this decreased the importance and secrecy of the town, the ongoing construction works continued and Sillamäe was better supplied than other towns [33,35].

In the early 1950s, four- and five-storey apartment buildings were added to the area by the sea to accommodate the quickly growing population of the intensively developing settlement [35]. Sillamäe was officially declared a town in 1957, with a comprehensive list of facilities that a Soviet town should have: "a town committee, police department, marriage registration office, a specialised court, prosecutor's office, special department of the KGB, military fire control unit, medical sanitary care department, sanitary epidemiological station, pharmacy, a House of Culture with 400 seats, a cinema with 600 seats, high school for up to 300 pupils, adult high school for up to 300 pupils, college for up to 300 students, the party's district committee, Komsomol's district committee, children's club, a stadium, sporting pavilion, dance ground, park, sauna, mechanised laundry, photo studio, sewing workshop, a retail chain that completely satisfies the inhabitant's needs, bread factory, hairdresser, post office, radio broadcasting unit, savings fund, juridical consultation, kolkhoz market, and a television centre to retransmit TV from Leningrad currently under construction" [3].

Uranium production was again reorganised in 1977, when plants were also established in Czechoslovakia and Hungary and the transport of radioactive raw materials across Europe ceased to be necessary; a new production complex was added to the factory in Sillamäe and production concentrated on pre-processed uranium ore [33]. In addition, a rare metals factory and a rare-earth metals factory were established in 1970 [33]. In December 1989, all uranium-related activities in Sillamäe ceased due to political changes that eventually led to the end of the Soviet system [36]. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, privileges permitted by Moscow also disappeared. Plant No. 7 was privatised and nowadays, the town continues to host a metallurgical factory, a rare metals factory, and a rare-earth metals factory. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the town was officially

opened to visitors but has been losing inhabitants ever since: the population of Sillamäe has decreased from 20,280 people in 1989 to 12,386 in 2021 [37]. The legacy of the population reorganisation lives on; about 97% of the town's inhabitants today are Russian-speaking.

The uranium-related activities, and the later metal processing in Sillamäe left behind a specific kind of legacy: a one kilometre long and half a kilometre wide tailings pond on the slippery clay soil, at the edge of the Baltic Sea, separated from it only by a dam. The side products and leftovers of chemicals used in these activities have been pumped into a waste depository; some of the waste contains radioactive metals [33]. The tailings pond itself is not unique—there were other similar cases in Eastern Europe, Germany, Sweden, and USA—but its vicinity to the sea was [33]. Deemed unstable and posing a risk to the sea due to erosion processes that were damaging the dam [38], the tailings pond was remediated between 1999 and October 2008. This meant stabilising the dam with reinforced concrete stakes jammed into the clayey soil, collecting radioactive soil from the surrounding area and adding it to the waste in the depository, modelling the shape of the waste pile with oil shale ash, isolating the pile with weatherproof covering, including a final layer of soil that would protect the pile from freezing and would facilitate the growth of grass that was sown on the hill (the roots of bushes or trees could ruin the layer that protects the construction against water) [33]. The cover is supposed to last one thousand years. During the remediation works, an industrial harbour was built at the far end of the tailings pond and opened for international navigation in 2005.

The remediation was a joint project between Estonia, Nordic countries (Finland, Sweden, and later Norway), Germany, the USA, and the European Commission; total cost was 312 million Estonian kroons or 20 million Euros financed by the European Commission, NEFCO, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, and Estonia [33]. At the end of the remediation project, a memorial stone was placed on top of it (Figure 1).

Figure 1. "Sillamäe jäätmehoidla saneerimine 1999–2008" (Rehabilitation of Sillamäe waste depository 1999–2008). Memorial stone to the remediation of the Sillamäe tailings pond. Photograph: Saara Mildeberg, 2 July 2021.

3.3. Changes and Development

Oil shale extraction in Estonia peaked in the 1980s and decreased in the 1990s due to post-Soviet restructuring of the industry. Depletion of mines and the economic changes related to the collapse of the Soviet Union resulted in a sharp decrease in production. People migrated from Ida-Virumaa, leaving entire districts empty and shrinking towns such as Kukruse, Viivikonna, and Sirgala into villages.

To encourage the positive development of Ida-Virumaa and promote the region's industrial heritage, the Estonian Regional Development Strategy for 2014–2020 suggests utilising the "[. . .] remaining resources of mining and industry, and abandoned mining areas and industrial buildings in tourism and other functions [. . .] through recreational and cultural services and local marketing" [39]. Although the Regional Development Policy for 2021–2024 [40] does not address tourism again, the idea of tourism in the region is ever present. As described earlier, Ida-Virumaa coastlines and its summer resorts were already popular among the Russian elites in the 19th century, and in the Soviet period, sanatoriums built in resort towns, such as Narva-Jõesuu were made available to visitors with special permits [29].

To take advantage of the tourism potential of Ida-Virumaa's peculiar scenery, improve the region's image and develop local tourism, a unified marketing campaign was launched in 2017 by the Ida-Viru Tourism Cluster, a tourism development and marketing group run by the Ida-Viru Enterprise Centre. The campaign published online (https://idaviru.ee/, accessed on 30 August 2022) introduces Ida-Virumaa as an adventure land: a concept that includes seaside spas, history museums in mining towns, water and winter sports centres in and around repurposed mines, and the sparsely populated swamp and forest landscapes that are attractive to independent hikers.

Tourism can encourage local entrepreneurship and promote ideas of sustainability and cultural exchange; however, as a field that heavily relies on exoticism and traditions, it can also damage local identities. Desire for primitive and exotic "others" in the imaginary geographies of great nations has now also turned to self-exoticism, reproducing hierarchies of cultures and nations within, while also claiming their agency and sovereignty [41]. Tourism can motivate remembrance activities through social and material encounters in areas characterised by difficult heritage, such as in the case of the international gathering of military vehicles at the former military base Borne Sulinowo, Poland [42], but can also have a problematic influence on the development of local identity. Local identity begins to depend on tourism when tourism providers select elements of nature and history to promote and assign values no longer based on personal experiences but rather on universally learned and universally understood narratives based on stereotypes and illusions about the area and its past. Socio-economic dependency on tourism can lead to the emergence of new, commercially motivated communities, such as in the case of Setomaa, Estonia [43], and the emergence of "tourism landscapes": material realities that cater to visitors but exclude local interests, or unsuccessful tourism landscapes, as described in the case study of Paldiski, Estonia [26]. In extreme cases, such as that of the Sápmi land touristification, the landscape ends up being stripped of all meanings related to its past and future, endangering Indigenous lands [44]. Complex memory and identity politics in Sillamäe and Ida-Virumaa more broadly mean that here, too, tourism development must be approached with nuance, taking into consideration how it will impact local identity.

The Planned Sillamäe Heritage Conservation Area will focus on the nucleus of the town: the first set of residential buildings built in the 1940–1950s, with two public buildings built in the same style have already been declared as cultural monuments in 2001: the House of Culture and the Cinema Rodino (Figure 2). Since institutional researchers, experts, and tourism professionals often provide an external interpretation to local characteristics thereby creating and circulating idealised and exoticised stories [26], then there is a danger that the heritage conservation area will impose a particular, external image onto Sillamäe. Examining the town as a broader heritagescape enables an exploration of its potential before the contents and the borders of the heritage conservation area are set.

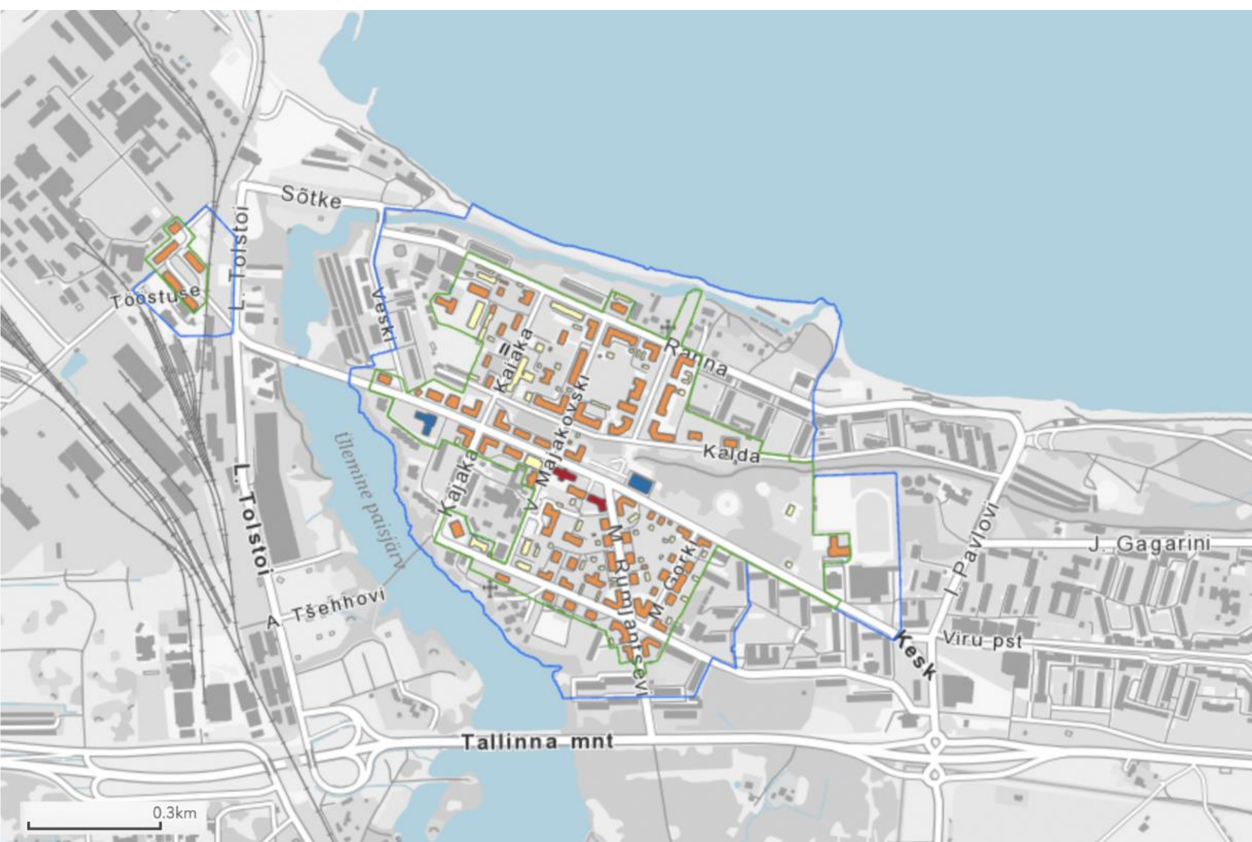

Figure 2. Proposed borders (green line marks the conservation area and blue line marks the protected zone), buildings (red, orange, and yellow designate different categories of protection), and cultural monuments (dark blue) of the Sillamäe Heritage Conservation Area. Estonian Heritage Conservation Board, 2022.

4. Results

This section is divided into two sub-categories. First, the roles of heritage and tourism are examined in the Town's Development Agenda, revealing the importance of the museum for the town's official tourism development plans. Secondly, the heritagescape approach is applied to the town centre, looking at and beyond the planned heritage conservation area and documenting the current state of affairs in the museum as a multifunctional memory institution.

4.1. The Town's Development Plan

According to paragraph 37, section 1 of the Local Government Organisation Act, each municipal district—town or parish—in Estonia is required to have its own development plan and budget strategy to better integrate and coordinate the development of different spheres of life, including long-term trends, needs, current problems and opportunities in (at least) economic, social, cultural, and natural environments, and the health of the population [45]. These development plans set the strategic goals and their expected impact for the period of their effectiveness.

The Sillamäe Town Development Plan 2022–2026 [27] is the guiding document for Sillamäe for the coming years. According to a SWOT analysis, the main goals of the town are to increase coherence with other regions in Estonia, while also internationalising its economy. In addition to increasing the number of people with Estonian citizenship and Estonian language skills, improvement and diversification of the quality of services to improve the reputation of the town as a tourism destination and the development of the necessary infrastructure, are seen as some of the key activities required to increase Sillamäe's chances of cooperation and competition in the region (p. 31, [27]). Next to

more locally oriented necessities, such as improving living and learning environments and water and canalisation infrastructure, solving traffic problems, and ensuring environmental sustainability and availability of public services and social security for the townspeople, international attraction plays a great role in Sillamäe's vision for 2030. Related goals are to become the logistical centre for both freight transport and tourism flows in Ida-Virumaa, develop an internationally attractive business environment, and become a well-known tourist destination in the Baltic Sea region, where the town's architectural heritage combined with new buildings ensures the high quality of the urban environment and encapsulates the town's identity (p. 32, [27]). Tourism is included in the first section on developing employment and entrepreneurship, and in the second, on culture. In the category of employment and entrepreneurship, tourism is a potential that can be realised through seaside and harbour development, and existing attractions in town. Tourism development would diversify entrepreneurship in the town, and help develop the service sector and infrastructure, which would also benefit local inhabitants (pp. 36–37, [27]). In the category of culture, tourists are seen as consumers of the town's cultural objects and events (p. 55, [27]).

The employment and entrepreneurship section prioritises the seaside area and emphasises the need to develop experience, leisure, sports, and urban and cultural tourism, including exhibiting Soviet history and offering "the milieu, products and activities characteristic to the era" (pp. 36–37, [27]). The overall appearance of the town centre, its buildings, and the urban seaside with its promenade are prioritised. Areas that are deemed to require renovation are the central square with its House of Culture and town hall, and the memorial sign on the square opposite of the town hall. Entrances to the town should be decorated with sculptures. Particular attention is given to Sillamäe Museum (renovation and fitting out its surroundings) and its special exhibition ('temaatiline näitus') in the House of Culture, as the museum is argued to have the potential to function as "cultural, visitor, leisure and informal education centre that commits to the collection, preservation, research, exhibition and popularisation of the culture and history of the area, using new technologies, and would grant access to all visitors through developing a modern support infrastructure, thereby also supporting the development of tourism." (p. 37, [27]).

The culture section emphasises the already existing infrastructure of cultural activities. Among others, attention is drawn to activities, development, and modernisation of the Sillamäe Museum, Sillamäe House of Culture, Sillamäe Library, hobby schools, and youth centres. A proposal is made to develop a theme park based on the exhibition of Sillamäe Museum to "preserve and exhibit the town's culture" (p. 56, [27]); this theme park has already confirmed funding to be received by 2022. In addition, new items should be acquired to the museum's collection and both the exhibition on the Soviet period and the museum's activities should be expanded. The activities of the thematic museum on the House of Culture should be broadened. The "development of tourism routes (street signs, opportunities to use the Internet, information boards, parking and leisure areas, observation decks, town decorations (incl. graffiti)), historical objects into tourism products—restoration of sculptures on Mere puiestee and the town park, creation of other works of art and small architectural objects, and emphasising of the sea theme" are listed as a concrete action plan. In addition to the town square, the seaside, and the museum with its surroundings, the area around river Sõtke, and public green spaces are emphasised in this section as important aspects that add to the milieu of the town (pp. 55–58, [27]).

The notion of heritage ("pärand") is mentioned in the section on international cooperation, where Soviet heritage along with its architecture and military industry is listed as a unique characteristic of the town (p. 67, [27]). The main target groups for industrial and tourism cooperation are Kotka and the Hamina region in Southern Finland, across the Gulf of Finland (p. 67, [27]). On this note, a ferry line already opened between Sillamäe and Kotka in 2006, but it was discontinued in 2007 due to economic reasons.

4.2. Sillamäe as a Heritagescape

The formation of a heritagescape is guided by three principles: boundaries, cohesion, and visibility [23]. In Sillamäe, two physical boundaries immediately delimit the research field: the geological break lines that have influenced the development of the town, namely the river Sõtke and the Baltic Clint. The river Sõtke in the east is an obvious boundary between the residential and the industrial part of the town; however, this boundary is challenged by another guiding principle: visibility. The newly established seaside promenade in the residential part of the town offers a clear view of the factory's two operational chimneys and a serene hill covering the tailings pond and stretching far into the Baltic Sea (Figure 3). However, the remediated waste depository is not the first thing a visitor notices. From west to east, another boundary, the Baltic Clint splits the town in two: the upper town and the lower town by the sea. Entering the town from the direction of Narva or Tallinn, the visitor has no other option than to approach the town from its cliff-top side where the highway runs; currently, the port of the town is not open for passenger traffic.

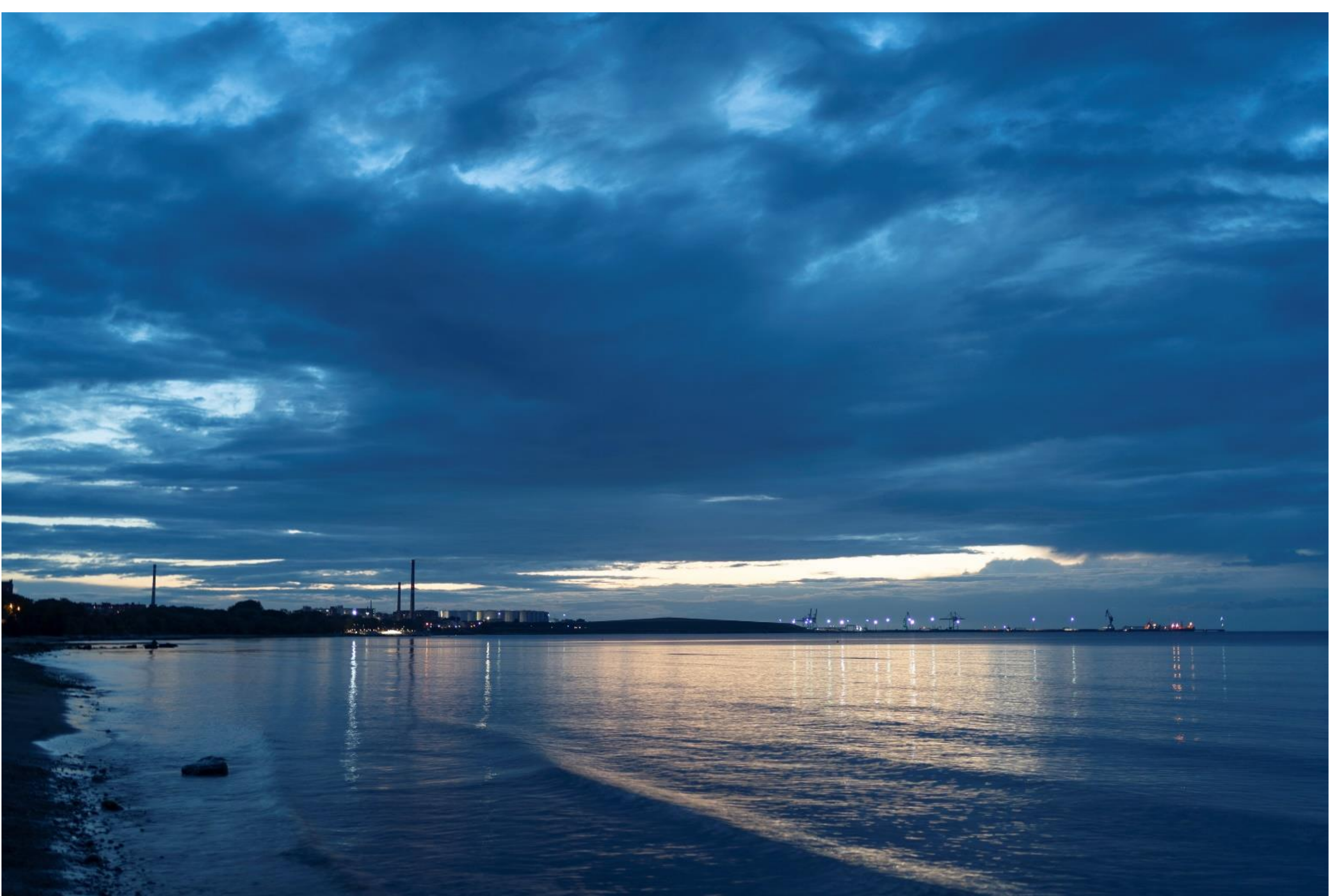

Figure 3. View from the promenade (opened in late 2020) to the western, industrial side of Sillamäe across Sõtke river. Industry on the left, waste depository in the middle, harbour on the right. Photograph: Saara Mildeberg, 9 August 2021.

In terms of its coherency, Sillamäe consists almost entirely of buildings from the Soviet era. However, one can distinguish three main architectural styles associated with different Soviet periods. Stalin-era neoclassical buildings from the late 1940s and 1950s form a nucleus, which is surrounded by five-storey silicate brick "khrushchyovkas", named after the Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev, and lastly, mostly in the eastern part of the town, large, five- to nine-storey red brick residential buildings were built during the Brezhnev era from the 1970s–1980s (Figure 4). Buildings from the 1940s–1950s have received the most attention and can be considered a unique heart of the heritagescape, forming its own boundary and

excluding other architectural styles. Those buildings are also characterised by cohesion, which the National Heritage Board of Estonia wishes to emphasise by declaring the area a heritage conservation site. The most ambitious plans of Stalinist urban planning in Estonia (Viru Square, Tallinn Cultural Centre, and Central Square of the Pärnu region) were never finished in their time [8]. Today, only Sillamäe and Kohtla-Järve have town centres built after the canonical planning principles of Stalinist architecture. Although currently there are single buildings under protection in both towns, their value and meaning as heritage objects largely depends on the recognition ensembles that surround them.

Figure 4. Brezhnev-era red brick buildings in the eastern side of the town. Photograph: Saara Mildeberg, 9 August 2021.

Continuing the journey along Kesk Street towards the old town centre, a visitor would notice a town hall building with a sharp spire. According to town guides, the town hall was built to look like a Lutheran church to convey an image of Sillamäe as just another Estonian town to anyone approaching from the sea. Across the town hall is a park with one of the few sculptures in town. Renaldo Veeber's "Man and Space", also known as "Peaceful Atom", depicts a promethean man carrying an atom and stands in the exact location where a statue of Stalin used to stand between 1951–1963. "Man and Space" was unveiled on 5 November 1987, to celebrate the town's 30th anniversary. Considering that the uranium-related activities that rendered the town a secret were still ongoing, the reference to atoms was bold. The sculpture is also exhibited in the museum as a small scale model, but there he reaches out his hands with a slate in a reference to the site-specific resource that laid the foundation to the industrial town. In the northeast corner of the park, our visitor encounters one of the first public buildings in the town: Sillamäe House (or Palace) of Culture. The establishment, built in the Stalinist neoclassical style, is still functioning as the local cultural hub and also hosts the special exhibition of the Sillamäe Museum.

The buildings in Stalinist neoclassical style create a historic milieu without reference to the hardships and terror associated with the Soviet regime; therefore, it is not possible to regard them as dark heritage [46]. Dark heritage has its place in the region, but not in

Sillamäe. The local museum could be the place where such narratives are discussed, but museums in the Ida-Virumaa region are thematised and segregated based on their focus. Sillamäe represents the history of the forbidden paradise; the manor in Kukruse is dedicated to the polar researcher, Baltic German Eduard von Toll and his family; Vaivara Museum of the Blue Hills covers the atrocities of the defence battles in 1944; Narva Museum introduces history until the independence of Estonia in 1918, with a special focus on the Swedish time; Kohtla-Nõmme Mining Museum specialises in the region's oil shale industry, providing visitors access to the underground mine; and the Oil Shale Museum in Kohtla-Nõmme showcases equipment, history, and thematic art.

The Sillamäe Museum was established by two local artists in 1995 based on the collections of the oil shale chemical factory. From 1995–2003, the museum with its exhibition hall was run by the House of Culture. Since 2004, the Sillamäe Museum has been run as an independent institution and since 2014, it has been housed in a separate building. The museum works closely together with the town government of Sillamäe, receiving regular funding from the town budget, and the strategic goals of the museum match with what the town expects it to become, prioritising four directions: "mediation and popularisation of cultural heritage", "development of tourism service and improvement of service quality", "collection, preservation and attractive display of the history of the area", "development of museum pedagogy" [47].

The museum's exhibitions are located in two buildings: the main exhibition is in the lower part of the town in a two-storey former kindergarten building at Kajaka 17a, while the Soviet-themed exhibition is in the upper part of town in the basement of the still functioning House of Culture at Kesk 24. The two exhibitions have two different stories to tell about the town. Both geographically and architecturally, the location of the Soviet exhibition gives it an advantage compared to the rest of the museum downtown. The House of Culture that houses the Soviet exhibition was designed by Aleksandr Popov in 1946–1947 and built in 1947–1950. It has been recognised as an architectural monument and the basement of the building, a former bomb shelter, is where the exhibition dedicated to the town's Soviet period is located. The exhibition is divided into four rooms. Two rooms focus on the building itself: the first room examines the history and architecture of the House of Culture and the second displays the bomb shelter's ventilation system along with equipment such as uniforms and gas masks.

The third room is a walk-through room and is the most text-intensive part of the exhibition, hosting a pyramid of the Collected Works by Lenin and the biographical book "Meie noorusaastad" (*The Years of Our Youth*) or "Ka oo ..." (*How young we were*), compiled of materials from the museum's archive, town library, the archives of the local newspaper "Sillamäe Vestnik", and information found online. The book, published in 2015, is written by and dedicated to the builders of the factory and the town and includes a list of the names of the first people that settled in the industrial town. Although this introduction is written in Estonian, there is only one article, "Sillamäe sünnilugu" (*Birth Story of Sillamäe*) by Vaino Kallas in Estonian, the rest of the materials are "in their original language", i.e., Russian. The biography of Sillamäe in Kallas' article begins in winter 1944–1945, when geologists from Moscow arrived to examine the local graptolitic argillite for uranium oxides, and ends with a mention that the town was a "closed town" from 1947 until 1991. According to the museum representative, the closed-ness tends to be overemphasised, as the town was next to the main road between Tallinn and St. Petersburg. The main reason why people wanted to come to Sillamäe, was because it was better supplied with goods, and it is said that various tricks, such as leaving the car and walking the last few kilometres to town to sneak through the checkpoints, were used to get in.

Two busts of Lenin guard the entrance to the fourth room, where an oil painting of Stalin in front of a freshly ploughed field with transmission towers immediately catches the visitor's eye. This room is mostly object-based but since the music of the TV show shown on loop in the upper corner of the room fills the whole shelter, it sets the mood for the whole exhibition. Some of the items have explanatory signs in Estonian and Russian

next to them, but non-Estonian or non-Russian speakers are left completely clueless. This part of the exhibition is especially coherent in its use of known Soviet symbols, but without explanations, the visitor is in danger of getting lost in the colourful bric-a-brac.

Looking down from the park next to the House of Culture, the visitor is met with a breath-taking view of the sea. A cascade of stairs leads down from the park to the boulevard, Mere puiestee, literally, "the Sea Boulevard" (Figure 5), that continues between decorated residential buildings almost until the sea, to what used to be hinterland at the western border of the Soviet Union, but is now the newly established promenade. The "pearl of Sillamäe" (as referred to by the Information and Marketing Specialist, among others) makes use of the Baltic cliff that cuts the town into two levels. Thanks to the neoclassical architectural style, pale yellow colour, and worn-off look of the residential buildings, one feels like they have remained in the past when walking through the old town after a visit to the Soviet exhibition. The steps were originally decorated with plaster statues and palm trees, uncommon in the northern climate of Estonia. Considered part of the attempt to embody an image of communist paradise on earth [35], these statues are among the ones that are to be restored according to the Development Plan [27].

Figure 5. The view from the top of the stairs through the boulevard to the sea. The location is sometimes used as a pop-up concert venue, here during the Town Days for the concert of singer Anne Veski. Photograph: Saara Mildeberg, 29 June 2021.

Still surrounded by Stalinist buildings, the visitor has to turn left from the boulevard to make their way to the main building of the Sillamäe Museum at Kajaka 17a. Inside this part of the museum, the curators have tried their best to give an overview of the whole recorded history of Sillamäe, that is, from the 19th century until the collapse of the Soviet Union, when the town lost its special status as a nuclear town. The two floors of the building are divided into several exhibition halls that, together with collections not on display, crowd all the rooms of the former kindergarten. The recently deceased treasurer of the museum Alexandr Popolitov's stone and mineral collection fills one of the larger rooms in the right

wing on the ground floor, but also leaves space for a tiny and cramped exhibition of various household items of the pre-industrial era. The left wing introduces the international and industrial history of Sillamäe: from the annual visitors of the Russian intelligentsia to the resort town in the late 19th century, to the beginning of the industrial era in the late 1920s, to the new settlers who arrived in and after the late 1940s and their privileged life in the secret nuclear town. Another, smaller room on the ground floor features a reconstruction of a Stalin-era domestic interior. When discussing the museum's collections that are not on display, the representative of the museum explained that the museum also has a collection of paintings of Sillamäe as a resort from its pre-industrial era, when tourists would visit the South Coast of the Gulf of Finland for its refreshing water and the pleasant smell of pine trees.

The rooms on the first floor are reserved for an exhibition of musical instruments, temporary exhibitions and local art initiatives. Again, although there are textual objects here and there, there are very few written clues that connect the images and objects and it is difficult to navigate in the exhibition without a guide. However, this is not a conscious choice, but a misfortune of time and financial resources, as the representative explained. Providing the exhibition with titles and explanations is in process, but lack of staff, especially Estonian-speaking staff, is hindering it considerably.

5. Discussion

This section is informed by the heritagescape approach and includes the opinions formed by the local tourism stakeholders based on their experiences. The previous sections illustrate that creating a coherent tourism image of Sillamäe is and has been a struggle of identities and different historical narratives. To compare with the town's official development plan and fieldwork location, a local tourism entrepreneur and representatives of the Sillamäe Museum and Town Government were asked about the tourism challenges in Sillamäe. Additional comments were gathered from the representatives of the regional Tourism Cluster and Visit Estonia, the national tourism board. Three key narratives for Sillamäe's tourist identity emerge: the uncomplicated history of a resort town, the best-preserved example of Soviet urban planning, and a mysterious industrial hub. However, each narrative has its issues for tourism development.

Searching for a marketing strategy, it is important to stand out but also to fit in an attractive and preconceived niche. The town's promotional logo was recently updated to match the town's motto "Sillamäe—the town of fresh sea winds" (*Sillamäe—värskete meretuulte linn*) on the commission of the Town's Information and Marketing Specialist. The logo from 2017 featured the industrial area's two chimneys and a seagull and the new one from 2020 includes stylised symbols depicting the town hall, House of Culture, harbour at the end of the promenade, boats, and green areas of the town. In addition, both wavy lines above and underneath the panorama and the alternating colours of the composition are conceptualised as symbols of the positive aspects of a clean and welcoming resort town.

The resort image pursued in the logo and town's motto is however challenged by the seasonality aspect. The local independent tour guide and tourism entrepreneur arrived to the area at the turn of the century and, at first, lived in a nearby farm they had received back through privatisation. They began working in tourism in 1998, at first as a guide in Europe for various tour operators. Then they started receiving guests at their own farm. In 2001–2002, they started spending more time in Sillamäe and bought their first apartment in around 2010. They now own three apartments in town which are rented out through Airbnb and Booking.com. In an interview in Sillamäe on 14 September 2021, they reflect on the journey: *"Finally, I understood that it is very difficult to invest in a thing that works for three months and doesn't work for nine months. There is no point in making big expenses. Luckily, I wasn't granted a loan and luckily, I didn't receive any financial aid, so I couldn't do anything more. Otherwise I would have to pay the loan back now and it would be very . . . [. . .] This is why I went over to [renting out] apartments, at least they are [working] throughout the year"*. With their experience, they propose a national scheme where investments into regions outside of the

main towns—Tallinn, Tartu, and Pärnu—could be tax-free for five years, until the business is truly established.

Focus on the Soviet era could help Sillamäe become an all-year tourism destination, both for domestic and international visitors. Both the local museum representative and the independent entrepreneur agree on this, although their view differs slightly when discussing what exactly makes the town attractive: is it just the buildings, or the people as well? The museum representative argued that 'Russian culture' gives visitors a feeling of being in 'another Estonia' and is the main attraction in Sillamäe. This 'Russian culture', that to them is synonymous with 'Soviet culture', consists of Soviet-era architecture and the segment of population that arrived in the town after WWII. The independent entrepreneur did not fully agree since for them 'Soviet culture' consists exclusively of tangible objects: that 'what was made during the Soviet era'. They offered a parallel with the unimaginable event of singing Soviet songs and waving red flags, while the architecture that was built then still remains and is allegedly gaining value in the eyes of the local people over time.

A point of view presented by the Tourism Board representative in an interview on 2 December 2021 illustrates that there has not only been a shift in the authorised heritage discourse, but also in what the visitors are after. They provide a list of advantages Ida-Virumaa has due to its peculiar history and Soviet heritage.

Ida-Virumaa can:

(1) Cater to the tourists that seek adventures and like-a-local approaches;
(2) Provide young tourists with the interesting and exciting experience of the Soviet era and its legacy that they have heard about but never experienced themselves;
(3) Provide the opportunity to experience 'Russian culture' in the safety of the European Union;
(4) Help bridge the generational gap in understanding between those who lived in the Soviet Union and their offspring.

Heritage is a collective identity manifested in physical objects and accepting heritage sites as landscapes locates them in a fluid, changing space with which people regularly interact, and not just as part of an evolving storyline or developing ideologies [23]. Officially acknowledged heritage status may bring attention to the town but it alone does not guarantee investments and development. The representative of the museum expresses hope that a Heritage Conservation Area could help to reach the critical mass of attention needed for investments and action. The independent entrepreneur is convinced that the younger generation has more enthusiasm to invest in the town and repair the buildings according to the requirements of the Heritage Conservation rules. One of the obstacles in their eyes is the existence of housing associations, where everyone living in the same building has to agree on the repairs.

Currently, there are two buildings under heritage protection in Sillamäe, both since 2001: the House of Culture (Kesk 24) and the former Cinema Rodina (Kesk 11). While the House of Culture has been renovated and is currently being used as a cultural centre hosting various events, the building of the former cinema has been privatised, is out of use, and has no clear future plans. According to the local tourism entrepreneur, it is easier for the owner to pay the fine for neglecting the building than to renovate it. His proposed solution is to set a deadline for the renovations; if the owner fails to meet the deadline, the building should be forcefully sold. Both the independent entrepreneur and the representative of the museum propose a variety of functions for the building that lacks tourism infrastructure, such as accommodation or catering venues due to the special status of the town during its foundation and for decades that followed: a cultural centre, youth centre, event venue, restaurant, etc. Only one hotel exists in the town and some opportunities exist via the Airbnb portal, but nothing for groups of tourists.

The seaside promenade, opened in late 2020, is seen as a potential event location in the future, if or when a passenger terminal is opened at the port of Sillamäe, which currently only functions as an industrial harbour. The independent entrepreneur and the representatives of the Town Government and the town Museum all express interest in creating tours to the industrial area for visitors. Although the privately owned Port of

Sillamäe (AS Sillamäe Sadam) supports local cultural life, it is currently not interested in receiving commercial tourists nor discussing the current state of tourism activities in the port. The situation is further complicated by the fact that the area is used by several international companies. In other towns in Ida-Virumaa, the wounds and scars of broken supply and demand connections are still visible as (semi-)abandoned industrial complexes—which are simply too large to host contemporary production and are looking for re-purposing and/or investors—while Sillamäe as a port town with a successfully re-oriented industry is a notable exception. Although its social function has also changed since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the port occasionally organises tours for its partners and prospective employees and anyone in the town can visit once a year in late June or early July during the Sillamäe Town Days.

On the potential of Sillamäe as an industrial tourist destination, the local independent entrepreneur comments: *"I think the thing is still too raw or too fresh here."* While operational industries are not suitable for or willing to participate in tourism, post-industrial spaces require external funding to be suited for visitors. The former Kreenholm textile factory complex in Narva and the Mining Museum in Kohtla-Nõmme are examples of former industrial spaces that combine architecture and history and draw international attention as elements in global networks of similar objects. In an interview on 15 December 2021, the representative of the Ida-Viru Tourism Cluster also remains sceptical about industrial tourism, but for different reasons, as in the Ida-Viru context, industry *"bears the fossil [fuel] footprint of the oil shale industry"*. Although oil shale is also used in the chemical industry, they do not think this explanation would be sufficient for the younger generation that is critically minded about fossil fuels. However, they are relatively optimistic about providing offers based on education on the use of oil shale for business tourism.

From the three potential narratives for Sillamäe's tourist identity, the uncomplicated history of a resort town and the best-preserved example of Soviet urban planning are the most widely prompted. The narrative of an industrial town with nuclear legacy remains in sight, but unexplored.

6. Conclusions

The town of Sillamäe in Northeast Estonia has in recent years received attention as the first area where Soviet architecture would be under protection in Estonia. This offers both opportunities and challenges for the local tourism development. Stakeholders on all levels agree that the critical mass of dwellers and entrepreneurs must be backed up on a national level to increase investments in the town. The emerging Heritage Conservation Area is welcomed by the local representatives, as they are already accustomed to relying on the image of a Soviet town. It may, on the one hand, provide the attention needed to overcome marginalisation, attract investments, and challenge the seasonality of tourism in the region. On the other hand, it can force the town into a loop of circular referencing that denies attention to the town as a whole. Sillamäe as a nuclear urbanism site and industrial hub remains underexplored, but even whole Soviet heritage is visible and emphasised in the town and its museum; the lack of explanations leaves its meaning ambiguous and open to interpretations. The heritagescape as a theory and method offers the visitors of Sillamäe a chance to experience a curated version of the Soviet era and contemplate on the legacy of nuclear industry, while remaining in the safety of a resort town. This kind of analysis in the urban planning could provide important insights on how a visitor experiences the place and use this information to better mitigate knowledge exchange between different groups of people.

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Article

The Tourism Potential of the Jewish Cultural Heritage in Bucharest

Elena Bogan

Department of Human and Economic Geography, Faculty of Geography, University of Bucharest, 010041 Bucharest, Romania; elena.bogan@geo.unibuc.ro

Abstract: The field of tourism includes its own heritage, through which it is possible to valorize those components of the cultural environment and of the cultural heritage that truly have a touristic valence. The urban interventions in Bucharest during the communist period affected many central historical areas. However, a part of the Jewish architectural heritage continues to last, with the attention on it increasing in recent years with the awareness of its value. The aim of this study is to assess the tourist potential of the Jewish cultural heritage by using an index of tourist attractiveness and a set of values established as evaluation criteria; identifying the heritage values as well as the ways of its development and promotion within the cultural tourism in Bucharest, in the context of preservation, conservation and restoration; identifying new ideas, products or services, respectively improving existing ones.

Keywords: Jewish cultural heritage; tourist potential; cultural tourism; tourism product; niche tourism; heritage values; Bucharest

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1. Introduction

Heritage tourism is linked to cultural diversity—past or present, and ethnic minorities have become a significant part of the tourism industry. Heritage can be considered a modern use of the past according to the current cultural, social and economic realities [1], and cultural heritage is viewed as a leading determinant of tourist choices of travel destinations [2–5]. Thus, one of the branches of the modern tourism industry with the most dynamic development is cultural tourism, promoted through heritage sites, which is the main incentive for the development of specific tourism products [6].

In a study carried out in Syracuse, Italy, Corsale and Krakover pointed out that a cosmopolitan and multicultural historical city (Syracuse) specializes in cultural tourism and tends to develop niche products, including Jewish heritage tourism (J.H.T), in order to strengthen and diversify its status as an international cultural destination [7].

Along with cultural tourism, in recent years, ethnic tourism has benefited from continuous development. Numerous studies reveal the positive consequences of ethnic tourism [8–15], with tourists being often attracted by cultural diversity, which also leads to the growth of various tourism products and destinations [16–20].

Multicultural and ethnic tourism is found in those urban agglomerations that are a true mosaic of minority groups. The presence of minority populations has led to the emergence of the phenomena of borrowing cultural elements, or gradual assimilation. However, there are minority groups that have carefully preserved their traditions and passed them on from generation to generation, preserving their cultural identity at the institutional and social level. The best known in Europe are the groups of Jews and Turks. According to Yang and Wall, with the widespread integration of ethnic tourism worldwide, the "consumption" of this product has become "fashionable" [21].

Ethnic tourism is used by many countries to facilitate economic and cultural development but also to help conserve their heritage [21]. Ethnic tourists choose to experience primarily the practices and customs of another culture, which may involve shows, presentations and events or activities that portray or present the lifestyle of local communities.

In a broader perspective, this type of tourism includes the following several components: culture, heritage, anthropological background, urban aspects and other similar types of tourism.

If this type of tourism is properly planned and managed, it can be promoted as a form of sustainable tourism and can be used as a tool for preserving and conserving culture and heritage [22]. The introduction on the tourist market of several niche segments has become a common practice in the tourism industry, with almost every city developing a form of tourism packaged and directed to specific groups, with a specific message. One such example is multicultural and ethnic tourism, which involves addressing certain types of tourists.

Currently, cities, especially in Europe, are engaged in developing their Jewish heritage resources [23–26], as there is a growing worldwide trend towards preserving and developing Jewish heritage tourism [27–30]. Thus, the old Jewish quarters represent a first-hand tourist attraction, such as in Barcelona, where it is the Ell Call district, located in the middle of the Barri Gòtic, or in Madrid, the Lavapide district; in Prague, the old Jewish area, synagogues from Venice's ghetto or the antique judería of Toledo [31], in Vienna, the Judenplats district and in Berlin, the Jewish quarter Scheunenviertel. Paris has the most exclusive Jewish quarter in the Marais, one of the most expensive areas of the metropolis. In Bucharest, the megalomania of an uneducated president generated the policy of destroying everything that was old.

Bucharest continues to offer many cultural and historical attractions and testimonies of bygone times. During the communist period, urban interventions affected many central historical areas, changing names and even the street plot, but the fall of the communist regime did not bring with it a significant change of attitude regarding the architectural heritage, which was affected on one hand by the lack of funds for conservation and restoration and, on the other hand, by the economic pressure that has led to inappropriate real estate developments in these historic areas.

The Jewish community was in the interwar period the largest minority in Bucharest, representing almost 11% of the population. Another fact is related to the ancientness of the Jews in the area; the first testimonies dating before the 16th century, from the area near the royal court, where they worked as doctors or creditors. Over time, the involvement of the Jewish population in Romanian society has been quite important—whether we are talking about the Sephardim coming from southern Europe or the Ashkenazi from the north, with all the difficulties they had to face politically or socially. Corsale, quoting Streja and Schwarz, points out that "the south-eastern districts of Văcărești and Dudești were the heart of the religious and communal life, but Jews settled in all central districts of the city, especially in areas of intense economic growth, and were active in many fields, including commerce and trade, industry, finance, medicine and arts" [32,33].

Interventions during the communist period severely affected this neighborhood, shaken by anti-Semitic events before and during World War II. One of the most significant losses is the Spanish Grand Temple "Cahal Grande", which burned during the legionary events of 1941. The temple, built in 1818 in Văcărești, was the most beautiful synagogue not only in the country but in southeastern Europe. Within a few decades, starting with the middle of the 19th century, several dozen synagogues and houses of prayer were being built, with a predilection around the Văcărești road.

Today, only a few survived the legionary rebellion of 1941, the earthquake of 1977, and, last but not least, the urban restructuring of the communist period. In most cases, the synagogues are owned by the Jewish Community of Bucharest, although there are still buildings that house other functions with private ownership. Of the synagogues left today, some have benefited from restorations and some are still in operation, either constantly or, due to the small number of parishioners, only on the occasion of large holidays.

At present, the traces of Jewish housing are no longer visible in many places. Beyond the specific character of houses with shops on the ground floor, generally located in the central or commercial areas, the Jewish architectural heritage in Bucharest refers to the

synagogue architecture, houses or banks owned by large Jewish owners, shops and schools, which are still clearly recognizable tourist assets [33–35]. It is remarkable not only that these buildings still exist, despite the demolitions, but also that most researchers or visitors to these places are non-Jews, people who want to know about and preserve the memory of Jewish Bucharest.

Knowing the Jewish built heritage is the first and easiest step for knowledge and understanding, and, implicitly, a chance to recover the spiritual heritage values, and, according to some authors, Jewish heritage preservation can be used to revive dialogue with a forgotten past that may also contribute to urban tourism development in the future [27].

2. Methodology and Research Approach

In order to approach this research topic, it was started from a strictly qualitative aspect. Through the study, the values that can be attributed to cultural heritage assets were determined, and those, in turn, support valorization through tourism.

Culture is an accumulation of information, religious beliefs, means of manifestation of traditional and modern arts, moral practices and customs, tangible and intangible assets preserved and transmitted from one generation to another [36]. Cultural heritage includes a very diverse range of assets that, for the most part, also have tourist values. In addition, by summing up a larger number of values, these assets can become brands for many tourist products, giving them originality, authenticity, attractiveness and better positioning in the tourism market.

The relationship between the concepts of "culture" and "heritage" sometimes makes it difficult to separate the two terms when referring to tourism experiences [37]. Thus, there is a long-standing debate in the literature about the definition and conceptualization of the notion of cultural / heritage tourism, due to the increasing complexity of the concepts of heritage, culture and tourism [38].

The primary research involved unstructured personal interviews with travel agents and local guides, as well as with local stakeholders (associations) relevant to the topic. Field observations were also made to correlate the information obtained with the reality on the ground, as well as for obtaining a better knowledge of the analyzed subject.

The secondary research was implemented by processing data and information from existing official websites, travel agencies and associations, consulting the list of historical monuments, using various databases, to which are added statistical data taken from the National Institute of Statistics (http://www.insse.ro, accessed on 9 March 2022) for the formulation of some final findings.

The maps were made in the ArcGIS program, version 10.6.1, by the author, in Bucharest, Romania, using open-source data from OpenStreetMap, vector data in polygon type shapefile layers for buildings and polyline for the street plot. Moreover, the attractions of cultural, historical and tourist interest of the Jewish community were mapped, using as a basemap the map from OpenStreetMap, available for ArcGIS, and the boundaries of the Jewish quarter in the interwar period versus those of today. In the end, two maps were exported, a general one, at the level of Bucharest, of the traces of the Jewish community, and one at the level of the Jewish Quarter.

The development of heritage tourism assumes the existence of tourism potential that, through its attractiveness, aims to ensure the integration of an area, region or country in domestic and international tourist circuits, in order to valorize this heritage and satisfy the motivations of tourism participants. Mayo and Jarvis considered that attractiveness can be defined as the perceived ability of the destination to deliver individual benefits [39]. In the specialized literature, the tourism potential of specific cultural assets is mainly focused on aspects linked to their value as a heritage asset, from a historical, architectural and artistic perspective [40–44].

The identification, inventory and knowledge of all the components of tourism potential, their grouping in space and then their qualitative and quantitative evaluation, are

necessary in order to establish the development opportunities, the forms of development and the priorities of valorization in tourism that they can generate [45].

The main elements of analysis for the delimitation of areas with tourism potential take into account the following aspects: (a) existence of tourism resources, varied in structure, volume, dimensions and tourism value; (b) concentration of tourism resources in the territory, which determines a certain particularity of this territory; (c) the specifics and dimensions of some components of the tourism potential, and d) the qualitative and quantitative characteristics of the tourism resources, which confer a tourism function. These elements lead to outlining some criteria for the delimitation of tourist areas, which regard the heritage as a whole, and which point out its essential and complex elements [45,46].

In practice, several directions for calculating the tourist attraction coefficient have been outlined, which also have some common methodological elements [47–49]. One such method, for example, is that of the simple arithmetic average, which is based on the analysis and taking into account the components of natural or anthropic tourism potential, and the tourism function generated by these resources (cultural tourism, niche tourism, etc.).

Thus, the tourist attractiveness index is calculated, according to some specialists [45,47–49], taking into account the following three categories of elements (factors): the potential offer (natural and cultural-historical resources, practicable tourist activities); the secondary offer (access and accessibility, the material base, the general picture) and the technical resources (potential and means of action, integration into national and international development programs) [47].

The tourist attractiveness index has an important role in determining the tourism value of some regions, areas, tourist resorts or tourist attractions and in establishing (along with other elements) the opportunities and priorities for valorization in tourism [45,47–49].

In the evaluation of the tourist attractiveness index of some cultural heritage tourist attractions, the major components (criteria) of anthropic tourist resources are taken into account; these groups of factors of attractiveness can be divided into component elements that constitute a lower level of tree (subcriteria) [47–49].

In the structure of each element that is part of the Jewish cultural heritage tourist offer, the following factors were included and analyzed: (A) anthropic tourist resources: ethnic quarter, memorial monuments; synagogues and temples; museums; ethnic cemeteries; cultural life, and (B) the technical-material base: food structures for tourism: restaurants, bars, etc., classic or specific (with traditional dishes).

The qualitative and quantitative levels of these components can be assessed using different scales with 3 or 5 scalar intervals. The scale of 3 values is considered acceptable, taking into account the possibility of more objective evaluation of the quality of analyzed components.

The main element that determines the potential and attractiveness of cities to tourists is the architectural value, particularly the one of the historical buildings [2–5]. Architectural value, as well as local urban spaces, is also unique and may enhance the tourist attractiveness of a city [50,51]. The Jewish heritage product embraces a set of specific elements listed in descending order of their appearance as follows: Jewish quarter, synagogues, Jewish museums, memorials and Jewish cemeteries [24,28]. Based on the specialized literature [52], it is appreciated that the component elements of the tourism product participate in a differentiated way in establishing its functionality.

The structure of each element includes a certain number of sub-elements, hierarchically differentiated and appreciated on a scale of values between 0 and 3, depending on quality, originality and competitiveness [48]. The four scalar intervals refer to the following aspects: 0 = for the non-existence of the factor or very low intensity in time and space, unfavorable factor due to physical and moral degradation, pollution, etc.; 1 = low intensity, non-competitive internationally; 2 = satisfactory quality, limited national and international interest; 3 = originality, notoriety, favors the development of international tourism. Within the methodology for evaluating the degree of tourist attractiveness of the elements com-

posing a Jewish cultural heritage tourism product, the global attractiveness index was defined [48], calculated based on the following mathematical formula:

$$q = \sum_{i=1}^{m} q_i \times P_i \quad (1)$$

where q = the global index of tourist attractiveness; i = 1,2,3, . . . —number of elements; m = number of elements taken into account; qi = the participation coefficient of each element in establishing the tourism functionality; Pi = the partial index of attractiveness whose element "i" is calculated according to the following formula:

$$P_i = \frac{\sum_{j=1}^{n} V_{ij}}{n_i} \quad (2)$$

where Vij = the value assigned to each sub-element "j" within the element "i"; n = total number of sub-elements.

As the value of the sub-elements falls in the range 0–3, it results that the field of existence of the two indices of attractiveness will fall within the same limits, with the following meanings: for the range 0–1 the tourist offer is not significant; for the interval 1–2 the tourist offer has limited value; for the interval 2–3 the tourist offer has a high value, with the area being internationally competitive.

Based on the methodological tools presented, it is possible to evaluate the elements and parameters for each type of tourist attraction. For each cultural heritage tourist attraction, the representative elements for the tourism potential and for the development perspectives were analyzed, according to evaluation criteria described in part 4. The qualitative approach to the tourism potential allowed the identification of the main directions of its valorization.

3. Identifying the Tourist Places of Interest of the Jewish Cultural Heritage

The subject of this research was approached from a limited perspective, of what was considered more relevant from a tourism point of view, not being included here places and prominent personalities of the Jewish community in Bucharest, which are treated in other broader materials. Following the information and data obtained, as well as field observations and interviews, a number of attractions of interest to tourism were identified and selected, in order to outline a tourism product.

They are divided into the following several groups: The Jewish Quarter of Bucharest is considered a symbolic space (here being the most representative place of the religious institutional system and also a space where Jewish culture is present in a commercial way for both Jews and tourists, as well as for locals); followed by synagogues, museums, memorials, cemeteries, cultural life (theater, cultural and artistic events) and gastronomy. These are briefly presented below.

Jewish Quarter. Although the boundaries are debatable (Figure 1), the Jewish Quarter is today only a small part of what used to be the Jewish quarters in Bucharest. The Jewish community itself was very diverse, with people from the Ottoman Empire [53], Spain, Poland or Ukraine.

In 1941, the 102,018 Jews living in Bucharest represented 11% of the city's population, but at the last census, in 2011, only 1333 still lived in Bucharest (Figure 2). The exodus to Israel or the West began due to persecution during the Antonescu regime and communism [35], and the beginning of work for the Civic Center, in conjunction with the extensive process of emigration of ethnic Jews to Israel, which led to the removal of the last enclaves inhabited by the Jewish population in the center of Bucharest [54] (Figure 3).

Figure 1. Delimitation of the Jewish Quarter (1939/2022) within the city of Bucharest. Source: author, 2022.

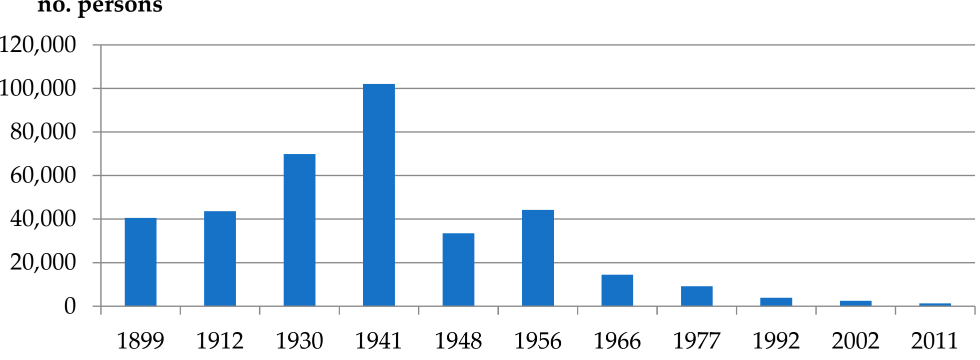


Figure 2. Demographic evolution of Jews in Bucharest (1899—2011). Source: processed data according to the Censuses of the Romanian population, 1899—2011 and according to the data of the partial Census from 1948.

Lately, there has been a revival of the old Jewish quarter. The museums of the Jewish quarter can be visited, housed in the renovated buildings of the Choral Temple and the Great Synagogue and also in the renovated building of the Holy Union Temple (since 1978, the museum of the Jewish community, today under the name of the "Nicolae Cajal" Museum of Jewish History and Culture in Romania). In the same area, old connections are reborn between former Jewish buildings and memorials as follows: the new Alexandru Șafran square and the Memorial of the Jewish Victims of the Pogrom in Bucharest (behind the Great Synagogue), the building of the State Jewish Theater, the building of the new

Jewish high school “Laude-Reut” or the Center for the Study of the History of the Jews in Romania, “Wilhelm Filderman”.

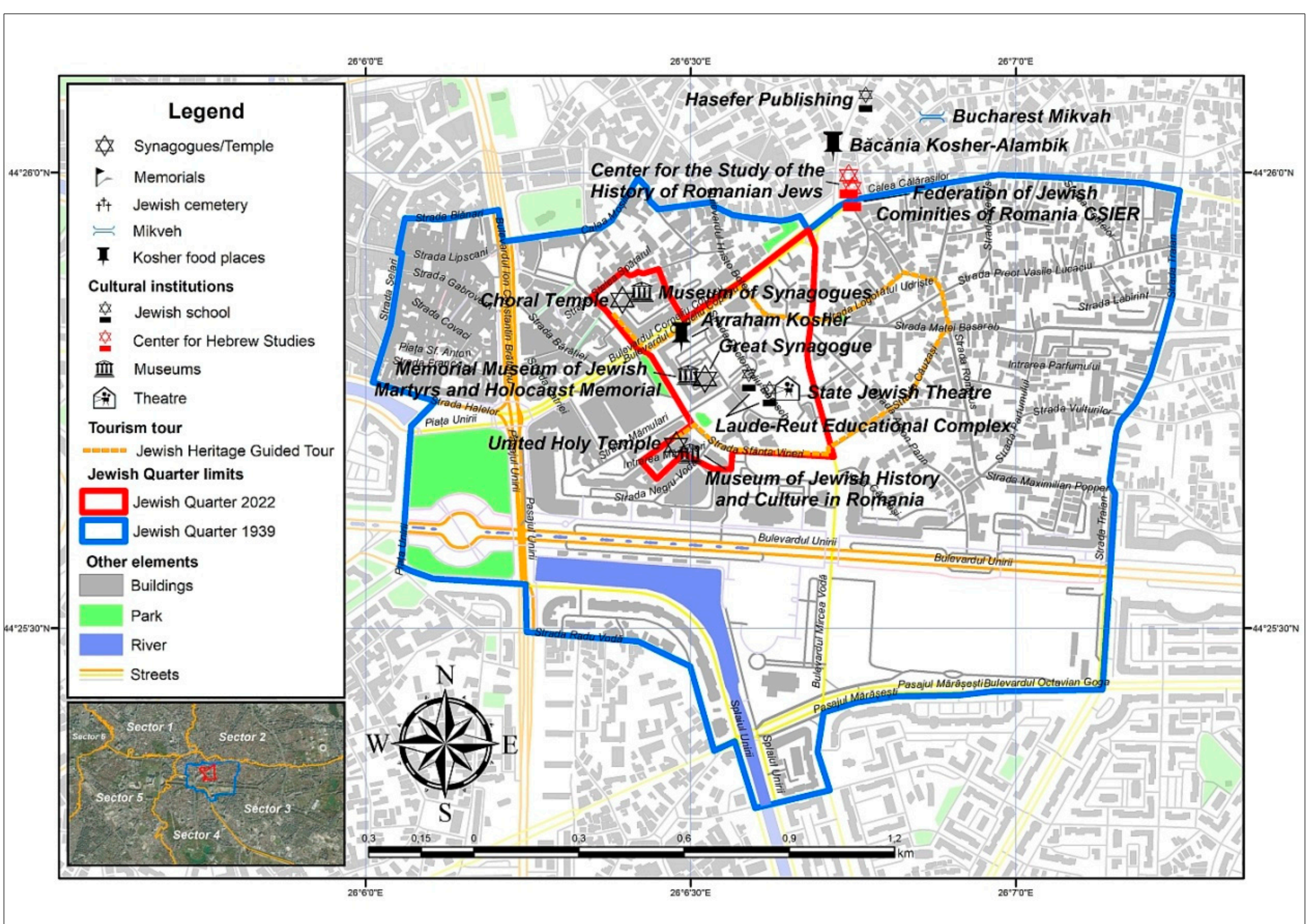


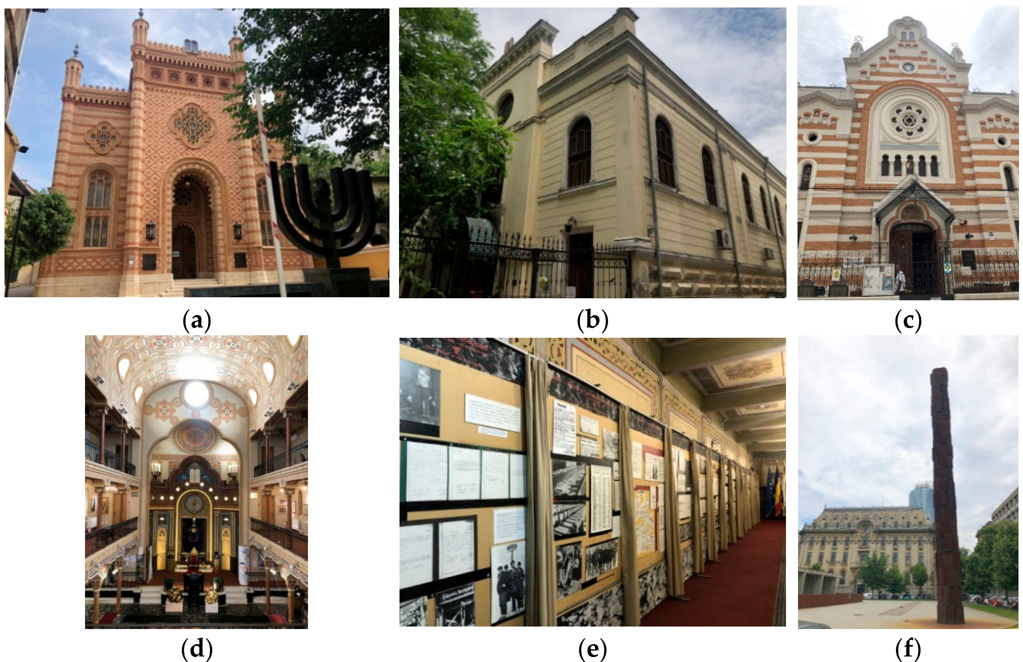
Figure 3. Distribution of tourist attractions in the delimited perimeter of the Jewish Quarter (1939/2022). Source: author, 2022.

Synagogues/Temples. Historic synagogues are heritage sites and, as such, are a resource for tourism [55]. **Choral Temple** in Bucharest is a synagogue of the Jewish Community in Bucharest, being the largest mosaic place of worship in the city. It has an area of 700 m^2, two floors and a basement. The building was built between 1864 and 1866 and was renovated between 1932 and 1945. It is the most famous tourist attraction, being also a place of worship frequented by the Jewish community. The structure of the project was designed by two Viennese architects; the temple was built in the Moorish-Byzantine style, and it is a faithful copy of the Temple in Vienna. At the beginning of 2008, new works of consolidation, conservation and restoration of the temple were realized. In the courtyard, in front of the temple, there is an impressive monument, built in memory of the Holocaust in Europe. The Choral Temple in Bucharest has been included on the list of historical monuments in the category of historical monuments of national or universal value (Figure 4a).

Great Synagogue is a synagogue built in 1846, with an area of 715 m^2. Since 1991, it has hosted the Memorial of the Jewish Martyrs, and the organization of religious events is prohibited. The synagogue was originally known as the Polish Synagogue, being built at the initiative of Ashkenazi Jewish communities of Polish origin and it is the only place of worship to be built by this community. The architecture of the synagogue is in the neoclassical style. The transformations produced in 1903 following a series of interventions

gave the building the shape we can still admire today. In the period 2004–2007, the building was renovated again only on the outside. The synagogue was reopened in 2007 and it can now be visited (Figure 4b).

United Holy Temple was built in 1836 and has an area of 305 m^2, a ground floor and two levels. It has a façade with Moorish, Romanesque and post-Byzantine elements. Starting in 1978, in this building was built the Museum of History of the Jews of Romania, redesigned and reopened in 2019 under the name of the Museum of History and Culture of the Jews of Romania. The Holy Union Temple can be visited and has been included on the List of historical monuments in the category of historical monuments of national or universal value (Figure 4c,d).



(**a**) (**b**) (**c**) (**d**) (**e**) (**f**)

Figure 4. (**a**) Choral Temple and the menorah monument; (**b**) Great Synagogue; (**c**) United Holy Temple; (**d**) inside of the United Holy Temple; (**e**) Holocaust Museum, inside of the Great Synagogue; (**f**) the Holocaust Memorial. Source: author, 2022.

Yeshua Tova Synagogue, also known as the Mogoșoaiei Bridge Synagogue, was built in 1840 and has an area of 295 m^2, and is designed in the Moorish style. It is currently the oldest synagogue in Bucharest. Above the entrance, there is an ornament where the Ten Commandments are written. At the same time, the synagogue underwent several restoration works, and in 2007 a special inauguration took place with traditional prayers and dances. Moreover, above one of the main entrances, you can see a stone representation of a seven-armed chandelier and also the Star of David. Today, this synagogue is still functional and can be visited.

Faith Temple Hevrah Amuna, also called the Faith Synagogue, was built in 1926 and has an area of 289 m^2. The style of the building is predominantly modernist and modest and it is currently insufficiently maintained. Services are still organized here, although the Jewish population in the area is very small. Remarkable to this building is its interior and the central ornament, represented by a circular decorative motif with the Star of David. The temple was included on the list of historical monuments in the category of architectural monuments representative of the local cultural heritage.

Museums. **Museum of Jewish history and Culture in Romania** is located inside the United Holy Temple, a building declared a historical monument and was founded in 1978. The museum is offering visitors the opportunity to learn about the history of the Jewish community in Romania, its origins, growth, contribution and influence on the Romanian culture, economy and political life.

Holocaust Museum is located inside the Great Synagogue since 1991. Moreover, there is an excellent and very interesting exhibition dedicated to Jewish martyrs, which contains many exhibits, newspaper clippings and photographs that record the state of the Jewish ethnic group during WWII. Guided tours are available for this museum (Figure 4e).

Museum of Synagogues, **Mosaic Worship and Religious Life** is located on the second floor of the Choral Temple; this museum is part of the Jewish Museum Complex in Bucharest.

Memorials. **The Holocaust Memorial in Romania**, which commemorates the more than 250,000 Jews who died as a result of their deportation to Transnistria in 1941, is a monument inaugurated in 2009 and located in an area designed to remember the visitors of the martyred Jews (Figure 4f). The ensemble was built on a land area of 2894 m^2, on the site of a former green space, the public domain of the Municipality of Bucharest. In addition to the Central Memorial, the complex includes the following five sculptures: the Memorial Column, the Via Dolorosa, the Wheel of the Roma, the Star of David and the Epitaph. **The monument in memory of the victims of the Holocaust**, in the form of a menorah, is located in front of the Choral Temple, and **the area designed to commemorate the martyred Jews** is located outside the Great Synagogue.

Jewish cemetery. **Jewish Cemetery Giurgiului** is the largest of the three Jewish cemeteries that still exist in Bucharest and the second largest in Romania, after the one in Iași. Giurgiului Cemetery is crossed by a railway line, which divides it into two distinct parts. On one side, is the old cemetery, inaugurated in 1929–1930, with artistic funerary monuments. On the other side, there is the new cemetery, added in 1945. On an area of 140,000 m^2, there are 35,000–40,000 graves, some of which belong to Holocaust victims and Jewish soldiers and heroes from Romania.

Jewish Cemetery Filantropia was inaugurated in 1865 and has a rich history, with important personalities of the Jewish community being buried here. On the surface, the cemetery is the second Jewish cemetery in Bucharest, measuring about 94,000 m^2, of which 80,000 m^2 are occupied by baroque monuments. All the monuments inside the cemetery are impressive, although the vast majority have suffered severe damage due to weather. Several monuments are part of the categories of public monuments, respectively, memorials and funerary monuments, and have been included in the list of historical monuments in the category of historical monuments representative of the local cultural heritage.

Sephardic Jewish Cemetery, also known as the Spanish Cemetery, was inaugurated in 1865. It has an area of about 4–5 ha and contains 10,300 graves. In the cemetery are some of the tombstones transferred from the former cemetery on Sevastopol Street (the oldest Jewish cemetery in Bucharest, from the 17th century), which was dismantled during the Holocaust under the Antonescu regime. Here is also an obelisk, a monument in memory of the Sephardic Jewish soldiers who fell for Romania in the First World War.

Cultural life. The Jewish community in Bucharest is extremely lively and active. It organizes for members of all ages both educational activities (seminars, conferences, round tables, courses) and recreational ones (parties, trips, participation in international meetings), keeping alive the Jewish tradition.

State Jewish Theater was founded in 1941 as the Barașeum Theater, given that Jewish actors were no longer allowed to play in Romanian theaters. The theater generally operates in Yiddish and is the first professional Yiddish theater in the world, having in Romania 146 years of existence and of uninterrupted activity. It is also one of the few such theatrical institutions in Europe. The shows that are organized here are also sought after by Jewish tourists from all over the world.

Festivals. Several such international cultural events are organized every year, such as the following: Bucharest Jewish Film Festival—BJFF; Bucharest Shalom Jerusalem! Festival; Yiddish Language and Culture Festival; TES FEST Yiddish International Theater Festival.

Artistic groups/ensembles/bands active in the Jewish cultural field are the following: Hora Bucharest—Israeli and traditional Jewish dance group, Bucharest Klezmer Band—traditional Jewish music, Hazamir Choir of the Bucharest Jewish Community and

the Bucharest Jewish Community Center and the Choir of Children of the Jewish Community Center Bucharest.

Kosher food places. Jewish cuisine refers primarily to the culinary traditions that Jews around the world have. Among the places where kosher food is served are the following: Avraham Kosher Restaurant-Cafe, Bereshit Restaurant-Grocery, Moise Kosher House Restaurant-Grocery, Shabbat Dinner RSVP, Kosher Grocery and others.

It is also worth noting the presence of **Mikveh** (a bath used for the purpose of ritual immersion in Judaism to achieve ritual purity) in Bucharest. There are the following two such functional baths: Bucharest Mikvah, within the Jewish Community Center and Mikvah of Bucharest located in District 2 of Bucharest.

4. Results of Evaluation of Tourist Offer of the Jewish Cultural Heritage

After identifying and selecting the tourist places of interest for cultural tourism, a series of characteristics were outlined that directly express the tourism values of the cultural assets.

A previous analysis of the cultural heritage assets in Romania, with the aim of realizing an inventory, identification and classification, carried out by the author after a consistent experience in cultural tourism research in Romania, has led to the realization of a complex set of 22 values, applied to the natural and cultural heritage, through which a better appraisal of the heritage assets is made [56], from which a set of the following 13 values, suitable for the types of tourist attractions considered, were selected for current research and used as evaluation criteria: (a) Historical and documentary value; (b) Identity and inheritance value; (c) Architectural or artistic value; (d) Esthetical value; (e) Tourist and recreational value; (f) Monument value; (g) Religious and spiritual value; (h) Museum value; (i) Educational and formation value; (j) Emotional value; (k) Symbolical value; (l) Commemorative value; (m) Memorial and author value (Figure 5).

The adapted methodology, proposed by the author, regarding the tourism potential of the Jewish cultural heritage aims to represent a useful element in the outline of new tourism development strategies in the medium and long term. However, overall, this methodology only provides a low, medium and even high-level assessment. Analyzing heritage tourism comparatively with the other types of natural, respectively, cultural heritage, tourism one can also establish its own set of values in the analysis and evaluation of the existing tourism assets, especially since in this case too, one can remember a historical value, identity value, associative and use value, etc.

The existence of a system of heritage values more easily determines the importance of a heritage asset, shows its true value as a whole but also through the elements that compose it and determines its protection status; the more values it holds, the more vulnerable it becomes to the passage of time. Thus, the proposed system of heritage values has the role of influencing urban development policies, giving tourism importance to this heritage. The more a cultural or natural asset has more heritage values, the more it will need better integration in the context of modernizing a city. A large number of such values will determine that a cultural asset is more difficult to demolish and declassify for economic interests, to make a maximum profit for certain terrain. Then, its economic exploitation will be more closely supervised to reduce any constructive or ornamental degradation.

Although the field of tourism has not clearly and comprehensively established its own heritage, determined by certain values—there is only a sum of methodologies related to the approval of land use and urban planning; establishing heritage values is important in suggesting a method of documentation and analysis of values to discern what is or is not heritage, and determines the possibilities of economic valorization. Not all heritage assets should also have the status of monuments, but they can support any local economy [46].

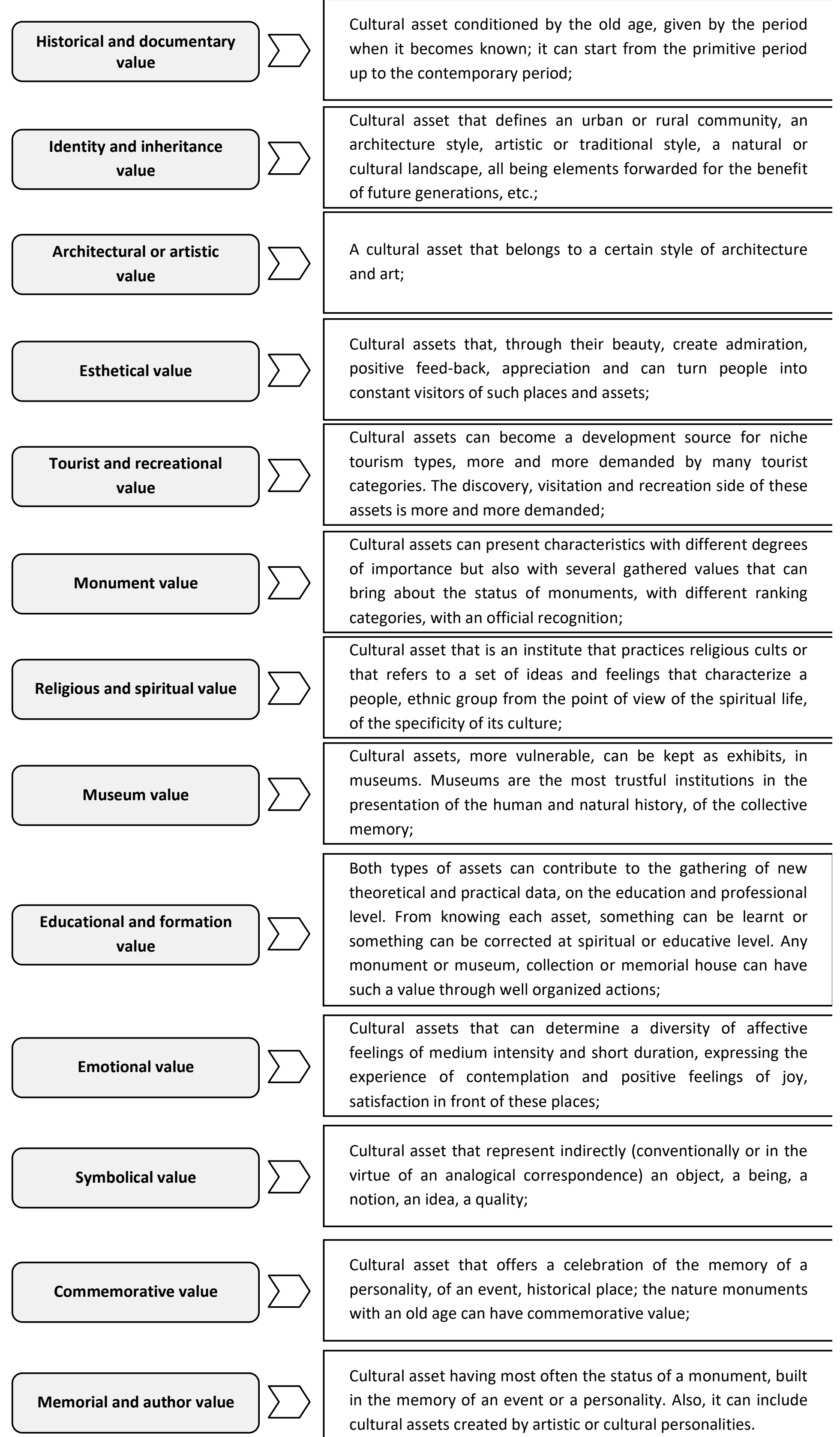


Figure 5. The set of values used as evaluation criteria for cultural heritage components. Source: Bogan et al., 2021 [56].

In addition to the heritage components that are the subject of this study, the presence of elements that are part of a competitive tourism product is also considered, such as the following: Jewish cultural life, which includes theaters, international ethnic festivals, as well as ensembles and artistic formations, which have an impact on the tourist offer. A second element that has been taken into account is the presence of restaurants and grocery stores that serve or sell specific foods, kosher, to tourists of Jewish origin (among others), whose number has been growing lately.

The results of the evaluation of the heritage elements (as well as of the other components of the tourist offer of Jewish cultural heritage tourism products) according to the applicable value from the set of values for each sub-element are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Evaluation of the components of the tourist offer of the Jewish heritage tourism product.

Components of the Tourist Offer	Assigned Value	Partial Attractiveness Index (Pi)
	I. Jewish Quarter	
Historical and documentary value	2	**1.80**
Identity and inheritance value	2	
Architectural or artistic value	2	
Esthetical value	1	
Tourist and recreational value	2	
	II. Synagogues/ Temples	
Historical and documentary value	3	**2.85**
Identity and inheritance value	3	
Architectural or artistic value	3	
Esthetical value	3	
Religious and spiritual value	2	
Monument value	3	
Tourist and recreational value	3	
	III. Museums	
Museum value	2	**2.00**
Educational and formation value	2	
Emotional value	2	
Tourist and recreational value	2	
	IV. Memorials	
Symbolical value	2	**1.66**
Commemorative value	2	
Emotional value	2	
Educational and formation value	2	
Monument value	1	
Tourist and recreational value	1	
	V. Jewish cemetery	
Commemorative value	2	**2.00**
Memorial and author value	2	
Emotional value	2	
Monument value	2	

Table 1. *Cont.*

Components of the Tourist Offer	Assigned Value	Partial Attractiveness Index (Pi)
	VI. Cultural life	
Theater	3	**1.75**
Festivals	2	
Art ensembles and bands	1	
Other cultural events	1	
	VII. Kosher food places	
Restaurants	2	**2.00**
Grocery	2	
GLOBAL ATTRACTIVENESS INDEX (qi)		**2.00**

The values calculated and assigned for the sub-elements of the cultural heritage components of the tourism product, using the evaluation criteria from the set of 13 values described above, were used to obtain the attractiveness indices according to the calculation method described in the methodology.

These assigned values are based on the author's subjective judgment. These are given subjectively and arbitrarily [24] and rated on a scale of values between 0 and 3, depending on their quality, originality and competitiveness.

The analysis highlights the fact that the component elements of the tourism product participate differently in establishing its degree of attractiveness (Figure 6). Thus, for the **synagogues/temples** component, the highest maximum scores, respectively the calculated value 3, were assigned for its sub-elements (every single synagogue), resulting in a value of a partial attractiveness index of 2.85, being thus the most representative component of the tourist offer. This fact can be explained by the very good condition of conservation and restoration of these buildings, their antiquity and architecture and the fact that they also host museums and memorials, which gives them real tourist value and turns them into potential base points for creating an original tourism product. Corpas and Castillo emphasize that tourism at synagogues can be seen to be a very specific type of cultural tourism for Jewish heritage [57]. Some of them are classified as historical monuments in the category of monuments of exceptional national value, a representative for the Romanian civilization at a global level.

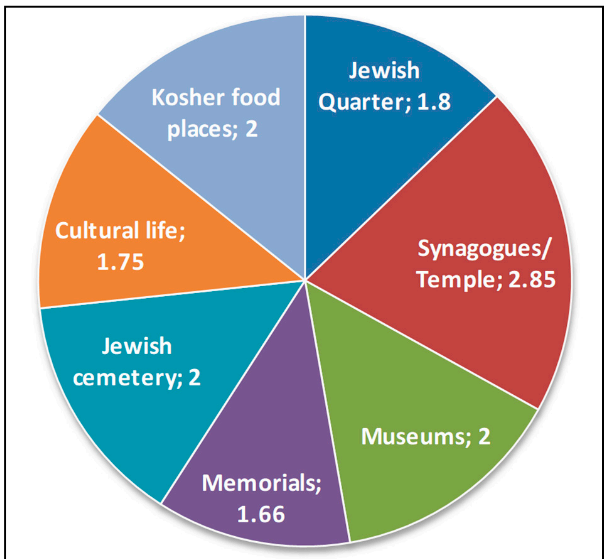


Figure 6. The participation of each component element in the Jewish cultural heritage tourism product.

Not surprisingly, the **museums** component is also representative forthe tourist offer, with a partial attractiveness index of 2.00. These tourist attractions are among the most sought after by tourists in increasing numbers, as well as by lovers of the history of Jewish communities and their origins in Romania. They also offer, in addition to museum exhibitions, temporary events with various themes.

Jewish cemeteries, with a rich history, tombs of important figures of the Jewish community and monuments classified as historical monuments in the category of monuments of national value, are also a representative component of the cultural tourism product, with a partial attractiveness index of 2.00, which puts them on an equality with museums.

The Jewish Quarter scored slightly lower, based on the evaluation criteria taken into account, compared to the other components, with a value of partial attractiveness index of 1.80, although many of the tourist attractions are concentrated here (synagogues, museums, memorials, theaters, buildings, etc.). The explanation consists inthe fact that the perimeter of the current neighborhood is very small, with buildings in different stages of degradation, thus offering a lower level of attractiveness, compared to other areas of Bucharest. Some buildings within this perimeter have been classified as historical monuments in the category of monuments of national value. However, private tours include a larger perimeter than the one currently delimited, towards the limits of 1939.

The commemorative **memorials**, with a special symbolic and emotional value, in addition to their educational character, have a partial attractiveness index value of 1.66, relatively high, indicating a real tourism potential, which proves that they can be valorized in guided tours. Although the calculated value of the sub-elements was higher than 1 for the monument value, for the tourist and recreational value evaluation criteria was chosen the unit value was 1. In general, most of these memorials, intended to commemorate martyred Jews, are slightly included in tourist routes to be visited, are often ignored by guides, are not being signaled enough to be visible, and, at the moment, are very little valorized through tourism.

Cultural life, through its cultural events, can become an important part of the strategy of attracting tourists to other cultural heritage components, as well as knowledge of Jewish culture, obtaining a value of a partial attractiveness index of 1.75 through its sub-elements. Jewish cultural events manifested through the internationally renowned theater, international festivals, but also other cultural events, offer numerous benefits for the Jewish cultural heritage tourism product and the existing community, including increased visits and expenses, repeated visits from year to year, and verbal recommendations to acquaintances through the acquired experiences, thus being able to contribute to the impulse and self-sustained growth, on the whole, of the cultural tourism of Jewish heritage.

Kosher food places, through their presence, complete the visitors' experience by offering specific Jewish dishes of very good quality, thus completing the tourist offer. They obtained a value for the partial attractiveness index of 2.00.

Global attractiveness index value is situated at the median limit between the two intervals established for the evaluation of the tourist potential, respectively, interval 1–2 (a tourist offer has limited value) and interval 2–3 (a tourist offer has high value and is internationally competitive), having a value of 2.00, which can be considered as a high value and can be appreciated as being at the lower limit of international competitiveness.

Under these conditions, the Jewish cultural heritage tourism has all the chances to exceed the current level of development and to become a type of tourism increasingly sought after and appreciated by various categories of tourists. It may take in the future more complex forms of spatial organization as follows: identity tourism areas, itineraries and tourist routes and thematic networks. Prospective thinking needs to imagine tomorrow's customers, their profiles, their behaviors and expectations.

Poor valorization of this potential can be determined by the following number of factors:

- Indifference and lack of financial support in terms of cultural heritage, which, although it lost a lot during the communist period, still faces loses, almost daily;
- Non-involvement of the local administration and lack of strategies for niche tourism;

- A deterioration, in the field of cultural services, of spiritual and religious values, of opportunities for the acquisition of knowledge and educational training, as well as of leisure and aesthetic values;
- Insufficient promotion.

5. Discussion

Some acknowledgments must be made regarding the valorization through tourism of historical and cultural heritage and also a critical reflection on the appropriateness of such an approach to Jewish heritage sites in Bucharest.

First of all, it is important to point out that tangible and intangible cultural heritage are fragile in its protection and dissemination, and it needs tourism promotion, in order to gain national or even international fame, to show and enhance its value and to make it visible to society.

The deeply problematic notion of "valorization through tourism" (i.e., commodification and monetization) raises several issues. Thus, on the one hand, this type of valorization is suspected of wanting to exploit the cultural heritage solely for commercial interests, which some specialists, such as historians, art historians or architects, naturally oppose with all their might. On the other hand, there are different ways in which "valorization" is understood and used. If the term is used without a clear definition, that will cause a profound mistrust of the specialist sciences. Thus, "a conferring of value upon something" and "the act of making something valuable or useful" meanings of this term were used in this article.

The valorization of cultural heritage can be a very confusing concept because of the value of cultural heritage. It is necessary to distinguish between the intrinsic value of cultural heritage, which is its common memory, common history for a group of people and for society and its instrumental value, which means what cultural heritage is useful for, the economic value that cultural heritage assets produce, which can take the shape of tourism.

The still largely unexpressed tourism potential of Jewish cultural heritage within the development of tourism in Bucharest, along with ongoing and planned practices of revitalization and commodification of Jewish heritage, makes this study appropriate at the moment, and an approach to Jewish heritage rediscovery in Bucharest, including the revitalization and restoration of formerly neglected and decaying neighborhoods and Jewish memorial monuments, is opportune.

Both positive and negative aspects can be identified [23,32,58]. When a majority group, for various reasons, has the power and chance to decide which aspects of heritage should be emphasized and promoted, including ethnic minority heritage, the problems of authenticity, commodification and participation occur [59–62]. This implies that Jewish communities are not always able to keep a central role in decision-making related to the management and promotion of their heritage [32].

The commodification of Jewish sites has been critically analyzed by some authors [63–65], also unrestrained commercialization of Jewish-related sites in Poland and Germany raised significant negative reactions in the Jewish world [65], but, at the same time, rehabilitation and revitalization of Jewish heritage in many European cities have turned decaying and forgotten neighborhoods into vibrant and cosmopolitan urban spaces [19].

Tourism promotion plays a very important role in terms of increasing the visibility of a tourism product, which leads to better knowledge of it, economic growth and benefits for locals. Cultural heritage does not yield a direct financial gain [29,66]. Obviously, the product must have enough tourism potential to attract tourists. Several authors [67–69] define tourism potential as the evaluation of supply, demand, competition, market trends and the characteristics, or "vocation", of territory for tourism activity. Its existence, together with a correct valorization and proper promotion, will lead to the recognition of the tourism product at the national level, but especially at the international level [70].

Ethnic minority groups, present in urban centers, have preserved their traditions very well, conserving their cultural identity at the social and institutional level, thus encouraging multicultural and ethnic tourism.

Multicultural and ethnic tourism can be very beneficial, viewed from the following two perspectives: that of tourists, because they come into contact with new cultures, traditions and people; tourists are often motivated by their desire to see and experience things that they do not have in their familiar environment [17], and that of ethnic communities, because they significantly increase their incomes, promote their culture and thus preserve themselves over time. Archer and Fletcher consider that involving local communities in tourism is likely to promote the economy [71]. The valorization of the existing potential can be performed primarily through the active involvement of the authorities (which currently does not exceed by far the stage of intention) in the restoration, conservation of cultural heritage and promotion of the tourism potential of the area.

The introduction of several niche segments to the tourism market has become common practice in the tourism industry. Jewish heritage tourism is a cultural niche product offered to visitors in many European destinations [24,28,32]. This is the reason why we propose that the tourist offer of Jewish cultural heritage tourism products needs to be included in tourist packages with greater diversity, which should also include niche tourism, so that the tourist has the opportunity to know and carry out more tourist activities.

A visit to one of these destinations can be extremely advantageous, both for tourists who are curious and eager to enrich their knowledge, but also for the visited ethnic communities, who can benefit financially from small tourist investments. Tourists, on the other hand, will gain many unique experiences at the cost of one, as opposed to the cultural tourism of a single nation; they will have the opportunity to try novelties in the field of traditional gastronomy, or the way of celebrating various customs or festivals.

Jewish descendants who want to connect with their historical legacy present a growing opportunity for tourism in Europe [72]. Before the pandemic, Israel was one of the most important sources of foreign tourists spending their holidays in Romania (Figure 7). Romania is one of the traditional destinations sought by Israelis at present, city breaks in Bucharest being inthe top of thepreferences for these tourists.

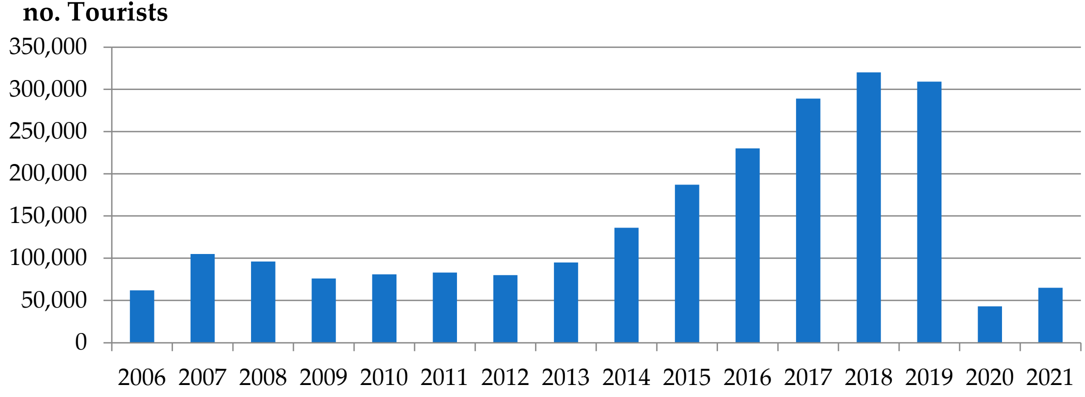


Figure 7. Evolution of arrivals in Romania of tourists from Israel (2006–2021). Source: National Institute of Statistics.

In the current tourism industry, all the factors participating in the support and development of this field (economic units, family associations, individuals, state representatives directly or indirectly involved in tourism) must know the national and international trends on which to base cultural tourism planning. Often, national and international trends coincide, which makes developments positive on multiple levels [22].

Overall, there have been many shortcomings in the materials published for promotion over time, so Romania does not currently have a clear, well-defined tourist destination position, and the funds allocated are insufficient, government initiatives are not transparent

enough or known to the private sector and public administrations, and the impact and efficiency of the implementation of promotion programs, participation in fairs and exhibitions are not carefully monitored and evaluated, according to criteria of economic efficiency [46].

In essence, the promotion includes the following major activities: participation in fairs, profile exhibitions, the printing of general and thematic brochures, creation of websites on the Internet and advertising in the media (radio, TV, international stations).

The online environment and especially social media, are relevant for tourist activity because it is an industry based on the transmission of information and the promotion of offers. In an innovative paper regarding sieving tourism destinations, Krakover and Corsale show that "attractions not listed on social media sites are not only hard to find but also devoid of previous visitors' recommendations and scaling" [73].

Regarding the promotion of the Jewish cultural heritage in Bucharest on social media, it is quite diverse and common nowadays. Moreover, thanks to social media, not only that physical tours have started to be organized, but also online ones and tourists are becoming even more interested in those activities, being able to find out information just with a click. In addition, according to Krakover and Corsale, promoting appropriate and appealing narratives, including intangible heritage, could enhance the significance of minor tangible attractions and spread the interest and benefits coming from visitors [73]. Conti and Moriconi point out that cultural tourists actively collaborate by offering opinions on tourist destinations [74].

Following the interviews conducted for this research, it was determined that an important role in promotion is played by associations that organize physical tours or monthly online tours, as they are coordinated by experienced guides who are able to provide the most useful information about a synagogue or temple. For people passionate about Jewish history, this type of promotion is the most useful way to gain knowledge about Jewish culture. Therefore, associations need to be increasingly more creative about promotion and, very importantly, not repeat themselves from one tour to another.

At the level of tourism companies, the Jewish cultural heritage is not sufficiently promoted, as emerged from the interviews taken by the author, but these tourism companies have Jewish circuits in their composition or, as in the case of promotion through associations, are organized guided tours by bus or even walking with a guide. At the same time, tourism companies can promote the Jewish cultural heritage, especially through social media, by providing various information through advertisements on specially created sites, for the purpose of promotion, or by brochures offered to tourists at the end of a guided tour.

Given the importance of tourism promotion, there is the issue of its efficiency, namely, the few funds allocated that need to be spent properly, in well-organized campaigns in terms of the target group, means used, materials disseminated, etc. In an effective promotion, in order for the promotion to be useful, it is first necessary to take advantage of the Jewish buildings that are still in operation and for those that have a moderate degree of degradation to be restored by allocating funds.

From the point of view of promotion, it is necessary to invest in the online media, which is the environment most accessed by the general public. In addition to the tourist associations that organize guided tours in an online environment, an intense campaign is needed to present the potential of each building. Moreover, the most important events regarding Jewish cultural activities can be broadcast live on the most important television stations to create a link between the public and the Jewish culture regarding traditions, customs, dances, gastronomy and tourist attractions.

In recent years, the concept of "traveling to see different places" has started to lose its meaning due to the globalization process, thus urban tourism management must find new ways of promoting, of offering tourist services that transform the urban area into a different, unique place [75].

One thing is certain: the fact that Jewish cultural heritage tourism is constantly evolving, especially nowadays, when it turns out that the world has begun to be much more interested

in the lives of Jews compared to previous years. Corsale considers that Jewish heritage tourism is a niche segment that gradually turning into a mass tourism experience [76].

6. Conclusions

Jewish Quarters are a real cultural attraction; they are often valorized through tourism and due to their elements of ethnic cultural heritage, gain by promotion a national or even international fame, valorization of this heritage being important for many societies [22,77]. They have always attracted the attention of a wide range of stakeholders, developing specific tourism that often involves, in addition to culture, ethnic tourism. Russo and Romagosa also highlighted the potential of the Jewish quarters as a means for local and regional development [78].

Based on an inventory of cultural heritage, each country has created its own system for classifying cultural heritage based on accumulated cultural assets and values [46,56]. The process of inventorying cultural assets and of evaluating them in terms of tourism must lead to the diversification of tourist attractions [79]. Thus, a series of facilities can be developed to support tourism and diversify tourist activities.

Very often, it is supported the idea that any attraction or cultural or natural asset can become a tourist attraction, determined by the fact that it can arouse a certain curiosity. In reality, according to some authors, tourists are interested in traveling and paying for those tour packages that offer them the opportunity to visit and live an authentic and unique experience [80,81]. This fact explains why large tourist flows are oriented towards visiting special cultural assets with a reputation gained over time.

In recent decades, the attention of cultural managers has also focused on lesser-known cultural places that are representative of a particular urban community. A route containing the values of the Jewish cultural heritage of Bucharest will bring to light a culture animated by a strong faith, a desire to excel and a need for beauty; a culture that has left its mark on society as an engine of evolution and well-being.

In order to ensure the quality of the cultural and tourist services offered, it will be necessary, at all times, to take into account the particularities and exigencies of the present cultural heritage and those of the local community, in order not to harm the components of the cultural environment. Given that public resources are limited, the support for cultural tourism, in all its forms of manifestation, will have to increasingly rely on the private sector.

This study can be complemented by future development of research focusing on the visits of tourists and consumers of Jewish cultural heritage. Their motivations and expectations, as well as choices and impressions related to their experiences and different aspects of Jewish culture, can thus be compared.

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Article

Museums as a Means to (Re)Make Regional Identities: The Oltenia Museum (Romania) as Case Study

Liliana Popescu * and Claudia Albă *

Department of Geography, University of Craiova, 200585 Craiova, Romania
* Correspondence: liliana.popescu@edu.ucv.ro (L.P.); claudia.alba@edu.ucv.ro (C.A.)

Abstract: In recent decades, ever more museums have begun to put a new emphasis on the education of the public, playing an important role in creating national or regional identities. This paper aims to assess the strategy chosen by the History Section of the Oltenia Museum in Craiova (Romania) to use knowledge, objects and narratives to create a sense of belonging and negotiate identities. Site visits, participant observations and discussions with museum curators, the analysis of texts and discourses were used in order to see if there is a master narrative related to regional identity and to determine the elements used to shape this identity. The results of this study point to the fact that there is an underlying master narrative of the exhibition, stressing the dominant understanding of Oltenia's identity stemming mainly from cultural markers such as religion and language, while acknowledging wider European influences on the national and regional identity.

Keywords: collective memory; heritage; post-communist representations; narrative

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1. Introduction

The diversity of religious, linguistic and ethnic cultures within the European Union is seen as the element that gives the European identity its originality. However, while the national identities of most of the Member States are well entrenched [1], other countries located 'too far in the East' have been struggling with asserting their identity on the international scene. The Romanian national identity was forged in close connection to the European one, over the last three centuries [2]. However, this has not been an easy process, since two representations of Romanian national identity have existed during this period. According to the Western representation, the county has been part of the European mainstream, while the Eastern position focuses on the importance of indigenous Romanian values [3–5]. On top of that, the country has been perceived as having 'struggled with a Balkan identity in a century of independence, not only due to its geographical position at the crossroads between eastern Europe and western Asia, where frontiers between different civilizations have shifted throughout history, but also due to 'strengthened aspects of political cultural inimical to democracy' [6] (p. 67) (Figure 1).

In the first decades following the fall of communism, Romania was eager to further reconstruct its identity by shifting its focus from the ideology of socialism and 'the bright future of the country' to that of a nation with Latin ancestors and cultural ties and common interests with Western European countries. Just like the other Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries, it sought to project this new identity to the wider world [3], 'knocking once again on the gates of Europe and attempting (our) second entry into the Western world' [7] (p. 2).

The current paper provides an overview of previous research related to the construction of identities and collective memory, and the role of museums as cultural public institutions in forging identities, followed by a brief discussion on the background of the Oltenia Museum, which is the case study presented; we focused on the exhibitions on display during and after the communist period, and on the selection of historical characters

and events. The main aim of the paper was to analyze how the History Section deals with the issue of regional identity. Furthermore, we set two objectives:

The first objective (O1) was to determine whether there was a master narrative at the Oltenia Museum.

The second objective (O2) was to assess the components of Oltenia's regional identity as portrayed in the museum.

Figure 1. Romania and the historical province of Oltenia.

2. Theoretical Background

Ethnicity and identity, as in 'collective identity' or 'identity groups', surfaced as concepts that gathered the attention of scholars and politicians alike in the 1960s [8]. Collective cultural identity refers to 'shared memories of earlier events and periods in the history of that unit and to notions entertained by each generation about the collective destiny of that unit and its culture' [9] (p. 25). National identity is just one of a range of collective identities, which are always relational, implying the existence of 'others' [8,10,11], alleged enemies of the nation [10] (p. 18), against which the nation is defined [11,12]; consequently, national identity becomes meaningful only through contrast with others [13]. Still, national identity is also defined from within, considering the common features of the group, which have important implications for group members as individuals and for the group as a whole.

Anthony Smith, one of the most prominent scholars focusing on nationalism studies, argued that 'national identity involves some sense of political community, history, territory, patria, citizenship, common values and traditions' [9] (p. 9). He portrayed a multi-dimensional concept, including five fundamental attributes: (i) historic territory or homeland; (ii) common myths and historical memories; (iii) a common, mass public culture; (iv) common legal rights and duties for all its members; and (v) common economy with territorial mobility for its members [9] (p. 14).

Considering that the past is what makes a nation [14], national identity has a historical dimension; the longer and the prouder the history, the better for nation-builders [15]. This idea causes many nations to search for their roots back in antiquity, a period seen as a source of legitimacy for a nation and its culture, since it stresses continuity, a key element of identity [10]. The cult of ancestors is legitimate as a heroic past provides the social capital upon which national ideas are built [14]. Hence, national narratives related to identity depend on 'the construction of great personalities [. . .] depicted as national heroes [. . .] who symbolized the achievements and characteristics of the nation' [16] (p. 22).

The manner in which identities are forged and reproduced across time and space is inextricably linked with myths and symbols which people seize upon to denote their

national allegiance [17], allowing for nationalist narratives to be a (re)-written, perpetually mutating repository for the representation of the past to serve the present, its representation largely depending on factors such as ethnicity, class, gender and age [18]. That is why, quite often, the myth of the nation is contested continuously [17–19].

The cultural elements of the national identity include values, beliefs, customs, conventions, habits, language and practices 'that bind the population together in their homeland' [9] (p. 11) [10,20]. All classical studies on nationalism emphasize the importance of language to express and symbolize ethnicity [20,21]. The focus is on the emergence and dissemination of the language and its relation to the nation.

Identities are constituted within representation [22] and discourse in specific historical and institutional sites using the resources of history, the natural environment, language, culture and economic success or recession [23], focusing not so much on the past and 'who we are' but rather on what we might become [22]. Identities are not only defined, but also 'contested, and at times naturalized, through representational practices and individual performances' [24] (p. 24).

The concept of regional identity has been seen as a complex expression of the society and its spatial structure, since the region as an entity can only be represented by symbolic means through political, economic and legal institutions [25]. This concept mainly points to the regional consciousness of individuals and is based on 'collective narratives on who and what 'we' and 'our region' are and how these differ from the others' [26] (p. 146). Images, together with representations and discourses, lead to opinions and attitudes and thus are of the utmost importance for the construction of a territorial identity [27,28].

It has been argued that individuals and communities conceive their identity based on collective memory [29], which 'refers to the distribution throughout society of what individuals know, believe, and feel about past events and persons, how they morally judge them, how closely they identify with them, and how much they are inspired by them as models for their conduct and identity' [30] (p. 1). This is to say that collective memory is not strictly related to what actually happened in the past, but rather to the way people perceive the events [29], since collective memories are shared individual memories that shape collective identities [31]. Thus, collective memory draws upon historical sources in a selective and creative way, continuously negotiating between available historical records and current social and political agendas [32] (p. 5); it can be seen as an active past that constitutes and maintains identities [33], as members of a group share the same narrative resources, memory being part of the negotiation of group identity process [34]. Collective memory can be seen as subjective, having a single committed perspective, linking the past with the present, promoting unquestionable heroic narratives [35] while serving the interests of the present [36]. It is aimed at rendering the past comprehensible and compatible with the social identity of the group, i.e., the image that the group wants to maintain (the first anchor of a collective memory) [37].

There is always a 'deliberate attempt to shape collective memories by means of particular kinds of communicative messages' [36] (p. 56). A master commemorative narrative emphasising the common past of a community and its aspirations is an important mechanism by which a nation constructs a collective identity, through a highly selective attitude towards the available historical knowledge [32]. Moreover, narrated collective identities are often 'ideal identities' laden with cultural or political interests [38].

Among the various means used for the construction of national or regional identities, museums have been seen as a strategic identity-building element [39–44] since they have great power as an inculcating force because audiences generally trust their objectivity [40]. Due to the authority they are granted, they shape identities through collective memory making [33] and the selective and systematic reconstruction [45] and presentation of heritage objects to be displayed, stories to be told and characters to be forgotten [33,40,46,47] within a conceptual structure that engages the viewer [48]. Hence, the major role of the museum is in 'accessing, ignoring, confronting, re-affirming and forging identities' [49]. Museums have always been about identity, whether the private identities of the elites as it

was the case with the very first museums in Renaissance Europe, the identity of 'polyglot populace in cities transformed by migrants' during the Progressive Era in the U.S., or the 'custom identity business' of history museums nowadays, where visitors explore and foster their sense of themselves [50]. Within museums, identities are negotiated at three different layers: 'the identities of those encoding the representations; the identities of those decoding the representations; and the identities of those being represented' [49] (p. 294).

Museums and the heritage they display are considered human products of different times and places, representing cultural identities, and are seen as political in all senses [51,52]. As museums currently encourage local communities to investigate their own past and share their experiences, they are considered centres for civil engagement, as well as repositories for community memory [47]. Focusing on heritage display and interpretation and underlying master narratives, this paper analyses the ways in which the post-communist identity is (re)constructed through a master narrative in the exhibitions of the History Section of the Oltenia Museum.

3. The Context: National Identity and Master Narrative in Romania

3.1. Romania's National Identity

Until the 19th century, Romanians were integrated in the Eastern cultural space, dominated by the Orthodox idea and not the national one [7]. Regional identity was the main hindrance for adopting national identity, since it created a community of transnational faith, that disregarded both ethnic and linguistic borders [53].

Towards the end of the 18th and early 19th centuries, the educated elite from Transylvania helped spread the Enlightenment ideas to the rest of the country, having a significant impact on the other Romanian provinces regarding the development of a national consciousness, focusing mainly on the Latin origins of the Romanian people. It thus began a process of Westernization, around the 1830s, following major cultural and ideological shifts, namely the replacement of the Cyrillic alphabet with the Latin one, the spread of European clothing and notably the import of a Constitution, as well as financial and educational systems in accordance with Western models [7]. Forged during the 19th century and the first decades of the 1900s, the Romanian historical ideology focused on the national values and relationships between national culture and the Western model.

The development of national identity is seen as a long, laborious and troublesome process that challenged major resistance from subnational traditional identities (namely religious, regional or professional) which had to be dissolved in order to make room for national identity [53] (p. 21).

According to the 'German formula' generally applied by the Central European nations, 'Romanians are defined by their common origin (whether Roman/Dacian or Dacian–Roman), unitary language, shared history and specific spirituality' [7] (p. 74). Beginning in the 17th century, the Romanian historiography saw the Roman conquest and colonization of Dacia, which overlaps the current Romanian territory as its starting point. Thus, Roman origins made a strong mark on the individuality of the Romanian lands, giving them nobility and prestige [7] (p. 171). Romanian myths are part of the Romanian identity [54] (p.474). The myth of foundation, which is a general European one, has been continuously re-elaborated so as to fit the configuration of the current national organism. 'The excellence of the foundation myth guaranteed the excellence of the Romanian future, in spite of the mediocrity of the present. Through the Romans, the Romanians could present themselves to the West as the equals of anybody, and the phenomenon of acculturation no longer meant borrowing, but rather a return to the source, to a ground of civilization shared with the civilization of the West' [7] (p. 174). Even though Trajan, the Roman Emperor, is the central figure of the great founding myth and the emergence of the Romanian people, greater emphasis is placed on the voivodes Stephen the Great and Michael the Brave, who illustrated the history of the principalities in their age of glory (anti-Ottoman resistance, defense of their country and European Christendom), with little attention to the founders of Wallachia or Moldavia. Romanians have constructed their national identity by gradually

imaginatively discovering their past, a process led by the elites that very slowly percolated to the masses through the education system that allowed the 'nationalization' of the people [53] (p. 43).

For more than a century, the Romanian national identity shifted, in line with the 'central dilemma of Eastern European intellectual history' between the 'imitation of the West and its repudiation' [55] (p. 416). The main controversy stemmed from the share the two cultural sources—autochthonous tradition and Western values—should have [7] (p. 141).

There is a pervading idea throughout the research which focuses on the master narrative of the Romanian identity; this includes several directions, such as religious, linguistic, cultural and economic ones. Thus, orthodoxy is the element that preserves the Romanian culture and spirituality; language binds the ethnic identity and probably the only unquestionable dimension; and there is rich folklore and popular culture, which forms the basis of the Romanian nation. From the economic point of view, Romania is signally an agrarian and pastoral country, having difficulties adapting to industrialism and capitalism [54] (p. 474).

3.2. Background on the History Section of the Oltenia Museum

Since its early beginning in 1915, when it was named the Regional Museum for Antiquities and Ethnography, the Oltenia Museum has witnessed significant changes and benefited from private donations, public funding and the continuous work of dedicated researchers. Its patrimony includes more than 240,000 pieces and unique collections, half of them in the History Section (with some 700 pieces in the Treasure House category). For most of its existence, the activities carried on by the museum focused on the discovery, preservation and scientific and cultural capitalization of the pieces of heritage that testify for the historical evolution of the Romanian people in this part of the country [56].

During the communist period, the History Section acted as 'an institution that argued based on thorough authentic testimonies and old documents the truth about the history of the country and the people who carved it' [57] (p. 128). As with all Romanian museums, the entire exhibition space (including the theme, narrative, objects displayed and layout), covering more than 2000 sqm, was approved by the State Committee for Culture and Art (in 1976). Numerous 'researchers and historians' contributed to the remodeling of the past, and to the entire history of Oltenia being re-written; all the past events were reinterpreted so as to be used by the communist doctrine [3]. The 'colonization of the past' was one of the most urgent priorities of the political regime which ultimately created *historiae ex fiat*/history by decree, ordered by the Communist Party [58,59], museology being just another form of propaganda [60]. Similar to other countries from the Eastern Bloc, Romania developed a culture of 'socialist patriotism' focusing on long-term temporal identity and the socio-cultural homogenous nation of workers and peasants [42,61]. The desire to glorify the merits of the socialists and the Slavic influences which were quite strong until the 1960s was the main driving force behind the construction of the communist master narrative at the Oltenia Museum in the early 1970s. Apart from using a different terminology and chronology, the narrative of the History Section also suppressed Romanians' memory of almost a century of monarchy by simply erasing any mention of the royal family or its role in historic events, while also praising the achievements of the communists in the country and particularly in Oltenia. Lying by omission would become the norm in the communist historiography [58].

For the period following the Independence War in 1877, numerous stories were fabricated to back up the communist reconstruction of the past. Thus, the creation of the Socialist Democrat Party of Workers in Romania in 1893 was described as 'a key historical moment', 'the socialists in this part of the country being highly preoccupied for assimilating the cutting edge ideas of the scientific socialism and for organizing the working class' [57] (p. 84). The creation of the Communist Party in Romania on May 8, 1921 was another moment 'of uttermost importance', as the party 'had to fight against the terrible bourgeois terror', and this was followed by another key moment, 23 August 1944, the national day for Romania during communist times, described as 'A Turning Point for the Historical Development

of Romania' following 'the national armed anti-fascist and anti-imperialist insurrection' that led to the 'creation of a democratic, free and happy country' [57] (p. 116). The communists had strict control over the information and persuasive propaganda that used lies and a flagrant bending of truth, while 'grossly counterfeiting national holidays' for purely propagandistic purposes [62]. The last halls of the exhibition, dedicated to agriculture cooperativization and industrialization, testified for the transformation of 'a region of illiterate peasants' into a 'huge building site and a plant with cutting edge technology'. The exhibition dealing with modern and contemporary eras displayed a lot of photographs, photographs of newspapers and extensive texts, so as not to allow the observer free interpretation [60], a common practice in all Romanian museums.

In the 1990s, the History Section was reorganized, but due to lack of funding, the curators had to be imaginative and scrape by with what they already had. So, the permanent exhibition focused on the fact that the region has been continuously inhabited by Romanians and that they had been Christians since the time of the ethnogenesis [56], the historical process that spread some nine centuries, at the end of which the Romanian people and language emerged. Beginning from 2009 until 2013, following major investments from the Dolj County Council and European programmes, the building that houses the History Section was restored and enlarged, currently offering an area of some 4000 sqm for display together with modern infrastructure including digital displays, a state-of-the art laboratory, efficient internet speed and access, which are important tools for providing a virtual tour of the entire exhibition. According to the museum's mission statement, it aims to collect, preserve, research, restore and exhibit the material and spiritual proofs regarding the history of Romanian society and civilization, so as to spread knowledge, educate and entertain the youth in particular and the wider public in general.

4. Materials and Methods

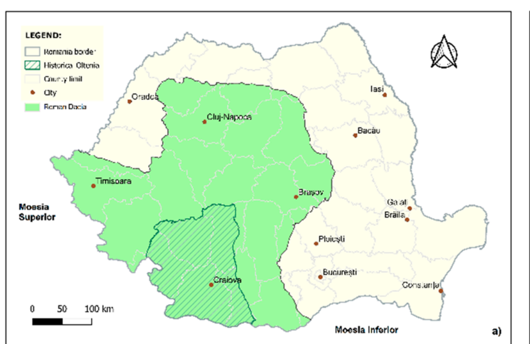
The research was undertaken in the Oltenia Museum, Craiova. Although the museum has three sections (Natural Sciences, History and Ethnography), our main focus was on the History Section and its narrative. Since both authors have been living in this region their entire lives, it can be assumed that they have insider knowledge appropriate for a citizen regarding the city of Craiova and Oltenia as well.

For O1, there were two steps: first, visits to the museum and checks for historical chronology, then visitor observations and interviews with museum staff. Site visits were taken between 2018 and 2021 in order to try to grasp the narrative for creating an identity story. We used participant observations for several guided tours during different periods and with various groups (children, university students, elderly persons), in order to observe visitors and if/to what extent they followed the trajectory set by the narrative, and to gauge their reactions towards the discourse and the exhibits. We only reviewed permanent exhibitions. Apart from analyzing the printed materials, exhibitions, objects and texts, we also had discussions with museum guides and security staff from the History Section about the exhibition structure (size, chosen theme/narrative, objects displayed), general considerations (target groups, facilities for particular groups), the information presented during the guided tours and visitor behavior (what are the main elements that capture their interests, do they discuss with each other, do they read the texts).

For the second objective of the study, we observed three major commonalities: strategic identity, cultural identity and functional identity [63]. Strategic identity referred to the strategic location of the region, major development axes and the relationship with other major political and economic centers. The cultural component included ethnicity, religion and setbacks during two different periods: before the 1990s, and the current decade. As Oltenia has been one of the most homogenous regions of Romania, from an ethnic and religious point of view, there should not be any dilemma of the narrative regarding the regional identity. The economic, political and social components identified in the narrative and exhibition as a whole were the main attributes for grasping the functional identity.

5. Results

Currently, there are three main themes displayed in the permanent exhibition: *Prehistoric Oltenia,* which focuses on presenting the life of the first human communities beginning with the Paleolithic era; *Rediscover History*, on the ground floor, which aims at presenting the origins of the Romanian people, beginning with the customs and beliefs of the Dacian society, the advantages of the Roman civil society and the emergence of Christianity in the region up to the dark Middle Ages (migrations, Wallachian rulers, wars between the Romanian Christian and Ottoman armies); and the last section, titled *Oltenia Rediviva*, which begins with the rule of Michael the Brave (1593–1600), continues with all of the major historical moments for the national history, emphasizing the key role the region played due to its strategic location (Figure 2), and ends with the communist period of agriculture cooperativization, industrialization, propaganda, political cleansing and daily life.



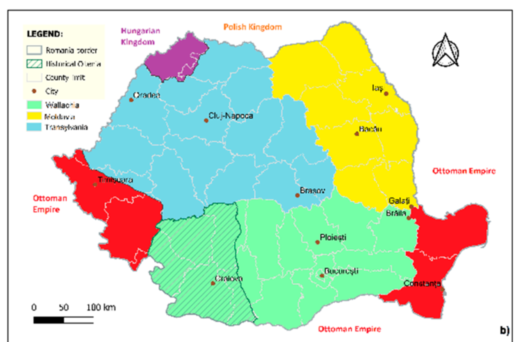


Figure 2. Romanian and Oltenian territory (**a**) after the Roman conquest (2nd–3rd centuries A.D.), and (**b**) during the rule of Michael the Brave (16th century) (Processed after *Romania. Historical-Geographic Atlas*).

5.1. Master Narrative at the Museum

All the objects displayed by the museum were found in the Oltenia region or are related to this region. Depending on the historic period, there are ceramic pieces, coins, weapons and religious objects, together with written documents and personal effects of both illustrious historic personalities as well as soldiers that fought during the most important battles in Romanian history. There are no details about any objects displayed, just their names and places of origin. Every hall includes some panels with a short presentation of the historic period to which the objects displayed belong. For antiquity, most of the time these panels present extracts from famous Greek and Latin historians/writers referring to the Oltenian territory and its inhabitants. Beginning in the Middle Ages, the texts displayed on the panels in each hall present a short chronology and a few characteristics of each period. These texts are usually short and simply state some facts. For the 20th century, apart from descriptive texts on panels, on the walls there are reprints of newspapers reporting on key historical moments, kings' letters to the Romanian people and large photos from several major events.

A visit to the History Section of the Oltenia Museum usually takes 60 to 90 min. There is a chronological route and most of the halls cannot be skipped by visitors, with the exception of five rooms (dwellings of the Dacian people, weapons during the Middle Ages, jewelry, slice of life during the Belle Epoque in the city of Craiova, Communism: prisons and propaganda). There is quite a distinct pattern, with most of the visitors, particularly older ones, following the master chronological trajectory in the museum, including all the side display rooms, while the younger ones (mainly children) tend to stick to the unavoidable trajectory. Individual visitors generally read the information on the panels and discuss among themselves the various artifacts, whereas groups usually just look at the objects displayed and listen to the explanations the guide provides.

The official narrative seems to revolve around the fact that the territory has been continuously inhabited by Romanians and their ancestors since prehistoric times, despite

the many hardships they had to face throughout history, with the entire exhibition undertaking the task of emphasizing the struggles that the people as well as their rulers faced in order to preserve the independence of the country. Drawing from Berger's guidelines on shaping a master narrative [16], we can safely assume that conflicts, politics and religion are depicted as the central actors of both national and regional history; the historical figures that populate the museum stage begin with Basarab I and Mircea the Elder, well known figures of Wallachia, followed by the most prominent political figures of the country, originating from Oltenia: Michael the Brave, the Buzesti brothers, Tudor Vladimirescu and Nicolae Titulescu. The enemies are found particularly at the Eastern and Southern region, with Eurasian nomads during the Late Antiquity and Migration Periods, followed by the Ottoman Empire and later on the Russian Empire. The origins of the nation as depicted in the museum go back to the Dacian–Roman period, emphasizing the founding myth of the Romanian people. The story line hints to flourishing periods that alternate with 'darker' ones, in the end leading to the rebirth of the nation in the late 19th century. Just as at national level, regional history is understood in a strictly conflictual manner, as a continuous fight for ethnic and national survival [7] (p. 296).

Although toned down to a certain extent, the focus on the difficult past of the people as depicted by the current exhibition is similar to the idea portrayed during the communist period; only the felons and threats have changed somewhat. Moreover, the stress on the continuous presence of the autochthonous population in the region points to the Romanian version of the universal myth of permanence, with the continuity thesis being sequentially renewed and reaffirmed [53,59].

5.2. Components of Oltenia's Regional Identity

For the second objective of the paper, we tried to identify the three main components of the region's identity: strategic, cultural and functional ones. Throughout the entire exhibition, there are hints about the location of the region at the crossroads of civilizations and its geographic conditions (fertile soils, plenty of fresh water sources) that favored an early process of population since the Early Neolithic period. Bordered by the Danube in the south and the Carpathians in the eastern and northern regions, Oltenia was located at the borders of great empires that continuously tried to push boundaries, beginning with the Roman Empire during the Ancient period, the Hungarian Kingdom/ Austrian–Hungarian Empire in the West and the Byzantine and later on the Ottoman Empire in the South. The presence and pressure from all these major powers has forged the past, as well as the identity of the people in this region. The Danube and its main tributaries in the region were also, since Antiquity, the major development axes (along which the major cities in the region are found) and communication lines, linking Oltenia to the other Romanian provinces. All these strategic identity elements are found throughout the exhibition (in texts, maps and diaporamas).

The cultural identity elements, focusing mostly on religion and to a lesser extent on ethnicity (as Oltenia was one of the most homogeneous Romanian regions from the ethnic point of view), are quite abundant for every major theme and period displayed, with a major emphasis on Christianity, in an attempt towards the re-ethnicization of national identity, i.e., 'the re-emergence of ethnicity as the core idea of national identities in the context of uniform cultural references that are globally available', in line with the pan-European current in the entire of Europe [42]. Thus, the visitor enters a replica of an early Christian basilica, on the walls of which we find symbols employed by the early Christians (the white dove bringing a cross, ichthys/fish, the star) as well as ancient objects with the symbol of the cross that were discovered in Oltenia. There is an entire hall dedicated to early Christianity (titled *Cults and Religious Beliefs: Emergence of Christianity*), with one of the texts indicating that '*In Oltenia, three Christian basilicas were identified beyond any doubt [. . .] that date back to the Late Roman period*'. The hall titled *The early beginning of the Romanian country* features the portraits of six Romanian rules that left their mark on Romanian history. These portraits are replicas of frescoes from various Romanian churches, dating back to the 15th century.

The last major section, *Oltenia Rediviva*, also includes a hall dedicated to ecclesiastic art, where old holy and divine gospels and diptychs, religious objects, frescoes and altar doors from old churches in Oltenia are displayed. References to the religion of the Romanian people are also found in various other halls that focus on major historical events (e.g., the letters of army members, proclamations of the kings and the declarations of political and social elites always mention their faith in God to help them and the Romanian people). Even the hall dedicated to the communist period features two original frescoes from a church in Craiova, dating back to the 18th century, that was demolished by the regime due to the incompatibility between the Christian religion and the communist doctrine [64]. Unlike the previous period, religion is acknowledged as an intrinsic component in this dominant understanding of the region's identity; the idea that the Romanian people were born Christian has become an axiom of Romanian spirituality, defining their identity to a great extent [53] (p. 137), a fact also proven by the current museum exhibition.

The third component of regional identity, pertaining to functional elements, is also visible in the master narrative that focuses mainly on the political and social components, especially beginning with the modern period. It is worth mentioning the fact that the hall dedicated to Michael the Brave, the most prominent political figure at regional and national level, is focused not on the ruler's most acclaimed contribution—the union of all Romanians—but rather on the political and administrative institution of *Bania*, a high office within Wallachia during the Middle Ages, similar to principal reign, but over a smaller territory. Its ruler, called *ban,* had important administrative, juridical and most notably military responsibilities. This institution was characteristic only for Oltenia, and Michael the Brave was its most famous ruler who eventually became Wallachia's ruler.

The events that are considered to be major turning points in the country's history are always correlated with the wider European movement. Special focus is given to the uprising from 1821 that is considered to be the starting point for Romanian nationalism, which originated as a movement against the Phanariot administration (Greek aristocrats from Constantinople/Istanbul appointed by the Ottoman Empire to rule Wallachia for almost a century); it began in Oltenia and later spread to the entire of Wallachia. The exhibition also focuses on Nicolae Titulescu, one of the most important diplomats of the interwar period (the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the President of the League of Nations for two years), who was born and raised in Craiova. There is also a hall dedicated to Craiova during the interwar period, seen as the *Golden Age* in the history of the city, portraying the social and cultural characteristics of the era and subtly underlining the similarities with Western metropolises.

6. Discussion

As the identity markers changed considerably during recent decades, so did the narrative. Consequently, there are no longer reports of the 'gigantism of the finest workmanship carried on in Oltenia', 'the heroic fight of the popular masses led by the Communists' and 'the continuous preoccupation of the socialists from this part of the country to master the bright ideas of the scientific socialism' [57] (p. 130). The changed narrative leads to different ways and means used by the History Section to render the regional identity, crafting texts and displays that capitalize the historical heritage of Oltenia and reinforce its dominant understanding of the region's identity.

However, the narrative and message behind this stems from social, ideological and not least political influences, the curatorial concept being also influenced by the frameworks of knowledge and social relations of the personnel as they partake in the process of exhibition making [65,66]. Apart from the artifacts displayed, a lot of attention was paid to the technical infrastructure, including exhibition furniture, wall panels, lighting and museological mise-en-scene so as to draw the visitor, catch their eye and successfully deliver the message. If during the communist period the museum and research certainly followed a political agenda, the current exhibition tries to 'capitalize the most important artifacts that the museum holds', testifying for the cultural heritage of the local community

as well as significant historical events. The ultimate aim is 'to revive/to re-enact social, cultural or political milieus of the past, and thus provide the visitor the context that may offer new learning experiences, combining education and recreation at the same time'. As one museum guide argued, 'there was no hidden political agenda behind the project, just a lot of enthusiasm, dedication and hard work to put together an exhibition that would showcase the most important heritage objects of the museum related to the events, personalities and characteristics of our past'.

It is worth pointing to the fact that, just like in most of museums worldwide, the past is selectively remembered or forgotten [33,46]. Although the Slavic and Ottoman influences on the cultural, societal and political norms are generally acknowledged, there is little to no mention of ethnic minorities in the region. Oltenia was indeed one of the most homogenous Romanian regions from an ethnic point of view, but this does not mean that only Romanians ever lived and worked here. According to the population census from 1930, almost 10% of the urban population in Oltenia were ethnic minorities, mainly Romani people, but also Germans and Jews. If the latter were located mainly in the major towns of the region, Romani people were also found in the countryside. Togehter with the Tatars, they were the only slaves in Romania, from the 13th until the 19th century, with country rulers usually granting them as gifts to monasteries. They were the cheapest and most reliable labor force [67], the Romanian principalities bringing 'a system of oppression that was formative, generating a culture of prejudice' [68] that still persists today [69]. Although museum guides when prompted do not hesitate to answer questions about ethnic minorities in Oltenia throughout the centuries and offer many details, nothing in the exhibition acknowledges their existence.

The narrative of the History Section seems to support the Western discourse on identity, highlighting the connections and links of the region and of the country with other European countries, especially beginning with the modern period. Thus, the uprising lead by Tudor Vladimirescu in 1821 is presented in close connection with the wider upheaval in the Balkans; the descriptive panel in the hall dedicated to the events from 1859 that led to the unification of Wallachia and Moldova, mentions that 'during the Peace Treaty from Paris [...], the Great Powers also paid attention to Romanian Principalities [. . .] urging for the ad-hoc gatherings—consultative reunions where inhabitants would express their opinion on the organization of the principalities'. Moreover, representatives of peasantry would be part of these reunions and speak their minds. In another hall, dedicated to the 'golden age' (the end of the 19th, early 20th century) of Craiova, the major city in Oltenia, there is detailed information about the most representative buildings or parks in the city that were built according to the plans of French, Romanian or German architects, in line with French and Italian trends, and sometimes by foreign construction crews. Following the Western model, Craiova was the first city in Wallachia that featured street lighting, beginning in 1887. The elite of the city was in constant touch with the Western mentality, either through education (attending various European universities) or economic ties.

Previous research [45,70] points to the fact that locals who visit a history museum already have their own narratives about the version of the story the museum depicts, which comes into contact with the official master narrative; thus, the museum's identity of a place becomes a 'co-construction between individual and official narratives' (p. 297), wherein visitors decide whether to accept or reject a museum's master narrative. This is particularly true for the more mature visitors and it was obvious from the attitude of various Romanian visitors in their early 50s to late 70s within the hall featuring the Communist era. Almost none of them read the texts related to this period, a fact we observed during our visits and which was also confirmed by one of the guides. However, their reaction to the objects displayed, pointing to the daily life of a regular citizen (a typical living room, *sufragerie,* as they all looked almost the same due to limited choices for furnishing and decor, uniforms, clothes and housewares from that period) was completely different. They would usually reminisce with their peers about that period, pointing to various décor or kitchen objects, while children and those in their early 20s paid little to no attention to those objects aimed at

stimulating past memories of everyday life under communism [46]. As proved by previous research, people visiting museums actively make and remake their identities, selectively selecting, rejecting or manipulating the images and identities found within [71].

7. Conclusions

During recent decades, there has been an increasing interest in the role of museums as a means to (re)build identities; however, almost all studies have focused on the role of national museums in the politics of (re)branding and rebuilding national identities, namely post-colonial museum representations of identities or ways in which identity is constructed and negotiated. The current paper addressed the role played by a regional museum, in this case study the Oltenia Museum in Romania, in the construction of regional identity. In exploring this issue, we focused on 'what' and 'how': what is the master narrative at the museum, and how is regional identity constructed within the History Section of the museum?

The thematic content of the permanent exhibition points to the existence of a master narrative and trajectory. The construction and dissemination of a certain image of the nation, often based upon the dominant ethnic group, is among the main strategies employed by nation-builders in their pursuit of a single national identity [10]. The master narrative at the Oltenia Museum greatly focuses on four of the five fundamental attributes of national identity as identified by Smith, namely the historic territory, common myth and historical memories, common culture, addressing to a lesser extent the legal rights and duties and common economy for its members.

For Oltenia, the historic territory overlaps that of the 'much acclaimed Dacian land' [7] (p. 123) that was colonized by the Romans, and hence the place where the Romanian people formed during subsequent centuries. The myth of founding figures of the nation generally follows that of the master narrative on national identity with the most important figures for the national consciousness, while detailing the same characters that had a close connection to the region: Michael the Brave and Tudor Vladimirescu. The idea of the religious origin of the nation [19] pervades the entire of the History Section, always reminding visitors of the early Christianity of the inhabitants in the region of Oltenia and the country as a whole. This widely shared view on the region's identity aligns with the Western theory on nationalism in Romania, pointing to wider European connections and influences. Nevertheless, it still has some continuity with the communist narrative, stressing the continued occupation of the territory by the autochthonous population despite hardships, and the drive for independence. There is no doubt that the master narrative of the History Section is also a selective one, as it generally leaves out minorities that have also lived in Oltenia and have contributed to the social and economic development of the region.

For almost a century, the Oltenia Museum has faced serious circumvolutions, starting from its name, location and artifacts, up to, most importantly, the narrative behind the objects displayed, due to political changes and, to a lesser extent, museology practices. Compared to the narrative projected by other national museums in Romania, the Oltenia Museum barely displays significant differences in terms of themes, narration style and the broader discourse of national identity construction. However, while supporting the national version and timeline of major historical events that shaped the nation's identity, it also inserts elements pertaining to the region's historical trajectory.

No matter the period, the museum has always been a repository of collective memory, since it collects, treasures and preserves artifacts from the past. The current dominant story at the Oltenia Museum's History Section is that the region is a Christian and Latin one, hence a part of Europe, that played a major role in the national history and in the emergence of the current nation.

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Article

"From Beautification to Ennobling": The Exterior Mural Mosaics from Suceava of the Socialist Era

Ştefan Purici * and Harieta Mareci Sabol

Department of Human and Social-Political Sciences, Ştefan cel Mare University of Suceava, 720229 Suceava, Romania; harieta@atlas.usv.ro
* Correspondence: stefanp@atlas.usv.ro

Abstract: The mosaic is one of the most durable monumental artworks, hence the belief in its permanence. It is resilient to shocks, abrasion, moisture, and frost, protecting, in turn, the walls it covers. These qualities made the mosaic one of interest to the communist authorities, who later considered it suitable for beautifying the exterior walls of various buildings. The article addresses the issue of the symbolic and identity aspect of art in the urban space. The authors discuss the exterior mural mosaics from Suceava, during the communist period, as an expression of the compromise between the ideological commands of the period and the neo-traditionalist and neo-folklorizing direction professed by the artists.

Keywords: visual representation; communist regime; ideology; tradition; artistic stylization

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1. Introduction

On 17 October 2007, an article in the local press announced the "falling under the bulldozer blade" of the artistic mosaic that decorated the exterior wall of the main hall of the former Machinery and Spare Parts Enterprise (IUPS) in Suceava, an industrial complex renamed ROMUPS. This fact increases the number of cities in Romania that turn the massive mosaics into rubble [1]. Despite warnings from the secretary-general of the Ministry of Culture and Religious Affairs and the conservation proposal of the director of the Bukovina Museum Complex, Suceava City Hall approved the demolition in favor of an investor who promised to build a housing complex. To the open letter addressed to the Suceava authorities by 11 local personalities, the mayor of Suceava replied: "I do not comment culturally on the value of this work, as a symbol of a distinct era. Probably the nostalgic ones want to keep it. I have no such nostalgia" [2]. The debatable connotation of this statement reflects the slogan "let's break it with the past", specific to the post-1990 iconoclasm and the strategies for erasing the communist past and relics. The decision of the mayor's office can also be related to the context of urban administration, which involves land use, as well as the revitalization and expansion of housing infrastructure to improve economic efficiency and social welfare for the local community. In this dynamic, we should not be surprised by the idiosyncratic mixture of old practices and innovative models of a "new reality".

The theme of the evolution and aspect of socialist cities was intensely exploited in Central and Eastern European historiography over the past two decades [3–6], although it appeared in the literature of the 1990s [7,8]. Studies and surveys investigate the changing societal framework and the effect of ideology on social conditions, focusing on specific issues such as decision-making, spatial planning and urban experiences [9,10]. In addition, the photographic documentaries ensure a record of images, reflecting the aesthetic value of socialist relics and proposing another meaning of monumental art creations in the urban space [11–13]. Capitals such as Warsaw, Sofia, Budapest, and the big cities of the former communist bloc are usually privileged in approaching the rise and institutionalization of the relationship between politics/politics of urbanism and art in the 1960s–1980s. In

contrast, cities that appear as "small" in the international context [14] generate, at best, case studies on the broader histories of socialist planning, modernization, and beautification. Surprisingly, these case studies challenge the stereotypical views that obscured the historical effigies, presenting them as standardized socialist urban landscapes. It is not about cities created by the post-war industrialization, such as Nowa Huta in Poland, Dimitrovgrad in Bulgaria, Leninváros in Hungary, Most in Czechoslovakia, or Schwedt in East Germany, but the former medieval residences like Bielsko-Biała in Poland [15] or Plovdiv in Bulgaria [16]. The changes in the cultural policies during the communist period were predominantly normative, the state having an overwhelming role in the supervision and coordination of the artistic production. Socialist regimes sought to differentiate themselves from previous ones by material and visual forms (more imposed than recommended) and by the discourse on innovation and effectiveness of the urban composition and aesthetics accessible and meaningful to all citizens. The ideology that dictated the new orientation in the artistic conception of the built environment relied on economy, functions, and rationality [17], taking the form of ″socialist realism″ or ″national socialism″. Likewise, the interference of politics in the messages of art influenced the artist's decision [18] even if his condition (i.e., recognition of his usefulness to society, his ethical stature and the dilemma dimension of the profession regarding the treatment of freedom and coercion) remained active within the ″compromise area″ [19] or the ″space of professional conscience″ [17]. Regardless of the approach, the reflection on how the communist project intervened in the artistic dimension and the imprint of the urban space in general (not only of the big cities) opened possibilities to widen the range of research.

With regard to Romania, post-1989 literature on the transformation of cities has been produced primarily by architects and architectural historians, sociologists and, to a lesser extent, historians [19–21]. Their interpretations oscillated between emphasizing and contextualizing local peculiarities within a broader history of urban avatars [22,23]. Not surprisingly, Bucharest, Cluj Napoca, and Iaşi have captured the interest of many researchers, the analysis highlighting the fragility of the planning system, either challenging or promoting spaces of historical significance and poor implementation of urban projects [24,25]. Other studies have focused on cities such as Braşov, Sibiu, and Hunedoara, showing how history, economics, and politics have interacted in the urban landscape [19]. Similar to Hunedoara, which combined the emblem of its 15th-century Gothic castle with symbols of mass industrialization, Suceava added to its medieval citadel the hallmarks of socialist modernization [26]. However, unlike Hunedoara, where the main economic interests left the cultural aspects in the background, Suceava was able to enrich its urban landscape with elements of socialist inspiration as well as models that activated the history and tradition of the region. Suceava also had a dimension that no one could ignore: its location in the ″heart″ of a cultural area, with international resonance. Less than an hour′s drive away were the painted monasteries Voroneţ, Suceviţa, Moldoviţa, Arbore, and Humor (included, after 1990, on the UNESCO World Heritage List), which fascinated Romanian and foreign tourists with their exterior frescoes. In a duplicitous way, the local authorities enjoyed the fame of the mentioned religious places without forgetting to declare that the scenes that beautified their exterior walls (referring to God-Creator) belonged to the "history" or "old times" that had to be left behind. At the same time, the painted monasteries were located in the rural areas where the religious tradition could be explained as proof of the ancestral existence of the Romanian people. As opposed to the traditional village, the city of Suceava, as a county seat, had to prove the "renewal of the mind" by beautifying the walls of its buildings following the Soviet theory of the "New Man"—creator of a just, equal, optimistic world. Nonetheless, the traditional folkloric symbols, which we might call "permissive-neutral", were not removed effectively from the art projects, as long as many of the newcomers to the city, as a result of the industrialization of the area, still rooted their mentality in rural culture and civilization. The bizarre mixture of symbolically essentialized forms has become, to some extent, distinct from the murals in other cities of

Romania, even if the artistic language was simple, perfectly transitive for the messages of power, and intelligible for the "popular masses".

Undoubtedly, the history of Suceava during the communist period can be read in various ways. Still, there are not many monographs about Suceava or its urban evolution after Second World War. Except for the analysis of urban geography [27], most of the works take the form of tourist guides, highlighting the glorious medieval period when it functioned as the capital of the Principality of Moldova [28–31]. There is also a lack of papers that focus on the value of urban heritage and, implicitly, the awareness of its conservation, with one exception, a study published in the early 1990s [32]. In 2012, within the international project ATRIUM (Architecture of Totalitarian Regimes in Urban Management), the House of Culture of Suceava became a representative object for a comparative analysis of the architectural aspects of totalitarian regimes in the region of Southeast Europe [33]. Unfortunately, it is one of the few works that go beyond the sphere of popularization, being endorsed by architects. No wonder the official non-inventoried heritage of Suceava has become a marginal issue in the mayor's discussions, if not ignored in drawing up their urban modernization agendas. The result of this state of affairs is the very civic center of Suceava, increasingly grey and devoid of identity.

2. Theory and Methodology

Starting from the story of the demolition of the substantial industrial mural ornament of ROMUPS (a situation that would be complicated later by the compensations that the artist demanded from the mayor's office), our article discusses the process of creating and evaluating exterior wall mosaics in Suceava, as material evidence of the communist past, but also as an aesthetic version of socialist art, more or less politicized. It aims to address one of the gaps in the historiography of Suceava by offering a perspective on the process of urban transformation during socialism and analyzing the relationship between the display of urban (re)development projects and that of "beautifying" the built space. As the constructions "frame and embody economic, social and cultural processes" [34], Suceava can be also interesting for a historical retrospective, which captures the local specificity, indicating how to preserve the built heritage and avoid its intentional destruction.

The argument for our research originated in what Henri Lefebvre called "the space practice" [35]. He stated that space is visible as a social product and that each form of society develops a specific vision for its specific and desirable evolution. Two dimensions characterize the "social production of space": While the first reflects the daily, practical interaction of individuals with the place where they live and work, the second belongs to the "conceptualized" space generated by the compromise made to art by the political power. For Lefebvre, those who conceive space and represent it in plans, maps, projects or images reflect how power creates dominant discourses through the ways in which space is delimited, organized and controlled to meet particular purposes. Ideology is inseparable from practice, and it is the role of history to exemplify this relation: "We should have to study not only the history of space, but also the history of representations, along with that of their relationships- with each other, with practice, and with ideology. History would have to take in not only the genesis of these spaces but also, and especially, their interconnections, distortions, displacements, mutual interactions, and their links with the spatial practice of the particular society or mode of production under consideration" [35]. In the communist states of Central and Eastern Europe, the ideological factor was not the only one that conditioned the social production of space, but it was decisive as long as the political actors decided to structure it [36]. In their opinion, the aesthetic side was imperative only when "ennobling" the built environment, transmitting the general standards by those in power. The methodological approach of the article is also based on urban morphology, examining elements of the landscape and their transformation over time. The method aims to understand the processes of morphological change and to know the identity and actions of change agents, from institutions to individuals [37].

A second aspect of the conceptual framework concerns "urban beautification". In the communist states, "beauty" became the standard that should no longer be sought in nature, as it could be built politically and materially [19,38,39]. The relationship between "beauty" and "function" has been debated since the 1950s due to industrialization and urban sprawl. The stakes rose in the next decade, as did the cultural-ideological imperative of spreading consensus and cohesion in the socialist state, which contributed to the "beautification of life." The multifaceted presence of beauty ensured it a central place in the ideological matrix. However, it should not be limited to pure, sensory sensation, as in Western theories of beauty. The aesthetics of the socialist state were conceived as a combination of artistic beauty and political function and not as a pure feeling of pleasure or visual perception. In the rhetoric of the communists, the working people deserved a beautiful daily life, and this goal led to the need to beautify the cities. One of the privileged artistic genres was the monumental mural creation meant to decorate the public institutions of culture and education, then the residential spaces or factories. The new concept of "ornamenting" or "decorating" with mosaics or ceramic tiles allowed architects and artists to experiment, combining the object sign and the exterior design with the urban architecture.

The juxtaposition of the two major themes—Lefebvre's "social production of space" and the "urban beautification" helps to understand the bond between the environment, dominant ideology and political practices. Space and history are in a continuous and reciprocal dialogue; therefore, one of the historian's tasks is to recognize the message of those plastic signs articulated aesthetically and ideologically in their evolution and relation to the political or social actors.

Despite a generous, theoretical, and methodological framework fueled by the research results in anthropology, urban geography, sociology and heritage studies, the design of information on a historical background remains conditioned by the identification and access to historical sources. While urban reconfiguration and institutional organization can be more easily documented, with some documents even helping to decipher decision-making mechanisms, it is much more demanding to capture the perception of change of Suceava, which is invisible rather than opaque. This paper does not necessarily highlight the responsibility of the actors who transformed the historic city of Suceava but explores the historical context and the motivation of "beautifying" and "ennobling" the buildings by using mosaics loaded with ideological, humanistic, and secular rhetoric of the regime.

Based on written and visual sources (press, reports, addresses, and administrative correspondence, travel guides, sketches, photographs and postcards), we can outline our research itinerary by asking the following: How did the local authorities consider urban planning and how was "the beautification" of the space conceptualized? How were the new constructions approached concerning the general and national objectives of industrialization, urbanization and culturalization? How did local officials articulate their agenda, and how much did they extend the reconsideration of cultural and historical traditions to urban beautification plans? How were monumental works of art approached and evaluated after 1990, and what is their current status?

3. Argumentation and Discussion

The post-1990 revival of interest in the structures of the urban space and its symbolic narratives did not manage to make Suceava attractive enough for an exhaustive monograph, keeping its medieval Citadel as the most representative indicator of a glorious era. Many explanations on the town's achievements refer to the former capital of Moldova and the residence of Stephen the Great (1457–1504), a representative political leader of the Eastern Middle Ages, also called "The Athlete of Christ" by Pope Sixtus IV due to his anti-Ottoman campaigns. From a "Moldavian perspective", the narrative focuses on the 15th and 16th centuries, when the functional zoning generated by the Royal Court was "socially produced or embodied in increasingly large spaces for trade and crafts. The relocation of the capital of Moldova to Iaşi contributed to the city's decline, with frequent wars and periods of occupation affecting many of the buildings. Towards the end of the 18th century,

Suceava still had 25 churches decorated with murals (of Gothic origin, coming from the Transylvanian or Polish chain), almost 500 houses specific to medieval commercial townlets, slums, streets paved with beams (Armenian Lane/Uliţa Armenească) or stone (Boyars Lane/Uliţa Boierească) and a large square "of gathering and festivities" [32].

Under the Habsburg rule, since 1774, at a time when the enlightened absolutism promoted by Maria Theresa and especially by Joseph II had raised mercantilism to the rank of state policy, Suceava benefited from the construction of buildings necessary for new institutions or nobles attracted by the political, economic and social conditions. However, until the middle of the nineteenth century, its urban appearance was not in line with the status received, that of "commercial city", with its magistracy and the privilege of organizing an "annual fair". Its urban profile was generally low, with an absolute predominance of single story houses. Even in its center, the fear of building in height was a consequence of the use of less resistant materials such as wood. Contact with Western architecture in the 1800s led to a change in the classical understanding of the architectural tradition. In 1856, the local authorities demanded the inclusion of Suceava "among the other cities in the monarchy" to overcome its "outdated" urban appearance [31]. After the elaboration of the systematization of the cities of Bukovina, in 1874, in the central commercial area of Suceava houses were made of brick or stone, covered with tile or tin, provided with balconies and windows facing the street, and with aligned facades. Dominated by church towers, the urban profile was enriched by new and imposing buildings, according to their functions: schools, administrative offices, banking, cultural, or commercial establishments.

Until the 1930s, Suceava offered the viewer a landscape created by the play of roofs, with a unique charm given by the architectural variation of the facades (eclectic modernity, with shades of Renaissance, Baroque, Rococo and Classicism) or the decorative fantasy of the consoles and hardware of the balconies. The development of a new style and another urban composition added different elements to the physiognomy of Suceava, but it broke, somewhat, the stylistic unity of the traditional medieval past. However, the relative economic stagnation of the town in the interwar period and the phenomenon of "demographic weakening" [32] contributed to the architectural heritage preservation.

The situation would change dramatically after World War II, with the city's reconstruction plans following the principle of "rebuilding on new foundations" [40]. For the local authorities, the most "acceptable" way of modernization was to clear the land by demolition and construct a new city, which would keep, isolated, some of the monumental buildings of the past. The administrative-territorial reorganization and transformation of Suceava into a "county residence" fueled the tendency to assert the urban prestige of a socialist nature. In 1957, the construction of blocks of flats began in the city. By 1960, more than 270 apartments had been completed, either in the historic center or at the periphery [32]. In 1963, the opening of two plants ("Pulp and Paper" and "Wood processing") generated a migration of labor from the villages to Suceava, explaining, on the one hand, the population growth and, on the other hand, the need to expand the urban territory (including the almost complete decommissioning of the St. Ilie village), the creation of new neighborhoods and, of course, the acceleration of the pace of construction. In 1956, the population of Suceava was 20,946 and in 1985 it reached 98,426 [32]. Although some researchers believe that the rate of population growth has been faster than the expansion of the city, especially in terms of land for auxiliary units [41], we can not ignore the creation, in about ten years, of five new neighborhoods in the south-western part of town. In only five years, according to the systematization sketches from 1975 and 1980, the remodeling and later demolition of the old urban center of the city raised the value of the urbanization indicator (by building new blocks) to over 90%, placing Suceava among the leading cities in the Moldova region [32].

3.1. Beautifying the "New Citadel"

Urban beautification means, most of the time, the creation of an environment that is pleasant from an aesthetic point of view [19]. It can take various forms, from urban renewal and functionality to artistic and ideological expression. For example, the interwar Suceava

seen through the eyes of Simionescu was idyllic, typical of Bukovina fairs, and archaic in the picturesque "knot formed by dense shops" of Armenian or Moldovan houses; some of them were "more modernised", while others, still "covered with shingles", sprang from "bushy trees or flower gardens" [42].

From the perspective of the resident of Suceava in 1965, a contributor to the regional daily "Zori Noi" (New Dawns), the city was gloomily described: "What seemed to be urban here was just a rural attribute pushed to some limits that expressed nothing but an insatiable pursuit of money. The fagged booths and the stalls with the shrewd merchants often lined up tirelessly along poor streets over which leaned countless balconies where, along with the drying clothes, the bored townspeople ate seeds, spitting out their shells, with indifference, on the muddy sidewalks". Only the Citadel remained unchanged, "the town, scattered on the same streets" living in its shadow. The blame for this deplorable image belonged to the bourgeoisie who "had managed to push Suceava to the last stage of ruin". That is why the fundamental problem of urbanization was the annulment or reconfiguration of elements reminiscent of the pre-war "bourgeois" period. The one who could do this was the "architect" defined, in the language of the 1960s, as an "exponent of beauty", that is, the one who "let his imagination unfold according to the love and passion of thousands of the city's inhabitants" [43]. In other words, according to the theory of "social production of space", art had to be brought into real space, accessible to all inhabitants, and artists were to take an active role in the construction of socialism by "beautifying" the public space. From the Marxist ideological perspective, the urban transformation was, at the same time, the stake and the means for breaking the past.

The whole architectural movement of Suceava followed two directions clearly outlined: on the one hand, modernism in its scholastic form, located between figurative and abstraction, and on the other hand, experimentalism in neo-traditionalist and neo-folklorizing version [44]. Urban "beautification" in 1965–1975 expressed the tendency to affirm the concept of the new regime, including the architecture of residential blocks and public buildings. In socialist folklore, Suceava did not have only a "Medieval Citadel"; it had itself become a "New Citadel", as one local poet wrote: "Green leaf, princely apple/At Suceava when I look/I seem to be getting younger/It's so rejuvenated/My old Suceava/Also with big blocks/Charming princes, healthy and strong/peony sprinkled with dew/Suceava is a new citadel" [45].

Paradoxically, while erasing the physical traces of the old houses, modernist architects claimed to have incorporated a particular spirit of the place into their projects. For example, the arrangement and decoration of the Central Square (Republic Square or 23 August Square), in 1964, solved a "space problem": an open plateau to the Citadel, a large volume (10-storey tower block) in its south-western part, and a few smaller ones (4-storey blocks) arranged on its northern and southern side. On the one hand, the square organization was a typical example of modernist urban design by completely removing the more or less attractive 19th-century buildings. On the other hand, the architects considered the local specificity, suggesting an interpretation of the city landscape by arranging the built structures. In fact, since the mid-1960s, the authorities of Suceava have shown their openness to diversify the way the city was beautified by installing pavements with neutral, concentric layouts in regular or freely disposed spots. As a novelty, in the case of Central Square, it was precisely the pedestrian mosaic "with scenes from the history of the city and of Moldova and from our new life" (Figure 1).

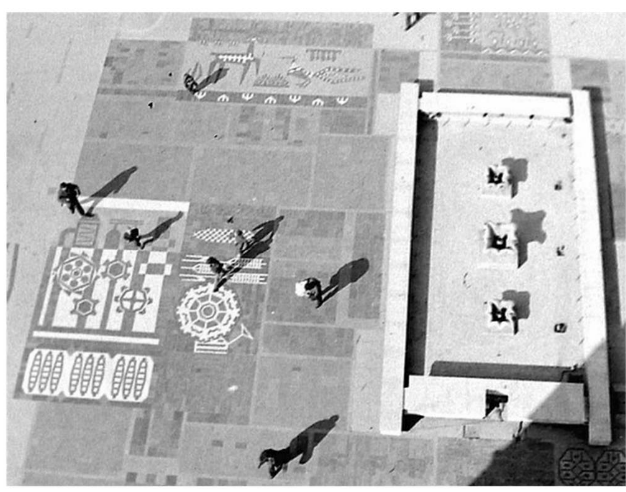
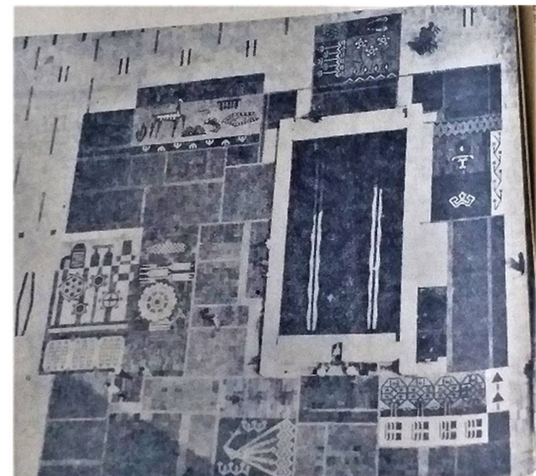

Figure 1. The pavement mosaic in the Central Square of Suceava.

The propagandists defined the pavement large marble slabs as "a prestigious stamp on the surface of a city, introducing it into the circuit of urban values" and as "a transfiguration (in the highest way of art) of two histories brought together, by the people of Suceava, on the stage of a new and round fulfilment" [46]. The mosaic contained stylized graphic elements (crown, mountain, river, peacock, deer, spike, gears) that referred to the relief, hydrography, fauna and flora of the area, the medieval history of the city, but also what was called "its new economic geography" [28], "the beautiful every day", and "the permanence of the anthological pages of the socialist construction in the northern part of the country" [43].

3.2. The Outdoor Wall Mosaics of Suceava

The exaltation that emerges from the texts of the years 1960–1980 (local press, tourist guides, speeches at cultural events) reveals the issue of beautifying the architectural aspect of Suceava: the aesthetic-ideological combination. Trying to increase the artistic expressiveness of some blocks of flats in the newly built residential zone, the communist practices aimed at incorporating creative compositions into the architecture of the facades. Varied in size and texture, the facades had to carry the message (more or less ideologically charged) of the socialist transformation of society. The Decision of the Council of Ministers no. 1003 of 23 December 1963, provided, for "the stimulation of creativity in the field of fine arts and its closer connection to the requirements of socialist construction", the role of control and guidance reverting to the State Committee for Culture and Art [47]. One year later, the large-scale works of contemporary art (executed only by "living artists") could be purchased by "public and cooperative organizations", implicitly by the local administration. The general tendency to introduce the new socialist aesthetic in the urban environment became evident after 1964. All artistic projects for decorating the buildings had to ask for approval from the "Center" in Bucharest. Of all the types of monumental art, mosaic has become the most common and sustainable way to beautify the facades.

As everywhere in Romania, the artists experimented in Suceava with techniques and materials, making monumental tiles from small, natural stone and ceramics. According to the classifications of the composition—(a) folklore and national motives, (b) history and ideology, (c) work and industrialization, (d) sports and leisure—most artistic ensembles in Suceava belong to the first two categories. Analyzing the character or destination of the buildings on which the parietal mosaics were installed, with strict reference to the most representative ones, from 1966–1983, we propose another classification, as follows:

3.2.1. The Mosaics on the Facades of Apartment Buildings

In the mid-1960s, the director of the Department of Systematization, Architecture and Construction Design in Suceava underlined the importance of local peculiarities, asking the employees to reflect, in their design work, the rich folklore of the region and the

artistic traditions. Unfortunately—he noted—"the large volume of construction in our region needed to be healed of the disease of pattern making"; otherwise, they would have appeared in localities "shot at the scapyrograph", and their appearance might have seemed, "later, monotonous, tasteless" [48]. Most of the photos in the local newspapers in the 1960s and 1970s illustrated new or under-construction blocks with unpainted or freshly painted walls. To avoid the monotony, but also to beautify the "new fortress" of Suceava, the members of the People's Council of the Suceava Region asked the State Committee for Culture and Art, respectively the Fine Arts Council for approval to start the decoration of the balconies [46] or the facades of some blocks. The themes that the small tiles were to illustrate were "the life of the youth", "the wood exploitation and processing industry", and the crafting of the region (fabrics, black pottery, Kuty ceramic). Financial reasons or re-prioritization prevented the realization of many projects. However, a few mosaics applied on plaster (alternating colors or non-figurative compositions) managed to cover some of the "high visibility buildings" positioned "on the traffic arteries" or "in the animated points of the city" [49].

During the same period, following the systematization sketch from 1960, the urban plan focused on building cheap and good quality housing in the marginal areas of the city, often stigmatized as slums. The adoption of modernist elements quickly contributed to the composition of success stories published in the local press, in groups entitled "Notes" or "From the Reporter's Notebook". The articles—loaded with a visible communist credo—explained how to "put order" at the "western gate of the city", where the landscape was most desolate: "At the bottom were the dark walls of the prison dating back to the time of Maria Theresa. Next to it—the field full of mud and corn stalks, as in Bacovia's fair. All around, the look-alike small dwellings, a few dirty huts, a few sordid taverns lined up on both sides of the streets". In a short time, the Arini neighborhood (located at the entrance to Suceava, from the West) was to reach the "pride of the city", making locals and visitors "vibrate sincerely at the striking contrast between the bitter past and the uplifting present" [43].

The blocks built between 1964 and 1965 were to be "painted in the spirit of our folk art, dividing the facades into various fields that will be colored differently, which is in the spirit of the mural painting from Voroneţ" [50]. Such a discourse sought ideological legitimacy in taking over the traditional motifs and local-historical patterns that were to decorate the buildings in the "slum" that had become the center of interest for the intervention of local party authorities. At their suggestion, a group of 5 artists were hired (Virgil Almășanu, Dona Num, Mihai Velea, Constantin Crăciun and Istvan Vigh). The practice of the time required the commissioning of monumental works directly at the Union of Visual Artists in Bucharest. The art projects were assigned to the artists by the bureaucracy at the Centre or won by competition. Not infrequently, subjectivism and corruption interfered with the aesthetic quality of artistic creation in the absence of a transparent cultural policy that would guarantee the best-funded and the most ideologically controlled type of art [51]. Led by Gheorghe Popescu from the University of Fine Arts in Bucharest, Romania these "monumentalist painters" had to visualize, on 700 m^2, a unitary decorative work sequenced in four compositions with allegorical narrative symbolism. Although fresco may have been an option, the governing bodies preferred mosaics. They were to create, "at the entrance to the city, a discreet specific atmosphere, a diffuse suggestion of the forests and people of Bukovina, their ancient customs and art or the general, essential elements of nature and art, in this part of the country" [52]. The invoked "spirit of mural paintings from Voroneț" had nothing to do with religious symbolism but with the cultural complex of the periphery and the quality of strategies for asserting zonal and local identity. Typical of folkloric expressionism, the new iconography followed the desecrated conception of the world, which placed man in the center of attention as a supporter of creation.

The three blocks of four-story buildings (the so-called "H-blocks"), arranged parallel to the main road of the city (or "Highway"), were tiled with mosaics meaning, in order, "Wedding" (14.80 × 5.25 m), "Forest" or according to other sources "Spring" (14.20 × 5.20 m),

and "Hunting" (14.85 × 5.10 m). The drawing, in red and black, only "alluded" to a wedding, a hunt, or a forest, which must be "more felt than recognised" (Figure 2). Human silhouettes (male and female depicted as equestrians, horn-hunters, archers, dancers), birds, deer, insects, trees (deciduous and coniferous) and folk motifs stylized the most striking features of the historic area was part of Suceava and frequently appeared on traditional fabrics.

Figure 2. Mosaics on the "H blocks": "Wedding", "Forest", "Hunting". (Source: Petru Palamar).

On the ten-story tower block that dominated the square, the team of "monumental painters" installed a mosaic inspired by the essential myths of Romanian culture: "Mioriţa" and "Meşterul Manole". We do not know the reason for the artists' change of mind. Still, in the end, they gave up the theme of "Building Sacrifice" in favor of the pastoral epic, considered a symbol of the permanence of the Romanian people due to pastoralism as an ancient occupation. Large-scale (28.05 × 13.87 m), the work is arranged, as in the case of "H blocks", in registers and strips illustrated with folk, vegetable motifs (Tree of Life, firs, flowers), zoomorphic (sheep, goats, birds), cosmogonic (sun, moon, stars) and geometric (spirals, circles), according to the "sobriety of our old song" (Figure 3).

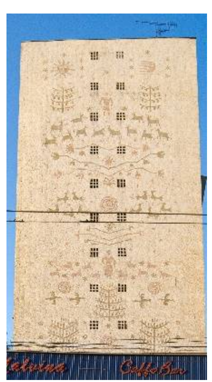
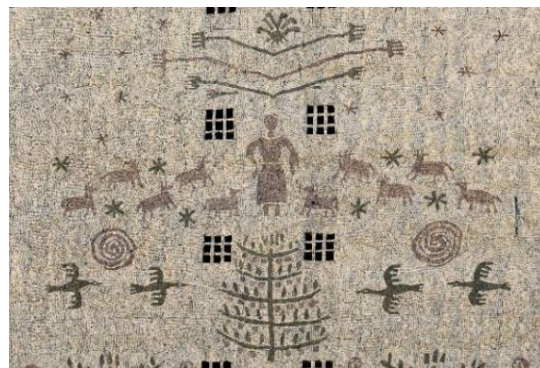

Figure 3. The "Mioriţa" mosaic on the Arini tower block. (Source: Circulated postcard and Petru Palamar).

Surprisingly, the author of the article published in the regional daily "Zori Noi", pointing out the value and significance of the new parietal mosaics, insisted on his description of the peculiarities of Bukovina. It was no longer a question of connecting the city to medieval Moldova, but to Bukovina, a province which had belonged to the Austro-Hungarian Empire and which, after 1944, had been divided between the USSR (northern part, with Chernivtsi, the former duchy capital) and Romania (southern area, with Suceava, the medieval residence). According to this author, in the mosaics in Arini Square, one should not look for "a Bukovina of the postcards, with Romanian lads, sheep and hornbills, but an essentialised Upper Country, concentrated in a few lines, a discreet evocative creative atmosphere". Also striking was the remark at the end of the text that referred to the mosaic of "glazed ceramic, yellow with spots, of monumental ugliness" (Figure 4), placed on nearby buildings and which "forced the aesthetics of an important market" [52].

Figure 4. Non-figurative mosaic applied on the blocks of the Arini neighbourhood. (Source: Petru Palamar).

The true intention of the builders and architects in choosing the yellow-black combination is also unknown; perhaps it was a random one, or it was a discreet expression of the choice of the two colors on the flag of the Austrian monarchy. Regardless of the scope of this choice, it was required to extract from the unfigured mosaics "unfortunate black dots" and replace them with others of a more appropriate color, or "a unitary colour, if not beautiful, at least bearable insight" [52].

Seen through a permissive neutral, aestheticized and depoliticized artistic lens, the mural mosaics from the Arini/Areni section have passed the test of time thanks to their particularities of monumental artwork devoid of any overt doctrinal connotation. Neither before 1989 nor after 1990 did their symbolism offer the viewer a propagandistic interpretation, considering them more decorative, timeless and universally valid than ideologized. The risk of their destruction arose in 2010 when the residents raised the issue of thermal rehabilitation of their blocks. Without having the status of architectural heritage and legal protection provided by law, the mosaics of the H blocks remained only a landmark or symbol of the area, which gave identity to the neighborhood. The appeal of the Directorate for Culture and National Heritage Suceava highlighted the disinterest of the local authorities in classifying the monuments in the city and for the observance of the Law 120 of 2006. Trying to save the mosaics and prevent them from being dismantled or covered with polystyrene some architects proposed to install thermal insulation inside the apartments [2].

3.2.2. The Mosaics on the Facades of Public Buildings (Education and Culture)

In June 1967, an address of the State Committee for Culture and Art mentioned the preference of Suceava's authorities for ornamentation, blaming the local People's Council for the lack of a firmer orientation towards works inspired by nature, and the specifics of the region, from the life of the working people or the historical and patriotic past of people. This type of creation, "which depicts what is most precious and specific to the region", were "needed, to a greater extent, local, public and cultural institutions" [49]. In fact, in the summer of 1967, there was a rather intense exchange of addresses and memoirs between the Council of Fine Arts in Bucharest, Romania and the local authorities of Suceava, one of the reasons being the mosaic on the outer wall of the Pedagogical Institute. The polychromatic marble mosaic, entitled "Education", was an artistic stylization of the idea of promotion and enlightenment through education, having among its symbols the book, the bird, and the sun (Figure 5).

Figure 5. The "Education" mosaic on the facade of the "Petru Rareş" National College. (Source: Petru Palamar).

The project of the painters Camilian Demetrescu and Vasile Varga had received approval in June 1966. Still, the bureaucratic delays led to the opening of the site only in October and the installation of the mosaic pieces in November. In a letter to the president of the Fine Arts Council, the two painters complained about the "more difficult" conditions in which they worked ("on blizzard and snow," "at high altitude, on a makeshift scaffold and with ice in mortar"). Worse than that was the disinterest and malice of the beneficiaries—the People's Local Council and the Pedagogical Institute—who had not supervised the action, but complained, at the end, of the unsatisfactory quality of the work such as the improper colors of the material, lack of perspective, and peeling stones. While these objections went unnoticed in Bucharest, the official interventions before the State Committee for Culture and Art and the Union of Visual Artists were successful, resulting in the "revision", "remediation", or "partial restoration" of the mosaic. Despite the tumultuous beginnings, the work lasted in the same place, on the walls of the building whose destination was later changed.

Much more contested than the "Education" mosaic were the ceramic tiles placed, in the same period, on the exterior walls of the stadium in Suceava. They were arranged according to "an immutable aesthetic criterion" or on every second part of the wall (reminiscent of a common saying: "a hard step and a soft one"), having a sports theme. A local journalist

noticed that, shortly after the application, at least half of the plaques peeled off so that a large part of them had come to look “like after scarlet fever”. The appearance of the characters was “at least grotesque. (. . .) The striker has his left leg so prominent and, in many places, amputated by the weather. One of the two basketball players is, of course, an amateur. In fact, at least half of the immortalised athletes should be sanctioned by the referees, not having a regulatory attitude”. The work at the stadium contrasted with the “success of beauty”, which was the mosaic “Mioriţa” on the tower block in Arini. For this reason, the journalist concluded his material with the question: “What if, instead of a single colour, the plates contained, by analogy, housewives shaking carpets or making coffee?” [53].

As for the mosaic on the side facade of the House of Culture—named later the Center of Culture and Socialist Creation “Song of Romania” of the Unions in Suceava—its history also had an interesting route. The building, constructed between 1965 and 1969 in the eastern part of the city’s Central Square, was to have one of the walls covered with a monumental fresco. A *Note* from the Suceava archives shows that local propagandists and activists wanted all the artwork created for this edifice to evoke either Voroneţ (also called the “Sistine Chapel of the East“ due to the fresco of the “Last Judgment“ and its blue color) and the history of Moldova or the worker and industry. In a society rigid and suspicious of artistic symbols and meanings, the secretary of the Regional Committee of the Communist Party was unexpected rather than “balanced”: “Let’s not re-edit the frescoes from Voroneţ, nor should we force the note on contemporaneity, on the working element, because it would be annoying” [49].

In an address sent, in July 1969, to the president of the Culture and Art Committee of Suceava County, the vice-president of the State Committee for Culture and Art indicated the painters who could make monumental works of art at the House of Culture in Suceava, as well as their projects’ titles. Thus, the team formed by Mihai Horea, Constantin Berdilă and Mircea Velea (authors of the work “Cântarea Ţării de Sus”/“The Song of the Upper Land”) and that of Constantin Crăciun and Paul Gherasim (who had proposed the mosaic “Luceafărul”/“The Evening Star” or “Mioriţa”) entered the competition. At the end of December 1971, some of the mentioned artists came to Suceava to present the black and white slides with images of two panels. As in the viewing and discussions participated the first secretary of Suceava County, “representatives of the working people, cadres from the county and municipality leadership, delegations of cultural institutions, DSAPC, artists”, some recommendations and clarifications were formulated: 1. The “Mioriţa” panel had to accentuate the region’s peculiarly about the human typology and the character’s clothing. The compositional details were subordinate to the theme’s deeply symbolic and humanistic revelation. 2. The second panel, on the side, presented the theme “Song of the Upper Land”. The recommendation was to give up the figure in the medallions, emphasizing the metaphorical and symbolic dimension of the oak in the center of the composition. The light was also to contribute to the symbol of the panel, going to the buttress of the building. The divergences related to the material of the monumental artwork (fresco or marble mosaic) led to the formation of a commission in Bucharest that was to establish, in February 1972, the most appropriate technique. Over the next several months, officials from Suceava agreed that only the “Song of the Upper Land” mosaic should adorn the House of Culture. The composition “Mioriţa” was to decorate the facade of the Cotton Spinning Mill from Gura Humorului (“located on the tourist route to Voroneţ”), and “Luceafărul” one of the “new constructions in the municipality” (without specifying which of them). None of the last two was made, in Gura Humorului appearing, in 1982, another mosaic entitled first “The national and economic specifics of Suceava County”, then “Bukovina Folk Traditions”, and, finally, “From the beauties of Bukovina”, designed and executed by the painters Napoleon Zamfir and Victor Feodorov [49].

In 1973, the local authorities unveiled, on the side facade of the House of Culture of Unions in Suceava (Figure 6), the parietal mosaic “The Song of the Upper Land” created by Constantin Crăciun, Constantin Berdilă, Paul Gherasim and Mihai Horea. With an area of

14.12 × 31.50 m and made of stone and marble, on a wall with a rugged surface, it has a non-figurative composition and reveals a discreet chromatic that appeals to faded tones (ochre, grey, yellow, brown, white, black). The plastic artists from Suceava understood its theme in a different range, insisting on "Phases of the Moon" (specific to the Midsummer/"Sânziene" Night, and the celebration of the town, on 24 June) or the "Oak" (as a symbol of endurance and permanence). There is no written evidence of the attitude of the locals towards "The Song of the Upper Land", but some witnesses at the inauguration event remember that the mosaic delighted everyone [54].

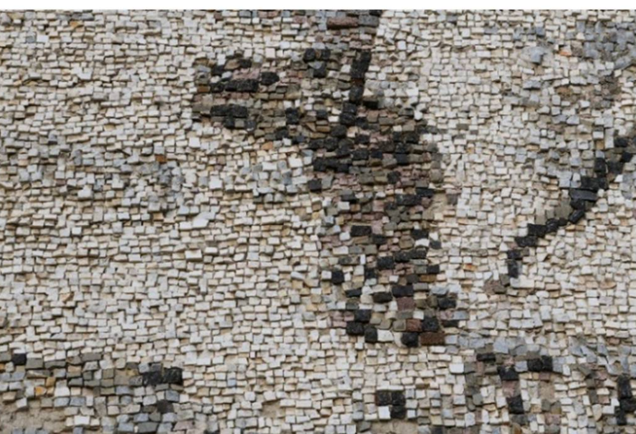

Figure 6. "The Song of the Upper Land" mosaic on the facade of the House of Culture. (Source: Petru Palamar).

Unfortunately, even this mosaic did not enter the list to give it the status of an architectural heritage object, thus protecting it from vandalism. At the end of 2008, an unidentified person drew on the wall. Because the cleaning of the mosaic requires a dry surface, and the meteorological conditions prevented the rescue intervention [55], the marks remained on the side facade of the House of Culture, altering its appearance already affected by the mercantile transformations of the last three decades.

3.2.3. The Mosaic on the Facade of the Machinery and Spare Parts Enterprise

Rapid industrialization changed the "face" of Suceava [56], from the four enterprises (3 that produced food and one footwear) in the 1940s to a real industrial platform with pulp and paper mills, wood processing, metal constructions, machines and tools, car repairs, artificial fibers, and textiles. In 1969, according to the program of the Communist Party, which wanted to "provide the entire economy with technical equipment", the Machinery and Spare Parts Industrial Enterprise was established in the "new citadel". As a component of the machine-building industry, its purpose was to grant "in a significant proportion, the necessary utensils for the other branches, as well as an ever-increasing assortment of consumer goods" [57]. Such a presence counted in the industrial landscape of Suceava, being part of a model of economic behavior that favors social development by hiring hundreds of workers from the city and adjacent localities. At the end of the 1970s, it was the responsibility of the local authorities to find suitable spaces for the execution of wall decorations of any kind, thus ennobling the buildings and promoting the monumental art [49]. Not only blocks of flats, public edifices, and cultural institutions were of interest, but also factories and enterprises, which became "the decisive factor in reducing the gap with economically developed countries" [58].

Unlike the period 1964–1970, both the documents of the local administration and the thematic orientation of the monumental works of art demonstrate an evident change of language. In a letter sent to Miu Dobrescu, a high-grade official from the Secretariat of the Communist Party, the chairman of the local Socialist Culture and Education Committee reminded of the need to "ennoble the facades of some industrial enterprises in Suceava

County" and also to illustrate the "vast work of creating the new socialist society on these lands" [49]. At the time of writing, the artists already had the projects in graphics and 1/1 size samples in the final material, which ensured efficiency in their realization. But beyond the "humanist" side of the factory's artistic "ennobling", there were some financial motivations that the local authorities did not ignore. The ping-pong game of correspondence between local and central political leaders shows that socialist art was not cheap at all. In the letter of 3 March 1980, the amount allocated by Bucharest for the execution of the mural mosaic was 1,629,004 lei, of which 366,000 went to the authors (an average annual salary in Romania was 2602 lei). The costs estimation sent by the Suceava Council in November 1980 was 8104 lei lower. A few weeks later, the representatives from Bucharest returned with a message approving the total amount of 1,629,005 lei [49].

Less visually aggressive than the "state kitsch" exhibited by ideologically regimented art [59], but with sufficient elements of propaganda, the mosaic was to enrich "the dowry of spiritual values existing in this part of the country", bringing—as the local newspaper noted—"a vibrant homage to work" and "an ode to joys and socialist accomplishments". Anchored "in the socialist present", the artistic creation represented "The Man, in a multitude of metaphorical hypostases meant to give him both the force of action and the moral, soul dimension". Moreover, the figurative preponderance, the gallery of faces and characters coming to illustrate the allegorical narrative proposed by the two artists. Other complementary elements (arches, coats of arms, inscriptions, trees, tulles, shields, stars, pigeons) made up the human and historical space (Figure 7). A local journalist presented the mosaic as "an elegant business card about Suceava, today and forever", illustrating the traditions and contemporary realities of the lands, without forgetting "the changes in the last decades in the life of the settlements" [60].

Figure 7. The mosaic "The heroism of the working class in the endeavor of socialist industrialization" [61].

The mosaic did not necessarily insist on the specific elements of the city or ethnographic area, such as those on the pavement of the Central Square, but on themes of universal value (peace, motherhood) or traditional Romanian specifics (horn players, characters dressed in popular costumes). After all, it "should not have just mirrored the occupations and ethnography of places, for art has, as it is known, its specific ways of reflecting the life and feelings of the soul". Traian Brădean, one of the artists, did not explain his plastic vision either, limiting himself to stating that he intended to raise the level of creation "to the height of the demands of such an enterprise in an area with such a distinct personality in national culture and history" [60]. Subsequently, during investigations generated by the removal and destruction of the mosaic in 2007, the journalists discovered its original title—"Songs for Man and Work"—and that was going to "ennoble" the metro station "Unirii Square" in Bucharest. As the costs of arranging the underground transport infrastructure were high, authorities decided to move the mosaic to Suceava, placing it on a visible wall [1]. This explains why Brădean addressed, through the local newspaper, "sincere thanks to the county bodies, the relevant forums, to all those who showed understanding and gave us support" [60]. Unlike the reception of "The Education" mosaic from the Pedagogical

Institute (with appeals and dissatisfaction), on 13 October 1983, a commission composed of representatives of the Committee of Culture and Socialist Education of Suceava County found that the monumental art entitled "The heroism of the working class in the endeavour of socialist industrialisation", covering an area of 456 m (6 m high and 76 m long), met the "artistic and thematic qualities according to the project", being awarded as "very good" [49].

More or less noticed by the workers or admired by the passers-by in the area, the mosaic wall from the Machinery and Spare Parts Enterprise has lasted 24 years. After 1990, the platform that concentrated the principal industrial units of Suceava changed its structure and character, becoming a "commercial area". In addition, its location at the intersection of the three large administrative divisions of the municipality (Centre, Burdujeni and Itcani) attracted the attention of real estate developers. This state of art fueled the controversy between the opponents of the demolition of the mosaic (representatives of the intellectual, academic, cultural environment of Suceava) and the supporters of this action (the local and county administration). Although the Directorate for Culture, Cults and National Cultural Heritage had put it on the "consultative" list of public monuments in Suceava County, the mosaic was not under the protection of Law 120/2006 (regulating the legal framework for construction, location and administration of public monuments), nor was it included in the patrimonial records of the local administration. Notified in this regard, the prefect of Suceava—as a guarantor of compliance with the law and the government's representative in the territory—justified the destruction of the mosaic since the owner had not raised any claim and the monumental work was not included in inventories of heritage objects. From his point of view, the mosaic was, however, anachronistic, "resembling the statue of Lenin in front of the Casa Scânteii/House of the Spark" [1], referring to the removal, in Bucharest, of one of the most relevant symbols of loyalty to communist ideology referring to the removal, in Bucharest, of one of the most relevant symbols of loyalty to communist ideology. The mayor of Suceava also defined it, naming the signatories of an open letter proposing to save the mosaic as "crypto-communists". Destroyed in the second half of October 2007, the monumental work became the subject of litigation between the authorities and the plastic artist Traian Brădean, the latter requesting one billion lei as compensation. Subsequently, neither the local media nor the City Council provided information on the status of moral damages due to the painter's heirs, the subject of parietal mosaics that "beautified" or "ennobled" Suceava in the years of socialism faded into the background.

4. Conclusions

The complexity of the relationship between space-society-history and art-urban ideology leads us to believe that behind the visual representations that ordinary people read or intuit is not only what philosophers considered "cultural vision" but also a matter of displaying power. From this perspective, in the key proposed by Lefebvre, space is primarily political. In the form of buildings, monuments, statues or mosaics, some of the material evidence of the communist past in Romania (as everywhere in Central and Eastern Europe) is still in place. Many others were removed immediately after 1989 or abandoned until time turned them into ruins, helping the authorities to more easily justify the need for their demolition. After half a century dominated by the communist ideology and strategies of erasing authentic history, initiatives advocating the preservation and re-evaluation of socialist-type artistic creation have understood both the purpose of its nostalgic dimension and that of iconoclastic reasons and practices. From this perspective, demolition or conservation is no longer a purpose in itself (with some isolated exceptions) but a part of planning policies, integrated into a broad, conceptual, institutional, and legal framework.

In the case of Suceava—the capital of the medieval state of Moldova in its glory days and an ordinary, provincial city until the interwar period when it became the county seat—urban development projects were modelled at the intersection of local and central interests, negotiating its relevance depending on the context historically, the actors involved and the dynamics of power. Rather than an ideologically motivated struggle against a despised past (as evidenced by propaganda texts), the policy of expanding and then "beautifying"

the built environment took advantage of the opportunities of a system that could be both rigid and porous. Thus, the Romanian version of socialist modernism did not ignore the traditional, local specificity, pondering the thematic constraint and offering the plastic artists a certain stylistic autonomy.

The mosaics of Suceava represent an integral part of the architectural image of a socialist city and also a material testimony of an era in which artists' relationship with power passed through the restrictive framework of political and administrative institutions. Most of them belong to painters from Bucharest who maintained a high artistic level in the works commissioned by the communist authorities. Supporting the ideas of "beautification of the New Citadel" or "artistic ennobling of buildings", they compromised the "practical utility of art" in their professional and material interest. Compared to many of the epics of socialism in stereotypical productions on buildings in other Romanian cities, the mosaics in Suceava are characterized by modernizing styles, illustrating abstract, floral, zoomorphic motifs, even inspired by traditional fabrics in the area. Not even the decoration of the House of Culture—a construction generally attributed to Soviet-origin cultural policies aimed at educating the masses following the principles of communist ideology—does not reflect, in Suceava, obedience to official iconography. The artistic style of the mosaics "Hunting/Vânătoarea", "Miorița" or "The Song of the Upper Land/Cântarea Țării de Sus" combined ethnography, symbolist techniques and scenes taken from Romanian mythology, bringing in line the ideal of autochthonism and aesthetics of 1965–1975 with that permissive neutrality that gave it quality even within the constraining system in power. "The heroism of the working class in the endeavour of socialist industrialisation", destroyed in the "bulldozer era" due to its absence from the list of public monuments, did not enjoy the same appreciation. Seen as a product of a totalitarian epoch, the mosaic that "ennobled" the walls of an important factory in Suceava confirmed the paradox in which the local administration ignores the works of monumental art, and the locals pass over them. The lovers of socialist art lose the chance to see them in the most diverse and fascinating hypostasis.

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Article

Urban Image at the Time of the COVID-19 Pandemic, Case Study Novi Sad (Serbia)

Tamara Lukić [1,*], Ivana Blešić [1,2], Tatjana Pivac [1], Milka Bubalo Živković [1], Bojan Đerčan [1], Sanja Kovačić [1,2], Marija Cimbaljević [1] and Dajana Bjelajac [1]

[1] Department of Geography Tourism and Hotel Management, University of Novi Sad, 21000 Novi Sad, Serbia; ivana.blesic@dgt.uns.ac.rs (I.B.); tatjana.pivac@dgt.uns.ac.rs (T.P.); milka.bubalo.zivkovic@dgt.uns.ac.rs (M.B.Ž.); bojan.djercan@dgt.uns.ac.rs (B.Đ.); sanja.bozic@dgt.uns.ac.rs (S.K.); marijac@dgt.uns.ac.rs (M.C.); dajanab@dgt.uns.ac.rs (D.B.)
[2] Institute of Sports, Tourism and Service, South Ural State University, 454080 Chelyabinsk, Russia
* Correspondence: tamara.kovacevic@dgt.uns.ac.rs

Abstract: The main aim of this paper is to examine how negative phenomena, such as a pandemic, can result in positive cultural shifts and an upgrade of the urban image. The research was conducted employing an in-depth interview approach at the end of 2021, based on a semi-structured protocol with 15 participants. The answers of the respondents are conditioned by the socio-demographic differences. They show the urban image and cultural opportunities of the city. The image of the city is changing under different cultural influences, which are caused by events in the region or globalization. The self-awareness of the history, tradition and heritage that the people of Novi Sad have should be nurtured in order to preserve the image of the city with the strength of the majority of the immigrant population. The title 'European Capital of Culture' has been well received, but its impact will be best seen at the end of the year. COVID-19The COVID-19 pandemic favored and popularized cycling, awakened environmental self-awareness and solidarity, brought culture to the streets and beautified the city's image. Everything that could not be placed on the street, it was entered and placed in the virtual world.

Keywords: Novi Sad; urban image; culture of living; tradition; heritage; COVID-19 pandemic; European Capital of Culture

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1. Introduction

Urban image is too broad a term to mention all of its elements in one paper. Therefore, there is a need to emphasize at the beginning of the paper that it will focus only on those segments that directly or indirectly currently affect some visible transformations of space.

In the function of the objectivity of presenting facts about urban image of Novi Sad, a study was conducted in which its inhabitants discussed a few topics. The first topic reveals what, in the opinion of the residents of Novi Sad, is what makes it unique, recognizable and influences the formation of its image, etc. It points out the importance of European cultural influences on the urban image and culture of the city. After that, one thinks about self-awareness, which determines whether the tradition will be preserved and passed on to the next generations. The level of cultural competence depends on self-awareness [1]. The high level of cultural competence [2] is part of the image of Novi Sad. Respondents assess the impact of the sudden and large influx of new population over the last decades [3] on the city's cultural competence.

Novi Sad won the prestigious European title 'European Capital of Culture 2022'. In this regard, the paper seeks to show the reactions of the population of Novi Sad. Respondents commented on their impressions of the image and cultural changes in urban areas caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The significance of the work is that special attention was paid to the positive outcomes caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. At the end we discuss critics

of the urban image and the cultural occurrence and phenomena. The main hypothesis explored in the paper is that negative phenomena, such as a pandemic, can result in positive effects on the urban image and visible cultural changes.

2. Theoretical Background

An image of a place is the first association with it when it is mentioned. However, in the scientific literature, it is mentioned more sporadically. It is very important to note that the authors understand the term image as visible, but also are aware of those intangible symbols. In addition, it is important to note the factors that have had or still have an impact on the characteristics of the image of the city.An urban image consists of possible forms of urban buildings [4,5], styles, forms [6], and architectural solutions, but respondents mentioned this concept before thinking about how they perceive the overall image of the city. Changes in the urban image are mentioned in settlements where major spatial transformations occur, such as in the work El Amrousi & Elhakeem [7]. A sustainable urban image links the physical character of the built environment with the environmental, social, economic, and cultural aspects of that environment [8]. Accordingly, Fuli [9] writes that urban image includes the material and the intangible heritage such as inter alia, habits and spirits of citizens. Symbols of urban history preserve the image of the urban landscape in the frame of identity and community cultural values [10]. Social change and economic transformation reshapes the city's spaces and image. Cultural initiatives can cause heritage-creativity hybridization in the city [11].

Non-physical factors affecting any urban image must be linked to visual imagery to present a coherent city image [8]. Regional culture as an important core content reflects the characteristic value of the city [12]. The muteness of the region of Vojvodina [13], whose capital is Novi Sad, was, among other things, colorfully reflected in the rural area. The settlements with a majority Slovak population were dominated by blue [14], Hungarian by green, Croats by red [15], Romanian by golden yellow [16], and so on. This historically conditioned heritage explains why Novi Sad, where all ethnic groups of Vojvodina are present, is most colorful (Figure 1). Florenzano et al. [17] confirm chromatic interventions in cultural heritage have not been overcome and should be discussed in its historical, theoretical, and phenomenological complexity.

Figure 1. Colors of ethnic groups on the facades of one of the oldest streets in the city. Source: Bojan Đerčan, February 2022.

Presenting, recognizing and recommending the city's heritage creates new employment opportunities for the local population [18]. This work can influence the correction of urban regulations which could improve the image of the city.

3. Methods

Available literature was used for historical facts. Basic information about the European Youth Capital 2019 and European Capital of Culture in 2022 has been downloaded from official documents and from the Internet. The research part of the work was carried out using qualitative analysis and by applying deep interviews. Only with a qualitative approach to data collection can the attitudes and answers of the respondents be investigated in detail [19].

The deep interviews were conducted at the end of 2021. Because of the restrictions imposed by COVID-19, some of interviews were conducted by phone, email, social networks, as well as in a physical format. The duration of the interview with respondents was on average 15 min. As in a research paper of Kovačević et al. [20], during the process, the interviewer made his notes and observations to facilitate the coding, analysis and interpretation of the data. All participants were residents of Novi Sad.

Respondents contributed to the objectivity of the research by giving their opinions on the set topics. According to Sapu [21] and Cvetković et al. [22], interviews and focus groups are highly beneficial for gathering detailed information about people's values, beliefs, and opinions, and for finding out how a 'group' or perhaps a community feels about a particular issue. Respondents had to answer five questions related to socio-demographic characteristics and five questions based on the theme of the paper. The respondents' conversations were recorded on a mobile phone, and the most useful and expedient answers were selected during the desk research. The most constructive answers are given in the paper.

3.1. Questions

The first question was intended to find out what the residents of Novi Sad think about the influences on city image and culture in the broadest sense of the word. Did they see the historical background? Do they think of the recent or distant past? Do they feel the effects of globalization? Do they recognize the uniqueness that arose on the spot and that is not conditioned by anything?

The second question examined self-awareness, which is very important. Without it, there can be no originality. Self-awareness adds an intangible to the image of the city. Culture has no future, because the influence of tradition is lost. More precisely, there are always traditions, but the question arises: whose is it and what kind of tradition is it?

The third question explored self-awareness about the current situation. How aware are the respondents of the title of European Capital of Culture? What does the new title mean to them? Does it affect the image of the city?

As everything is happening in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, one of the questions is dedicated to noticing its impact on all cultural segments. What has the COVID-19 pandemic changed about the city's image, if anything?

The fifth question deals with the identification of the shortcomings with regard to the city's image. Respondents also offered possible solutions to some of them. Pointing to others should in this way mobilize intellectual forces in an attempt to overcome them or at least reduce their intensity.

3.2. Sample

The researchers sought participants who fit the following three criteria: 19 years of age or older, residents of Novi Sad, and have at least a primary education. The selection of respondents for the in-depth interview was carefully undertaken. Two respondents are people who are active in different ways in the culture of the city of Novi Sad. Others were chosen to be of different ages, backgrounds and educations. Participation in the study was voluntary. The sample consisted of 10 women and five men. The absolute majority were born in Novi Sad and they are highly educated (Table 1).

Table 1. Socio-economic structure of respondents.

Socio-Economic Structure	Number	Percent
Gender		
Male	5	33.3
Female	10	66.7
Age		
20–29	3	20.0
30–39	3	20.0
40–49	3	20.0
50–59	3	20.0
60+	3	20.0
Origin		
Born in Novi Sad	8	53.3
Inhabited	7	46.7
Education		
Primary school	1	6.7
High school	6	40.0
Faculty	8	53.3
Total	15	100

Source: Authors' findings.

In abbreviation, next to the answers, there are signs that indicate the basic socio-demographic characteristics from the respondents. R means respondent, followed by his ordinal number, than gender (m—male, f—female), and age. The penultimate word refers to the origin (b—born in Novi Sad, i—inhabited). The last letter indicates the educational level of the respondents (p—primary school, h—high school and f—faculty).

4. Results and Discussion

The deep interview consisted of five questions. The most interesting results are presented in the paper and they indicate differences in the perceptions of the population of different socio-demographic characteristics.

4.1. What Can You Say about the Influences on City Image and Its Culture?

"Novi Sad has formed its unique identity under the influence of Europe. Since the formation of the city, various European nations have lived in it and with its culture and tradition has influenced of its multicultural originality and unrepeatability. (R1f45bf) It is no coincidence that the most pioneering and ground-breaking advances in human development originate from cultures that embrace diversity as a positive challenge rather than as a threat [23]. Multiculturalism has formed an urban image of Novi Sad.

"Europe influenced the architecture of the city (the old city core), the formation of cultural institutions, the mentality of its first inhabitants and their descendants, etc." (R2f70bf) Every occurrence in the present is historically conditioned [24]. Matica Srpska (1864) was moved from Pest, (which is part of Budapest and where were established in 1826) to Novi Sad. From 'Matica Srpska' emerged the most important literary and cultural institutions of the Serbs, like the Museum of Vojvodina (1847), the Gallery of Matica Srpska (1847 in Pest) and book trade and publishing companies [25].

Respondents recognized different influences: east, west, plains, hills, north, south... "Something is constantly being copied from the west. There are good things there, such as music. The bad thing is that movies raise our children". (R8m54ip) "In Novi Sad there are also influences of the east, such as in the architecture of Orthodox sacral objects, houses of individual housing, gastronomy, etc." (R5m48bf) 'The population of Novi Sad was previously recognized according to manners that it accepted from Europe and which distinguished it from the population from the mountainous regions of the Balkan Peninsula.' (R4f59bf) The age of the respondents of this group of answers is quite close in relation to others. This fact indicates similar educational forms that existed at the time of their education.

"Oh, that's hard to say. Each new time brought some of its own people. Some of them merged with the environment, and some, by bringing their culture, enriched the city image." (R3m63bh) According to Lawler [23], differences make the cultures of the world richer and it is not in anyone's interest to let anybody give up their culture or their identity.

The answers of the following respondents also support this. "Traditionally, Novi Sad closely follows cultural events in Europe. Classics are listened to and played in Novi Sad; but also the accordion. It reads William Shakespeare, Honoré de Balzac, Chekhov, but also Orhan Pamuk. So, in Novi Sad, he strives for the image of a city that respects quality and progress, no matter which side he comes from." (R7m38if) "The culture of the city is seen at every step and it is diverse. There is everything: ballet and boxing, courtesy and vulgarity, and cleanliness and dirt." (R15f33if) These two respondents come from the same age and educational category. They are in their thirties and have university degree. Also, they were not born in Novi Sad.

"The Internet is the cheapest source of information and all cultural influences on young people come with it. The Internet should be used to improve the city's image" (R12f21bh) Global culture comes through different media and it doesn't matter where you live. Intellectuals are culturally sophisticated, and their perception of cultural influences is related to their interests. (R13f28if) The youngest respondents mentioned globalization. From this it can be concluded that it was recognized during the 21st century. According Ritzer & Dean [26], globalization has been recognized in various moments of human history and various segments of life. According to the opinion of Pieterse [27], the last wave of globalization arrived at the end of the 20th century. This author mentions three paradigms: growing homogenization, cultural convergence, and the global mixing of cultures that has resulted in a global hybrid culture. It was also recognized by the respondents.

Some respondents gave unpleasant answers, which resulted from their bad experiences (historical, financial or those of some other nature). "It should not forget the days of the European culture that we suffered in 1941, 1942, 1944 and 1999. Then Europe distorted the image of the city". (R6m42ih) "Young people see only a 'culture of survival'. Low income, high costs, expensive food. I go to the theater, wait for the show to start, and then I beg to be released without a ticket. So, whoever fights for the crumb of culture cannot define who has the decisive influence on the city image". (R14f25ih) "Many cannot get rid of the culture they came from, so they are recognizable by their noise, disorder, negligence and arrogance. Unfortunately, that also fits into the culture of the city and tarnishes its image." (R9f51bh). "Unfortunately, you are researching what affects the image and culture of the city, and not how it changes immigrants. I conclude that you assume that decades of suffering are her tameness and non-aggression." (R11f65bf) Theespondents do not share any common socio-demographic categories. This means that each of them recognizes something bad that they must mention and that these things are different from the historical moment in which they were recognized.

"I liked this city and that's why I stayed in it. Calmness, courtesy and mutual respect. But, I also remain to change, to progress, to accept everything we like, regardless of where it comes from. I think it improves the quality of life." (R10f38ih).

The European influence is in Novi Sad is indisputable. The inhabitants of Novi Sad are constantly looking towards Europe and they are happy to accept new cultural achievements. Politics in the Second World War and in the spring of 1999 adversely affected the experience with some European countries. A fraction of the population who lost family members feels a natural aversion to the causes of their family disasters. Destroyed bridges and buildings have changed part of the physical image of the city. The rebuilding corrected the appearance of the city's symbols.

An example of representative coexistence in a multiethnic environment is one of the most recognizable images of Novi Sad. Similar multiethnic environments in the world, those are not at that peacetime level, could look up to that image. In the questions on influences on image and culture, the thematic grouping of answers according to the age of the

respondents was recognized, but also according to their origin. The material symbols of the city's image are definitely the safest guardians of its history, tradition and cultural heritage.

4.2. What Do You Think about the Self-Awareness of History, Tradition and Cultural Heritage?

The image of the city is formed by history, tradition and cultural heritage. That is why the self-awareness of the residents regarding these mentioned things is very important. A focus on self-awareness is necessary for understanding and developing responsible personal relationships with those who are similar and different from oneself [28]. Strengthening people's cultural awareness and competencies in ways that are represented by respect for both one's own and other cultures according to Yang & Gao [29] is extremely important in multicultural environments such as Novi Sad. Depending on how much someone is aware of their history, tradition and cultural heritage, it depends on how much they will pass it on to younger generations, that is, to nurture and preserve it.

"We were listening about famous institutions, buildings, people, and customs from the teacher. Novi Sad is growing, building, changing and all that is now history. I gladly remember when I hear someone talking about it on local TV." (R12f21bh) "The cultural foundations on which the identity of the city has been built can not be found in the curriculum of elementary schools. How can we expect that the young generation will have some self-awareness about tradition, culture, and cultural heritage?" (R1f45bf) "Being aware of history, tradition and cultural heritage means to have ancestors who lived in Novi Sad in the past." (R2f70bf) "Self-awareness comes from the family. I heard about old Novi Sad from the lady I lived with while I was studying. After that, it is nowhere to be found." (R13f28if) What these respondents have in common is that they are women. Thus, they are broader and deeper in terms of self-awareness in relation to male respondents. Women should be in politics, as Lukić et al. [30] mentioned, because they will work towards the self-awareness of young generations.

"Vojvodina, even Novi Sad, as its largest city and administrative center, has always been called 'Europe in small.' I am very proud of that". (R3m63bh) This is because different ethnic groups inhabit the Province of Vojvodina [31]. The results from Šagovnović [32] also recognize the presence of a sense of pride of "being from Novi Sad".

"The natives of Novi Sad are aware, but the city has been inhabited by many immigrants, so the purpose of history, tradition and culture has slowly become meaningless." (R4f59bf) Bubalo Živković et al. [33] talk in detail about the settlements of this area. The presence of a new population brings new details to the urban image of the city.

He et al. [34] have noticed that the cultural heritage administration and the residents play a role in preserving the culture of the historical sites, which promote sustainable preservation. "Since the middle of the 20th century, industrialization and socialist development, then at the end of the same century, political and economic changes in the former SFRY (Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia) have influenced the immigration of the population that is not familiar with the past of the city. They do not feel the spirit of Novi Sad." (R5m48bf) Similar examples are evident in Europe. Beeksma and Cesari [35] write about a museum staff member, between whom they found social cleavage between those who feel that they belong and see themselves as locals with roots and those who don't.

"We are aware of famous people who are the basis of the tradition and culture of Novi Sad. Starting with George Balasevic (musician), Miroslav Antic (famous poet), to Mileva Maric Einstein (scientist and wife of Albert Einstein) and Jova Zmaj (children's poet, but also a doctor)". (R9f51bh) Scientists are already leaving traces of these greats. Their names are mentioned in the works of Tadić and Đurđević [36], Bojkov [37], Esterson and Cassidy [38], and Stošić [39]. They are generally known in Serbia and the former Yugoslav republics, so they are a symbol of the intangible image of the city.

"I was not born here, but the culture of living is close to my hometown. Everyone loves dogs, everyone can ride a bike, everyone is on the banks of the Danube during the summer, everyone is procrastinating when talking and not rushing when eating. It's all Novi Sad." (R10f38ih) This is one of the images of the city that describes the dynamics of

life, the spirit of the inhabitants and the 'atmosphere'. "Yes, yes I am a hedonist and I am aware of the traditional culture of eating. Novi Sad is a legendary place with good wine and food." (R6m42ih) According to Figueiredo [40], food is cultural heritage and it can be the way of promoting some territory. Respondents who tied their self-awareness to life culture styles are of similar age and education (they have a high school diploma), but were not born in Novi Sad.

"I heard about Matica srpska, great patrons whose money was used to build palaces, churches, high schools. However, music is my life and for me the heritage and tradition is EXIT, the Festival of Street Musicians, or 'NOMUS' (Novi Sad Music Festivities)". (R7m38if) Sacral objects of different confessions provide adequate offer for tourists of different religions [41]. The EXIT festival is the most important promoter of the Novi Sad. It is held annually during the summer season, and attracts a large number of young tourists [42]. In January 2018, EXIT was once again crowned Best Major Festival at the 9th annual European Festival Awards, which took place at Groningen's De Oosterport in The Netherlands. EXIT won the Grand Prix in a fierce competition comprising of over 350 festivals in 35 countries [43]. It proves that Novi Sad has become the center for youth all around world. The EXIT Foundation initiated and led the process of the candidacy of Novi Sad for the European Youth Capital 2018. The youth organizations of Novi Sad continued the process and brought victory to Novi Sad [44]. Festivals such as EXIT have an impact on increased tourist traffic. Tourists contributed to a new phase in the formation of the city's image, but they also promoted it upon returning home. Therefore, events are an instrument for modifying the image of the city. Other musical events can be found in the works Novaković and Mandarić [45]; Doğan and Simolin [46] and others.

"I think my generation is very aware. We were raised in a spirit of tolerance, intercultural respect and esteem. It all starts with the Petrovaradin Fortress, tamburitza orchestras, quay, beach, and ends at the Gallery Square (if we think of art), Spence (sports) or at the Serbian National Theater, Benakiba or Youth Theater (theater culture)". (R11f65bf) That these are the greatest potentials of the city is confirmed by the works of Reba & Kostreš [47]; Konstatinović & Jović [48] and Kopić & Polić [49]. The Petrovaradin Fortress is a multi-layered archaeological site. In addition, it is a master of the work of the famous architect Sebastien Le Prestre de Vauban, a French military engineer. The fortress is connected to numerous historical stories, but also legends [50]. Oral and written lectures have not yet been put into the form of tourism trends that would have a financial benefit. This group of respondents recognized the history, tradition and cultural heritage in the sights that are material symbols of the city's image.

"Yes, I respect. I notice that living legends, symbols of Novi Sad, walk the city (actress Mira Banjac, poet Pero Zubac). They haven't even the part of respect they will receive when they are no longer alive, as was the case with musician Đorđe Balasevic". (R15f33if) Ekelund et al. [51] confirm this claim. They argue that the works of art of those artists who are no longer alive are more expensive.

"I have moved in here recently and I do not feel obliged to know anything special now. I know something, such as that there are a lot of people of different origin and that everyone lives in peace." (R14f25ih) "Do not ask me. The past has passed. For me, the past is painful and has nothing to do with Novi Sad. I am only interested in the future." (R8m54ip) Research has shown that there are those who were not born in Novi Sad and who do not feel the need to have any level of self-awareness about its culture, tradition, and heritage. Such answers were not expected. Due to their strangeness, they had to be involved.

Some respondents have self-awareness, but obviously not everyone has acquired and recognized it. Based on this answer, it can be concluded that the past of the respondents affects the recognition of the image and interest in the cultural values of Novi Sad. Thanks to its cultural heritage, which has been created for centuries by European influences, Novi Sad can be included on numerous European routes, such as the gastronomic, Danubian, and Voban heritage routes, tolerance routes, festivals, etc.. They can be in the function

of preservation and economic sustainability from the city, without which ecological and population sustainability cannot survive.

4.3. How Does the Title 'European Capital of Culture' Affect the City Image and Cultural Situation?

The "European Capital of Culture" has been chosen for 35 years and it is one of the most important cultural initiatives in Europe. Cities are selected on the basis of a cultural program that must have a strong European dimension, promote participation and active involvement of the community, but also support the long-term development of the city and the region. Novi Sad is the first city to take the title of "European Capital of Culture" within a special program for candidate countries for membership in the European Union. The COVID-19 pandemic postponed the title from 2021 to 2022, as in other cities in Europe with the same title [52,53].

The European Capital of Culture 2022 is a platform for the development of the creative potential of Novi Sad [54]. This project should motivate and inspire both cultural workers and all citizens to re-examine current values and set new goals toward the democratic cultural development of the city. The re-examination of the modern identity of Novi Sad, the revitalization of its cultural heritage, the reconstruction of the existing and opening of new spaces intended for culture, and the developing of cultural participation of citizens are just some of the principles of cultural development [55].

The concept of Novi Sad's bid—'For New Bridges' used the bridge metaphor as a connection, building upon the symbolic meaning of the city's bridges over the Danube which were built, destroyed by wars and then reconstructed. A recent trauma in the city's memory was represented by the 1999 NATO bombings, when all three bridges were destroyed. Today, they represent strong "lieux de mémoire", reminding people of the strong sense of solidarity of the local population who, back in 1999, tried to protect the bridges against the bombings at the cost of their own lives. The concept also has symbolic connotations in the context of Serbia's European aspirations for joining the EU, hence, new bridges needto be built. Belonging to a non-EU country, the title represents a way to 'reintegrate' the city and Serbia "into Europe's cultural life, through a dialogue of cultures" [56]. By promoting the city as a cultural destination, a young city of culture, peace and reconciliation, it was aimed to stimulate citizens' pride [57].

The "New Town" is an urbanistic and architectural competition for the financing of small public spaces. Numerous arrangements and reconstructions of public spaces, so-called new places for meeting citizens and cultural events, are part of preparations for 2022, when Novi Sad will be the European capital of culture.

'Microgranting—small town' is a real competition in order to raise awareness about the significance of the participation of the local community in the organization of small areas of public interest. Another goal is animation of citizens and the local community to organize small urban spaces through joint work.

The "Audience in Focus" program, which represents the first phase of the realization of the project platform from the Application Book "Outside the comfort zone, aims to strengthen and support cultural institutions in Novi Sad and their continuous work on the development of cultural habits, needs and competencies of the citizens of Novi Sad. It is a financial support for the realization of projects of citizens" participation in public cultural life. The answers below show what the residents of Novi Sad think, and how the title of "European Capital of Culture" affects the city image and the cultural situation

More positive responses were obtained from people who deal with any kind of culture. This reveals that the essence is in information and interest for the culture. These respondents are women of similar age and who were born in Novi Sad. "I think it's good that this happened to the city. It is an opportunity to draw attention to multiculturalism, more decennial interethnic tolerance, the benefits of cultural diversity, strengthening the European spirit of the city. This specialty can be put into the function of tourism, which can manifest with different bonuses in the future." (R1f45bf) The title is a huge positive

impulse for improving the quality of the city's image. "Since its inception, Novi Sad has been a cultural Mecca. It deserved to show his qualities to the whole world. I think this title is an opportunity for that." (R9f51bh)

Some answers, given by those born in the city, show that the title is important for young people. "I watched the writing process for a competition that brought the city a prestigious title. I have to point out the great efforts of the team that worked on this job. Creative young people should invest their potentials in exploiting old (perhaps forgotten) and creating new unique cultural results." (R2f70bf) "If this will bring young people into the city, then it is great at this time of 'white plague' (namely at the time of insufficient birth that reduces the potential size of the population) (R3m63bh) "Super. We young people love different events. If they are free, the better. We are happy. We look forward to the beginning. We will attend every event." (R12f21bh) "Bravo, for those who managed to bring it to our city. They will probably know what to do with it. I would use that to promote cultural institutions. I would cancel the tickets. Entrances would be free, as in London." (R4f59bf)

Observing the benefits of the title of "European Capital of Culture" from the financial aspect came from respondents who are in the third or fourth decade of life. "Only positive, just as befits the city. Public buildings in the city center are being cleaned, repainted and tidied up. Manifestations, performances, concerts, guests are announced." (R5m48bf) "I see that the facades in the center of the city are being renovated, the squares are being arranged and more work is being done to promote the actions of the city government." (R15f33if) "If this city title brings some money, I hope that it will be used in the best possible way." (R10f38ih) "It is very important for the image of the city, tourism, the present, but also the future. The goal is that almost every citizen giving the contribution, it can feel back the material or spiritual grace". (R7m38if)

"The title affect on the city image in various ways and useful. For example, the British magazine *Time Out* put Novi Sad on the list of world capitals that offer unusual cultural events." (R13f28if) *Time Out* [58] writes: "Novi Sad has gone all in ahead of more than 1500 events featuring 4000 artists, including an exhibition in The Mlin Cultural Station, an abandoned pasta factory. Many have been making the pilgrimage to EXIT Festival for years, but 2022 will see Novi Sad's gorgeous architecture and unique history put it on the map as a major destination-in-waiting".

Female respondents expressed concern for the cleanliness of the city. "I expect that this will increase the city's cleanliness." (R11f65bf) A skeptic said: "Novi Sad as 'European Capital of Culture' will increase number of events. It looks like as the EXIT festival. Some will be enriched, and most will be the witness of dirt that needs to be removed." (R14f25ih)

Some answers were not clear, nor precision. "I heard somewhere about that." "I saw some advertising at the wall of the shopping mall and in the centre of city. There is nothing wrong with that." (R6m42ih) "I heard something. Great." (R8m54ip) Such answers came from male respondents.

Most respondents recognize and respect the title. Kovačić et al. [59] did not find any negative perception or influence of the title "European Capital of Culture" with a detailed analysis of the literature. Respondents of this exploitation find it easier to notice changes in the streets (in the inner physiognomy of the city) than the implications that will appear in some later cultural phenomena. People like the good news and look forward to it. They believe that it is already having a positive effect on the city's image and situation in it. Some respondents have heard of the title, but are unsure how it could affect the city. Obviously, there is a need for more intensive marketing activity. Flyers should be provided and distributed freely, for example with electricity bills. They should point out everything that the title brings, from which every citizen of the city could find some benefit. The suspicion of the respondents is based on lack of information or on bad experiences. It can be a good incentive to work on the transparency of the performance of persons in the project team who won the title.

4.4. In Which Segments of the City's Image and Its Culture Do You Recognize the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic?

The pandemic had the greatest impact on segments of everyday life culture. The culture of life is changing spontaneously. The COVID-19 pandemic has spread and raised the level of self-awareness about the need to maintain hygiene. It tacitly set the standards. The imposition of mandatory wearing of masks in public places has changed the general impression.

Respondents emphasized wearing masks in the first place. "The mask has become a cultural standard 'overnight'. Masks are mandatory in public places. The hosts pay fines if a visitor without a mask is spotted. However, this rule is not followed whenever feasible. So, there is a lack of self-awareness or conscience." (R1f45bf) "Under the mask, I feel unpleasant smells around the city better than before." (R9f51bh) "If the image of the city is the image of its inhabitants, then I see changes in its face. Masks, visors, gloves, disinfectants . . . Since the beginning of the pandemic, I feel like I'm constantly at a masquerade ball." (R6m42ih) The masks were mostly discussed by female respondents over the age of 40. Milošević et al. [60] wrote that the local governments of Novi Sad should promote urban park and river quay usage during pandemics with a major focus on protective measures such as physical distancing or limiting of the number of visitors, if necessary, rather than having mask mandates that cause discomfort to the population. Dragic et al. [61] confirmed that lockdown in Novi Sad caused the positive effect of improved air quality on public health.

"The culture of living has changed for the better. People began to pay attention to hygiene. In order to avoid crowds in public transport, bicycles began to be used en masse. I am a big fan of Amsterdam. I am glad that Novi Sad got a cycling image." (R11f65bf) People began to avoid all places where they could be found among many people. There were primarily means of public transport, i.e., buses. Although there have been bicycle rental points since 2010, it seems that with the COVID-19 pandemic, their use is becoming more widespread. Relief (alluvial flat land and river terrace) and climatic characteristics (moderate continental climate) of Novi Sad are ideal for this activity. From 2021, the city subsidizes the purchase of bicycles, renews bicycle paths, traces new ones and thus emphasizes alternative ways of moving. In addition, it is a method that fights traffic density, solving parking spaces and the quality and health of the population. The work on popularizing the use of bicycles and educating about its positive aspects, in the time of the COVID-19 pandemic, gained special significance. It has been proven that the spread of the infection is less in open spaces. Komadina [62] writes that people who cycle expressed their satisfaction with the number of parking spots, storage space at home, safety in traffic, and the quality and density of cycling paths. Cycling will definitely be a puzzle in the future in the complex image of the city.

The perception of the increased number of cyclists on the streets was contributed by the appearance of food delivery people and other similar courier services [63]. In this way, people helped the hospitality and restaurant sector to overcome the losses caused by the recommendations on avoiding public places and social contacts. On the other hand, they are welcome to the elderly population who have difficulty moving and are afraid of infection. Also, a significant number of unemployed people thus became useful to society and found a source of income. One of the interviewees emphasized that "the COVID-19 pandemic has developed a business of delivering food and other necessities. For me, it really simplified and made life easier." (R3m63bh).

Another respondent saw a positive pandemic phenomenon. "I recognize the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in many segments of the city's culture. I felt that there was mutual understanding, respect and the need for solidarity. You will agree that these are cultural achievements that have been neglected." (R13f28if) "In the culture of communication, the unavoidable topics are vaccination and how did you survive COVID-19?" (R14f25ih) Sympathy with the problems of the elderly, but also their peers, was expressed by the youngest respondents. It is clear that the COVID-19 pandemic will disrupt daily life until

the majority of the world's population is vaccinated or until effective medical treatment is available [64].

Most of the answers indicated how the COVID-19 pandemic indirectly took people out into the fresh air. Culture, art, and festivals can all be used to boost a territory's attractiveness and inventiveness [65]. "COVID-19 disrupted the culture of living, established celebration ceremonies, thinned out visions, and alienated people." (R12f21bh) "The COVID-19 pandemic forced parents to devise birthday celebrations in nature, animating children for outdoor games." (R10f38ih) "The COVID-19 pandemic has displaced numerous cultural events outside the confined spaces. Then they became more visible to larger groups of people compared to the time before." (R15f33if) From 2020, Chinese lanterns are placed every winter in the 'Liman' Park [66]. They symbolize the friendship of the two peoples, but also the presence of the Chinese in the city. Compared to other smaller ethnic groups, the Chinese are the shortest present on the territory of the region of Vojvodina, but have a transparent influence. In addition, manifestations similar to this one (Figure 2) fill the gap in cultural life of the city created during the state of emergency and curfew that were introduced in order to prevent contacts and reduce the spread of COVID-19. The appearance of culture on the streets in the form of manifestations, exhibitions, performances certainly beautifies all aspects of the city's image.

Figure 2. Chinese lanterns in the 'Liman' Park. Source: Bojan Đerčan, Ferburary 2022.

Culture that is impossible to organize on the street has been moved to the virtual world. "Culture began to be followed over the internet. Some institutions, such as the 'Matica Srpska Gallery', provided virtual visits. Some have made short films, such as 'The Museum of the City of Novi Sad' about the part of the Underground military galleries that are under their protection. They are available on YouTube". (R5m48bf) Although the literature records the digitization of cultural sites even before the pandemic [67,68], it seems that they gained complete purpose during it. "The pandemic has negatively affected my culture. I worked from home. The children went to school 'online'. I had problems with the internet connection. In the house, we all fought for the computer. I started swearing often. I want it never to happen again." (R7m38if) "The culture of living has been digitized. I drink coffee with a friend via Skype, I meet via Zoom, I read e-books, I pay bills via e-banking, I buy food via social networks... Then I wait for the health consequences of sitting in front of a computer." (R4f59bf) The functioning of civilization at a distance was mostly discussed by respondents who have a university degree. Turning to the virtual world has imposed the need to present the image of the city in that area as faithfully as possible. For that, the most valuable help is those who are the most educated.

Some respondents did not see anything good in the pandemic. "Closing in houses and restricting the movement of people over the age of 65 seemed like great discrimination.

Music culture saved me from pandemics." (R2f70bf) Cancura [69] approved that music offers perspective, it heals, and it allows for compassion—all so that each and every one of us can lead a big and full life. "The culture of living was lost because of survival. The cult of death, fear and lack of money were brought by the pandemic. Everyone ran away and there is no company to drink beer. How, then, can I culturally and politely ask someone to lend me money?" (R8m54ip) The work of Kalenjuk Pivarski et al. [70] indicates that the ban and restriction of movement in certain phases of the COVID-19 pandemic has led to a reduction in visits to catering facilities. For someone, it changed cultural habits, and for some, a complete lifestyle.

According to the respondents, the COVID-19 pandemic brought masks. The pandemic imposed the need for distancing, which was facilitated with bicycles. On the one hand, it moved culture and art from the closed to the open space. On the other hand, the pandemic closed the culture in a virtual space, opening up endless possibilities for it. The andemic influenced the recognition of the need to help the helpless and provided an opportunity for more mass organization of such services. The pandemic provoked interpersonal understanding and solidarity, but also fear for one's own life.

4.5. List the Biggest Deficiencies of Image and Culture of Novi Sad?

"The number of inhabitants in Novi Sad is growing, but the number of cultural institutions does not increase." (R1f45bf) During 2021, two cultural institutions, the Ballet and Music School, will receive a new building with the largest concert hall in the region. World-famous violinist Stefan Milenković is returning to Novi Sad to give his contribution to the cultural advancement of the city [71]. This is a good criticism, because a city with 231,798 inhabitants 2011 [3] needs many more different cultural institutions.

"Information boards should be placed in front of every landmark of the city of Novi Sad." (R7m38if) The boards would have an informative function for tourists, but also an educational function for new generations. "I would form cultural points. They would have an advisory function. They could, for example, advise teenagers on how to trace their energy, ideas and free time in various forms of cultural enrichment." (R5m48bf) The most educated male respondents suggest ways to more aggressively share information and information for educational purposes of different groups.

"There is a lack of water parks, theme parks, classic parks to enrich the culture of living, especially of young people." (R12f21bh) From 2016 to 2020, Novi Sad had the first theme park, Dino Park [72], modeled on similars in Europe (Saint-Hilaire-de-Riez, Agde, Charbonnières-les-Sapins). However, a tumultuous past can be inspired by many similar, such as Puy du Fou in France [73], historical theme park with epic, period-specific shows. According to Conić [74], the city really lacks a water park and its construction is planned. They will complete and beautify the city's image in the future.

"Novi Sad needs to enrich the culture of living with green roofs and fountains." (R13f28if) Green roofs and green walls are effective resilient and adaptive solutions that provide multiple ecosystem services when implemented in urban environments [75]. The paper of Jeftić et al. [76] explains how much green roofs Novi Sad needs and that it is necessary to start their construction as soon as possible. Novi Sad, with an urban area of 129.7 square kilometers [77], has only four fountains and many drinking fountains. They positively affect the microclimate conditions, and attract users to their surroundings [78]. Drinking fountains are very important significance and associations which are related to the culture and meetings of people in region of Vojvodina [79].

"An original attraction should be made, such as an elephant in Nantes or a spider in Liverpool." (R15f33if) This remark is constructive and may be the subject of some further research on what could be the symbol of the city.

More comments indicate noise. "Communal police cannot silence loud music. I feel a lack of culture of living." (R3m63bh) "Our people are inclined to accept something that is not ours. For example, the Chinese believe that noise drives away evil. In our country, children like to make noise with firecrackers. They usually do not know what they are for.

They are not our cultural heritage. This is not taught in school. Firecrackers can hurt them. They make noise." (R4f59bf)

"I'm bothered by the lack of culture in traffic. Cyclists are carefree and self-sufficient. People on scooters are arrogant. Taxi drivers are rude. If the street has more lanes, the one closest to the sidewalk is occupied. There are too many swear words, sirens and noise." (R6m42ih) Đerčan et al. [80] wrote about traffic noise. The new bridge [81] is expected to reduce congestion and noise in the city.

"Newcomers live where there is garbage under the windows. The natives are negligent towards existing buildings, squares, green areas, and often even monuments." (R2f70bf) The literature proves the testimony of this respondent. Krklješ et al. [82] noticed the negligence of institutions and organizations that should intervene in public spaces. Dragin et al. [83] talk about inattention to the cleanliness of the Danube bank. "Novi Sad lacks garbage cans, especially in residential areas of the city." (R8m54ip) Dragić [84], Aleksić [85] and similar wrote about this problem. "Some show their non-culture when they leave dog feces in the streets." (R9f51bh) Children fight against this phenomenon by tying bags to trees. The bags are intended for dog owners to collect their feces. Children say not to soil the surface for walking or playing. The younger generations offer hope of preserving environmental awareness. "There is little space for dogs to run" (R10f38ih) According to Stakić [86], there were 19 locations for running dogs in Novi Sad. Seven are decorated according to the highest European standards. All respondents were extremely critical of the quality of culture of living on city streets.

"Young people destroy urban facades, so urgent need to find out mechanisms for eradicating this phenomenon. It seems to me that this can damage the city's image." (R11f65bf) This phenomenon is known in the Balkans [87]. The daily press testifies to vandalism that can be in the colors of the flag [88]. However, the memory of the famous inhabitants of Novi Sad brings murals dedicated to them [89]. It is like a noble compromise that channels creativity and the need of the spray master to satisfy the need for his cultural expressions. According to Cercleux [90], graffiti is considered to be the starting step of street art development, therefore referring to an art that can bring a value to the city and is made on the basis of authorizations or the acceptance of the owners of the concerned places.

"Political influences should be excused from the cultural life of the city. The existence of only cultural policy is desirable." (R14f25ih) Volić [91] writes in detail about cultural policy. The politicization of culture [92] is a frequent topic in the daily press, and it is even mentioned in the Strategy of Cultural Development of the City of Novi Sad [93].

Respondents are aware of the biggest deficiencies of culture in their city (lack of cultural institutions, information boards, different type of parks, fountains, original attraction) communal problems (negligence, vandalism, noise, garbage, and communal waste), politics influences and cultural policy.

Great self-criticism left out positive examples in some of the respondents' answers. The streets of Novi Sad are clean, so everyone is terribly upset when it is disturbed. In addition, the privatization of housing has led to increased concerns about the appearance of facades, entrances and driveways. This is supported by the prescribed communal penalties for clearing snow, disintegrating the facade or similar transgressions.

Respondents think that deficiencies were created among the population of a certain age. They have some constructive proposals for their overcoming and eradication. "Act locally—think globally" [94] is a solution to the problem, if the themes related to the culture of living in the city would be included in school plans and programs at the most serious level. The culture of living is not of a political nature, it has nothing to do with conflicts and it certainly does not harm [95] and therefore can be unreservedly propagated. The positive thing is in the responses is that everyone sees gaps in everyday life (which can be repaired), not in cultural institutions or in some higher forms of appearance, such as art (in which it is not expected). It is the most important to have self-awareness about how to preserve the image of the city, as well as ideas for its improvement.

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5. Conclusions

Judging by the answers of the respondents, Novi Sad built its image more on intangible than on material values. These are primarily relations of multiculturalism. Respondents recognize historic buildings that are the image of the city. They feel the global influences coming through the Internet. They also believe that we should react in the opposite direction. Using Internet, it should to place a positive image in the same way.

Women have distinguished themselves as people who have a greater self-awareness of history, tradition and cultural heritage. How to persuade people to respect the city they moved into and to inform themselves about history, tradition and cultural heritage? Future research should focus on the causality and consequences of cultural apathy. Respondents gave different views on the impact and expectations of the "European Capital of Culture" title. Vision was lacking in a couple of male respondents, who are not the best informed about the new title. By winning nominations, Novi Sad got the opportunity of presentations, affirmations, development of creativity and ideas, cultural training, which should be used in the best possible way. All citizens of good will need to be involved in that mission. Aggressive marketing could be essential for improving the perception of monitoring and understanding culture development in the 21st century. The prestigious title of the "European Capital of Culture" enhances the visible and intangible image of the city. It promotes the city at the European level. Positive effects are yet to be expected. As one of the respondents said, Novi Sad deserved it. This research will be the starting point for the future. In the near future, after the end of 2022, they will be able to see how much the title of European Capital of Culture has contributed to the improvement of the city's image.

The urban image is influenced by lifestyle, but also by residents. Some of them are so original and unrepeatable that they have become symbols of the city. These people, the symbols of the city, are often called 'urban legends'. The appearance of 'urban legends' of Novi Sad confirms that the urban image is changeable throughout history. Its intangible side is often unpredictable. In the distant future, the descendants of the inhabitants and new immigrants will have their own perception, which will be formed on the basis of the heritage that will be best preserved.

The COVID-19 pandemic hid people's faces. Also, it gave the city a cycling image. The most important thing is that it managed to bring out visible solidarity, understanding, and compassion from people. By bringing culture to the streets, the pandemic has added dynamism and variety to the city's image. Everything that could not be organized on the street, spread into the virtual world. The improved image of the city on the Internet has brought it closer to the so-called "distant world". Only two respondents out of fifteen gave comments in which no positive perception of the presence of the COVID-19 pandemic was stated. Therefore, it can be said that the hypothesis that negative phenomena, such as a pandemic, can result in a positive on urban image and visible cultural shifts has been confirmed. The work may represent a trace of the historical moment in which people lived with the pandemic. It can be valuable in some future image research when the pandemic is over.

The years to come should be used to make Novi Sad as a recognizable locality in Europe. The tourism traffic to be registered and the statistical parameters that speak of tourism revenues will be measures of success. The local population should culturally evolve in a positive sense and actively engage in the preservation of image and creation of a cultural future. The positive thing about all the problems is that, with the existence of good will, self-discipline, and self-awareness, they are solvable and it is possible to overcome them. The in-depth interview is a method that allows for examining the explanation of the attitudes and answers of the respondents. It limits the study to presenting only the most

extravagant parts, because otherwise it would be too extensive. In addition, the time that elapses before the publication of the paper brings certain changes, which the authors often regret that they will not be able to find in the paper.

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Article

Hotel Naming in Russian Cities: An Imprint of Foreign Cultures and Languages between Europe and Asia

Olga P. Kormazina [1], Dmitry A. Ruban [2,3,*] and Natalia N. Yashalova [4]

1 Department of Russian as a Foreign Language, Far Eastern Federal University, 690922 Vladivostok, Russia; olga.kormazina@mail.ru
2 K.G. Razumovsky Moscow State University of Technologies and Management, 109004 Moscow, Russia
3 Department of Organization and Technologies of Service Activities, Southern Federal University, 344019 Rostov-on-Don, Russia
4 Department of Economics and Management, Cherepovets State University, 162600 Cherepovets, Russia; natalij2005@mail.ru
* Correspondence: ruban-d@mail.ru

Abstract: Hotel naming can contribute to cultural exchange, and big countries boasting lengthy peripheries and sharp "cores" are suitable for studying this contribution. Foreign cultural and linguistic imprints in hotel names is studied in four big cities of Russia, namely Rostov-on-Don, Nizhniy Novgorod, Krasnoyarsk, and Vladivostok. It is established that the hotels with names bearing foreign-culture elements constitute up to 20–25% of all hotels in each given city. These elements can be linked to many, chiefly West European countries. The English foreign-language elements are the most common, whereas the French and Italian elements occur in subordinate numbers. The linguistic-cultural types of the hotel names are commonly toponyms and landscape-related symbols. The imprint of foreign cultures and languages in the hotel names diminishes together with the increase in distance from the western state border.

Keywords: cultural affinity; foreign influences; hospitality; society openness; urban studies

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1. Introduction

The growth of the hospitality industry is triggered by the processes of globalization, and the former also facilitates the latter [1–10]. Hotels are "hotspots" of cultural and linguistic exchange because representatives of different cultures interact there, and a kind of language mix is typical for the hotel environment. If so, the principal attributes of hotels, including their names, contribute to the cultural exchange and, particularly, bring elements of foreign cultures and languages to new places. In many small countries, this effect is thought to be significant because they are very open to the world and the majority of hotel guests are foreigners. The situation may differ in big countries where the amount of domestic travelers is significant and foreigners tend to visit chiefly big, cosmopolitan centers or cities near state borders. If so, the hotel contribution to the cultural exchange may differ spatially in such countries.

Russia is the biggest country in the world with an area of 17.1 mln sq km. According to the World Tourism Organization, it hosted 24.6 mln international tourists in 2018 compared to 22.3 mln tourists in 2010 [11]. This country boasts of significant involvement in the international tourism market [12–17], and domestic tourism rises quickly [18–20]. Tourism growth and active business traveling facilitate the development of the national hospitality industry [21–23]. The related cultural exchange can be described with some models, and Russia, with its unique size, seems to be ideal to develop them. Such models can be applied to other big countries such as Brazil, Canada, China, India, and the USA.

Hotel naming is an important but significantly underexplored topic [24]. Apparently, this topic is related to such issues as hotel and place branding, cultural exchange, and

societal openness. Although naming a given hotel reflects the preferences and intelligence of its owners/managers, these are also framed culturally and may follow some stereotypes. Moreover, the naming procedure is often shaped by the marketing needs, that is, the expected preferences and intelligence of the potential visitors are taken into account. Such cultural peculiarities and transformations as established in Russia [25] should influence many aspects of the development of the national hospitality industry, including hotel naming.

The present study aims at studying hotel names in several Russian cities in order to judge their foreign cultural and linguistic imprint. Different location of the studied cities within a very big country permits examination of the spatial factor of this imprint. The main research question is whether there is any difference between the hotels from the peripheral and central parts of the country in terms of the strength of the imprint of foreign cultures and languages. The central hypothesis to be tested is that the foreign cultural influences increase towards the country's boundaries and are determined by the culture of the neighboring countries. It is also expected that testing this hypothesis sheds light on the degree of openness of Russian society. Indeed, the present study can be only tentative and, thus, organized rather simply. It generally aims at the understanding of whether the issue of the noted imprint exists or not. Such a study seems to be essential for planning a series of more extensive investigations for the future. Nonetheless, putting new questions on the research agenda itself is important, and the reported findings are novel and allow various interpretations.

2. Conceptual Remarks

Studying hotel branding is important in contemporary hospitality research. Since the pioneering works by Connell [26] and Taylor [27], a significant advance in knowledge has occurred [28–32]. It has been established that the cultural and linguistic components of brands are of utmost importance. The main aspects of this issue include global versus local/national cultural peculiarities of brands [33,34], place brands as cultural phenomena [35], brands as cultural heritage [36], cultural and linguistic peculiarities of branding [37–39], and brand semiotics [40,41]. Additionally, it has been established that cultural characteristics of hospitality customers affect brand perception [42], although the national identity may not matter in the case of global brands [43]. Naming and branding are closely connected, and, particularly, names can be important for how the branding of tourist destinations reflects authenticity [44].

Surprisingly, hotel naming has been rarely discussed in the academic literature, with the main ideas summarized below. Ingram [45] examined the evolution of the hotel chain names in the USA during about a century. This specialist found that two main strategies were to name all units of the same chain similarly and to give individual names to adapt to local conditions. He concluded that the former strategy is more successful, which can be interpreted so that hotels belonging to any international chain should prefer "standard" naming, which means dispersal of foreign cultural and/or linguistic elements. Hashim and Murphy [46] found that domain naming of Malaysian hotels and, particularly, its consistency, are significant approaches to hotel branding. Manthiou et al. [47] investigated name-brand hotels and concluded that customer loyalty depends on name brands. This means cultural and linguistic peculiarities of hotel names are important to their positioning on the market because of the related guest sensitivity. The three above-mentioned studies paid attention to branding issues. Only the work by Nash [24] focused on naming itself. This specialist analyzed the Norfolk Island hotel names, and two of his ideas are of utmost importance. First, hotel names should be treated in the local cultural context. Second, toponymy in hotel names deserves careful investigation. The former idea means that hotels can be classified on the basis of local–external relationships of elements in their names. The latter idea implies that the cultural affinity of hotel names can be revealed by place names. The issue of the presence of foreign cultural and linguistic elements in hotel names remains almost completely missed in research despite its evident importance. The growth

of international tourism and business activities triggers the inevitable penetration of foreign elements into national cultures and languages (e.g., via hotel naming).

The "core"—periphery investigations in the tourism and hospitality research [48–52] also raise interest in the mechanism of the noted penetration. Supposedly, the foreign cultural and linguistic imprint in hotel names in very big countries decreases together with the increase in distances from state borders (Figure 1). This proposition is based on the assumption that peripheries of big countries (in addition to cosmopolitan cities and world-famous tourist destinations) are more open to cultural exchange than the geographical "cores". Such an assumption echoes the previous notions by Gormsen [53] and Hu and Konrad [54] on the near-border cultural phenomena. It is also reasonable to hypothesize that the foreign cultural and linguistic imprint in hotel names in very big countries is related essentially to the countries located most closely to hotel locations (Figure 1). For instance, if hotel names are studied in a city near the border with any European country, it is possible to expect that the cultural and linguistic elements in these names are chiefly European.

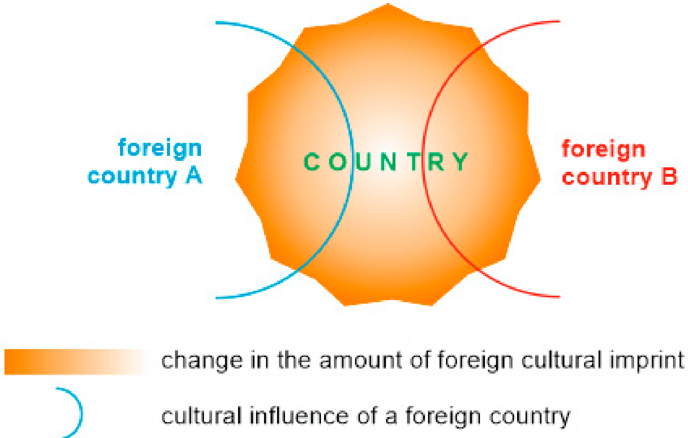

Figure 1. A schematic representation of the propositions.

3. Materials and Methods

Hotels of four Russian cities have been considered for the purposes of this study. The selection criteria are as follows. First, these cities represent different parts of Russia, including the Russian South, Central Russia, Siberia, and the Far East. Second, the cities are located near the borders of the country (periphery) and in the central part of the country ("core"). Third, the cities are big enough to boast of a well-developed hospitality industry with numerous hotels of different categories. Fourth, cosmopolitan cities attracting crowds of guests like Moscow and Sankt-Petersburg should be avoided because their extraordinary attractiveness and cosmopolitanism mask the influence of the factor of the distance from the state border. Fifth, the cities are located in the regions with moderate-to-low cultural differences from the other parts of the country (for instance, Kazan is an appropriate city by the other criteria, but it is located in the Republic of Tatarstan with its own cultural peculiarities). Rostov-on-Don, Nizhniy Novgorod, Krasnoyarsk, and Vladivostok are selected for the purposes of the present study (Table 1). Rostov-on-Don and Vladivostok represent the Russian geographical periphery, and Nizhniy Novgorod and Krasnoyarsk represent the "core" of the country (Figure 2).

Table 1. Basic characteristics of the Russian cities considered in the present analysis.

City	Macroregion	Location	City Population, mln.	Number of Persons Accommodated (2017), mln. *	Number of CAFs in the Region (2017) *	Number of Hotels in the City (2019) **
Rostov-on-Don	Russian South	Periphery (Europe)	1.13	1.09	568	153
Nizhniy Novgorod	Russian Centre	"Core" (Europe)	1.25	1.07	486	109
Krasnoyarsk	Siberia	"Core" (Central Asia)	1.10	0.70	369	52
Vladivostok	Far East	Periphery (East Asia)	0.60	1.06	465	81

Abbreviation: CAF—collective accommodation facility (hotels, hostels, etc.). Notes: * the data by the Federal Survey of State Statistics of the Russian Federation (gks.ru) for the regions where the cities are located; ** the information on hotels extracted from Booking.com (accessed on 31 August 2019).

Figure 2. Geographical location of the selected cities.

For each selected city, the information is collected as follows. All hotels from this city are considered (the online booking system with its extensive coverage of hotels and other collective accommodation facilities facilitates the solution of this task). The hotel names available either in Cyrillic or Latin are compiled. Then, these names are checked in order to find those bearing foreign elements (a hotel name can include one or more elements, and sometimes foreign and Russian elements are mixed in the same name). These elements can be attributed to two major categories. Foreign-culture elements are foreign toponyms, persons, literature personages, national culinary items, etc. Each of these elements can be brought in correspondence to a given country of origin. Foreign-language elements are foreign words that are not used in the standard Russian language. Each of these elements can be brought in correspondence to a given language of origin (but its attribution to a particular country is often impossible because the languages like English, Spanish, and German are used in many countries).

Hotel names with elements belonging to these two categories are then transliterated (if these are given initially in Cyrillic), and spelling of some foreign words is corrected according to the norms of the relevant language (spelling is incorrect chiefly because of transliteration, but some names were given to hotels with linguistic errors). After these procedures, the lists of hotel names bearing the imprint of foreign cultures and languages

are compiled for the selected cities, and the names are classified, with identification of the linguistic-cultural types (Supplementary Materials).

The number of hotels with names bearing foreign-culture and foreign-language elements relative to the total number of hotels is measured for each city (R). This permits the establishment of the relative impact of foreign imprint in hotel names for the cities. Then, the ratio of foreign-culture and foreign-language elements (E) is calculated for each city. Third, all foreign-culture elements are attributed to countries. Fourth, all foreign-language elements are attributed to languages. Fifth, the presence of linguistic-cultural types of hotel names is registered for the cities. Subsequently, the above-mentioned patterns are considered in regard to the "core"–periphery position of the cities, which allows testing the validity of the propositions made above (Figure 1).

4. Results

In the three analyzed Russian cities, up to a quarter of the hotels bear names with foreign cultural and linguistic elements (Table 2). Only in Krasnoyarsk, their number is less than 20%. This indicates the recognizable foreign imprint. Importantly, the number of the names with foreign-language elements exceeds that of the names with foreign-culture elements (Table 2). This means that foreign words are preoccupied more actively than cultural ideas when the names are given to hotels. Only in Rostov-on-Don, the number of hotel names with foreign-culture elements is relatively high (Table 2). In contrast, such elements are not registered at all in the hotels of Krasnoyarsk.

Table 2. Basic indicators of the presence of foreign elements in the hotel names.

City	Number of Names with Foreign-Culture Elements	Number of Names with Foreign-Language Elements	R, %%	E
Rostov-on-Don	14	22	23.5	0.64
Nizhniy Novgorod	5	19	22.0	0.26
Krasnoyarsk	0	7	13.5	0.00
Vladivostok	4	16	25.0	0.25

The spectrum of foreign-culture elements differs significantly between the cities (Table 3). It is the widest in Rostov-on-Don where the correspondence to 12 countries is established. The hotels of Nizhniy Novgorod and Vladivostok can be related to only four and three countries, respectively. Interestingly, these are the same countries as in the case of Rostov-on-Don, except for the only hotel in Nizhniy Novgorod bearing the name of a character from the Mexican series that was popular in Russia a few decades ago. Notably, only Italian culture has an imprint in three cities (Table 3). The diversity of foreign-language elements is moderate-to-low in all cities (Table 4). It is also the biggest in Rostov-on-Don where the hotel names include the words from five foreign languages (all are European languages). The minimal diversity is established in Krasnoyarsk (two languages). The most common foreign-language elements are English (Table 4), which is a very expected finding due to the importance of this language in international affairs and culture. French words are included in hotel names more rarely, but these are also found in all four cities. The Italian foreign-language elements are more restricted (Table 4) than the Italian foreign-culture elements (Table 3).

Table 3. Foreign-culture elements in the hotel names.

Country	Rostov-on-Don	Nizhniy Novgorod	Krasnoyarsk	Vladivostok
Armenia	1			
Austria	1			
Bermuda *	1			
Cuba	1			
France	2			2
Georgia	1			
Italy	1	1		1
Mexico		1		
Norway	1			
Spain	2			1
Turkey	1			
UK	1	1		
USA	1	2		

Note: * a British Overseas Territory.

Table 4. Foreign-language elements in the hotel names.

Language	Rostov-on-Don	Nizhniy Novgorod	Krasnoyarsk	Vladivostok
German	2			
English	10	16	6	13
French	6	2	1	2
Italian	3	2		1
Spanish	1			

The diversity of the linguistic-cultural types of the hotel names is significant in Rostov-on-Don (8 types) and Nizhniy Novgorod (7 types), and it is lesser in Vladivostok (5 types) and Krasnoyarsk (4 types) (Table 5). In Rostov-on-Don and Vladivostok, toponyms play an important role. In Nizhniy Novgorod, the hotel names often are non-motivated, that is, these are "just words". In Krasnoyarsk and Vladivostok, landscape symbolic names are relatively common. This diversity reflects the breadth of cultural and linguistic options for hotel naming linked to the cultural and linguistic experience and awareness of hotel owners/managers (in ideal cases, the latter also take into account the cultural and linguistic preferences of their guests).

Table 5. Linguistic-cultural types of the hotel names.

Linguistic-Cultural Types *	Rostov-on-Don	Nizhniy Novgorod	Krasnoyarsk	Vladivostok
Non-motivated	9	7	0	6
Direct nomination (indication on organization type)	3	1	1	0
Indirect nomination: reference to hotel services and functions	4	6	2	0
Indirect nomination: reference to construction type	6	5	2	2
Indirect nomination: toponyms and famous places	10	2	0	7
Symbolic nomination: landscape	3	0	3	7
Precedent nomination: real persons	4	1	0	0
Precedent nomination: fictional (literature and movie) persons	2	2	0	1

Note: * several types can be found in some hotel names.

5. Discussion

Two principal findings of the undertaken analysis are the significant imprint of foreign cultures and languages in hotel names of the considered Russian cities and the geographical differences of this imprint within the country. These findings need further interpretation, which is provided below.

A servile attitude to foreign things should be excluded as a possible explanation of the significant imprint of foreign cultures and names in the hotel names because hotel naming requires significant responsibility. Moreover, Russians have been active learners of the world [25], which means in-depth cultural interactions with the latter. The ideas of cosmopolitanism constitute an important sociological theory [55]. In fact, cosmopolitanism is something more than an effect of globalization because it requires some internal processes in the societies, including cosmopolitan imagination [56]. It also faces some challenges like mediation between the particular and the universal [57]. Generally, this theory traces the roots of societies' openness, as well as the open world shaping and feeling (in this case, an open world is not equal to the contemporary understanding of the globalized world). However, cosmopolitanism does not seem to be an acceptable explanation of the findings of this study because of the well-shaped identity of the Russian society and the strong feeling of patriotism [58–62]. The registered imprint of foreign cultures and names can be explained partly by the global nature of the entire hospitality industry and the naming practices preferred by some international hotel chains existing on the Russian market. However, many analyzed hotels are independent, small ventures, and, thus, this factor cannot dominate. Finally, the presence of foreign elements in the hotel names cannot be explained by the desire of their owners/managers to satisfy the foreign guests because Russian guests prevail in the majority (if not all) hotels.

The rather high degree of the registered imprint of foreign cultures and languages in the hotel names of the four Russian cities indicates the involvement of the Russian hospitality industry in globalization processes and reveals a kind of openness of the Russian society, which seems to be prone to linguistic-cultural exchange. Indeed, the

finding of the present study is only one of many possible indicators of societal openness, and, thus the latter should be treated as rather hypothetic, although probable, characteristic. The latter contrasts the common stereotype of the Russian society as "closed", somewhat traditionalist, and oriented on the Soviet values. In contrast, it implies that the openness can be bigger than sociologists report [63], as well as it is not restricted to only such cosmopolitan centers as Moscow [64]. At least, these interpretations are reasonable in the light of the present study with its narrow focus. This openness may be a historically developed characteristic of this society enhanced in the post-Soviet times [65], and it is closely related to the famous Russian creativity [66] and hospitality [67]. Indeed, this is a significant competitive advantage of the society, and its detailed investigation seems to be a perspective for further research (more indicators of this openness should be considered, which is out of the scope of the present work).

Several findings of this study are linked to the geographical differences of the examined imprint of foreign cultures and languages. The hotel names in Rostov-on-Don and Vladivostok representing the Russian periphery bear a relatively bigger number of foreign cultural and linguistic elements than Krasnoyarsk representing the "core" (Table 2). However, Nizhniy Novgorod is also situated in the "core", but it does not differ by the presence of these elements from the peripheral cities. As for the geographical affinity of the cultural and linguistic imprint, three peculiarities should be noted. First, there is significant coherence of this affinity between the four selected cities (Tables 3 and 4). Second, the strongest affinity is to the West European countries and languages (Tables 3 and 4), irrespective of where the city is located in Russia (Figure 3). Third, the imprint of cultures and languages of the neighboring countries is zero in the peripheral cities. For instance, there are no East European elements in the hotel names of Rostov-on-Don, as well as there are no Chinese, Japanese, or Korean elements in the hotel names of Vladivostok. Several hotel names with affinities to Armenia and Georgia in Rostov-on-Don (Table 3) can be explained by the significant number of Armenians and Georgians living permanently in this city, but not by the close position of the city to Armenia and Georgia. Interestingly, the names of shops and various small enterprises in Vladivostok often include East Asian components, but this is not the case for hotels. Generally, it appears that the "core"–periphery explanation of the imprint of foreign cultures and languages in the hotel names does not work, and, thus, the central hypothesis of this study (see Introduction) is not validated.

Figure 3. Geographical affinity of the cultural and linguistic imprint in the hotel names of the selected cities (see Table 3 for information and Figure 2 for city abbreviations).

Evidently, the cultural and linguistic elements of the hotel names demonstrate strong affinity to West Europe; this is registered for all cities, including Krasnoyarsk and Vladivostok, which are located in Siberia and the Far East, respectively (Figure 3). This idea can be defined as the West-Eurocentric linguistic-cultural preference (WELCP). The results of the present study allow verification of the WELCP idea. First, the R values decrease eastwards, that is, from Rostov-on-Don to Krasnoyarsk (Table 2). Its high value in Vladivostok can be explained by the local openness that facilitates contacts with the entire world, including West Europe; from the analyzed cities, only Vladivostok is a sea port, and this factor tends to affect the local socio-economic and cultural situations in Russia [68]. Second, the spectrum of the cultural affinity decreases in the eastern direction (Table 3). Third, the spectrum of the linguistic affinity also shrinks eastwards (Table 4). Fourth, in regard to all indicators of the analyzed imprint, their values are the highest for the hotels of Rostov-on-Don (Tables 2–5), which is the westernmost of the selected cities (Figures 2 and 3).

The considered cultural orientation can result from the historical cultural influences, which were much stronger from the European side [25] than from the Asian side. It appears that the hypothesized openness of the society may facilitate acquiring foreign cultural attributes. It is notable that the popularity of the Latin American series in the first half of the 1990s left a legacy in the Russian mind, which resulted, particularly, in hotel naming (see above). If so, the WELCP reflects nothing more than strong historical interactions with Europe. WELCP contradicts somewhat the Eurasian self-positioning of Russia [69,70]. However, one would expect enrichment in the Asian elements if the channels of the cultural exchange between Russia and Asian countries strengthen and widen. Hypothetically, the discussed imprint has not challenged the national identity and patriotism, which seem to be strong.

This research raises the question of the dynamics of the imprint of foreign cultures and languages in hotel names. Indeed, the degree of this imprint can change through time, either increasing or decreasing. However, the hotel businesses in the analyzed cities are often too young (<10 years old), and, thus, many hotels possess the names they received from the beginning. Although there are several "old" hotels, which were named yet in the Soviet times and then changed their names in the 1990s or the 2000s, such hotels are chiefly outside the scope of the present study because their new names do not demonstrate the imprint (how it is understood in this study). Nonetheless, it seems to be probable that the intensification of domestic tourism and the increase in the names of visitors from Asian countries will affect the principles of hotel naming in the future, and the situation may change significantly in 20–25 years.

6. Conclusions

The undertaken investigation of the hotel names in four Russian cities permits making three general conclusions.

(1) The number of the hotel names representing foreign cultures and languages is significant in the selected cities, which indicates the involvement of the cultural exchange with the outside.
(2) The position of the cities on the geographical periphery of Russia or in its "core" does not determine the foreign imprint in the hotel names (thus, the central hypothesis is not confirmed).
(3) The majority of the hotel names with foreign elements demonstrate affinity to the West European cultures and languages, and, apparently, only the distance from the western border of Russia may affect the studied imprint.

More generally, the undertaken analysis highlights an important direction for modern hospitality research, that is, understanding the geographical determinants of organization naming. The main findings also have some practical implications for hospitality management (organization-level) and governance (city-, region-, and country-level). First, the significant foreign imprint in the hotel names can be employed for the purposes of effective branding of the cities and their hospitality industries, which is important for

the growth of inbound tourism in Russia. Second, WELCP is a kind of challenge for the hospitality industry in Siberia and especially the Far East where many visitors arrive from Asian countries. Presumably, programs and initiatives of tourism growth developed by the regional governments should address this challenge and support hotel naming that is more attractive to potential Asian guests (of course, sustaining the Russian identity should not be forgotten). Third, although the reported imprint is limited to no more than a quarter of the hotels, the practice of naming should be controlled to avoid any damage to the identity of the cities, which are essentially Russian. Moreover, it is questionable whether active use of foreign cultural and linguistic elements in hotel names is really attractive to foreign tourists who usually appreciate the authenticity of destinations [71–75] rather than their excessive internationalization. Managers of the hospitality industry should be aware of the noted issues, and their decisions, including name proposals, should be both reasonable (taking into account the cultural exchange as a factor of their business performance) and responsible (conservation and promotion of national, regional, and local authenticity).

The present investigation is only tentative, and it reveals the importance of hotel naming in countries as a promising research topic. This means further investigations should deepen the related knowledge about Russia and other big countries. For instance, it is necessary to realize how hotels are named, in fact, by whom, on which basis, and with which cultural focus. The other question is measuring the attractiveness of different hotel names to both Russians and foreigners. Evidently, cultural, linguistic, and sociological approaches would help with the solution of these and other possible tasks. It should be noted that these approaches would require modification to work irrespective of the cultural frame, the direct application of the tools tested for only Western societies should be done with serious cautions or even avoided. Nonetheless, discussing the outcomes of these investigations in the light of the available sociological theories and, probably, the extension of the latter seems to be a promising direction for further research.

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Article

Clash of Two Identities: What Happens to Industrial Identity in a Post-Industrial Society?

David Bole [1,*], Peter Kumer [2], Primož Gašperič [1], Jani Kozina [1], Primož Pipan [1] and Jernej Tiran [1]

1 Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Anton Melik Geographical Institute, 13 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia; primoz.gasperic@zrc-sazu.si (P.G.); jani.kozina@zrc-sazu.si (J.K.); primoz.pipan@zrc-sazu.si (P.P.); jernej.tiran@zrc-sazu.si (J.T.)
2 Science Directorate, Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, 16 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia; peter.kumer@gov.si
* Correspondence: david.bole@zrc-sazu.si

Abstract: This article examines the contemporary industrial semiotic landscape in the town of Velenje, Slovenia, to determine the (positive or negative) collective imaginaries and discourses about industry in the local community. To this end, the semiotic landscape is mapped for signs and symbols of past and present industry, 33 randomly selected short interviews are conducted to understand the residents' attitudes towards industrial symbols and industrial development in general, and a content analysis of official strategic documents is conducted to determine how industry is represented by officials and whether there are efforts to reimage the town. We found that the industrial past and present are well represented by industrial symbols and are a matter of pride and collective identity for the residents. However, the industrial tradition is hardly represented in official documents: Influenced by the prevailing post-industrial discourses, local authorities have begun to construct new territorial identities in order to increase the town's attractiveness and economic growth. Currently, both ideas seem to coexist in Velenje. We argue that industrial symbols can become a reference point to create an alternative perception of a modern consumer society based on past industrial values, such as collective well-being, solidarity, and equality.

Keywords: semiotic landscape; local identity; identity politics; reimaging; geography

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1. Introduction

In recent years, many (post)industrial cities have been using reimaging as a response to the acute problems of industrial decline, economic restructuring, and the increasing urgency of securing service sector activities [1]. To this end, (post)industrial cities are constantly seeking new niches to distinguish themselves from the gloomy image of their industrial ancestors. In doing so, they do not have to rely on one single narrative but can develop a range of compatible multiple narratives simultaneously [2]. For example, Turin has started to invest heavily in creative and cultural branding strategies to change its former image of an industrial one-company city into a smart city (targeting the internal market) and a gastronomic paradise (targeting the external market) [3].

Cities, towns, or regions often resort to various strategies to reinvent themselves as centers of creativity and experiences [4], knowledge [5], or culture [6], usually to attract individuals, tourists, investors, and firms. However, city reimaging strategies can often provoke conflicts between traditional values and norms on the one hand and modern development aspirations on the other; see for example Willer's account on rebranding conflicts in industrial cities in America's Rust Belt [7]. Reimaging strategies raise fundamental questions, such as how a city is represented, how the images are developed, what kind of investments are made in the city in response, and how the benefits are distributed among city residents. There is a particular need to address these kinds of issues in the context of old industrial cities that have undergone severe economic and social changes. There are accounts of some (post)industrial cities implementing ambitious reimaging strategies to

appeal to a variety of external audiences [8]. The problem with these branding strategies is that they may create a skewed image of the place and treat it as a marketing product instead of promoting the distinctiveness of the place or other intrinsic place-based qualities [9].

Local perspectives of an industrial town may vary substantially from the official version of the identity presented by marketing professionals. Said perspectives emanate from personal experiences, memories, place-based collective imaginaries, and emotions related to specific places [10]. Reimaging strategies should be based on place-specific values and embedded social practices and should strive to convey positive cultural legacies and historical discourses [11,12]. The case study of six small industrial municipalities in Sweden shows that place branding in a broader sense should not only be seen as a matter of selling the municipality to "outsiders" such as tourists and potential investors but should also be regarded as a tool to generate a discourse of attractiveness and pride for the local population, i.e., "insiders" [13]. This is particularly important for industrial places, which are not typically recognized as being attractive according to today's standard imaginaries and visual appeals.

The article first contributes to the understanding of how industrial legacy and industrial discourse are interpreted by the residents and how they influence identity formation in a post-industrial world. We argue that industrialism is perceived positively in the residents' experiences, memories, and emotions. This is expressed through visual and non-visual symbols in the urban landscape, i.e., the semiotic landscape. Secondly, we argue that modern post-industrial policy discourses and branding strategies lead policymakers and officials to develop strategies with a less positive and uncomplimentary view of industrialism. They try to impose new signs and symbols in line with post-industrial development paradigms. The aim of this paper is to examine how past and present industrial activities are interpreted by the local people and the policy makers and whether there is a conflict between the two. We examine the contemporary industrial semiotic landscape to determine whether it reflects positive or negative collective imaginaries and discourses. To reach this aim, we set two specific objectives:

(a) To scan (map) the urban landscape of the industrial town of Velenje in Slovenia and reveal its industrial imaginaries through the signs and symbols of industry;
(b) To scan policy discourses in Velenje to determine how industry is portrayed by the officials and whether there are efforts to reimage the town.

To achieve the first objective, we analyze the industrial semiotic landscape for visual symbols and conduct short interviews to complement the mapping exercise and gain an understanding of non-visual industrial symbols (Section 5). To achieve the second objective, we analyze official strategic documents to determine how industry is represented by policy makers (Section 6). In Section 7, we discuss our findings, relate them to theory, reflect on the aim of the study, and conclude the article with key theoretical and practical implications.

2. Theoretical Overview

2.1. Industrial Semiotics and Industrial Identity

The construction and deconstruction of material space within cities is directly involved in a process of signification, which gives meaning to specific symbols [14]. Observation and interpretation of those symbols can tell us more about their meaning, forces, and influences beyond their physical form [14]. Signs in space can tell a story about sociocultural, historical, political, and other contexts of a certain space and the people that live in it [15]. They always contain a temporal dimension and can be a repository of the past, the present, and the future: "Signs lead us to practices, and practices lead us to people . . . " [15] (p. 59). They are particularly important in the spatial context, as they constitute an important part of territorial identity [16]. Symbols give meaning to a territory, contribute to its institutionalization, and regional or local formation [16]. According to the typology of symbols in towns and cities [14], industry can act as a symbol in many varieties. *Material symbolism*, for example, is visible in factories, monuments to workers and miners, architecture, dwellings of workers, etc. *Emotional symbolism* is attached to either positive or negative feelings

towards the industrial past or present in the town. It can be connected to expressing strong positive sentiments of industrialism, expressed through leveraging industrial heritage in museums, tourist packages, etc. Likewise, negative sentiments of shame or trauma over industrial development can result in hiding or obliterating the industrial past.

Industry is undoubtedly a part of the semiotic landscape. It is defined as an area where public spaces bear visible inscriptions or signs made by deliberate human intervention and meaning making [17]. The term semiotic landscape was theoretically framed by human geographer Cosgrove [18] as a "way of seeing" or a "point of view". It interprets space depending on geographical, social, economic, legal, cultural, and emotional circumstances and our practical uses of the physical environment, aesthetics, memories, and myths [17]. Symbols in the landscape can offer empirical evidence on how people make sense of their social and natural environment.

The semiotic landscape is interrelated with territorial identity formation and serves as a source for communities to create a "sense of place" [17]. Industrial identity is part of a broader concept of industrial culture as a place-based phenomenon embedded in the social interactions and particular lifestyles of past and present industrial communities [19]. It is a consequence of collective everyday experiences where workers share a way of life that transcends factories and is rooted in families and institutions [20]. Byrne [21] mentions the "industrial structure of feeling" as a similar concept for the way people live, the way they do things, and the sense of personal and collective identity. Importantly, industrial identity as part of a broader industrial culture is very enduring. It persists long after the material symbols (mines or factories) have disappeared and can co-exist with other, more dominant postindustrial cultures [20,21].

An industrial character is thus an important part of the local identity of (post)industrial cities. The industrial semiotic landscape is a tool with which we can establish how industrialism resonates within those communities. For example, if iconic industrial buildings are being conveyed as positive symbols in the urban landscape, this might indicate that the industrial past is being incorporated into popular imaging of local identity.

2.2. Reimaging and Rebranding Industry

Many reimaging strategies seek to give new meanings and new identities to (post)industrial cities. Place branding has become a tool for urban and regional regeneration, building a new image among residents and outsiders alike [22,23]. Industrial cities in particular are prone to reimaging, as they see their industrial image as a barrier to economic diversification and attracting non-industrial economic activities [4]. Many former industrial communities that want to make a "break with the past" on a symbolic level have opted for flagship projects. A typical example of this is Herleen, a former mining community in the Netherlands. The local authorities built the Moon Quarter, a futuristic district in the city center for shops and services. Thus, they replaced the image of a coalmining town with one that appeals to the new middle class [24]. The lesson of the story: The reimaging efforts are a socio-political struggle between the new working class, with its identity constructed around consumerism, and the old "manufacturing" working class [25].

Reimaging (post)industrial cities does not necessarily involve the destruction of industrial symbols. In some cases, industrial heritage can become a tool to promote new economic activities, especially tourism. A report from Spain shows how industrial cities are using European funding to strengthen their identity by protecting iconic industrial heritage and repurposing it for tourism [26]. From a historical and heritage perspective, this is more favorable than destroying or replacing industrial symbols with new and generic symbols of the post-industrial age. However, there is a risk that industrial heritage can become an agent of commodification, homogenization, and neoliberalism, especially if it is not embodied and experienced by local residents [3]. There are reports where such commodification of culture produced gentrification and further socio-spatial inequalities in the city [12,24].

Reimaging the industry then cannot be a top-down process. The symbols have to be re-produced by the local residents who interact with and live in the place. Simply put, the new projected image must correspond to the identity of the place [27]. These strategies have to be balanced between the possible negative associations of (de)industrialization and the different industrial imaginaries of local residents [28]. One possible way to strike such a balance is for the residents and local government to co-produce the industrial city transformation strategies [29]. In the Finnish industrial city of Pori, rebranding was a collaborative process in which local people were involved as active participants from start to finish. For example, residents drew on their industrial reality when they proposed the city's own perfume (*Eau de Pori*) as the new brand, a humorous reference to the city's characteristic odor coming from two nearby factories [28].

Industrial reimaging in a city can take many forms. Within the post-industrial paradigm, official discourses tend to favor non-industrial discourses and reduce industrial ones only to their aesthetic or touristic function [30]. However, this discrepancy can be problematic and potentially cause friction and resentment within communities.

3. Case Study Description: Velenje, Slovenia

The Slovenian territory experienced three waves of industrialization: The first at the transition from the 19th to the 20th century driven by coal; the second in the 1920s before the Great Depression driven by electricity; and the third, which was particularly pronounced, after World War II in the form of Fordist mass production driven by socialist ideology. The third wave brought industrial development to rural areas. The socialist goal was to spread industrialism and the proletarian class throughout the country. Smaller towns and completely rural areas began to industrialize, which is still a feature of industrialization today [31]. The waves of industrialization associated with the transformation and the path-dependent post-socialist economy have produced different types of industrial cities: (1) Socialist cities industrialized in the socialist era with industries successfully converted to the capitalist system (medium-sized machinery, electrical equipment, metal products), (2) new manufacturing cities either industrialized after the collapse of socialism or whose industrial development has nothing to do with their past, and (3) positively and negatively deindustrialized cities [32].

Velenje falls into the first category of transformed socialist towns and cities. In general, these are smaller towns located in peripheral areas away from major transport routes [33] and have one or two large factories where the local population works. They are characterized by low unemployment and favorable economic indicators. They are vulnerable due to their dependence on one or two companies and the volatile world economic conditions. They show their socialist egalitarian legacy with a homogeneous income structure, reliance on local labor, strong identity, trade union movements, and strong local political interest groups [31,34].

Our case study is Velenje, a medium-sized town in Slovenia (33,000 inhabitants). Its emergence is directly linked to coal mining for the largest Slovenian thermal power plant in the neighboring town of Šoštanj and later to the metalworking industry. In 1959, a common modern urban plan was drawn up, which laid the foundation for the modernist garden town with a high-quality residential environment (utopian socialist town). The town's official name between 1981 and 1990 was Titovo Velenje (Tito's Velenje), named after Yugoslav president Josip Broz Tito. This was an honorary title awarded to only one town in each of Yugoslavia's eight republics and autonomous regions that most consistently realized the ideas of self-management and the development of a socialist society.

The developing coal mining and industry opened up many employment opportunities. The population grew dramatically due to massive immigration, almost tripling between 1961 and 1991. After the collapse of socialism and Slovenia's independence in 1991, Velenje managed a relatively successful transformation of its industries to a market economy [35]. Besides coal mining, the town specialized in the production of medium-technology machinery, electronics, and household appliances (Gorenje appliance company), which together

employ over 60% of the town's total labor force [34]. Today, Velenje has favorable socio-economic indicators, such as a low unemployment rate and low income inequality. Its successful transformation is also a consequence of state investments in the energy sector (thermal power plant and mining subsidies). The town is characterized by a deep-rooted mining, industrial, and labor tradition [36,37]. Recently, the environmental engineering sector has been growing as a result of the knowledge about coal mining and its negative impact on the environment [34,38].

4. Methods

We pursue our main objectives by examining the (visual) industrial semiotic landscape of the case study town of Velenje. The first specific objective is to uncover the collective industrial imagery of the residents and whether it has positive or negative connotations for them. To achieve this, we analyzed the semiotic landscape of the industry. We examined the urban landscape for signs and symbols of past and present industry. By analyzing these symbols, we hoped to understand and interpret the formation of a place-based industrial identity [39] by the local residents.

The analysis of the industrial landscape was conducted via a field study in which semiotic elements were identified and photographed. Each visual industrial symbol in the town was mapped. This was performed to identify people's dominant discourse towards industry. We paid particular attention to how the visual symbol is spatially 'emplaced' [40]; in particular, whether it is shown in central display places (public squares, 'elite' places, etc.) or more backstage or in passing. For each visual industrial symbol, we determined its significance in relation to past and present industry, location, appearance and state of preservation, visibility in the landscape, and its function in relation to industrial heritage in questionnaire form (see Supplementary Material, File S1). To our knowledge, there is no typology of specifically industrial semiotics, so we drew on the typologies of industrial culture [19,20] and similar studies analyzing symbols [14,41] to identify six main elements of the industrial semiotic landscape:

1. Industrial buildings, sculptures, and public open spaces.
2. Heritage institutions and communal spaces (museums, collections, individual exhibitions).
3. Tourism promotion (souvenirs, advertising, place-based consumption, guidebooks, tourist offers, attractions).
4. Arts and culture (cultural events, creative reuse of abandoned buildings, public art, local bibliography).
5. Names and emblems (geographical names, coats of arms, names of institutions, anthems).
6. Collective actions (solidarity and community work).

We then conducted 33 short onsite interviews with randomly selected passers-by on the streets of Velenje to understand the residents' attitudes towards industrial symbols and industrial development in general. The main question concerned the perceptions and memories of industry in the town and urban development in general. In particular, we wanted to discover the emotional attachment and narratives ascribed to industry and the town's past development (see Supplementary Material, File S2 for the interview questions and basic interviewee information). The interviews served as complementary material to the mapping of industrial symbols. We wanted to reveal the industrial identity of the place and to add missing parts that could not be identified through the field research alone, particularly for non-visual symbols, such as collective actions, events, etc. The interviews were short and lasted up to 20 min on average. At the beginning of the interview, we asked about three dominant town symbols associated with industry, socialism, and future development. These symbols were used to observe people's emotions and to determine their opinions about their past, present, and future industrial development. We took notes but did not record or transcribe the interviews. Each interviewer had to mark the recurring themes and questions that came up in the conversation. At the end, the interviewers rated the respondents' emotions, either as positive, negative, or neutral attitudes towards the

three dominant themes (see Supplementary Material, File S2). In the interview protocol, we followed the European code of conduct for research integrity, adopted in 2011.

The second specific objective is to determine how officials and policy makers see industry and how they want to portray and interpret it (i.e., policy discourses). To this end, we conducted a content analysis of ten official strategic documents ranging from general development strategies to more specific economic or social strategies (tourism, transport, welfare, etc.), which are accessible on the website of the Municipality of Velenje (Table 1). We performed a critical overview of the documents and analyzed whether the industry is interpreted in a positive (e.g., pride, opportunity, new development, etc.) or negative way (e.g., pollution, degradation, shame, etc.). Specifically, we were interested in analyzing the role and importance of industry for urban development and in making a comparison with other economic sectors (e.g., services, tourism, creative industries). The focus was also on identifying the perceived impacts of industry on other socio-ecological urban structures in policy documents (e.g., pollution, revitalization of degraded areas, living environment, collective actions). Our findings attempt to reveal how policy makers (re)image the industrial past and present and whether they want to either leverage it or hide from it.

Table 1. Strategic documents of the Municipality of Velenje.

Theme	Strategic Document	Year of Adoption
General development	Implementation Plan for Sustainable Urban Strategy for a Smart, Enterprising and Friendly Velenje 2025	2017
	Sustainable Urban Strategy for a Smart, Enterprising and Friendly Velenje 2025	2015
	Strategic Development Document of the Municipality of Velenje	2008
Tourism	Tourism Development and Marketing Strategy in the Municipality of Velenje 2017–2021	2017
Transport	Comprehensive Transport Strategy of the Municipality of Velenje	2017
Social field, culture, youth	2nd Local Program for Developing Youth Organization in the Municipality of Velenje	2015
	Local Cultural Program of the Municipality of Velenje 2014–2020	2014
	Strategy for Developing Social Protection in the Municipality of Velenje for the Period 2014–2020	2014
	Strategy for Age-Friendly Directives and Activities in the Municipality of Velenje 2013–2020	2013
Environment and spatial planning	Long-Term Plan of the Municipality of Velenje for 1986–2000	2010

5. Industrial Semiotic Landscape of Velenje

This chapter presents the results of the analysis of the industrial landscape through a field study in which semiotic elements were identified and interpreted. These sections tell the story of how different visual and non-visual symbols represent and display past and present industry and indicate the residents' industrial identity. The symbols were mapped, photographed, and described (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Industrial semiotic landscape of Velenje, with the locations of the mapped symbols.

5.1. Industrial Buildings, Sculptures, and Public Open Spaces

The material symbols of industrial and mining heritage are found in the built environment in the form of 7 sculptures, 10 residential and public buildings, 3 public open spaces, and 5 industrial sites. Most of these symbols were created in the first decades after World War II and are well placed, visible, maintained, preserved or restored, and communicated to visitors. They point to an enduring, explicitly positive, sometimes idealized image of the industrial past and present, conveyed mainly by the local authorities. None of the sculptures were removed or destroyed in the transitional period after 1991; all remained in place. In this respect, a very-well-preserved and maintained city center stands out: Tito Square with its sculptures. Among them is the statue of Tito, the largest of its kind in the world (Figure 2). The square is lined by public buildings built in 1959 according to the principles of modernism symbolizing the design of a modern industrial town under socialist rule [42]. It seems that industrial and socialist semiotics have been bundled into one coherent narrative.

Some symbols are very recent and show the continuation of the industrial past and present being honored. A sculpture was erected in one of the roundabouts at the entrance to the town in 2009 in honor of coal mining and the 50th anniversary of the town, the largest of its kind in Slovenia. Of the public open spaces, the recreational parks and playgrounds that are spread throughout the town are of particular note. One example is the children's playground 'Miners' Village', built in 2014 and presenting the history of energy efficiency and the importance of the local energy source. In general, the monuments of the coal

mining industry are somewhat idealized, especially those representing the continuity and growth of the town, which is quite uncertain due to the possible closure of the coal mine and the thermal power plant. Some existing buildings that were directly related to mining (e.g., the miners' administration building, the towing house for the mining school students, the industrial mining high school) have been rebuilt, but the memory of their original use has been well preserved with informative signs.

Figure 2. Tito Square featuring modernist public buildings and multistory residential blocks.

5.2. Heritage Institutions and Communal Spaces

The industrial tradition in the museums around Velenje is widely represented by numerous collections, materials, exhibitions, and shows, especially in two heritage institutions: the Museum of Velenje and the Slovenian Coal Mining Museum. Mining and energy production dominate these permanent exhibitions. The proportion of exhibitions devoted to industry and socialism varies between the two museums. The Slovenian Coal Mining Museum portrays a sense of pride in its former industry and tells a narrative of the miners' hardship and life in the town. In the Museum of Velenje, only a handful of exhibitions told the story of mining and industry between 2001 and 2014. On the other hand, every fourth temporary exhibition in the Slovenian Mining Museum between 2010 and 2017 was dedicated to the history of mining, which suggests a renewed interest in industrial history. In communal spaces, industrial heritage manifests itself indirectly through cultural programs, cultural heritage, and iconic architecture. The Dom kulture (House of Culture) Cultural Center, for example, is a typical modernist building, also hailed as the "cathedral of the new socialist order" [43], clearly dominating the townscape (Figure 3).

The locations of the community spaces are well known to all the residents and are well-maintained and popular public places for socializing. Three community spaces stand out: (1) The Dom culture Cultural Center, a public cultural institution that offers cultural programs; (2) the Museum of Velenje, housed in a non-socialist/non-industrial Renaissance castle and featuring thematic exhibitions about the founding of the town; and (3) the Slovenian Coal Mining Museum, where visitors can ride down the shaft in the oldest mining lift, walk through the original mining shafts, and have a miner's lunch in the deepest canteen in Slovenia.

In their interview answers, the residents were mostly positive about the industrial heritage and its presentation; although, again, industrial heritage is often associated with the legacy of socialism, as the beginning of industrialization and the founding of the modern city coincide with it. Some negative perceptions of industry can be found in narratives about the town's history, mainly due to the earlier environmental degradation in the 1970s

and 1980s caused by excessive air pollution. Nevertheless, the emotional symbols of the mining tradition remain very positive.

Figure 3. The Dom kulture Cultural Center dominates the main town square.

5.3. Tourism Promotion

Industrial identity is firmly present in the tourism development and promotion of Velenje and is strongly linked to the narrative of socialism. The industrial symbols are prominently featured in 5 tourist routes, 13 souvenirs, and 4 culinary products. The titles of the tourist routes are self-explanatory: "The Socialist Experience in Velenje", "A Retro Walk in Velenje", "In the Footsteps of Miners", "Tales of Lost Villages", and "A Walk through a Modernist City". The most popular souvenir in the Velenje Tourist Information Center is a T-shirt with the inscription "Tito's Velenje" and a red star. Other socialist souvenirs include a T-shirt with a socialist-era limerick "It's wonderful to be young in our homeland" (a slogan from a popular socialist youth anthem), postcards with a commemorative picture of Tito and Tito's monument in Velenje, and a magnet from Tito Square (Figure 4). For arriving tourists, the Tito statue is one of the motives for visiting the town.

The most popular souvenirs from the mining industry include a candle holder made of coal, a miner's lamp on a lump of coal, and a packed piece of coal. The children's game "Nine times Velenje" introduces the heritage of coal mining and the urban development of the town. The heritage of mining and the former leather industry in the nearby town of Šoštanj are described in a series of children's books with songs and stories, enhanced with a music CD for kids. The books and songs are very important for building the mining and industrial identity of the children in Velenje, as they all receive them as New Year's gifts in the local schools.

The industrial and socialist heritage also manifests itself in culinary experiences. A local restaurant offers grilled meat on a spit called "Miner's goulash". The popular socialist-era-themed burger restaurant Nostalgija (Nostalgia) uses Yugoslav socialist iconography and offers the "lignite burger" (lignite is a local type of coal that was the basis for the development of coal mining) and the "Maršal burger" (in reference to "Marshal", the nickname of Josip Broz Tito).

Figure 4. Velenje's promotional T-shirt featuring the former president of Yugoslavia, Tito.

5.4. Arts and Culture

Visual symbols of the town's art and culture include the creative reuse of abandoned industrial buildings, public art, and the consumption of popular culture. Many industrial buildings have been repurposed and have become the subject of creative place-making. Stara pekarna, a former bakery in Velenje's old town, was transformed into an art space for galleries and concerts in 2012, when Velenje was part of the European Capital of Culture. Since then, the space has been a visual arts gallery and a regular venue during the Kunigunda Festival of Young Cultures. Klasirnica, the former coal separation plant, is a huge building that was abandoned after the coal separation plant was no longer needed. During the Kunigunda Festival of Young Cultures in 2012, a group of artists painted what is probably Slovenia's largest mural on the façade of the building. The artists drew their self-portraits, with one of them depicted as a proud coal miner. In both cases, the significance of the buildings is made clear by their positive attitude towards industrial heritage.

In addition to the Tito monument, there are other public artworks related to the town's socialist and coal mining past, such as the statue of local economist and politician Nestl Žgank—founder of the modern town, its planner, coal mine director, and mayor—and the statue of the anonymous miner (Figure 5). These statues enjoy a higher status among the inhabitants of Velenje than the socialist statues in other towns in Slovenia, which is reflected in their diligent maintenance. Some local musicians have promoted Velenje's industrial heritage in their work, most notably rap musician 6Pack Čukur, who depicts industrial buildings and communist statues as the town's main landmarks in his music videos.

In consumer and popular culture, an aura of the "pastness" is found in the retro names and visual imaginary of cafés and restaurants. This type of symbolism is prevalent in Velenje's consumption venues and refers to the town's industrial and socialist heritage through the use of red stars, former flags, retro slogans, miners' iconography, etc. Short interviews reconfirmed that there is a common feeling of socialist nostalgia, bundled with feelings of pride of the industrial past.

Figure 5. Statue of an anonymous miner in the main town square.

5.5. Names and Emblems

Surprisingly, there are few geographical names directly linked to the industrial and mining tradition of Velenje and its surroundings, probably because industrial development has only been intense in the last 60 years or so. There are virtually no toponyms related to industry and mining, apart from a few references to mills and smelters. Velenje features the Miners' Road (Rudarska cesta) and the Mine Road (Rudniška cesta). The nearby town of Šoštanj has a Factory Road (Tovarniška pot). Topographical names associated with industry and mining are related to today's industrial and mining companies, such as the Velenje Coal Mine or the Gorenje appliance company. However, industrial symbols can also be found in the names of sports, educational, and cultural institutions. Of the 66 registered sports clubs in the municipality of Velenje, six bear names related to mining and industrial companies, such as the Miner (Rudar) Football Club or the Gorenje Velenje Handball Club. This also shows the local industries' commitment to sponsor the sports clubs as a part of their social responsibility strategies.

The coat of arms of Velenje was chosen out of 300 proposals in an open tender in 1992. The semiology of the current coat of arms is very modernistic (Figure 6). The white tower rising above the old castle wall (shown in green) symbolizes the modernist history of Velenje and reinforces the idea of a newly built industrial town rising above the old feudal historical remains.

Figure 6. Coat of Arms of the Municipality of Velenje (Source: www.velenje.si, accessed on 26 February 2022).

5.6. Collective Actions

The fusion of industrial and socialist identity is most clearly visible in the symbols of collective action. Pride in collective actions from the socialist era was one of the most common narratives expressed in the short interviews. Through them, we identified non-visual symbols of industrial and socialist values through solidarity and communal work. Velenje was built largely by shock workers, i.e., (semi)voluntary workers who dedicated their free time to building the town's public infrastructure and raising the social standard of the entire community. Shock labor has itself become a symbol of collective action and is reflected today in community building actions, such as youth volunteering and the work of trade unions and NGOs [34]. It is often mentioned in various narratives about the founding of the town and as a symbol of the self-sacrifice of workers and their families for the good of the entire community. Only one interviewee had a negative sentiment towards socialist collective actions describing shock work as a 'voluntary must'.

There are numerous organizations in Velenje with very enthusiastic and committed members, such as the largest local branch of the scout association in Slovenia, brass bands, etc. They often mention that volunteering is a result of their industrial and socialist identity and is inseparable from values, such as solidarity, tolerance, multiculturalism, mutual respect, comradery, and equality [34,44]. In the interviews, residents expressed a sense of belonging to these values, which symbolize the self-sacrificing and collective nature of the town's residents. Shock work and volunteering have thus become a symbol for the working-class collective identity, combined with (mild) socialist nostalgia.

6. Role and Importance of Industry in Policy Discourses

In this chapter, we analyze how officials and policy makers view industry and how they want to portray and interpret it. We conducted a content analysis of official strategic documents ranging from general development strategies to more specific environmental or social strategies (tourism, transport, welfare, etc.). The results shed light on how policy makers (re)image the industrial past and present and whether they want to leverage it or hide from it.

The general development guidelines of the municipality are set out in the Strategic Development Document of the Municipality of Velenje (from 2008) and the subsequent Sustainable Urban Strategy for a Smart, Entrepreneurial, and Friendly Velenje 2025 (from 2015). Both documents clarify the vision of the municipality and the discursive symbolism it wishes to convey:

> " . . . Velenje will be characterized by a well-developed economy based on the innovations of highly qualified experts, especially in the fields of research, design,

> and environmentally friendly and energy-efficient technologies. The appealing quality of living in terms of the friendliness and tolerance of citizens and environmental sustainability, the high quality of life in terms of the diversity of cultural and sporting activities . . . ”

Even though the documents start their introductions with terms such as “socialist miracle” or “pioneering spirit”, the town’s industrial past, present, or future rarely express a positive connotation. In fact, it is difficult to deduce the industrial character of the town from the texts at all. There is no occurrence of the term industrial heritage. Individual industry-based development policies appear inconsistently and fragmentarily. They can be narrowed down to tourism activities (on the lakeside of degraded mining areas); environmental research and education; and the reuse of industrial buildings for creative and youth activities.

Among the other strategic documents expressing the industrial character and heritage of the town, the Tourism Development and Marketing Strategy in the Municipality of Velenje 2017–2021 stands out (see Figure 7). It is very different in its “mission” from the general vision of the town:

> “We responsibly preserve the values of solidarity and comradery, which have become a rarity today and are often forgotten; we protect the memory of a time that has strongly influenced the image of Velenje and Slovenia as they are today, and we protect and interpret the heritage that comes from a time before us.”

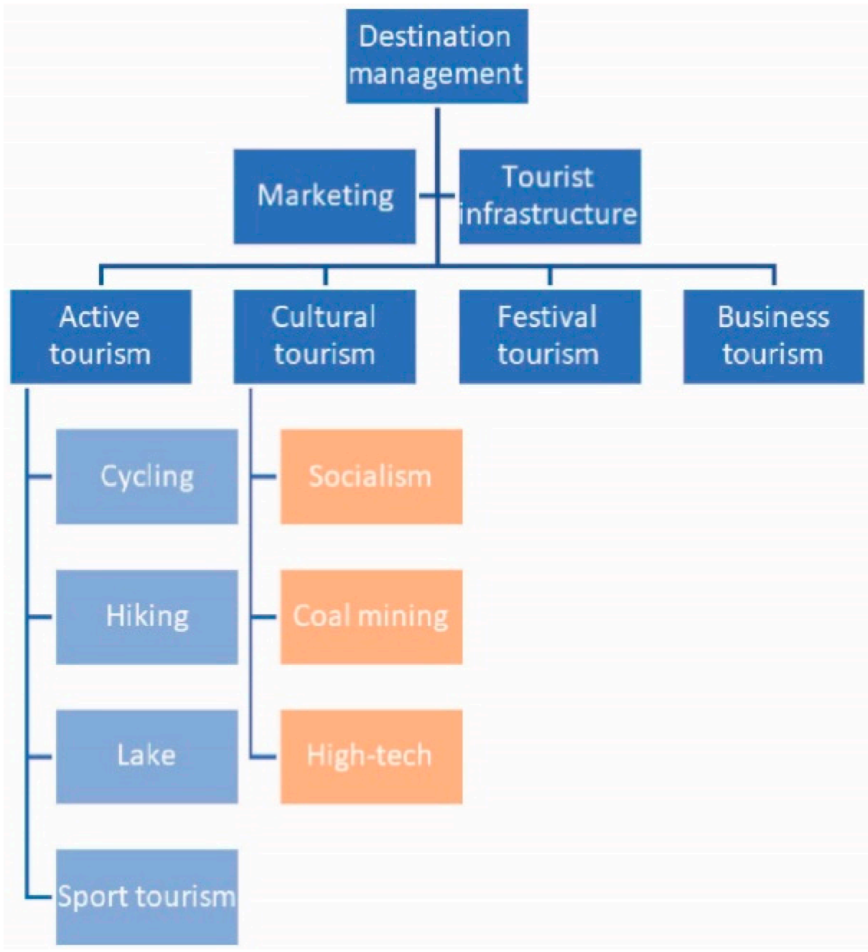

Figure 7. Emphasizing socialism, coal mining, and high-tech companies as part of future tourism development in Velenje (taken from the Tourism Development and Marketing Strategy in the Municipality of Velenje 2017–2021, p. 63).

The document adds that Velenje's greatest attraction for domestic and foreign tourists is the town itself: The story of its origins, the recent history and development related to the heritage of coal mining, the well-preserved modernist architecture, monuments, and the technological heritage reflected today in successful local businesses. Unlike most other documents, the authors of the tourism marketing strategy are external experts who are not from Velenje. This was probably the decisive factor for the future possibilities of tourism development in the municipality to be interpreted in this way. With their outside perspective, the authors have succeeded in imaginatively weaving together socialism, coal mining, and high-tech entrepreneurship as the main symbols and pillars of tourism in Velenje.

The industrial tradition is hardly represented in the official documents, as the prevailing trend is towards post-industrial development and a consumerist society. However, the documents show that the emphasis is on social programs, the social inclusion of disadvantaged groups, and solidarity. This could be the result of the emergence of a collective consciousness during the period of industrial society. It could be a consequence of a socially oriented state as a whole and/or the structure of the Slovenian space, which is predominantly rural with small towns where personal ties between residents and workers are stronger than in large cities.

7. Discussion

The aim of this article is to examine how past and present industrial activities are interpreted by local people on the one hand and by policy makers on the other and whether there is a conflict between the two. An analysis of the industrial semiotic landscape in Velenje revealed that the industrial past and present are expressed mainly through visual symbols such as sculptures, most of which depict coal mining. Public places, such as the main square, are clean, well-maintained, and decorated with socialist-industrial iconography, suggesting positive connotations. The industrial tradition is also reflected in museums and exhibitions, where the mining and household appliance industries dominate over other industries. We detected a positive attitude towards industrial heritage and tourism promotion, e.g., in the form of mining souvenirs or innovative tourism packages. The analysis suggests that industry is firmly entrenched in the minds of the local people and manifested through emotional symbols across the town. The iconography (the description of symbols) of the socialist-industrial past is being used to portray this image to outsiders (visitors, tourists) and is a source of pride and economic gain for the local residents. The town is characterized by a deep-rooted mining, industrial, and working-class tradition that defines industrial culture with tacit knowledge, fundamental values, and norms, such as solidarity, intercultural coexistence, tolerance, mutual aid, and social equality. The legacy of a strong collective consciousness and local identity has been transformed into voluntary actions that are popular among local residents [45].

The industrial semiotic landscape in Velenje is well represented and interwoven with signs and symbols of socialism and modernism. The symbolic geography of this industrial town is riddled with remnants of the Yugoslav past that continue to shape and define the present. Industrialism in Velenje is inevitably linked to the socialist past and the origins of the modern city. This is why industry and the socialist past are represented through various symbols and are a matter of pride and collective identity for the inhabitants. Socialist nostalgia is a common phenomenon in post-socialist countries [46]. In Velenje, socialist nostalgia is passed on to the younger generations who did not experience socialism. Bars, youth clubs, and other places where young people meet are full of symbols with socialist and mining iconography. As Velikonja [46] notes, this socialist nostalgia is not so much a commercial niche or a political statement, but a retrospective utopia in which residents wish for a better world with values such as true friendship, more solidarity, and a fairer society. In a way, socialist and industrial nostalgia can be interpreted as a reaction of a more collective (industry-based) identity to a new, individualistic and consumerist identity.

However, in contrast to the prevailing identity of the local residents, the official identity politics seems to try to make a detour from both industrial and socialist narratives in the city. The official documents and policies predominantly follow the discourse of western post-industrial cities, for example by emphasizing the high quality of life through leisure and cultural activities. In this discourse, industry is associated and presented with impending deindustrialization and inferior socio-economic performance. In the discourse on urban shrinkage, industrial urban areas are often portrayed as economically disadvantaged and vulnerable to demographic shrinkage [47] or as resistant to change because their industrial specialization leads to negative path dependency in development [48]. We have found evidence that town officials inadvertently ascribe new discursive symbolism to industry in their strategies and policies and present an embellished urban imaginary to their audiences. In the process, new positive symbols (culture, high-tech services, etc.) emerge while the existing and traditional industry is "washed away". We argue that the town leaders, under the influence of prevailing post-industrial discourses, have begun to promote a specific post-industrial urban imaginary to residents and outsiders alike.

These generic policy discourses emerged as a consequence of the construction of new territorial identities in order to enhance place attractiveness and economic growth [49]. Post-industrial economic policy discourse is often an attempt to relate a city or region to a globalization process and is sometimes referred to as a "thin identity", which is related to a specific problem and is utilitarian, as opposed to a "thick identity", which is normative and grounded in local culture and history [50]. In the case of Velenje, thin identity is reflected in the policy discourse emphasizing the service economy and the postindustrial structures, while the combined industrial-socialist identity of the residents is reflected as the thick identity. An empirical analysis of these reimaging efforts in five Swedish counties found that these policy discourses focus on outsiders' perspectives and disregard internal place-based qualities and strengths [49]. These contradictions in development narratives can lead to potential conflicts, as described, for example, in the Norwegian industrial town of Odda, where the authorities pursued a more culture-based discourse of development and locals a more industrial one [51].

At the moment, no real conflict exists between the two imaginaries in Velenje: The industrial one of the local residents and the discursive post-industrial idea of the policy makers seem to coexist. The policy makers seem to play a dual role: In the policy discourse, they clearly favor the postindustrial semiotics, while at the local level, they invest resources to preserve the town's industrial semiotic landscape. This duality also applies to the socialist semiotics: There is hardly any mention of it in the official policy discourse; however, the local authorities are diligent in maintaining socialist-era tangible (statues, public squares) and intangible symbols (names, references to collective actions). We suspect that maintaining industrial and socialist symbols is a way for local politicians to strengthen their position on the political left, where the majority of votes are found. In their "outward" communication though, they use completely different symbols to present the town as post-industrial and "more modern". The role of political structures in interpreting and engaging with the socialist past and using it for tourism or identity-building purposes is a relevant topic that should be explored in future research.

This status quo could lead to an identity crisis, especially if the official policy discourse were to collide with the symbols of industrial identity in the future. However, the recently adopted tourism strategy might suggest that the town's thin and thick identities are not necessarily antagonistic. The tourism strategy takes into account both industrial and socialist heritage and shows how to leverage it with other, more service-oriented activities, such as business and high-tech tourism. This document can serve as a good practical example for other industrial towns and cities that have been lost in the imported post-industrial discourses.

8. Conclusions

For our concluding thoughts, we would like to leave our specific case study and raise broader theoretical and practical concerns. The problem of reimaging and rebranding older industrialized places is indicative of a deeper struggle within post-industrial societies. The service economy provides the majority of jobs in the countries of the Global North, but industry remains very important in terms of economic output and its symbolic and cultural value. The positive influence of industrial culture in older industrial cities is expressed through neo-industrial strategies of flexible specialization, the knowledge economy, and fostering a pioneering spirit [52,53]. Industrialism shaped by a specific identity, culture, and values is still relevant to the idea of the "good city", where collective well-being and a close-knit community are very important [54] and can be a source of social and other innovations [34]. There are numerous reports where expressions of industrial identity and culture are not considered valid or important in today's society, for example in education [55] or creative activities [56]. This could mean that academic discourse is no different from other policy discourses and, in turn, neglects industrial identity as an ontological reality of many (post)industrial cities. It could also mean that integrating semiotics into political economy and developmental studies might be useful. Jessop [57] argues for integrating semiotic analysis into development studies to identify broader struggles between dominant hegemonic economic discourses (the "new economy") and how they resonate in situ with the local populations.

The practical implication of this research is that (post)industrial cities should promote their niche assets derived from industrial heritage. We agree that the reimaging of industrial cities should be conducted in a co-creative, participatory way, involving the residents' sense of place identity and attachment [13,28], but we propose to go even further. We suggest that tangible and intangible industrial heritage should not only be treated as symbols of the past and consumer goods for tourists and visitors. Rather, industrial symbols can become a reference point to create an alternative perception of a modern consumer society based on past industrial values, such as collective well-being, solidarity, and equality. Based on the findings of this research, official discourses in Velenje should find a balance between the strong industrial identity of the place and contemporary culture and creative industry-led strategies. The industry should neither be "washed away" nor treated as an object of commodification, but as a powerful tool to further strengthen the local identity and counteract the pitfalls of the contemporary consumer society.

Supplementary Materials: The following supporting information can be downloaded at https://www.mdpi.com/article/10.3390/soc12020049/s1, File S1 (with Table S1 of questions for mapping visual industrial symbols); File S2 (containing short interview questions and Table S2 containing the structure of respondents and their attitudes towards three dominant themes).

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Article

Centralized Industrialization in the Memory of Places. Case Studies of Romanian Cities

Radu Săgeată *, Bianca Mitrică and Irena Mocanu

Institute of Geography, Romanian Academy, 023993 Bucharest, Romania; biancadumitrescu78@yahoo.com (B.M.); mocanitai@yahoo.com (I.M.)
* Correspondence: rsageata@gmail.com; Tel.: +40-021-313-5990

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Abstract: The paper highlights the impact of excessive industrialization during the centralized economy era on urban spatial identity, as well as the disruption of this identity through political-administrative decisions, a phenomenon characteristic of the Central and Eastern European region during the era of centralized economies. The tendency to rebalance urban territorial systems is achieved through deindustrialization, together with reindustrialization and tertiarization. All these changes affect functionality, physiognomy as well as urban culture, and can be quantified through the changes in the memory of places. Urban toponyms related to industrialization are disappearing and are replaced by toponyms that illustrate the historical past of the city and, in general, its spatial identity. The paper aims to contribute to the development of research on the impact of oversized industrialization on the memory of places, in the context of the transition from industrial to service-based economies, a process that affected the states of the former Communist Bloc after 1990. Based on bibliographic sources and field research conducted between 2008 and 2020 in two cities in Romania (Bucharest, the country's capital, and Galați, the largest river and seaport and the main centre of the steel industry in the country), we have evaluated quantitatively these changes with the help of indices resulting from the toponymic changes resulting from these processes. The study shows that the functional disturbances due to the oversized industrialization that characterized the communist period only managed to a small extent to affect the correlation between the spatial identity of the two cities and their toponymy.

Keywords: spatial identity; political-administrative decisions; industrialization; memory of places; Romania

1. Introduction

The large-scale industrialization of the centralized economy has left deep marks on the physiognomy and urban functionality of the Central and Eastern European states. The development of the industrial objectives has exceeded the support space potential of cities, through over-reaching inter-industrial relations, a fact that imprinted on the urban territorial systems a high degree of vulnerability [1]. Their susceptibility stood out once centralized economic systems collapsed, when the former communist states were confronted with a strong process of deindustrialization, followed, in some cases, by reindustrialization in other areas and on other scales, in accordance with the regional identity of spaces in which urban centres had evolved.

The complex industrialization, deindustrialization and reindustrialization/tertiarization processes carried out during the past seven decades have had a major impact on the relations between urban centres and surrounding, rural and peri-urban areas, an impact that we intend to assess with the help of an important aspect of urban culture: the memory of places.

The purpose of this study is to provide an analysis of how the oversized industrialization of the centralized economy period changed the urban toponymy, thus influencing the memory of places. In this sense, we hypothesize that the dysfunctions registered in terms

of urban cultures because of the oversized industrialization policy, and in a broad sense, of the cultural policies pursued by the communist authorities could be entirely rolled back, disappearing once the disturbing factors themselves went extinct.

Despite a rich scientific literature devoted to toponymy during the centralized economy era, this issue has been only fleetingly addressed, either in the form of studies related to urban identity and image [2–7] to local development and regional planning, to urban culture and toponymy [8–26], or in general toponymy works [12,27,28]. Therefore, the original side to this study results from the deepening of the industrialization–deindustrialization–urban toponymy–memory of places relationship, applied in a representative space, though less studied from this point of view, of the former Communist Bloc: Romania.

As case studies, we have selected two cities that we deemed representative from this point of view: the country's capital, Bucharest, a metropolis with strong industrialized macro-regional functions during the centralized economy era, and Galați, which ranks 6th in the national urban hierarchy, the largest steel centre and river and sea port in Romania, a poster-city for oversized development in an industrial field (steel) at odds with the tradition of places and the potential of the urban influence area.

2. Literature

The problem of disturbing the regional identity of urban spaces as a result of large-scale industrialization is a study subject developed mainly after 1990. However, most of the studies target adjacent aspects to the relationships we aim to research in detail, which lends originality to the present work. Moreover, the cities chosen as case studies, although characteristic examples for the researched phenomenon, have been less studied over time, in terms of the industrialization–deindustrialization–regional identity–memory of places relationship.

Important contributions to the theoretical-methodological substantiation of the role of regional identity in shaping the particularities of regional development and planning were made through the studies of [2–6,29] and [7], respectively. Dematteis' study [2] focuses on the analysis of the relationships between urban identity, the image of the city and their implications for urban marketing, while Raagmaa [3] and Pike et al. [4] analyse the role of regional identity in regional development and planning. Anssi [5] follows the same epistemological lines, which address the mobilization of regional identity, the premise for the transition from delimited spaces to macro-regions defined by relational complexity. Regional identity is also the subject of analysis for the study of conducted by Semian and Chromý [6] which analyse it in terms of favours/restrictions for regional development processes. Moreover, in the theoretical-methodological sphere is Banini's study [29], which focuses on the analysis of the theoretical framework of local territorial identities. The latter study [7] focused on the impact of an emblematic building in shaping the urban regional identity in Romania's capital city.

The impact of urban subcultures on the configuration of territorial identity and memory has been deepened by studies such as those of [8] on London, [9,30] on Budapest or [31] on local branding campaigns. Petsimeris [8] analyses the ethnic and social division of a global city, having London as a case study; Budapest is analysed in terms of the impact of policies for the commemoration of anti-communist dissent in urban toponymy and places of memory [9], as well as in terms of the relationship between city marketing and urban culture [30].

Urban memory reflected in current or extinct toponymy. As a product of urban functionality and territorial identity, it was the subject of research by [10–12,32] or [33], a study conducted at the level of a German-speaking city (Sibiu) integrated in Romania at the end of the First World War. While the works of Trigg [32] and Bigon [12] move along the lines of purely theoretical coordinates, Crețan and Matthews [10] analyse the population's responses to the change of urban toponymy in a martyred city (Timișoara), and Light and Young [11] focus their scientific approach on the policies of continuity/change in urban toponymy.

In Romania, urban toponymy and in particular the issue of street names, as part of urban culture, has developed both through studies performed by historians [13–15], linguists [16–18], sociologists [19,20] as well as geographers [21–28,34].

The studies carried out by historians, linguists and sociologists used as a documentary basis for our research focus on the issue of street names and street nomenclature, turning to case studies of either a city (Bucharest, [13,16,17,19,20]), or the old names of streets, as an expression of the degree of culture in the evolution of a locality [14,15,18].

The contribution of geographers to the study of urban toponymy concerns both the theoretical [21,27,28] and the practical-applicative component. The second category includes the studies conducted by Light [22,23] on the renaming of streets in Bucharest after 1989, by Light et al. [24,25] on the urban toponymy during the communist period based on the Romanian capital, as well as the studies conducted by Voiculescu [26] regarding the fatalism reflected in the renaming of the streets in Timișoara post-1989, and Boamfă [34], regarding the geographical anthroponymy.

Another category of studies that have been used in recording this research is that related to the processes of industrialization, deindustrialization and reindustrialization, respectively, and the impact of these processes on urban physiognomy and functionality, changes in territorial identity and collective memory. In this sense, we have selected the studies of [35] on deindustrialization and post-industrial cities, and [36], on the role of creative destruction in urban planning processes, or those applied in Romania by [37] and [38], respectively, regarding settlement systems; by [39] on urban dynamics; by [40] on Romanian post-socialist cities, or those elaborated by [41] and [1] regarding the role of industrialization in urban development.

In this epistemological context, the present study aims to develop the state of current knowledge on the relationships between the trajectory of urban industrial evolution and the causes that influence these trajectories on the one hand (spatial identity as reflected by urban functionality or political-administrative decisions that distort this identity), and on the other hand, the reflection of industrial trajectories in the urban culture and in the memory of urban places, respectively.

3. Methodology and Research Approach

This paper is based on the experience provided by an extensive participatory research process carried out over a period of twelve years (between 2008 and 2020) in the two cities. This is the reason why this moment was selected for the current analysis.

The selection of the two cities was made based on their representativeness for two distinct situations (one is a metropolis with complex functions, the other a large city developed hypertrophically in an industrial branch not based on tradition, supplied by imports stemming from centrally coordinated industrial relations). The two development models are similar to the development trajectories of most former industrialized socialist cities during the centralized economy, but contrast with each other in several ways: demographic size, functional typology and balance between urban functions, as well as the extent of urban/rural relations. Galați was selected alongside the Capital due to its location near the former border between Romania and the Soviet Union, a geographical position which played a decisive role in its industrial development.

We will thus evaluate the frequency with which toponymy related to industrialization (including the toponyms related to the communist political leaders who contributed ideologically to the substantiation of forced industrialization policies or to the data of the political events that marked this process) appear at the same time as the development of industrial landmarks during the centralized economy era and, subsequently, the frequency of their disappearance/change given the transition to the competitive economy. The disappearance of toponymy related to industrialization is symbolic for the deindustrialization process, and the change/advent of new ones indicates the magnitude of the reindustrialization process.

The temporal dynamics of these indices will be a marker for the toponymy changes pertaining to this process, respectively for the long-lasting impact of industrialization on the remodelling of the urban spatial identity.

The respective analyses will also be correlated with the regional identity provided by the natural functionality of the respective spaces, highlighting the manner of their reconversion as a result of the destructuring of the industrial areas created during the centralized economy period.

In order to achieve this research, we will use bibliographic sources and cartographic materials from the respective periods, as well as official statistical data (regarding the dynamic of the urban population and of the employees working in the industry) from the censuses conducted in Romania, correlating them with the information collected by the authors on their field trips.

The paper functions, therefore, at the interference area between economic geography and geographical toponymy, as well as humanities and social sciences, since a series of conceptual clarifications of the notions used is necessary. Thus, we will use three categories of concepts:

1. Determinant:
   - (1.1) Spatial identity;
   - (1.2) Urban functionality;
   - (1.3) Political-administrative decisions.
2. Motor:
   - (2.1) Industrialization;
   - (2.2) Deindustrialization;
   - (2.3) Reindustrialization/tertiarization.
3. Resulting:
   - (3.1) The memory of places.

1. Determinant concepts are those that underlie urban spatial dynamics. They highlight the characteristics of the respective spaces, on the one hand and, on the other hand, the subjective disturbances brought in from the outside, as a result of various political/ideological factors. In this sense, spatial identity (1.1) is thought of as the set of connections between place, space and identity construction [42], respectively the identity built on the relevant aspects for space/place [43]. Ref. [44] defines spatial identity as the identity or perceived image of a place, as opposed to the identity of individuals living there. Thus, each place has particular characteristics that make it unique and help shape a certain behaviour. On the other hand, spatial identity is the premise of the emergence, consolidation and evolution of *urban functionalities* (1.2), defined as the professions exercised by the city, its reason for being, the shape it takes when viewed from the outside [45], respectively the specific human activities that take place in a city, over a certain period of time, influencing the size and character of its urban development and which are conditioned by the city's location, its climate conditions, natural resources, environmental particularities, as well as the evolution of the city over time [46]. All these elements make up, in general, the spatial identity. On the other hand, *political-administrative decisions* (1.3) trigger a dysfunctional behaviour in terms of the natural evolution of the city by bringing in a political-ideological, external factor of a subjective nature [47]. This involvement can be beneficial for the city, in accordance with the particularities of the natural environment that provide support for urban activities, thus strengthening its development, or can be detrimental, subordinated to an ideological factor, thus contributing to disrupting the natural relationship between the city and its area of influence. This is also the case of large-scale industrialization during the centralized economy era, which was enacted based on long-distance inter-industrial supply relationships, politically coordinated, which led to major disruptions in both urban and peri-urban areas.

2. Motor (dynamic) concepts, resulting on the one hand from the spatial identity of urban centres, and, on the other hand, from the political-administrative decisions that

distorted this identity. *Industrialization* (2.1) is defined as the process of a fundamentally developing industry, whose result is that industry becomes the predominant branch of the economy within a territory/city. In situations where this process is politically influenced and is achieved beyond the support capacity of the city, with the disappearance of political and ideological constraints that led to industrialization, the reverse process begins, i.e., deindustrialization, as a natural tendency to rebalance the territorial system, unbalanced due to the initial decisions [38]. *Deindustrialization* (2.2) therefore consists of reducing the share of industry in the economy of a country or a human community/city, followed by the reconversion of the jobless labour force [35]. In large cities, this is done mainly for the service sector or generates divergent migratory flows [48], often materialized in the decrease in urban population. This process is characteristic of transition periods or economic crises and affects both industrial production and people's lives, as real wages and living standards decline, while the unemployment rate rises.

Given the transition from a centralized, excessively industrialized economy to a free market globalized system, deindustrialization precedes *reindustrialization/tertiarization (2.3)* (the development of the tertiary sector to the detriment of the secondary one, in particular). These processes aim at restoring the natural balance of the system of city-area of influence, at other levels and in other fields of activity, in accordance with the potential of the urban centre's support space.

3. The resulting concepts are the consequence of the first two categories. From this point of view, for the present research we are interested in the *memory of places (3.1)*, as a part of urban culture, that is, those identity characteristics of places, spontaneous (original) or acquired through political-administrative decisions, reflected in toponymy (respectively in urban toponymy, for the present research). In this sense, the concept of "memory of places" is different from that of "places of memory" attributed to those historical places that awaken collective memory [49,50].

4. Background and Preliminary Discussions

4.1. Centralized Industrialization and the Disruption of Spatial Identity. The City, from Large-Scale Industrialization to Deindustrialization and Tertiarization

Rising to power with Soviet support after World War II, the communist parties in Central Europe and the Balkans tried to devise radical strategies for modernizing society. The new political-ideological dynamic shaped the society of these spaces between 1945 and 1989. Its main features can be summarized as follows:

- Mimicking the Soviet-Stalinist political model as a paradigm of change, establishing the dictatorship of the communist party, abolishing other parties and the parliamentary system.
- The prioritized development of the socializing processes of the economy and rapid industrialization.
- The marginalization, even the disregard of the conditions for the expression of the individual aspects of man as a social subject and the atrophy of the critical function of thinking.
- The instrumentalization of culture as a means of political-ideological propaganda.

These constants overlapped and interacted in various ways, depending on the circumstances, and shaped the picture of social realities. Their progress was the direct result of political action, the whole society being marked by the domination of the political system. Political life under the hegemony of the Communist Party echoed the characteristics of the Stalinist political system. It was defined by the exercise of the dictatorial power of the communist party, the disappearance of any democratic manifestations within it, the establishment of repression and violence as instruments of supremacy in the party and in society, the abrogation of civil rights and freedoms, the transformation of hypocrisy, denunciation and arbitrariness into governing principles. The Stalinist system transformed the communist party from a political body responsible with the elaboration of strategies for the development and modernization of society, into an administrative institution in

charge of executing the decisions made at the very top. It was able to resort to any means necessary, from repression to manipulation, with the sole aim of achieving an economic performance having a positive impact in the social field.

The radical change in the economy was conceived as being linked to a social structure, based on accentuated industrialization and the collectivization of agriculture. Another defining feature of the economy was centralized planning. With its help, the absolute domination of the party/state system over the economy was enacted.

In the long run, the mechanisms for regulating the economy, the single-party economic relations system and state ownership proved to be unsuccessful. The main cause was political, the dominant instrument in the structuring and functioning of economic mechanisms. Instead of the economy regulating itself through specific internal coordinates, it was modelled on voluntary principles, through state intervention.

The bankruptcy of the communist political system in the 1980s highlighted the consequences of centralized planning according to the Soviet model, which was "exported" to the states that came into its sphere of influence after World War II. This model of economic development was based on massive investments in industry, especially in the heavy industry—energy, metallurgy and machine building; on promoting the working class and on army-oriented investments, in an autarchic, political and social framework in relation to the global challenges of the era. Thus, while heavy industry in Western Europe and the United States had already undergone an extensive process of restructuring and refurbishment since the 1960s, and the centre of gravity of economic development shifted towards high-tech industries, and in Central and Eastern Europe the foundations were laid for large industrial investments in metallurgy and machine building. The industrialization of Central and Eastern Europe, out of phase in relation to the western part of the continent, generated profound social and spatial changes, which in turn imprinted differentiated particularities on the cities east of the former Iron Curtain, with consequences that are felt to this very day.

The policy of large-scale industrialization generated a rapid urbanization after the 1945–1950 period, either by building cities near existing industrial centres or on empty lots due to the implementation of new industrial investments, or by expanding existing ones due to migratory flows from rural areas occupied in the new industrial units.

In most cases, centralized development policies have consisted in shifting new industrial investment to small towns with predominantly agricultural or commercial functions, or even to rural settlements, which has led to population explosions based on migratory flows, followed by these settlements being granted city status. On the other hand, the spatial identity of the old urban centres was strongly disturbed by the appearance and development of workers' replicas of museum cities, cultural, historical or religious centres of tradition, viewed at the time as "bourgeois cities", aiming to change how they were perceived in the collective mind. Krakow, for example, Poland's traditional, historical and religious centre, was "mirrored" in 1949 by Nowa Huta, created as its "proletarian counterpart". Similarly, new suburbs have emerged and developed, some even granted city status: Novi Beograd (1948), Nowe Tychy (1950), Novi Zagreb (1953), Halle-Neustadt (1967) [51] or Bucureştii Noi [New Bucharest] neighbourhood, integrated into Bucharest in the 1950s, true cities-within-cities, working-class neighbourhoods of various traditional urban centres. Their particular trait remains today that granted by a uniform and monotonous urban landscape [52], consisting of large collective buildings inspired by Soviet cities, oriented towards creating new social relationships, in which individual personality and any traces of opposition against the political system would be easily annihilated. Wherever this spatial model was implemented, great disturbances were generated at the level of urban spatial identity, resulting in poorly developed territorial structures which were functionally dependent on the central urban nuclei.

Another category is that of cities granted a political-administrative function, which later triggered large industrial objectives. This is the case of Romanian cities such as Târgovişte or Călăraşi, urban centres that saw a strong development in 1970–1980 as a result

of their receiving the status of county residences in 1968, followed by the establishment of large steel mills factories, lacking any connection to their functional vocation.

The functional vulnerability of all these urban centres manifested itself brutally after 1990, given the destructuring of the centrally established inter-industrial relations, which created the premises for their "readaptation" to the potential of peri-urban spaces. Thus, functional changes were generated, materialized through deindustrialization and tertiarization, which in most cases led to strong demographic decreases both on the background of a natural balance, as well as—and especially—through migrations.

4.2. Leaders of Centralized Industrialization in Urban Memory

These processes can be quantified by the evolution of the memory of places. A whole series of places in cities (streets, squares, iconic buildings for the city, etc.) that originally, prior to the "great industrialization", bore names inspired by the local toponymic heritage, in accordance with the spatial identity of those urban centres, were renamed according to the "new proletarian transformations". They were named after either communist revolutionary personalities, or the dates of key events for the consolidation of the communist political-ideological system, or after newly created industrial landmarks or new purposes for the respective cities, introduced by political-administrative decisions. Even the urban macro-toponymy of Central and Eastern Europe highlighted these aspects, with some large cities temporarily bearing the names of Soviet or domestic political leaders.

Thus, I.-V. Stalin alone, the main artisan of the post-war division of the Continent and of the centralized industrialization of the entire area east of the former Iron Curtain, lent his name to 13 cities in Central and Eastern Europe, up to the former-Soviet Turkestan: Stalingrad, Stalinsk and Stalinogorsk (present-day Volgograd, Novokuznetsk, and Novomoskovsk in the Russian Federation, respectively); Stalin (Varna, in Bulgaria); Oraşul Stalin [The City of Stalin] (Braşov, in România); Qyteti Stalin (Kuçova, in Albania); Sztálinváros (Dunaújváros, in Hungary); Stalinogród (Katowice, in Poland); Stalinstadt (Eisenhüttenstadt, in Eastern Germany); Stalingrad (Nové Město, a suburb of Ostrava, in the Czech Republic); Stalino (Donetsk, in Ukraine), as well as in the Caucasus region—Staliniri (Tskhinvali, in South Ossetia, Georgia) and Central Asia—Stalinabad (Dushanbe, in Tajikistan), respectively Stalinskoye (Belowodskoye, in Kyrgyzstan). After his successor, Nikita Khrushchev, condemned the use of mass repression and the cult of personality during Stalin's time, most of these cities reprised their original names (between 1956 and 1961) (only Qyteti Stalin in Albania was named thus until 1990, and Albania was the only country from the former Communist Block to remain faithful to stalinism). Similarly, V.-I. Lenin named the largest city in the Baltic Sea basin (Leningrad, now St. Petersburg), as well as the city of Tiszaújváros in Hungary, which went by Leninváros between 1970 and 1991. Other communist leaders had no international interests, naming cities only in their own countries. Karl Marx, a German thinker and philosopher, was one of the authors of the theories that founded socialism and lent his name to the city of Chemnitz (between 1953 and 1990), while Marshall Josip Broz Tito, president of Yugoslavia between 1953 and 1980, named the city of Podgorica, the capital city of Montenegro (between 1946 and 1991). In what once was the former Soviet area, Russian writer Maxim Gorky, the founder of socialist realism in literature and a communist activist, gave his name to the city Nizhny Novgorod (Gorky, between 1932 and 1990); Yakov M. Sverdlov (1885–1919), one of the first Bolshevik political leaders, helped name the city of Yekaterinburg (Sverdlovsk, 1924–1991), and Soviet politician Valerian V. Kuybyshev, an officer in the Red Army, named the city of Samara (Kuybyshev, between 1935 and 1991). Ukrainian Communist leader Grigory Petrovsk named the city Dnieper (Dnipro) (Dnipropetrovsk, between 1926 and 2016) and Bolshevik leader Mikhail Frunze named Bishkek—the capital of Kyrgyzstan (Frunze, between 1926 and 1991). Similarly, in Romania, two industrial cities were named after local communist political leaders: Oneşti (Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, between 1965 and 1990), an important centre of the petrochemical industry, and Ştei (Doctor Petru Groza, between 1956 and 1990), a city which owed its development to uranium mining.

If the artisans of the centralized industrialization policy temporarily named large cities, which were seen, at the time, as symbols of new social relations, the industrial objectives created as a result of these policies often had a local toponymic impact, limited to the cities where they were implemented. Thus, Oţelu Roşu [Red Steel] city in the mountainous Banat area (Romania) was named thus in 1947, after the main product of the steel plant around which the city was founded (the town, originally called Ferdinandsberg, was founded in 1560 by German settlers who built a steel plant, around which the residential area would later be developed), and the city of Victoria (also in Romania), which had evolved as a residential area next to the Ucea chemical plant, was originally named Ucea Fabricii [Ucea Factory], and between 1948 and 1954—Ucea Roşie [Red Ucea].

The memory of intra-urban places is more intensely marked by these aspects, which we will further analyse in due course for two big cities in Romania: Bucharest, the country's capital, and Galaţi, the largest river-maritime port in Romania and the main steel centre of this country.

5. Results: Case-Studies

The analysis of the case studies will start by highlighting the characteristics of the spatial identity of the two cities, an identity that impresses their urban functionality. In this approach, the maps will play an important role, cartographically illustrating the elements described in the text. The urban function, respectively its spatial expression (functional areas), is the consequence of the spatial identity of the city, but the urban dynamics can also be influenced by a second category of functions, resulting from political-administrative decisions. In the case studies we will present, political-administrative decisions will attract the industrial function (industrialization), thus disrupting the natural, inherent dynamics (in relation to the potential of areas of influence) of cities and influencing the memory of places. The tendency to rebalance the urban dynamics will be achieved through deindustrialization, tertiarization and reindustrialization in other fields.

5.1. Centralized Industrialization and the Memory of Places in Bucharest

Bucharest, the capital of Romania, is one of the largest cities in the south-eastern part of Central Europe (2,155,240 inh.—estimated as of 1 July 2020) and acts as a regional economic and demographic hub. Located at the intersection of old trade routes that connected the Danube, Carpathians and, respectively, the Black Sea with Central Europe, the city owes its natural development to its commercial function, doubled since 1862 by the political-administrative one (when it became the country's capital).

The industrialization of the city began relatively late and was a consequence of its commercial function: the first industrial unit (Assan's Mill) (Assan's mill, destroyed in 1995, was the first steam mill in Romania) was built in 1853 by two merchants — George Assan and Ion Martinovici. Starting the second half of the 19th century, the first industrial focal points begin to take shape: on the Dâmboviţa Quay (later renamed TimpuriNoi – Văcăreşti), the Ştefan cel Mare – Obor – Pantelimon areas, the Filaret – Rahova – 13 Septembrie area, joined by the areas Gara de Nord – Grozăveşti, Griviţa, Vest, Dudeşti – Policolor after 1870. In the inter-war period, the industrial areas of Republica and Pipera began to take shape [53] (Figure 1). Their hypertrophied development was to take place in the post-war years, aided by the policy of centralized industrialization promoted by the communist authorities, when the industrial landscape of the Romanian Capital was rounded out by the emergence of other industrial areas: Progresul, Berceni, Giuleşti, Colentina, Chitila and IMGB (the Bucharest Heavy Machinery Enterprise/Întreprinderea de Maşini Grele Bucureşti) (Figure 1).

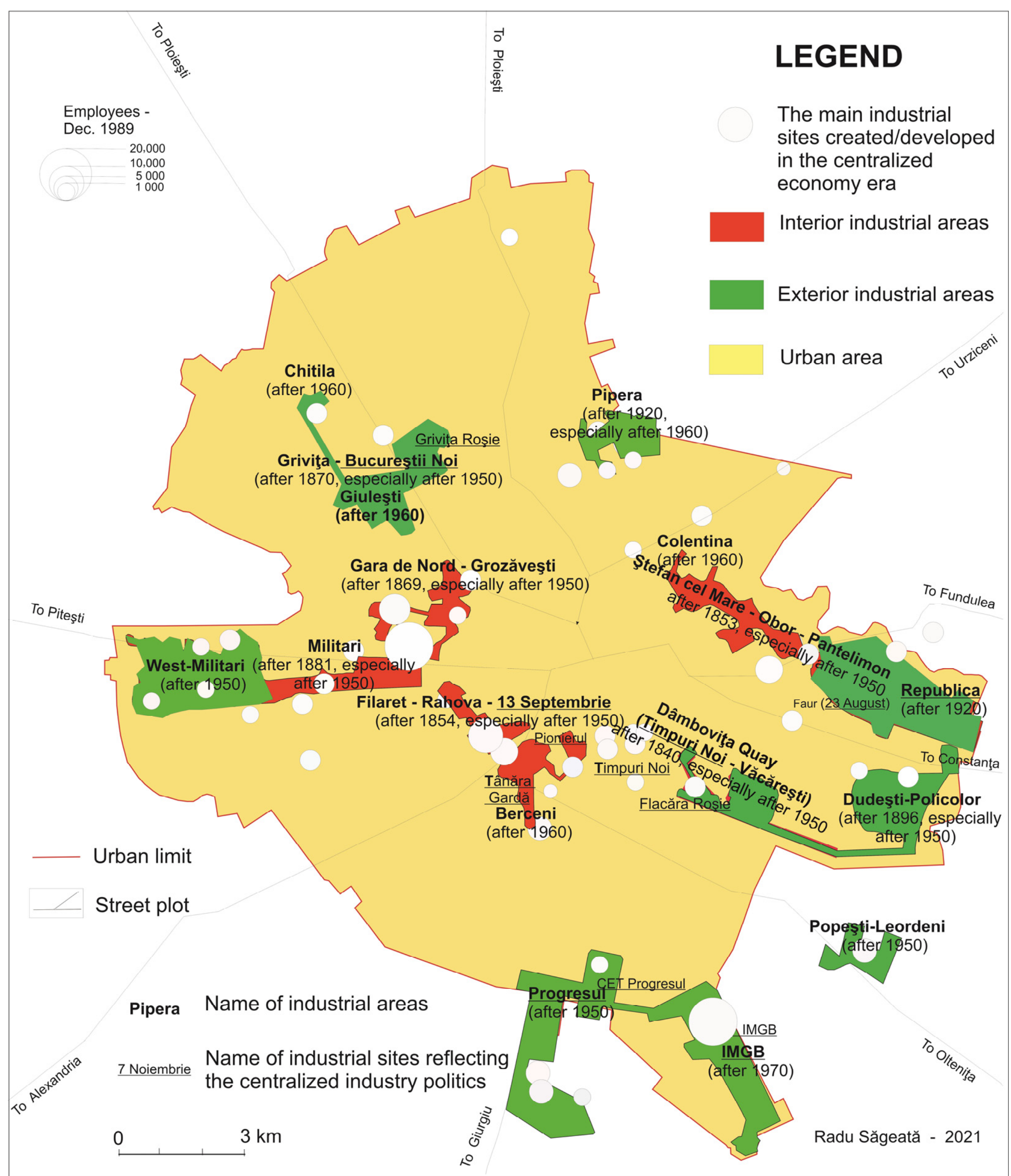

Figure 1. The centralized industrialization of Bucharest.

Thus, over time, based on the evolution of the built space and the radial-concentric morpho-structure of the city, two types of industrial areas were outlined, between which residential areas were built after 1950. Some are interior, corresponding to the old industrial areas, individualized especially in the inter-war period and developed at a later date, and others are exterior, respectively the large industrial areas, built on an empty site, starting the 1950s, during the centralized economy era (Figure 1).

Thus, if in 1950 the capital of Romania had 110,679 people working in industry, that number reached 210,089 in 1961 and 477,900 in 1982 [54,55], exceeding 500,000 at the end of the 1980s, which meant over a third of the population of the Romanian Capital. At the same time, the number of industrial enterprises in Bucharest reached 216 in 1982 and 314 in 1993 [56], when the privatization process began, which brought with it deindustrialization.

The map illustrates the main industrial areas and sites created and/or developed during the centralized economy period, highlighting the two types of location in relation to residential areas, as well as their development along the main roads in the city.

Due to the high price of land in the central urban areas, the interior industrial areas were most affected by the deindustrialization process, and were replaced, especially between 2000 and 2020, by residential, commercial and business areas.

Industrialization was also visible in the memory of places. The industrial sites created in the inter-war period and later developed were renamed so as to erase from the collective memory their "bourgeois past", while those created after 1950 were named in accordance with the political tendencies of the time. Most of the names contained the words roşu [red] and nou [new], a direct reference to the symbolic colour of the international communist movement and the new economic and social transformations that the states east of the former Iron Curtain were going through at that time. Industrial enterprises such as Griviţa Roşie, Steagul Roşu, Flamura Roşie, Flacăra Roşie, Tricotajul Roşu, Steaua Roşie or Timpuri Noi contributed to altering the urban toponymic landscape. They are joined by industrial units named after important dates that marked the implementation of communism in Romania and Eastern Europe (23 August, 11 Iunie, 8 Mai or 7 Noiembrie), or after socialist militants (I.-C. Frimu). There were also names such as Socialist Victory, Young Guard or Popular Silk, which in turn lent themselves to the names of streets, intersections, public transport stations or school units (high schools with an industrial profile) [17,20,57,58] (Figure 1).

An analysis of the 1962 street names in Bucharest, a suggestive time for the first phase of centralized industrialization, highlights an industrialization index reflected in the street toponymy of only 1.05% (56 toponyms reflecting industrialization out of a total of 5322 streets), which increased to 3.86% in 1988, a year deemed to be the epitome of centralized industrialization in Romania (263 toponyms reflecting industrialization out of a total of 6820 streets). From a qualitative point of view, important changes also took place: if at the beginning of the centralized industrialization process, this endeavour was predominantly exemplified through the names of small streets and pedestrian alleys, names related to industrialization were later assigned to important streets for the large residential area developed as a consequence of centralized industrialization [59]. One such example is Metalurgiei [Metallurgy] Boulevard, which provides access to the southern industrial area of the Romanian Capital, with a predominantly metallurgical and machine building profile, or the Industriilor [Industries] subway station, the end point of the subway line that ensure access to the western industrial area (Militari).

Additionally, as the communist political regime was consolidated, street names appeared in the urban macro-toponymy of the Romanian Capital meant to illustrate this particular aspect. One such example is the Victory of Socialism Boulevard (currently renamed Bulevardul Libertăţii [Liberty Boulevard]), designed to be a polarization axis for the New Civic Centre, built on the North Korean architectural model [60] on the site of the former Uranus neighbourhood that had been demolished following a political decision [61].

After 1990, but especially after 1992–1993, as a result of the collapse of the system of centrally established inter-industrial relations and the failed privatizations, a wide process of industry decline began (deindustrialization), with profound social implications (unemployment, migration, decline in living standards, a surge in crime rates and marginal social phenomena). Against this background, new changes took place in terms of urban toponymy, with cities returning to their spatial identity. A good example in the case of Bucharest is a decrease in the industrialization index reflected in urban toponymy, which fell below the 2% threshold (1.97% in 2016).

Against the backdrop of the more developed infrastructure, deindustrialization affected the Capital to a much lesser extent in relation to the rest of the national territory, which was highlighted by a considerable increase in the share of the Capital industry in the total Romanian industry from 13.6% in 1982 [55] to 43% in 2004 [62]. However, it has

substantially contributed to an extensive remodelling of the urban space by reconverting the former industrial areas into commercial/service and residential areas [41,61,63].

5.2. Centralized Industrialization and the Memory of Places in Galaţi

Also called the "red city" due to its strong industrial development during the communist period, Galaţi (304,873 inh.—estimated as of July 1, 2019) is the sixth largest city in Romania (after Bucharest (2,133,941 inh.), Iaşi (381,118 inh.), Timişoara (328,480 inh.), Cluj-Napoca (325,179 inh.) and Constanţa (313,156 inh.) (Source: The National Institute of Statistics—1 July 2019, estimate). Located on the eastern border of the European Union, near the political border between Romania and the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, the city evolved in an area of a triple hydrographic convergence—the Danube with the Siret and the Prut rivers (Figure 2)—owing its identity to its port-commercial function, which also drew in shipbuilding activities [64]. Prior to the unification of the Romanian Principalities (1859) it functioned as a port of Moldavia (in competition with the city of Brăila, the main port of Wallachia), being currently the largest river-sea port on the Danube. Shipbuilding, an old tradition in the city, acquired an industrial dimension after 1895, when the shipyard was reorganized under the name of The Mechanical Engineering Plant and Iron and Concrete Foundry, which also engendered the establishment of complementary industrial units, both in the interwar period (nail and chain factory—1922, tin rolling mill—1923), as well as after 1950 (Wire, nail and chain plant—1955, Mechanical Plant—1961) [65].

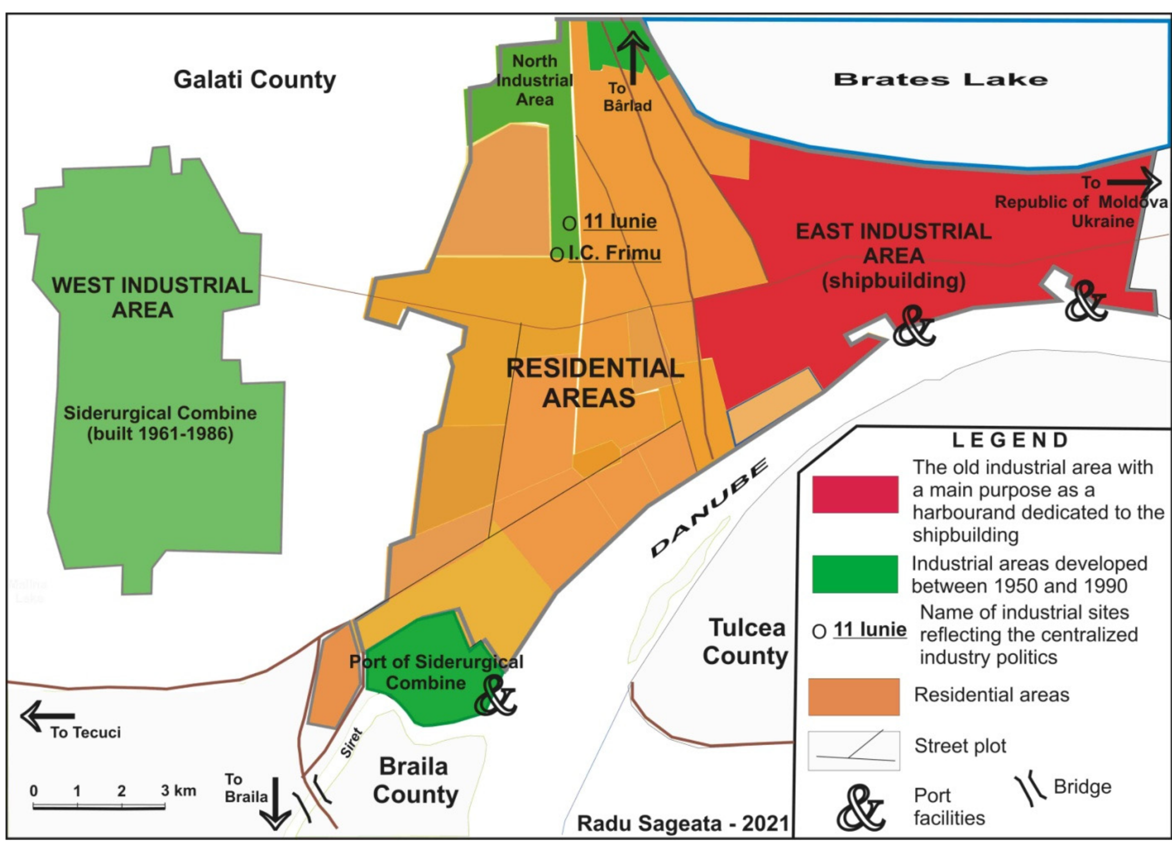

Figure 2. Industrial areas in Galaţi.

However, the political decision that radically changed the territorial identity of the city, and with it the dynamics of its demographic and urban-civic development, was the establishment, here, in the early 1960s, of a large steel plant with integrated production flow, following the model of large steel centres of the former USSR. It is a typical model of port steelmaking, as, given the economic relations between the former socialist countries,

its location on the Maritime Danube was designed to be supplied with iron ore from Krivoy Rog [Kryvyi Rih] and coking coal from the Donbass Basin (Ukraine) (Figure 2).

The construction, and later expansion of the steel plant, influenced, on the one hand, important migratory flows of the labour force employed in the steel industry, and on the other hand the explosive development of other downstream industrial units, which use sheet metal and steel subassemblies, as well as complementary industrial units, for the female labour force, especially in the textile and food industries. The strong industrial development triggered a three-fold increase in the city's population in just three decades, from 107,248 inhabitants in 1961, when the construction of the steel plant began, to 326,139 inhabitants in 1990, when the deindustrialization process started. This demographic evolution has, in turn, led to a rapid development of the built area particularly in the western part of the city, adjacent to the steel industrial area, by building new neighbourhoods, generally high-rise edifices, in a hurry and as cheaply as possible, which do not correspond, for the most part, to current standards of comfort and safety [66]. On the other hand, this development has generated a strong polarization of services (especially in terms of specialized services) in the central area of the city while decreasing them in the large working-class neighbourhoods of the west, home to the highest population densities. These territorial discrepancies subsequently favoured the post-industrial tertiarization process.

The map illustrates the arrangement of industrial areas on the outskirts of the residential area which, when associated with the barriers imposed by hydrography (the Danube, Lake Brateș and Siret River), considerably limits the expansion of residential areas. This phenomenon is typical of the city of Galați and prompts the reconversion of the functional areas within the same built perimeter.

The social-urban dysfunctions were joined by dysfunctions in terms of the city image [67] and the collective spatial memory. From a city with a commercial-port mission, which later became an industrial-port calling, imprinted by its territorial identity, its urban branding [68] became dominated by the steel industry. The steel plant in Galaţi became, in the second half of the 1980s, the largest industrial unit in Romania (of about 40,000 employees), and Galaţi became the only large city in Romania whose economy was dominated by a single large industrial unit. This fact is also highlighted by the memory of urban places. The main traffic arteries in the new residential areas, built as a by-product of the steel plant's development, have names related to the steel industry: Siderurgiştilor [Metallurgy] and Oţelarilor [Steel workers] boulevards; Laminoriştilor [Rolling millers] street etc. For Galaţi, the analysis of the industrialization index reflected in the street toponymy shows an increase from 5.12% in 1962 (at the time, the main names related to industrialization were significant for the port-industrial function of the city: Navelor, Elicei, Portului, Strungarilor streets, located near the eastern industrial area), when the construction of the steel plant started, to 6.62% in 1988, the city's moment of maximum industrialization, followed by a slight decrease to 5.87% in 2016, mainly due to the replacement of the names related to the dates or to the representatives of the socialist movement (6 Martie, 11 Iunie, I.-C. Frimu etc.) (Figure 2) (thus, the name of the 6 Martie Boulevard was replaced after 1990 with Basarabia Boulevard, while the 11 Iunie Square and Park were replaced with Rizer Square and Park, and the I.-C. Frimu neighbourhood was renamed Aurel Vlaicu, thus creating a reintegration of the urban memory into the spatial identity of the city).

The relatively small decrease in the industrialization index reflected in the post-1989 street toponymy can be explained through the extent of the development of the steel industry in Galaţi during the centralized economy era. Despite the deindustrialization of the steel industry, it continues to remain the dominant industrial branch in the city's economy, which justifies the prolonged existence in the urban toponymy of names related to the steel industry. In addition, these names were not given by replacing pre-existing names, more relevant to the territorial identity of the city, as happened in other urban centres (including the Capital), but were assigned to new roads, which cross new urban micro-neighbourhoods (in Galaţi, most urban micro-neighbourhoods built in the years of the centralized economy era do not have proper names but have been called "Micro" (from

micro-urban neighbourhood), followed by a number (e.g., Micro 17, 19, 20, 21; Micro 38, 39, 40) built on empty lots, as a result of population growth due to the establishment of the steel plant, thus contributing to the territorial identity of the city.

6. Conclusions

The two analyses highlight the correlation between the urban spatial identity and the memory of places reflected in the urban toponymy, given some dysfunctions due to some political decisions pertaining to large-scale industrialization. These are characteristic of the Central and Eastern European space, which was under Soviet political and ideological influence between 1945 and 1989.

The location of large industrial objectives in cities lacking a true industrial tradition has disrupted the relations between cities and their areas of influence leading to artificial developments of the built fund. Subsequently, the disappearance of political-ideological constraints that generated these hypertrophic developments led to a rebalancing of territorial systems through deindustrialization and tertiarization. The disappearance/reconversion of the industrial objectives also had a strong impact on the urban toponymy by replacing the names that reminded people of the communist period in favour of others related to the national specificity and the tradition of the places in question. This demonstrates the hypothesis stated at the beginning of the paper that the dysfunctions registered in urban cultures as a result of the policies pursued by the communist authorities during the centralized economy era are reversible in nature, receding with the disappearance of disturbing factors and having an impact on the memory of places, which tends to fade over time. These are practically a stage in the evolution of the cities of the countries that made up the former Communist Bloc [25,60].

The first example is typical of a European capital of metropolitan size, with multiple functions and the role of polarizing the national and even transnational territory. In this case, the functional changes stemming from political decisions have disturbed, in time, the memory of places through names that illustrate the industrialization process, respectively the historical data/events and protagonists of the centralized economic development policy. The political and economic changes that started in 1989 considerably blurred this process, as illustrated by the decrease in the value of the industrialization index reflected in the street toponymy, confirming a tendency of realigning urban memories to the characteristics of the city's territorial identity.

The second example is indicative of a city in which an industrial giant was inserted as a result of political decisions, without any connection with the territorial identity of the respective urban centre. This model of industrial development was not unique—the Galaţi steel plant is part of a real generation of such industrial units, as are the steel plants in Nowa Huta (Poland), Košice (Slovakia), Eisenhüttenstadt (East Germany), Kremikovtsi (Bulgaria), as well as the major steel plants in the Russian Federation and Ukraine, most of them being developed, however, based on local raw materials. The industrial development brought with it a strong demographic growth and a development of the built area, as new residential areas were built on an empty site in the vicinity of the steel plant or by demolishing the old housing stock; a new urban identity was created alongside a new urban brand that joined the natural identity conferred by the proximity of the city and which, due to its size, would later diminish, but which continues to exist despite deindustrialization and tertiarization.

The two selected case studies complement each other and are meant to provide a more evocative picture of the impact the communist period has had on the urban culture of the localities east of the former Iron Curtain and, in particular, on the urban culture of Romanian cities.

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