

Impacts of the urban development factors on cultural heritage in the post-socialist period.

Bucharest as case study

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Conservation of urban heritage is a priority action at international level, although more and more emphasis is placed on its economic value (Kiera, 2011; Merciu et al. 2021) in the context of intensive urban development that has generated negative effects on cultural heritage. Preservation of urban cultural heritage is often seen as a barrier to urban development.

The theme of this study is focused on the analysis of the impact generated on the cultural heritage by the accelerated urban development of Bucharest, the capital city of Romania, after the fall of the communist regime. The authors identified different forms of destruction of cultural heritage buildings as a consequence of the use of different speculative methods by different actors to change the current uses of historical properties. At the level of Bucharest, some entrepreneurs and owners exploited the legislative vacuum and other specific processes (rapid development of services, increasing housing demand, sudden deindustrialization) and started deliberate and hidden actions to produce the declassification of heritage

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buildings. Under these conditions, several types of actions of intentional destruction of heritage buildings have been identified, such as: damage to the resistance structure of buildings by arson, demolition of parts (most often only the main facade is preserved), extension and repartitioning of heritage buildings for housing projects, demolition or conversion of industrial heritage sites for the construction of office or commercial spaces, etc. The destruction of heritage buildings is not a mass phenomenon, but it is an important negative impact of the transition of urban areas in post-socialist cities in Romania, as a result of a more flexible territorial planning process compared to the communist regime.

As a methodology, the authors used comparative analysis of Corine Land Cover images (1999, 2006 and 2018) (1999, 2006 and 2018), as well as semi-structured interviews with urban planners. Field campaigns were also carried out to develop detailed maps, using the Geographic Information System.

The main results are represented by the identification of some cases, as an example of intentional or pseudo-unintentional destruction of some cultural heritage buildings in Bucharest.

References

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