CITADEL OF FIRE
Spatialization of time in the post industrial city of Hunedoara, Romania

Master’s Thesis
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June 2019
Abstract

The following MA thesis expounds upon anthropological theories of memory and the spatiality of time, while contributing to ethnographic studies of the Balkans, specifically of Romania. This work seeks to capture the role of historical memory divided among those coming of age in either pre or post socialist Hunedoara, and the ways in which these subjectivities inform their imagination of future city planning. The research explores Hunedoara’s role as a former socialist showcase city and traces its transvaluation up to today’s current local discourses between a generation split by the component of either first or second hand experiences and memories of the communist past. It focuses mainly on four analytical sites integral to the local cityscape: a 15th century castle, the 19th century steel mill and subsequent museum, the apartment blocks built for the workers in the 1950s, and the city's stadium built in 1960.

Essentially, the work explores the poly-temporality of Hunedoaran citizens as they develop aspirations for the city's future, highlighting newer entrepreneurial trends arising amidst generations born only on the cusp of the city's shift into a capitalist free market. Research delineates conversations happening around the creation of an iron museum, a memento to the local industry of metallurgy which was the life vein and the logic of the city. Data showcases the shifts in Hunedoara as a concept itself, from its inception as a worker’s utopia to the violence of the regime change which made countless social, economic, and visual marks upon the city still visible today. Lastly, it is important to note that this paper seeks to explore Hunedoara not through the lens of public discourse, but instead access it through the memories of its inhabitants.
Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Jerika, without her help, support and reviews this paper would not have been possible. I gratefully acknowledge the support of my family, they kept me going through the toughest moments.

I thank my advisor, Dimitris Dalakoglou, his in depth readings of my drafts made me think of this research in ways I could not have even imagined on my own. Also to my professors at VU: Freek Colombijn for his teachings and support, Younes Saramifar for his mind opening classes and Thijl Sunier, the second assessor for this paper.
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1. INTRODUCTION

During one of my first interviews with a former worker in the steel plant, he asked me a question about an episode from 1981- one considered the bloodiest terrorist attack to ever take place in communist Romania. It involved three aggressors that took a bus full of commuters as hostages, trying to use them as human shields in their attempt to leave Romania. His question was: "Were they terrorists or hero anti communist fighters?". Observing my bewilderment, he continued: "Because if you look at their actions, they are not different from the anti communist fighters in the mountains that have monuments all over the country. They fought the communist system with weapons and tried to escape, just like them. So, are they hero anti communist fighters or terrorists?" The question remained unanswered, but it offered me a glimpse into the contradictions between the plural public discourse (communist and post communist) and the confusion it brings in the minds of the people that lived under their materialisation.

While this research seeks to explore how opposing ideologies and rapid succession created concurrent narratives that live within space, it operates under the larger overarching themes of layered polysemy in relation to the past (as showcased by the aforementioned anecdote). Furthermore, it observes how they are being negotiated among the inhabitants of Hunedoara and how they influenced the production of space in the city.

This study seeks to answer the following questions:
How have the inhabitants of Hunedoara dealt with the rapid succession of opposing state ideologies?
How has rapid industrial growth and the creation of the politicized working class compounded into current discourse in Hunedoara?
What are the perspectives of the younger generation (those who came of age in the post industrial era) over the industrial past of the city?
What is the role of memory in the production of space in Hunedoara?

In summary, this research follows the city of Hunedoara through the eyes of its inhabitants as it has moved through time and into the future.

HISTORICAL REVIEW

Hunedoara entered the history books in the 15th century when the Hunyad family was first mentioned as rulers of the region. Given the iron reserves in the mountains surrounding the city, the land served as a valuable asset to the Hungarian Kingdom and changed hands between Hungarian noble families until the late 19th century. In 1884, Hunedoara was at the forefront of the second industrial revolution with an iron processing plant connected by rail to
the other industrial centers of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The exploitation of the local iron reserves continued to grow until 1989 under a program of heavy industrialization, only to leave room for the deindustrialisation that followed the change of regime towards liberal-democracy. In 2003, the industrial plant was privatized and, since then, is running only small scale operations that employ less people than ever before. There were 500 employees left in 2019, a shadow of the former 20,000+ employees in 1989 at its peak. (Ioan, 2007)

HUNEDOARA AND STATE ALLEGIANCES

The city and the county of Hunedoara are part of the bigger geographical area of Transylvania and thus bound to its tumultuous history. In the 15th century, when the town was developed and established as an iron market, it grew around a central gothic castle that served as the seat of the Hunyad noble family. At the time, it was part of the Kingdom of Hungary. It remained so until the First World War when Transylvania became part of the Kingdom of Romania. After the Second World War, Romania became a republic with a communist regime until 1989, when a liberal democratic rule took its place. (Ioan, 2007; Djuvara, 2012). Since 2007, Romania is a member of the European union, a multinational political construction.

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT IN HUNEDOARA

The first wave of industrial growth in Hunedoara can be traced back to the 1800’s. It was then part of the First Industrial Revolution, but it was the mass production of steel that came with the Second Industrial Revolution which marked the foundation of the steel plant in 1884. In the late 19th century, budding industry took advantage of the iron ore reserves being exploited in the mountains behind Hunedoara for two millennia, but survived the exhaustion of the iron deposits in the next century. (Ioan, 2007)

Understanding the history of the city is integral in grasping the unique social realities that unfolded in the thereafter. For example: How did a siderurgical industry survive the exhaustion of the raw materials that determined its inception? In short: political context. As a result of being part of the communist states international, Romania was the beneficiary of very cheap raw materials from the USSR reserves. (Ioan, 2007)

For Hunedoara, coal and iron ore were imported from Krivoi Rog (in current day Ukraine) where Romania had built and manned a mine for this purpose. The connections were perceived as being strong and long term. Evidence for this stand the fact that the Romanian communist regime built not only the mine at Krivoi Rog, but also apartment buildings and schools for the worker’s children (Stirileprotv.ro, 2017). The availability of these cheap high quality resources (coal and iron ore) allowed for the growth, albeit inefficiently, of the Hunedoara steel works beyond economic rationality (Ioan, 2007). The favourable political
context dissipated once the 1989 political changes occurred and the investment in Krivoi Rog was abandoned. The official institutional status is "in conservation" and the 1 billion USD investment was abandoned, with most of the workers returning to Romania (Stirileprotv.ro, 2017).

The scale of the unnecessary spending needed to keep Hunedoara going was evident (although only in hindsight) to the workers. The shared perspective over this situation talks about a level of expenses with the transport of these raw materials reached an anecdotal level: The costs for transporting the iron ore imported from Brazil to the Romanian Black Sea port of Constanta was the same costs as the rail transport from Constanta to Hunedoara. The political motivation for this situation is even more evident when finding that the largest industrial complex built in communist Romania was in Galati, a city on the Danube river, with access to the open sea, situated nearby the Constanta port. Processing the raw materials there would have not implied the extra cost with their shipment to Hunedoara.

When the Galati steel works was described in the political discourses of the time, the language of rational use of resources was invoked when discussing the funds that were needed towards its construction. It was built because industrial installations closer to the Black Sea were needed. This type of discourse was not present when Hunedoara was involved. Especially after 1966, when the plant in Galati had started production. Hunedoara was the center of narratives about builders- builders of the steel mill, of the city, of communism (TVR, 2017). It was branded the Citadel of Fire, a play on words bringing together the memory of the 15th century castle and the intense fire associated with steel production. It was in this citadel of fire that you could find the best steel workers in the country. (Chirica, 1974)

The city, as a function of the steel mill, was assigned the role of the “steel worker school” with its future development plans aligned with this objective. In service to this, more investments in education consisting in specialized high schools and even an engineering University, better housing for the more specialized (and thus more demanding) population, all followed by hyper specialized industrial installations. For example, the steel mill of Hunedoara produced the 70+ special steels needed to build the Cernavoda Nuclear Plant, an industrial objective only 150 km away from Galati, compared to the 600 km distance to Hunedoara. (Chirica, 1974)

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The spatial focus of this research is materialized through a focus on the constructed environment, buildings or statues as we attempt to read in them the various layers that surround them: social, economic and historical. Setha Low (1996) considers that "As an object of study, the building becomes a point of spatial articulation for the intersection of
This paper will develop the concept further while observing the web of connections surrounding the castle of Hunedoara, the apartment blocks or the steel mill, but also extends it when analyzing one of the statues in town.

This paper seeks to explore Hunedoara not through the lens of official historical discourses, but instead access it through the memories of its inhabitants. The historical discourses in the Western historiography "is based on a clean break between the past and the present" (de Certeau, 2010). This approach informed the official discourses in Hunedoara, but as this paper will show, the narratives of the inhabitants vary from group to group.

These narratives were multiple and informed by the different readings of the past. In the words of Pierre Nora (1989), "there are as many memories as there are groups [...] memory is by nature multiple and yet specific; collective, plural, and yet individual. History, on the other hand, belongs to everyone and to no one, whence its claim to universal authority."

Furthermore, "Memory takes root in the concrete, in spaces, gestures, images, and objects; history binds itself strictly to temporal continuities, to progressions and to relations between things." (Halbwachs, 1992; Nora, 1989)

Pierre Nora introduces the concept of lieux de mémoire, translated from French as places of memory and defined as "any significant entity, whether material or non-material in nature, which by dint of human will or the work of time has become a symbolic element of the memorial heritage of any community" (Nora, 1989). This concept was central to the reading of Hunedoara and in this paper I will situate the recollections of my informants around several local ‘places of memory’.

One of the ways in which memory is being digested in Hunedoara is through the creation of museums. Their importance is legitimized by their function for those who experientially relate to their subject matter. Pierre Nora (1989) considers them as being "the boundary stones of another age, illusions of eternity. It is the nostalgic dimension of these devotional institutions that makes them seem beleaguered and cold-they mark the rituals of a society without ritual; integral particularities in a society that levels particularity; signs of distinction and of group membership in a society that tends to recognize individuals only as identical and equal." (Nora, 1989)

Seeing as this paper looks at how space is being constructed and produced in Hunedoara, theories of space serve as the primary theoretical muse for the research. Following Setha Low (1996) we consider that "[t]he social construction of space is accorded material expression as a person/spatiotemporal unit, while social production is understood as both the practices of the person/spatiotemporal unit and global and collective forces." The social production of space, again from Low (1996), "includes all those factors-social, economic, ideological and technological-the intended goal of which is the physical creation of a material setting". On the other hand, the social construction of space "is the actual transformation of space-through
people's social exchanges, memories, images and daily use of the material setting-into scenes and actions that convey symbolic meaning" (Low, 1996).

The social production of space is a constant process that compounds on top of itself; it never stops. As we will observe in the coming ethnographic chapters, certain places in Hunedoara allow us to see beyond the official history not only through the way they're constructed (i.e. their meanings for different social groups) but also situate the notion of history as a continuous process. That is, history is regarded here not as antecedent time, but also embodies happenings in the now and those that have not yet come to pass.

Taking a functionalist approach, we can consider how Marxist notions of use value have played into the creation of space itself. Mark Purcell (2002) considers that "Space is something that is produced to be used, to be consumed and, thus, be continually reshaped and changed. The social production of space is a continuous activity where urban space is in continuous transformation, fashioned by complex political, social and economic processes." This paper adopts this perspective and considers how time was and is spatialized in the city of Hunedoara. That is, we will observe how different historical eras permeate spaces in the city in a way that not only links inhabitants to it’s past but also propels them into its future.

Spatialization of time in Hunedoara the materialization of various historical eras in the space of the city.

**METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCHER'S POSITIONALITY**

This research began as a curiosity that later evolved into the sensitizing concepts that shaped the research question of his MA thesis: How have the inhabitants of Hunedoara dealt with the rapid succession of opposing state ideologies?

I grew up in Romania, in the region of Transylvania, less than 200 kilometers away from my research site, raised with the image of Hunedoara as the great industrial center of our region-one of the biggest industrial conglomerates in Europe. This image was strong in my mind when I first visited Hunedoara in 2016. However, what I found upon my arrival was a city greatly reduced in size and only a deserted area where the industrial colossus used to stand. The road leading to Hunedoara was crowded by large trucks transporting the slag from the former steel plant to the new highway under construction nearby. The slag heap was all that was left of the steel mill, most of it already melted down as scrap iron. The city was consuming the last remains of the steel mill in order to survive.

Below is the juxtaposition of imagery between the Hunedoara I found upon my return and the city as it was in the 1970s (Picture 1).
Alongside the visual distinctions of rift observed in the photos, it remained unknown how these tensions were felt in the social body. Specific to the grave transformations in the space of the city, I was left wondering what happened to the people that once worked at the plant. How did they survive the changes that we observe in the landscape? How are they dealing with the changing world around them? This research set out to attempt to answer, at least in part, these questions.

I conducted fieldwork between the months of January and March in 2019. The research methods I used included semi structured interviews, participant observation, local observation, online documentation (netnographic data) and archival data collection. Analyzing visual methods were employed throughout the research and was often coupled with more active approaches: from photo elicitation to archive research, from visually documenting my path to image analysis of representations of the city. The below portion provides further context to each methodological angle.

**Semi structured interviews:** I collected interviews with more than 10 informants, on top of the hundreds of informal conversations that I have kept in writing (through my fieldnotes). I initially began by asking general questions about the city- For example, *What would you advise a visiting friend to see in Hunedoara? Where do you go out with your friends?* I then followed their memories, asking for more details and delineating their own opinions in the process.

**Participant observation:** Participation in city council meeting was one activity I participated in while analyzing how the space of Hunedoara was produced. It was the only place where I could observe how the inhabitants and the local authorities interacted. I only managed to attend two of these gatherings since many of the meetings took place on short notice. At the same time, some of my informants were there and they displayed reluctance towards talking to me with their political adversaries present. Participant observation was not always passive but often required participatory action on my part in order to further excavate realities from a more emic experience. For example, on Feb 6th, the football supporters of the local team performed a commemorative ritual for their legendary captain who died in 1992. Donning a hat with the club's colours, I joined the procession. This opened the door for later interviews with some of the members of the group.

**Online research:** A large amount of data was gathered from the social media sites where the local inhabitants gathered virtually. This entailed joining groups on facebook or linkedin and occasionally taking part in the conversations. This was the case in the latter stages of my research when locals started to know me as "the guy doing research in the city" and no longer continues ignoring my comments. As one of my informants told me, "there are so many cloned [fake] accounts on these groups that when you don't know someone, you just assume that this is the case".

The research methodology, as the rest of this paper, was tailored towards the goal of understanding how the space of Hunedoara is being constructed and produced. In the following chapters, I will establish the groups that took part in this research before delving into the intricacies of the four focal spaces in the city. I will approach these locations diachronically and will look at how the memories of different demographic groups interact with these spaces. I conclude by analyzing how time is being spatialized in the fabric of the city.
2. THE PEOPLE

Throughout this paper I will follow two groups of inhabitants in Hunedoara:

**Retired workers and engineers:** This demographic widely covers those over 50 years of age who worked at the Hunedoara steel plant until its privatisation, after which they either retired, got involved in small scale activities in order to supplement their incomes, or helped their children with their own businesses (e.g. a bookshop salesman in their son’s library or a construction team manager working for their son’s business). Most of them were first generation city dwellers who arrived in Hunedoara in order to work at the steel plant, originally coming from distant corners of the country and some from nearby villages. The few that were second generation shared the memory of the builders (i.e. the generation involved in the initial stages of communist industrial development) as a consequence of their parents being part of the group. Data shows their views on the city as a function of the steel mill, telling of the fact that they experienced its development alongside the industrial plant.

**Enthusiastic social entrepreneurs:** This second group refers to those a generation under the retired workers and engineers, usually those ages 30 and above. Although these entrepreneurs live in Hunedoara, many had previously left to go abroad but returned- bringing back with them new ideas and resources to apply locally. The demographic usually works together in groups formed around ideas of either 'saving' or 'rebuilding' Hunedoara. The aspirational models they exalt are mirrored in Western European countries, revolving around notions of a “civilised” Europe. Their ideas for future planning were once seen as unrealistic by other social groups, visible in the comments that were posted when a picture outlining their plans was first published on facebook. Yet, by the time of the fieldwork in 2019, the initial plans were becoming reality and the initiators were being consulted and involved in the development of the design. The members of this group were involved in their own economic or social entrepreneurship as business owners or employees for the public administration. The group regarded the city as an urban center in need of a purpose, now that the steel mill is not there anymore. They are descendants of the city builders and embody the narrative of their forefathers.

Data generated from these two groups were instrumental in forming answers to the following research questions: How has rapid industrial growth and the creation of the politicized working class compounded into current discourse in Hunedoara? What are the perspectives of the younger generation (those who came of age in the post industrial era) over the industrial past of the city?

These two groups were chosen for their relevance to the research questions and because of their observable role in the production of space in Hunedoara. The spatialization of time in the city can also be seen as a result of the negotiations between the memories and plans of
these groups, as the generational subjectivities of the social groups were aligned with the embodiment of ‘eras’ in specific city spaces.

**Why the retired workers and engineers?**
Retired workers play a large role in the current imagination of the city and it’s future. Retirement pay in Hunedoara is the second highest in the country (Hihn, 2018) as a result of the high salaries and pay received during their working years, as tough working conditions involved a bonus which almost doubled a person's salary in some cases. This meant that on top of the higher pay, they also benefited from earlier retirement with full benefits. For example, a worker that now has a retirement pay close to the current country wide average salary may have only worked for 35 years, but under very difficult conditions. This was not something unique to communism, but concerns heavy industry work in general. During their first years, workers started out on mostly low level construction work (involving a bonus for the ‘hard working environment’, in Romanian ‘organizare de santier’) while getting trained for a specific workstation (e.g. ’otelar’), a position the worker would then hold for the rest of their working life.

Given this disbalance, Hunedoara has now become a city “living off it’s elders” (traieste pe spatele batranilor). This model is so normalized in the local discourse that one of the plans for the future involved the presupposition of the re-arrival of migrants back to their place of origin. That is, planning for a future where growth will come after the migrants that left during the past two decades would return to spend their foreign retirement pay in Hunedoara.

So, retired workers and engineers are not only a community constructed around the memory of the glorious years of industrial development, but they're also present as a group in the narratives of the other inhabitants. They are a linchpin in how the future of Hunedoara is imaged to unfold.

**Why the young entrepreneurs?**
The second group of young entrepreneurs offers important ethnographic insights as their subjectivities bind the city with their own imagined life cycles- the many years they themselves have ahead of them to live out in the city holds weigh in how they conceptualize it’s future. They also represent certain angles of foreign influence, given their own life histories amidst a rapidly globalizing world.

In 2002, two inhabitants of Hunedoara sat together in front of the computer and used Paint to draw over an aerial map of their city. It resulted in a plan for future development of Hunedoara (see Picture 2). They were imagining an ideal plan, one centered around tourism. It was centered around the touristic potential of the 15th century castle including improvements to the castle itself, pedestrian zones, new museums and a ring road. Why was the plan was aimed at tourism? Because “that was our only chance” (pentru ca asta a fost singura nostra sansa) as one of the initiators explained to me. They could only imagine
tourism as the path for development, with ideas coming together following their own interests or experiences and informed by their personal encounters.

Since the inception of the plan, 7 years have passed and the perspectives were enriched as more possibilities were envisioned. For example, missing in the original drawing was a plan for the area where the disaffected industrial installations of the old steel mill stood. This is something that is now included in the imagined plans for the future. As one business consultant explained to me while we were looking over the ruins of the industrial giant that once stood there: “all this you see in front of you can be anything we want[…] it is like a canvas waiting for us to paint it”. He was one of the original two that made the drawing. The other individual is now working as the administrator of the castle and part of the team that will supervise the 5 million+ euro restoration project financed by EU funds.

The clumsy drawing from 2002 is now being materialized, taking a shape similar to their original vision. Once their ideas started to be transformed into actual projects, made by architects and engineers, some parts of their drawing were left out, while some were moved or changed. The plan was split into smaller parts with each being financed on their own and from different sources. For example, the pedestrian zone was moved to the new center of Hunedoara (built in the 1950's) instead of old center (the centuries old central market that since the 1930's became the administrative and religious focal point) and is being financed from the municipal budget, the small gauge train became a project for the county budget, while most of them became projects financed by the EU funds.
Almost all of my informants in the young entrepreneurs group were part of this plan—the rest have other designs of their own in mind. Some of these plans are private initiatives informed by various interpretations of the past. To name one, the proximity to the 2000 years old capital of the Dacians (the tribe at the base of the Romanian national founding myth) instructs a plan to build a thematic park situated even further back in history than the Corvin castle.

One particularity of my informants’ subjectivity is that they are almost all men. This was a result of the man biased constitution of an industrial workforce, at least in the case of the retired workers and engineers. The actual work was described by one of my informants, a retired worker, as "hard, dangerous,[and] the plant was no place for women". Even though there were jobs filled by women, they were mostly secondary or support jobs (e.g. driving a crane or welding). The perception of the working class as being made out of men was also part of the public discourse. For example, in a 1974 book published to praise the 90 years since the plant's foundation, the construction of light industry in the city was motivated by "the need to get more women in the city" (Chirica, 1974). In the book, the word used was "woman", but in many conversations, the light industry was called in jest "industry for the wives". In another place in the book the gender balance was quoted as the reason for a problem that was worrying the city's administrators—workers leaving the city "because the masculin element is still superior to the feminim one, a large amount of men are leaving our city in order to start a family in other places". These facts explain why research done with the former working class of Hunedoara is still characterized by a strong masculine component.
3. CORVIN CASTLE
The 15th century castle informing the founding myth

"The present allows the transformation of the future into past"
(Ioan, 2007)

Corvin Castle, also known as the castle of Hunedoara or Hunyady castle, is the site of the founding myth of Hunedoara and sits at the center of the city’s future planning. It survived the political transformations that took place around it and kept its importance throughout time. It is also the central landmark of the city.

The construction of the castle in the 15th century is connected to the story of the Hunyadi family and the Kingdom of Hungary, of which Transylvania was part of at the time. The castle was the center of power for the Hunyads, a noble family that lived for only five generations. The castle was built by the founder of the family, Voicu, a skilled warrior from Wallachia (then a neighbouring principality, later becoming one of the regions of Romania) that was offered the lands of Hunedoara by the King of Hungary as a reward for his military support and loyalty. It took only two generations until Matthias Corvinus, the grandson of Voicu, became the King of Hungary. Matthias is remembered and praised as one of the most important rulers in the history of the Kingdom.

Before the arrival of the Hunyad family, the name of the area was recorded earlier in a papal document as Hungnod (1265). When Voicu received the lands of what is now Hunedoara in 1409, he found only a small settlement with a known proximity to iron ore deposits in the mountains. Once the family took control over the lands, the castle was built and it became the center of a newly established iron market. The previously free and dispersed trading of iron came under the control of the new lord of the land. The iron market which took place in the yard of the castle institutionalized the centuries old trading practice where the villagers from the mountains, busy mostly with iron exploitation, traded iron for agricultural products grown by peasants in the valley below. The castle was built on the border between the two areas, acting as the gate to the iron ore rich mountains.

The iron market served as core function of the city, captured in its German name, Eisenmarkt (literally, Iron Market). Hunedoara, much like the rest of Romania, is a place where many linguistic minorities live together with the Romanian majority. Locally, Hungarians and Germans were the most prolific minorities living alongside Romanians. In the case of the latter, the local community was mainly involved in agriculture and commerce. Their interest with Hunedoara was related to the iron which could be traded at the town’s market, hence the name used for it: The Iron Market (Eisenmarkt).
The role of memory in the social construction of space in Hunedoara was visible in these names as given to the city by different ethnic groups. The various names were anchored in the historical eras that saw the city gaining importance for each community. For example, in the case of the German community, Hunedoara was placed on the map only after it became an iron market and was speaking to the group's commercial interests. *Eisenmarkt* relates to their concerns (i.e. trading for the iron in the mountains around the city) and was given after the 15th century (i.e. when the city became an iron market).

The Hungarian name of the town is *Vajdahunyad*, translated as ‘Hunyad ruler’, where the title "vajda" was the name taken by the rulers of Transylvania. The 15th century story of the Hunyad family explains the etymology of the city name in Hungarian, as Hungarians focused exclusively on the era of the Hunyad aristocratic family and this relationship with the city. This can also be observed in a park in central Budapest where a real size replica of the castle was built. The Budapest replica and the original in Hunedoara are both important touristic attractions for the Hungarians as Matthias Corvinus is considered the most important king in their nationalistic historical discourse.

The Romanian name of the city, Hunedoara, has its origins disputed between two different possible explanations. One of them, popular in the state discourse in the 1970s, identifies the source in the latin Ignis Ora (translated as Land of fire) as the area was presumably named by the ancient Greek tragedian Aeschylus in one of his works. The peasants living in the mountains surrounding Hunedoara still call the city "Inidora", pronounced in Romanian in a similar way to the latin Ignis Ora. The other version is related to a second Hungarian indication for the city: Hunyadvar, where the name of the noble family is joined by the Hungarian word for castle, "var". This name is phonetically very similar to how you would read Hunedoara in Romanian.

The role of memory was explored so far in the different names that were given to the city by the various ethnic groups that were living together. The collective memories of the Romanian, German and Hungarian ethnic groups (including the name) had their origin in the castle and its functions. They offer us a glimpse into how space is being constructed in Hunedoara.

The narratives were the result of centuries old coexistence between ethnic groups. Each narrative was established in a way that was allowing to be argued in a way that did not contradict the others. For example, the glory of Matthias Corvin, central in the Hungarian narrative, was possible to coexist with his father's Romanian origins, essential for the Romanian version. At the same time, it was possible for both to coexist with the German narrative centered around the iron market that was placed in the castle's yard.
The history of concurring stories of the same place, now centuries old for the name of the city itself, was an ingredient of Hunedoara. People share the collective memory in a way that even if it is confrontational at the discourse level, it was not grounded in the daily social interactions. This was visible in the way my informants were mentioning the existence of other renditions, but without placing them in confrontational stance. For example, a retired engineer concluded a conversation on the subject when he said: "these are just stories. At the end of the day, we still shop at the same market". He referred to the fact that no matter how
passionate everybody is in private, they still need to go shopping the next day alongside their neighbors and face others in shared public space. The fact that they were rubbing shoulders as a consequence of living in the same city was regarded as a stimulus for caution. The daily routines and the social relations attached to them were of more importance than the ethnic narratives.

The ethnic narratives were used to construct the castle in a way that tailored to its relevance to the different groups own historical memory. For example, the Hungarians followed the touristic discourse built around the Hungarian origin story. The largest group of visitors were the Hungarian tourists, as their interest in the castle was brought into relevance through the proliferation of their own ethnic narrative as a successful touristic strategy. Information on the nationality of the tourists was not gathered, but my informant's estimates varied from a quarter to a third of the total number.

Not only the myths surrounding the origin of Hunedoara are centered around the castle (and its iron market), but also the castle is the visual signifier for the town. Depictions of the castle were placed on every piece of promotional material for the city. The emblem of the city has it in its center, alongside the Corvin family coat of arms and an iron foundry. When searching the internet for Hunedoara, the first results provided are related to the castle as well. The castle was mentioned by the inhabitants first when asked for recommendations for places to visit in order to get to know Hunedoara.

For the inhabitants, the castle is the ultimate visual representation for the city, as we can see in the case of one local that tattooed the outline of the castle on his back. As a member of the group of football supporters for the local team, he branded himself not with the logo of the team, but the castle. The legendary team of the 1980's, now disbanded, left behind memories that now the locals are reliving through resurgence of support for its tradition. The more recent re emergence of the team's symbolism was preceded by the depiction of the castle as a visual expression. I will discuss in more detail the case of the football team in Chapter Six, dedicated to the team and its stadium.

The centrality of the castle in the city's memory survived every historical era since its construction. Before Hunedoara became part of the Kingdom of Romania in 1918, the Hunyad family history was the sole anchor constructing the city, hence the Hungarian name which has survived to this day. As part of the Kingdom of Romania, it kept its centrality as a result of its historical significance. For example, in 1935 when the king visited the area, it is noted in his memories great admiration for the castle and for the villages in the mountains inhabited by the woodlanders, without mentioning the city itself. The castle found its place as well in the succeeding communist discourse as the castle built by a Romanian ruler whose family ruled the Hungarian Kingdom. After 1989, it stands at the heart of the historicized narrative that serves the current predominant function of the city: a place for tourism. The
castle is the lynchpin of Hunedoara as a concept, although this concept has changed throughout time.

The administrative status of the castle speaks nothing of its symbolic and cultural importance as it was recorded as merely one of the assets of the municipality, among others. The strategies and plans that were made for the castle were part of the larger strategies produced for the city or region. The municipal budget was the beneficiary of the income generated by the castle, a significant amount for a city struggling to survive. In this way, even in the capitalist free market, the castle’s touristic value was at the center of plans for the future.

The castle is currently undergoing a restoration financed by the European Union. The projects that were born out of the tourism centered strategy were made around the renovation and expansion of the touristic facilities nearby the castle, alongside a historically accurate renovation. The new facilities include an amphitheatre, promenade alleys, archery grounds and a Renaissance garden as facilities for tourists. They were intended to increase the capacity of visitors and at the same time build towards giving them reasons to stay beyond the castle visit.

Most of the development projects in Hunedoara were aimed at keeping tourists in the city for more reasons that just the castle. For example, the old city center was undergoing an urban regeneration project while the river nearby the castle was scheduled for its transformation into a recreational zone. These plans were aimed at bringing and keeping the tourists in Hunedoara, revolving around the site which had already entered the lexicon in German and Hungarian. Thus, touristic strategies capitalized on Corvin’s place in the regional historical memory in service to popularizing the city- albeit now for reasons of leisure.

The inhabitant's administrative relationship with the castle was different, as locals still have to pay the full entrance fee in order to enter and tour the castle grounds. As one of my informants told me: "I, as a local, have to pay the full price everytime I visit the castle. I am in the shameful situation to not be able to go when friends visit me and want to see it. I can't afford to pay the fee everytime I would like to show of the castle to my family and friends!". This situation was cited by the local politicians when arguing the need for further development of the touristic facilities around the castle: "We started from the idea that an inhabitant of the city, if one visits the castle once and then goes again with visiting family, the second time they have no reason to stick around the castle beyond the visit itself" (Bârgău, 2019). The needs of the inhabitants were used to reason for the investment, but did not make it beyond that.

Despite divergent views on many other debates, my two demographic groups share the imaginary of the castle as a touristic objective. For the young entrepreneurs, this imagination was the result of the centrality of tourism in the official discourse, the only one they experienced. In the case of the retired workers it derived from the fact that the communist and
post communist discourses were synchronized, as the communist propaganda kept the castle as a place of pride and leisure, destined to offer spaces of recreation for the working class. The difference between the two discourses lies in the historicized narrative that characterized the communist story of its origins, one that only focused on the Romanian legacy and ignored the rest. After the regime change, the castle allowed for concurrent stories by adding the Hungarian and German historicized narratives.

Various ways of remembering, each different depending on the ethnic group, inform the narratives regarding the name, origin and story of Hunedoara. A closer look at how they articulate each other offers a glimpse on how they manage to coexist and serve the tourist imagination.

The ethnic disputes on the historical discourse around the castle are muted by the contemporary focus on its touristic value. In the case of my informants, they mentioned at least one of the these historicized discourses but treated them as variations on the same theme, as something that does not matter anymore. One of them even joked about it saying that he is comfortable with any story, as long as it brings tourists.

This focus on its touristic value translates in the era in which it was construction, the Renaissance, being spatialized in Hunedoara. We can observe how the plans for the extension of the castle grounds with a garden, a new development, will be kept in Renaissance theme in order to keep "the feel of the place", as one informant told me. The Renaissance, as the era of the castle's construction, was spatialized in the fabric of the city.

In summary, the castle is a place of memory (i.e. lieux de memoire) where multilayered historical, ethnic, and cultural narratives converge. As the central landmark of the city, the castle is a symbol which ushers in outside visitors- who once they are there will not just see the castle but the city itself. This then informs the touristic plans for other spaces in the city-ones which are grounded to it’s past as a communist showcase city.

While the castle survived wars, time and changing ideologies, the next chapter explores a space that did not live up to it’s once imagine perminancy: the Iron processing plant.
4. THE STEEL MILL AND THE IRON MUSEUM
Discourse and historical politics

"It took 100 years to build, but only 10 to raise it to the ground"
Local reporter from Hunedoara on the city’s steel mill

Hunedoara sits at the base of the Rusca Mountains, once holding the richest iron ore deposits in Romania. The iron processing history of the area is documented as far as the 2nd century AD, when the Romans built the first iron mines. According to archaeological evidence (including a 10th century smelting furnace now reproduced in the British Museum) metallurgy was a long standing and constant occupation of the woodlanders. The nearby Govăjdia blast furnace, built in 1810, was the first continuous flow furnace in Europe and the second in the world.

In 1945, at the end of the second World War, the Hunedoara steel plant hired 2000 people geared to work towards its expansion. The freshly installed communist regime was lacking the working class it needed for legitimation. The previous regime, capitalist and explicitly anticomunist, resisted any such class identity to be formed amongst the people employed as industrial workers. The plant in Hunedoara was public property, unlike the vast majority of other industrial capacities of Romania that were private. This made it available for industrial development and the branding of Hunedoara as a communist showcase city, where the narratives around the working class could be grounded.

In the decades that followed, around 10% of the country’s budget for industrial development was spent in Hunedoara (see Picture 4 to understand its scale) and propaganda was aimed at building the working class needed to man it.

The workers that populated the new industry came from rural environments. That is true not only when looking at the communist development, but throughout the city’s history. In the 19th century, the nearby villages provided sufficient workforce while migration from other areas of the Austro-Hungarian Kingdom supplied the specialists. In the later stages of growth, after the Second World War, people from all over Romania ended up in Hunedoara.

This considerable migrational wave was possible because of the collectivization of agriculture. On paper, collectivization was modernisation as it implied the mechanization of jobs that could benefit from the mechanical force of the machines, the creation of larger plots that could be exploited more efficiently and an orientation towards the market. In the case of the communist modernisation, that market was not free, but planned and at least discursively, following the needs of the people.
Collectivisation freed a large number of potential industrial workers ready to be moulded into the working class that the communist regime needed for its validation. Hunedoara was built as a citadel of steel where people could live the communist dream (by becoming workers and being part of a society ruled by the working class).

Every era had its own criteria for social categories and also its sweethearts, a privileged category among the rest. This was the case of the working class (means of production ownership related category) during communism or the entrepreneurs (mobility based categorization) of post socialist capitalism.

During communist times, worker wages were higher than even those of a professor. The centrality of the working class in the communist discourse led to high wages for those in heavy industry and Hunedoara symbolized the pinnacle of this practice, being the showcase city of the communist workers utopia. The development of Hunedoara from 1946 onwards is an almost singular case. This is due to the fact that the Hunedoara steel mill was one of the biggest industrial objectives controlled by the state, while also being located in an area surrounded by mountains. This latter aspect was essential in 1948 when the plans were hatched, only 3 years after the end of WW2.

The communist regime imposed in Romania at the end of the Second World War needed a few years before they managed to control the politics of the country, which was characterized before the war by a pluralistic political system. Hence, the communist regime’s need to build a showcase city and secure a working class to validate their discourse-Hunedoara ticked many boxes. Specifically, Hunedoara boasted a state owned industry with tradition and
experience (even though lacking scale), a location protected from prying eyes or attacks in the case of a war, and raw materials available nearby.

In the first decade of development, the technology used was mostly Eastern German and progressively more Russian, while the workers were either German or Russian. In the meantime, Romanian workers were being sent to Russia for training. The official discourse on the merits of Hunedoara promoted another story: One about the heroic Romanian worker who finds their purpose in industrial work furthering the development and growth of the country. The reality that the products were being shipped to Russia as war reparations were obscured by a Stakhanovite narrative (i.e. Encouraging workers to take pride in their ability to produce more than was required, as a way of strengthening the Communist state ), aimed at motivating young uneducated men to go to Hunedoara and find their purpose.

One of the vehicles used for this was the 1961 movie called "Close to the sun". The story was one of struggle and growth, following a young man leaving the peasant village and moving to a better place, finding work in industry and gaining the power to influence his own future. The imagined future brought to life in the movie was one of hard work, toiling together with your comrades towards a better common future in a communist society. The main characters, the majority of which were workers, lived in a socialist utopia localized in Hunedoara. What made it stick in people's memory was that it was actually real. The film also brought to life characters that the locals were familiar with from the state controlled propaganda, like the working hero Stefan Tripsa. He was the Romanian version of the Russian hero worker, Alexey Stakhanov, the embodiment of the Stakhanovite narrative.

More than that, the movie was filmed in Hunedoara and succeeded in legitimising the abstract communist narrative looking at the workers as the center of the new social system. By grounding the narrative in a recognisable space it worked not only towards legitimisation, but also created a feeling of belonging in the workers. This feeling travelled through time as I will showcase in my ethnographic data: All of them mentioned the film and some proudly located their work station in the setting of the movie.

Following Florentina Andreescu (2014), it can be observed how "The films produced during communism generally were directed at covering the inconsistencies in the communist ideology. Films were greatly relied upon to accomplish this role within society, as valuable tools for domestication and control of the citizens." Furthermore, the abstract political Stakhanovite narrative came into fruition in "Close to the sun" embodied as Stefan Tripsa, the local worker hero. The film served its purpose to "provide clear answers to social questions, that in turn would guide social behavior." This role was fulfilled only in the context of the worker identity as the main social identity. As Andreescu (2014) observes when looking at the Romanian communist cinematography, "[the] fantasy formations the worker hero represents the main social identity, and all other possible identities, such as that of a spouse,
parent, or friend, were all seen as secondary. Desire was to be fulfilled through a perfect embodiment of the worker ideal."

The main character of the movie was played by the actor Florin Piersic who, since 2014, became an honorary citizen of Hunedoara - an award that was received in a ceremony where the mayor motivated the decision through the memory of the industrial Hunedoara. Stating specifically "You are for us a reminder of those times and we offer you this award because this movie is all we have left to remind us of those years".

The ‘years’ the mayor was referring to was the era in which Hunedoara was a destination that bolstered the raison d'être of labor. People that lived in those days, the late ‘40s and ‘50s, remember a generalized enthusiasm around the industrial work. The vast majority of them had peasant backgrounds and only basic education (or none at all) and, as one of the people that lived it explained, they readily signed on to the discourse and still continued to support it today. The word used in Romanian was “Am muzcat-o” which is mostly used when describing a fish biting the bait.

But there was no shame, nor a critical tone when talking about it. This way of remembering, using tough words, but displaying enthusiasm and nostalgia was something that I encountered widely in the over 50, ex steel mill workers group. They perceived the communist industrialisation as modernisation, with the prefabricated social system that communism provided perceived as progress. The heavy industrialisation was understood as being needed to close the gap between countries that were industrialised ("West") and countries being predominant agrarian, as Romania was regarded. Thus, industrial work was not only perceived as being a step up from agricultural work, but as leading towards the modernisation of the whole country.

The individuals that came of age before 1989 were educated, trained and socialized in this Stakhanovite narrative- as was the case for the retired workers social group. The discourse they embody still sieves into conversations when talking about the "good times". On the other hand, the young entrepreneurs group have only second hand memories of those times. They came to age after the 1989 regime change and heard the stories of the glorious times from their parents, grandparents or even colleagues when they worked in the declining steel plant. Although they have pointed out to me the problems and hiccups of the communist industrial development, they spoke with respect towards the working class people involved.

Their attachments were aimed at their predecessors with respect to their effort, and not their motivation. They showed support for the creation of the Iron museum as a duty to their precursors, as a duty to their parents. This was visible during interviews when talking about the communist years. In the words of one of my informants, a successful entrepreneur, 32 years old: "my grandfather told me all about those times [...] they built this city from the ground up with their own hands." And later, when he talked about how to deal with this
legacy: "[N]obody wants to go back [to those times], but it is a big deal what they managed to create [...] they should've kept a furnace, a steel laminator [...] so that everybody can see what they've achieved."

When discussing ways of dealing with the legacy of the plant, a young entrepreneur framed it in economic terms: "People made a lot of effort to build the conglomerate. [...] We should take advantage of that and make it a part of the Hunedoara brand. [We have to build] the Iron Museum and other things aimed at industrial landscape tourism. This way, everybody is happy". The phrase used at the end of the quote I translated as "everybody is happy" but the original phrase was a Romanian saying that can be translated word-for-word as reconcile the goat and the cabbage (‘împacă şi capra şi varza’). It talks about situations where both sides of a dispute need to make compromises in order to reach the desired goal. In this case, the workers that lost the actual plant, the materialisation of their memories, were supposed to be happy with having at least the museum. At the same time, the young entrepreneurs (like himself) were expected to accept this glorification as a sign of respect for the elders, even though it contradicted their discourse of breaking with the past.

After stating their opinions, many of them, including the entrepreneur quoted above, directed me to talk to their parents or grandparents if I wanted to hear more than what they have to say. In this way, they were indicating their incomplete understanding of an era that they recognized as central in the history of Hunedoara, but one that they only lived vicariously.

This idea to build open air museums on the industrial landscape was put forward by a retired worker as well. Now a photographer with an impressive archive of pictures from Hunedoara, he talked about how he imagined the transition from industrial development to industrial downsizing (deindustrialisation): "The plant was oversized and irrationally built and the city was polluted. But what happened after 1989 is a disaster, they destroyed everything and left nothing behind. Not even a furnace, a steel producing unit, something where you can make a museum and show people how things worked. We now have nothing that speaks about those times. Only pictures. " Out of the two ideas he mentioned, only the Iron Museum was viable, as the industrial installations had been gone since 2006. His focus on collecting pictures and documenting the city was informed by his feeling that if he does not do it, everything will be lost.

The memories of both groups in my study converged in the support for recreation of the Iron Museum. The original Iron Museum was inaugurated in 1974 in one of the buildings of the steel mill. It was aimed at telling the story of iron processing in the area and it showed the communist development as its peak. It had exhibits ranging from centuries old pieces of metal extracted from the mountains in the area to detailed miniatures of the industrial installations at the time. The retired workers were speaking with great pride about what could be seen there, but always finished their comment in an air of disappointment, as the museum was closed in 2004. It only survived the privatisation of the plant for 1 year.
The museum was owned by the steel mill and after the latter's privatisation, it became subject to the rational cost calculations of the new owner. A museum cherishing the city's iron processing capabilities was not a priority for the investor looking for profit. The building that hosted the museum was put up for sale and the actual exhibits were left to chance. A few men involved in the administration of the museum, alongside others interested in telling the iron story of Hunedoara, managed to save some of them. But there is no information about what and how much was saved and we only have a few pictures available to remember.

When talking with the retired workers about the opportunity to recreate the museum, I asked my informants about the content they saw suiting the museum. The lack of details in their answers made me think that the symbolic value of an Iron Museum was more important than the objects actually displayed—simply holding space regardless of content. As one of my informants told me: "They just need to make the museum, we will deal later with what to put in it". Another retired worker was considering for the gallery the samples of steel he kept after the inauguration of a blast furnace. Offering the workers samples of steel resulted after the test run of a new industrial installation was a tradition in the plant. Many of the retired workers group had such samples. These samples, some bearing the signatures of workers involved in the production, were kept as memorabilia and cherished as the last remaining pieces of the steel mill. That is not to say that each of them collectively wished for the creation of the museum around their own personal memories, but rather that each of them was ready to donate his memories in order to create the museum.

The young entrepreneurs shared the support for the iron museum, but their reasons were different than the ones of the retired workers. The younger generation was imagining a "modern" museum, only one of many sites a tourist would be able to visit in Hunedoara. The content of the museum was not clearly imagined in their case either. Some of the informants were pointing towards "the specialists" (historians, archaeologists) as the ones responsible for that. In conclusion, both groups showed their support for the creation of a museum that talks about the history of iron in Hunedoara, but neither had clear plans on how to do it.

The Iron museum is one of the few points of entry capturing spaces where the interests of the retired workers and those of the younger entrepreneurial generation meet. This is a materialization of the elusive common ground that my informants seem to not be able to formulate or, in many cases, even imagine. The actual materialisation of these spatial constructions based on the memories of the two groups eluded my informants, anticipating the need for support from another social actor, the politician. This made sense in the context of Hunedoara, where each change in the political party in power in Hunedoara brought with it a renewed promise for support for the museum and a new plan on how to actualize it. Now in 2019, the museum is planned to materialize as part of a European Union financed urban regeneration project for the old center of Hunedoara.
Hunedoara, a city with a large population of retired industrial workers, is still perceived (positively or negatively) as a workers town. Using the words of one informant, a former worker in the plant: “you can destroy the steel mill [physically], but you can’t erase what we lived” (‘poti distruge combinatul, dar nu poti sterge ce am trait’). The stories of the workers are stories of struggle and effort, all going towards a better good. It is not rare to hear in Hunedoara the phrase “we’ve built this steel mill with our own hands” as it is the moniker for the generation that came to Hunedoara in the ‘50s and ‘60: “The builders”.

The memory of the struggle is still present, either through first or second hand recollections, in both the social groups I did research with. While for the retired workers, the trauma of the regime change and their fall from grace did not heal, for the young entrepreneurs is something that they need to deal with as a duty to their parents. The Iron museum offers a platform for the former to talk about the "glorious 1970s", while the latter perceive it as closure. Both groups see it as necessary, although for different reasons.

Future development in the area of the city that bears the scars of the old steel mill was informed by the way the space is perceived- as industrial land. For the inhabitants, the times of the steel plant left that zone as destined for industrial development. At the same time, the placement for the Iron Museum did not bring up a specific location. It did not matter where it was in the city, as long as it was telling the story of the people that were involved with the iron processing history.

The collective memories of different groups in Hunedoara informed each group's attitudes regarding the Iron Museum. Even though reached by following different paths, the narratives converged in support for its creation. It is similar to how the various concurrent narratives on the origin of the castle were assembled in a public discourse that accommodated all.
5. THE APARTMENTS
Individualization of public space

"Hunedoara is a village with traffic lights"
Local librarian on Hunedoara

If the steel mill was the materialisation of the communist discourse on paths of modernisation, the apartments were the materialization of the same discourse pertaining to the working class that was needed to man the steel mill. Almost all the apartments in Hunedoara were built between 1950 and 1989. The few buildings that were finished after 1989 were just completing the job started when the plans were made with the working class at their center.

The apartment blocks were perceived as a place where the uniformity preached by the political discourse took its physical form. They were built in a similar style and with the same construction materials (see Annex 1). Disregarding some variations (e.g. living space per inhabitant), the apartments also offered the same living conditions. The architecture and planning for these buildings followed the discourse that idealized communal living, with the notion of shared resources at its heart.

The apartments were distributed according to each person's needs. When a worker started his job or training in the plant, he was entitled to a place in the sleeping barackas that were rooms with numbered beds (ranging from 6 to 20 in the case of my informants). They did not have a kitchen as the plant provided their meals. The next level was reached when a worker got married. After this, they were entitled to a 1-room apartment with a kitchen. "because as a married man I could not eat together with the unmarried- I had a wife now" as one informant told me. When the first child was born in the family, they became eligible for a 2 room apartment and so on: when the second child was born the family would get a 3 room apartment and after the 3rd, a worker would get one with 4.

While the public space was uniform, the private spaces were the place for individualisation. The lack of options in furniture or home appliances was mitigated through custom/home made furniture or the acquisition of rare items. For example, in the 1980's the model of a corner bench for the kitchen was introduced on the market. Their rarity meant that whoever managed to get their hands on one gained bragging rights. As a result, the search for one became a preoccupation that meant finding one, obtaining it using the social web of relations and debts and lastly the transportation to the owners house. The complicated process of getting one made them so prestigious: it involved the use of social capital on many levels. Some of my informants still have one in their kitchens as it’s prestige still held value.
The apartments are some of the last material remnants of the homogenization focus of the communist era. They were built to house the workers of a steel plant which has since disappeared. But the apartments and its inhabitants continued their lives beyond these changes. They needed to adapt to the new ideology, one of individuality. The personalization of the outside of their apartments, as a marker of this individualisation, is one site where this change is most easily observed.

After the 1989 regime change, the individual emerged from the once anonymous collective. That is, the liberal democratic regime that came to life in Romania after 1989 shifted the focus from the collective to the individual. In Hunedoara, this was visible in the way people started to personalise their balconies. Their logic of providing an open air space "where you can dry the clothes" was superseded by the need for individualisation.

Almost every balcony was "closed" (a direct translation of the word used in Romanian, *închis*) by a home made construction using some metal parts readily available in the plant (e.g. T shaped iron profiles) and glass. The shape and form of the construction depended on the section of the plant where the inhabitant worked. For example, people working in the place where the T shaped profiles were being made, were making an "Abuse of T's", as one of my informants described the weird shaped contraptions that overused the more easily available components. Another factor were the web of social relations. Some of the better looking balconies were the result of a very good welder being friends with the owners, as it was described to me by the local informants.

The rush towards individualization continued into the 2000's with the individualisation of the whole facade of the apartment. This was not a plan put together by the neighbors, but an individual one for each family. As a result, the facades of most of the apartment buildings in Hunedoara look like "the feathers of a parrot", using the words of an informant. Meaning that each apartment had their facade painted a different colour or different decorations. The reasoning behind this decision was practical- the need for individualised heating and thermal isolation, but it offered the platform for the expression of difference. The materials and the colours employed for this were chosen on purpose to differentiate the apartment from the neighboring ones. And this worked the other way around as well. One informant told me how to read the places where I can see more than one neighboring apartment done in the same style: "they are friends that worked together in order to save costs". But this was not the case for most (see Picture 5 and more in Annex 2) as the apartments look like a vertical version of the houses lining the street: each with its own colour and shape, a testament to the people living there. The description of Hunedoara as a village with traffic lights spoke to this same perspective: It looked like a city, but socially it demonstrated village-like characteristics.
Picture 5. An apartment block in Hunedoara, February 2019
Individualisation of living spaces after the plant became privatised was exacerbated in Hunedoara due to the city’s previous dependency on the steel mill. While the plant was state owned, the heating agent (hot water) came from the steel mill. Once this was privatised and stopped providing the resources needed for heating, the inhabitants were left to their own accord. Unlike other Romanian towns, Hunedoara did not benefit from having neighborhood centralized heating plants as the hot water came directly from the plant. When this stopped, people needed to find ways to adapt. The most used solution was individualised heating for each apartment. In Romanian they’re called ‘centrala termica de apartament’, translated as ‘apartment heating station’. The wording is the same as the one used for ‘centrala termica de cartier’ translated as ‘neighborhood heating station’. These are technically wall-mounted condensing gas boilers or Combi boilers, but in Romanian they take their name from the spaces they’re used to heat. This shows how the space they’re intended for (i.e. apartment or neighborhood) is their most important aspect. And not the technical description or identification.

The transformations ushered in by the free marketization of the city were made visible by the ways in which the apartment blocks changed. The individualization of domestic facades was a visual signifier for the deeper changes that were taking place in the social life of the inhabitants. Some chose to make their apartment different, some choose to do it together with friends and, in only a few cases, full buildings underwent the transformation.

In the cases where the occupants worked together to restore the whole building, we can identify another aspect determined by the free market. The peculiar particularity of the very few buildings in the situation was that they had a mobile communication tower installed on the roof. If this was the case, the mobile operator paid a large amount of money for the rent. The money obtained in this manner was used to pay for the inhabitant's expenses (e.g. gas bill) or to finance the restoration of the building. The choice of where to place the antenna towers was determined by the market opportunities for the mobile operators and the levels of investments they were encouraged to place in Hunedoara. It was dependant on the number of mobile phone users and their distribution around the city.

The historical transition to capitalism made the apartment blocks a visual signifier of this political transformation. The way space was perceived changed, as is the case of the border between public and private space. It shifted in a way where the private space invaded the public space. The space was produced by the inhabitants need for individualization, with a municipality incapable of stopping them, and is now the image of the apartment blocks that were once the symbol of communal living.

The visual homogeneity in the space of the city was a mirror to the ideology that determined their creation. The apartment blocks retained this feature when the ideology changed and mirrored the shifts by anchoring visually the way people appropriated the public space (i.e.
the exterior of their apartments). The colorful exteriors today replaced the uniform facades of the communist era, creating a visual signifier for the individualisation that characterized this process.

James Scott (2008), when discussing the landscapes of resistance against the state in the case of the peasant society, sees the appropriation of the interior as a form of resistance. This idea can be extended to the case of the apartments in Hunedoara. There were very few ways of individualisation in the space of a showcase workers city. The inhabitants reacted to this situation by personalising the interiors of their apartments, as the only available space for differentiation. Once the regime changed and individualization became not only allowed, but encouraged, they reacted by expanding their private spaces to the exterior of their apartments in an effort to differentiate themselves by using the tools available.
Sitting, having a coffee in the newly opened cafe in the old center of Hunedoara- the door stirs open as an elderly woman enters. She takes one step inside before stopping to start a conversation with the barista, who is busy preparing a coffee. In Romanian, she interjects, “I do not want to buy anything, I just want to see how it looks. I used to work here for many years and I am happy to see the place reopened”. The barista, also the owner and proprietor, replies to her with a smile, invited her in, much to the woman's hesitation. Although she makes physical attempts at minimizing her presence, she can’t help but remark aloud the changes that had taken place since the moments frozen in time by her memories. “I see that it is clean and nice, warm inside, you have a comfortable workplace”. She continued to assess the room using only the frames of reference relevant to her relationship with her previous workplace-concerns of heating and cleanliness. Within that framework, it was entirely natural for her to assume that the barista was an employee, like she had once been.

Both were simultaneously present in different time periods while in the same room. Each read the space around them within a scheme drawn by their memories and experiences.

Different readings of the cafe's space were framed not only by the political regime ideologies, but also by memories of the city's football team. A few days after the previous episode, while having my morning coffee, an elderly man entered. I later found that he was a retired worker. The purpose of his visit was not connected to the current or previous functions of the space the cafe was occupying, but to the memory of the city's football team. He was there to buy a hat with the team's logo, a desire that was brought forward upon passing through the door: "I am here to buy the hat. Of course." His feeling of inadequacy was mitigated by his preemptive statement.

The cafe was owned by one of the members of the group of football supporters for the team and the cafe was the only place where you could by hats with the team's logo. The football team itself was disbanded in 2004, but this was not a deterrent for the fans. The effect of the disappearance of the team determined the supporters to rally and create groups focused on the memories they had of the team and their support to grow stronger. Even though the team did not exist anymore, its memory was shared between the people that lived though its glory and the younger generations (e.g. the young entrepreneurs group) that lived it vicariously through their parents and grandparents.
The football stadium of the city was the space where the memories and narratives of the football team were grounded. The stadium was built in 1960 and was intended to be at the heart of the civic center of the city of Hunedoara. Alongside the old center (i.e. The area around the castle) and the new center (i.e. the area around the city's House of Culture built in the 1950's), the civic center was intended to be the space where the workers could spend their leisure time. Some of the most emotional memories of the retired workers were related to the days when the team had a game. Not having the opportunity to add more memories of the team made the old ones even more intense and cherished.

The resurgence of support for the team was related to the lack of other means of collective identification that allow a glorious discourse over the 1970's and 1980's. The support for the team's memory is a testament to that, as it increased even in the absence of actual team. During the 1990's and early 2000's the support for the team materialised mainly through various projects aimed at getting the team back to its former glory. This was perceived by both of the groups in this research as the responsibility of the local administration or the Ministry of Sport and Education of the government of Romania. When this responsibility was not met, the expectations shifted more and more towards support for the memory of the team and the first commemorative rituals for the memory of the past captain.

The support for the team has different motivations for the two groups. For the retired workers, it was coming from subjective experiences they lived as supporters and the memory of the team that brought everybody together. For the young entrepreneurs, the team was a brand attached to Hunedoara. This brand was intended to bring people together, as their association's manifesto stated: "People need to be part of a group and Hunedoara does not currently offer a symbol that brings everybody together [...] Corvinul is a symbol we can be proud of everyday. People will ask questions, will come up with ideas, they will bring their opinions forward".

The centrality of the stadium in the space of the city made it attractive not only as a working class space for leisure, but also for businesses. As a result, in 2006, a hypermarket (i.e. large scale shopping centers) and its parking lots were built on the space previously occupied by the training grounds situated in front of the stadium. Both groups in my study adopted the hypermarket in their daily routines.

The critical attitude towards the placement of the hypermarket in the center of the city, instead of its outskirts, was not a reason to avoid it. One informant, a retired engineer, made the following comments on the location: "It should be at the outskirts, like it is in the West. Only in Romania you can find hypermarkets in the middle of the cities." But that was not a reason enough to avoid it: "Before [the regime change of 1989], my daily shopping routine included walking from Dunarea [open air market] to Obor [open air market]. Now, I am
The critiques towards the placement of the hypermarket in the center of the city, instead to its outskirts, were shared by the young entrepreneurs, but were secondary to the advantages it came with. One young entrepreneur described how the hypermarket changed his shopping habits: "The parking lot in the heart of the city is great. I even changed my bank with one closer to the hypermarket, it was impossible to find a parking lot in the new center, so I moved." On the same note, he also explained why he now only shops there instead of other smaller or closer shops: "Before it was built, the commercial center was Obor [market]. You could find anything there or on the way, as the streets connecting the center to the market were lined with small shops. [...] Since 2006, [the commercial focus] moved to the hypermarket. The old market lost its importance and that also lead to the closing of the small shops on the way there. Why would you go all the way there if you can find everything at the hypermarket?". In regards to the small local shops nearby his house, he explained why he does not visit them anymore: "I used to get cigarettes and 5 liters water bottles from the shop near my apartment block. But then, they started to not have the brands I wanted, because they were not selling enough to be worth it. I wanted to get them from nearby and not go to the hypermarket for them, but it became impossible. So now I shop only at the hypermarket".

Examining how the two groups of informants perceive the space of the stadium and the hypermarket that joined it allows a view of the way each person uses it individually. The ideological shift of the 1990's was mirrored by the production of the space where the stadium stands. If during communism, the stadium was a place of communities coming together in support of a common idea, in the present it is a place of individualisation. It can be seen in the ways the needs of the shopper became central (e.g. proximity as the main criteria for where to shop) or by looking at how the generous parking lot projects the image of the clients it wishes to attract.

Juxtaposing the image of the bustling hypermarket with the derelict stadium behind it allows for the observation of how time is spatialized in the space of the city. The old stadium built for the now gone working class stands almost abandoned behind a hypermarket that became the preferred commercial hub, a symbol of the commercialization of the space of the city.

The two groups of my study were brought together by a third occupant of the space initially reserved for the stadium, the statue of a former captain. The statue represents the captain of the team during its most prolific years. After leading the team in Hunedoara to success for the better part of the 1980's, in 1990 he emigrated to Germany and started playing for a Second League team. In 1993, while training, he died of a heart attack at the age of 33. He is the center of the commemoration rituals that the supporters are organising every year on Feb 2nd, the day of his death.
The statue was erected in 2019 and it is the place where the commemoration ritual is held. The ritual was performed by the supporters as they march through the city, with a ceremony in front of the statue at the end. The marching was done while wearing the club's colours (White and Blue) and was including coloured smoke grenades, large scale banners and occasional firecrackers (see Picture 6). The decade old ritual was performed by both groups, retired workers and young entrepreneurs, as the team's past success appealed to both: It allowed the former to speak of the glory of the 1970's while the latter interpret it in modern key and recuperate the team's memory through the modern football team fan paraphernalia.

The passion for the football team was strong in the minds and hearts of the retired engineers as they have experienced the joy of the team's victories first hand. The days when the team was playing were the days when the already bustling city was most crowded. Memories of experiences shared with thousands of other people were being greatly cherished. In the words of an informant: "When the team had a game, the whole city was alive. Even more than usual. [...] People were in the streets talking about the team and the game or in bars having a beer and discussing strategies. Everybody had an opinion on it. [...] Those were happy days." These experiences and memories travelled beyond the disbandment of the team and were the memories of a certain era, rather than specific memories of the team itself. There were memories of communities getting together. Nostalgia was materialized by the retired workers
joining the young entrepreneurs in their identification as "Blue ravens", as the supporters of Corvinul were called.

For the young entrepreneurs, the passion for the team was initially inherited from their parents and friends through the stories of the former glory. Later, visible in the manifesto of their association, it became a vehicle for social cohesion- one that was lacking.

The statue was built only recently and it offers a peek into how space is produced in Hunedoara. The different constructions of the space of the stadium as the materialization of their passion for the team were discussed previously. The actual construction of the statue was determined by the election of a new mayor in 2016. He, being a supporter of the team himself, saw the opportunity to bring together the locals through a symbol that survived the test of time, the legendary captain of the 1980's. Since the statue was erected, the commemoration ritual includes also a speech from the mayor. It needed the convergence not only of the passion and memories of the inhabitants, but also of the local political groups, in order to be materialized.

The statue near the stadium allows a site of political commemoration of historical days, but also a look into the future, one that will have the locals needs for cohesion as an important element. The statue is also important for keeping previous rituals and traditions alive despite the absence of the team.

The memories of my informants converge in the support for the defunct football team materialised in a place for memory, the statue of the former captain. The stadium as a place for memory was replaced by the statue that took its place as the locus of commemoration. Every year on the commemoration of the captain's death they perform a ritual involving stadium chants that the young never experienced at a real football game.

The times of the team's greatest success, the 1970's and the 1980's, were spatialized in the square where the statue stands. The square was previously the main entrance to the stadium, even though you have no visual indicators today when the hypermarket's parking lot covers any traces of a previously different arrangement of the area.

The memory of the team's accomplishments bridges the generational gap between the two groups in this study. In the case of young entrepreneurs, the experiences were lived vicariously through the memories of their forefathers. For the retired workers, the experiences were lived directly, but still only as spectators to the team's success. This is an important distinction between the convergence of support for the Iron Museum and the support for the team's memory. It is influenced by the memories of the retired workers. For them, the Iron Museum will materialise subjective memories of their lived experiences, while the backing for the statue was coming the memory of an experience lived together with others as bystanders. As a result of this, it was important that the statue was spatialized in the space of
the former stadium, the locus of the shared experiences. For the Iron Museum, the actual location was secondary as the locus of their memories, the steel plant, was now gone.
7. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the retired workers and engineers share the collective trauma of their fall from grace following the 1989 regime change. They are brought together by their need to challenge the official history, one that is condemning unequivocally the city’s decades under a communist ideology. Their collective memory informs their support for the Iron Museum and football team (stadium), as places of memory (lieux de memoire) where they can speak about the glory of the 1970's without talking about communism.

The entrepreneur's own directions for the cities future are still linked to the past, but only vicariously. This removal from direct memory explains the divergence with the retired workers in their plans which still converge in agreement at the site of the museum. The museum provides closure with the past while they're engaged in creating the future of Hunedoara, one that for the first time after centuries, does not include iron exploitation.

After 1989 saw the change from a communist regime to a capitalist one, the narrative of a clean cut with the past was towering over all other in the Romanian public sphere. Coming after decades of scarcity and authoritarianism, Romanians were hungry for options and alternatives and the capitalist market was very generous in offering that. The decades of propaganda placing socialism in opposition with capitalism were having the reverse effect in the 1990's: the free market with its attractive products was adopted and the communist regime associated with scarcity became its antithesis. For example, the workers protests in Hunedoara in the late 1990's asking for development of the plant instead of its privatization, were associated with their wish to return to the communist regime (and its paucity). Using the words of an informant that was involved with protests: "They were scared we will go to Bucharest and change the regime [...] But we only wanted to have our salaries paid in time and our jobs secured".

Oleg Golubchikov (2016) sees transition as the ideology of post communist capitalist states. In Eastern Europe, transition was the process endured by the former communist states (defined economically by a centralized controlled market) that saw the creation of market based institutions, made available by the introduction of the free market and its mechanisms. Golubchikov (2016) looks at how transition and urbanisation relate to each other and concludes his paper with three layers of analysis: ideological, practice and urban. Firstly, "at the level of ideology, it is important to understand transition as a totalizing doctrine, which completes the subjugation of the whole world to capitalism." In the case of Hunedoara, such a perspective offers the chance to understand why the first decades of post communism did not allow memories of the previous regime to come to surface and paints the image of an all-encompassing ideology that left no room for challenge from any others (such as communism). Secondly, " at the level of practice, it is important to properly account for the
spatializing effects of that ideology – which is not simply “domesticated,” but subsumes pre-existing practices altogether, alienates them from their own ideological history, and recasts them under the exigencies of capital(ism)." When observing the practice of transition in Hunedoara the hypermarket built near the stadium shows how the space was appropriated by the free market, while the locals reacted by including it in their daily practice. For example, the retired workers added the new hypermarket in their daily shopping routine. Thirdly, "at the level of the urban, while urban change is usually portrayed merely as a projection of larger societal changes, the urban needs to be seen the central stage through which the societal change is mediated; new meanings, social relations, and class divisions are construed; and through which transition achieves its practical, corporeal completeness." In the cityscape of Hunedoara, the complete dismantling of the steel plant, against the strong resistance of the workers can be easier understood by looking at transition from the angle suggested by Golubchikov.

The clear-cut from the past narrative is being challenged by the findings of this research. But it can only pertain to the current situation. The first two decades of capitalism in Romania observed in Hunedoara the collapse of an industrial colossus that hired more than twenty thousand people, without anybody being able to challenge it beyond nostalgia (i.e. comparing the derelict capitalist present with the glorious communist past) and the fight for the workers rights. But ignoring the workers, the ruling class during communism, became the realization of this clean cut with the past. They were not included in the conversation about the future of the city, nor taken into consideration when asking for their rights.

In 2019, almost thirty years since the regime change, spaces where the memory becomes visible start to materialize. It took this much for the memories to find a way to reach the surface. This leaves room to question why was this happening at this specific time and not earlier, or not at all. Major social and political transformations taking place in the space of the city were observed by Ewa Ochman (2017) as an explanation for the late recuperation of the memory of a 1920 battle: "What are the specific conditions that make this spectacular resurgence possible? This recovery could have occurred because major social and political transformations create the conditions in which a radical revising of the commemorative landscape is possible". While she cites the transformations in the case of a battle from WW1, the observation is aptly applied to Hunedoara also. The connection lies in how the space was produced, a process that needed the congruence not only of the inhabitants but also of local administration, municipality and politicians. The retired workers showed support for the creation of places of memory throughout the decades since the regime change, but only when the administration had the resources and political will (i.e. aspired to win their vote) they were materialised. The availability of resources was determined by two things: the tourism centered on the castle grew to a level enough to provide income for the municipality beyond its minimal needs and the availability of European Union funds destined for tourism and urban regeneration projects (of which the Iron museum is one).
Another factor for the late resurgence of the materialisation of nostalgia could be related to how the retired workers and especially engineers were used to interact with the authority. Adam Drazin (2005) in his article that discusses how the apartment blocks were built in communist Romania, makes the observation that "Dominant social groups do not necessarily provide guidance about how to build, but criticize it when it is wrong, so the form of the block evolves". In the context of an anti communist discourse, they did not come forward with plans, but were indicating their opinions on them through their daily social networks (e.g. conversations at the market during their daily shopping trips) on the ones that were brought forward. For example, the project for the transformation of the main boulevard in the city to a pedestrian zone. It started as a simple project of closing the street for cars and placing a few benches, but as the result of strong critiques coming from the locals, it evolved to a project that had in addition a singing fountain and the restoration of all facades lining the street.

Hunedoara is different in the ranks of the Romanian cities because of its unique pattern of development that saw the rapid succession of radically different economic systems (from being on the forefront of industrial development in the second industrial revolution, to the communist industrial growth as part of a centrally planned economy to the current era of free market and capitalism), political systems (from the Habsburgic or Hungarian monarchies to the Romanian constitutional monarchy, followed by the communist era and the current day liberal democracy). It also underwent an abrupt growth and shrinking phases over a timespan of seventy years when it grew from five thousand inhabitants to ninety thousand, only to later shrink back to forty five thousand.

This rapid succession allows us to observe groups of people involved in writing the plans for the future that grew up in different (and opposing) ideological eras: the retired workers coming of age at the peak of the communist industrial development and the young entrepreneurs that matured in the post socialist capitalism that brought the free market.

For the inhabitants, dealing with these imbalances cultivated capacity for adaptation and the ability to work together in heterogeneous groups. This experience was made visible in this research through the historicized narratives around the castle or the support of both groups for the same projects, but with different motivations. The wealth of artifacts left behind by each era, are continuously interpreted and reinterpreted in public discourses and regularly negotiated in the collective memory of the inhabitants. As a function of the political neoliberal capitalist practices, this was interpreted as creative destruction (Harvey, 2007) and will be developed further through future research.

We can trace how the disappearance of the communist discourse (with its categories of privileged people) from the public conversations, does not mean that it is also gone from the subjective memories of the people that were its subjects. It lives at least through their memories and also the personal perspectives over plans for the future of the city. In the case
of Hunedoara, the "fall of communism" and the public discourse focused on its "horrors and crimes" (e.g. The organisation endowed with the research of the communist era is called The Institute for the Investigation of Communist Crimes in Romania) is not aligned with the memories and perspectives of at least some of the locals in Hunedoara. The Iron Museum allows the retired workers memories to be glorified by sidestepping this anti communist public discourse.

Anca Pusca (2010) in her article that examines the post communist ruins of Hunedoara and Vitkovice (Czechia), industrial or human, calls our attention for the humans that inhabit them: "Just like the ruination of these spaces has been directly connected to the ruination of the humans inhabiting them, there is a certain hope that the preservation, restoration, or even capturing of these spaces in a positive light would revive an essential sense of pride and, more important, provide a visible recognition that the lives who inhabit these spaces cannot and will not be simply erased along with the ruins themselves". This paper was intended to give voice to the ones "who inhabit these spaces" and fill the knowledge gap that Pusca observed. The ruins of the plant area already erased from the space of the city, but we've discovered how various social groups in Hunedoara are trying to find ways to tell their story through the creation of new spaces of memory, as it was the case of the statue in front of the stadium, or the recreation of others, as it is the case of the resurgence of interest for the Iron Museum.

Hunedoara already had a strong identity upon the arrival of the communist regime in Romania. This led to the need for spatial localization of the discourse. The Iron Museum, built at the plant's 90th anniversary (less than 30 years of which under the communist regime) was an attempt to weave the post 1945 communist development into the millennia old iron exploitation history of the area. The purpose of its inception lost relevance after the regime change in 1989, but it took fifteen more years until the privatization of the plant and the Iron Museum to be closed and plundered.

Fifteen years later, in 2019, the work towards the new incarnation of the Iron Museum is about to start. In a new location, with a new concept and financed by European Union as an urban regeneration project. It is the result of the efforts made by the locals and as a continuation of the museum that closed in 2004. This revival of the museum speaks to locals dedication for creating space to harbor their memories. The post socialist iteration of that narrative does not add another chapter to the story of iron processing, but monetizes its history thus far by narrating it through a museum.

This research can be taken further through a focus on the 500 people that are still working in the privatised steel mill. I did not have the chance to meet one while they were absent from the discourse of my informants as well. A second direction for further research will put the spotlight on the generation that was born after 1989, following them as they come to age.
Pusca (2010) concludes her article on the post communist ruins with a gesture of respect for the people inhabiting those ruins from the inside, the ones that have their existence intertwined with the history of the ruins: "This is neither a call for nostalgia nor a visual support for a past that is no longer viable: it is simply a bow, a gesture that recognises that something and someone is still there, among the ruins, attached to them from the inside and not simply experiencing them from the outside." This paper and its author, joins her in the bow.
8. BIBLIOGRAPHY


9. ANNEXES

Annex 1: The apartment blocks in the 1960's and 1970's:
Annex 2: The apartment blocks in 2019:
10. NOTES FROM AN ENGAGED ANTHROPOLOGIST

With this paper, I attempt to show how the inhabitants of Hunedoara dealt with the rapid succession of opposing state ideologies and how their memories, lived directly or vicariously, are informing their imagined futures. I chose to focus on two groups that are characterised by their coming of age in different political regimes, the first during the years of the communist regime, the second after its demise. Practically, I am trying to show how people dealt with the trauma of the regime change. I call it a trauma because in the case of Hunedoara the overlay between two major changes warped and exacerbated their effects. The first is the regime change that saw communist ideology replaced by what was constructed as its opposite, capitalism with its free market and liberal democracy. The second is the process of de-industrialization that situated Hunedoara in a position where it lost its previous raison d'être. This was true for many cities in Romania, but I found it most salient in Hunedoara, the former showcase city for the communist regime.

I feel that these transformations, visible in the cityscape of Hunedoara when comparing pictures from the 1970's with pictures from 2018, were not hitherto thoroughly observed and researched in order to shed light on how the people dealt with them. This paper tries to start filling that blank and I aim to continue research in the area and unveil at least some of the social processes that can bring forward the subjective experiences of the inhabitants. The urgency of this task is coming from the already thirty years that have passed since the regime change and thus the old age of the people that lived the idealised 1970's.

I hope that my work will in turn bring the inhabitants of Hunedoara an understanding of others around them as realise how they are reaching their goal while working together, even though this view is obscured by the noise of confrontational public political discourses.