"The building at the outskirts of history"

The development of place-meaning and place attachment to the Palace of Parliament, Bucharest, Romania

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Abstract

The main aim of this research was to explore individual processes of place-making by focusing on the development of meaning and attachment to place, and the socio-political contexts in which the place is found. The Palace of Parliament in Bucharest, Romania, is an example of such a place which encompasses a multiplicity of meanings within complex socio-political circumstances. In this thesis, a qualitative method approach was used to explore an emic perspective of how locals in Bucharest develop their connection with this place. In-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted to provide a thorough understanding of how place is created through stories, memories, narratives, feelings and socio-political contexts. Sixteen locals born, raised and living in Bucharest from the age groups 25 to 29 years old and 40 to 56 years old participated in this research.

The findings of this thesis demonstrate the constructive and destructive power of heritage in people's connection with place. Most of the younger participants expressed a strong sense of identification with the Palace of Parliament, their identification heavily relying on the building's image as a national symbol and generating feelings of pride. The rest of the participants i.e. the age group of 40 to 56 years old and several younger interviewees felt no pride towards the building, their place meaning-making processes showing a more complex interconnection of aspects such as collective memory, authorized heritage discourse and the presence of the politicians in the building. Moreover, this study showed that all participants desire place changes, regardless of their age group and identification with the place. As such, place changes targeting economic and social goals are perceived to enhance a deeper connection with the place.

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1. Introduction

This thesis focuses on the Palace of Parliament, a contested heritage building in Bucharest, Romania and the way in which local people connect with it. Locals' and official interpretations of the building are explored to illustrate the multiplicity of place as a result of meaning-making. Comprehending how people perceive and make sense of heritage can shed light on their connection to heritage places (Smith, 2006; Ashworth & Graham, 2016) and help to understand the influence contested heritage has on place-making processes (Ashworth & Graham, 2016). To investigate the relationship locals develop with the Palace of Parliament the notion of place attachment as described by Scannell and Gifford (2010) is used. This concept is further complemented by additional literature which enhances the understanding of meaning-making processes.

This introductory chapter consists of four sections which aim to present relevant background information on the research. The first section briefly introduces the relevance of this research and the Palace of Parliament as the focus of this thesis by highlighting the findings of previous studies on the building. In section 1.2 attention is given to existing studies addressing heritage through place related concepts. Here, the knowledge gaps identified are outlined, and the scientific and societal contribution of this research are emphasized. Section 1.3 presents the research questions and defines the aim of this study, and lastly, in 1.4 the structure of this thesis is presented.

1.1. Briefly: The Palace of Parliament

Existing studies on the building bring to light pertinent questions regarding the way in which locals attribute meaning to the Palace of Parliament and the status of the building as a heritage place encompassing Romanian identity. The Palace of Parliament is an example of contested heritage because it encompasses various and conflicting meanings (Light, 2000; Light, 2001; Light & Young, 2013). On the one hand, Light (2000; 2001) claims that the building is associated with the former communist regime and ruler, an argument also supported by Light and Young (2013) who add that the Palace of Parliament is regarded as a reminder of a traumatic period in contemporary history, primarily emphasized by the early years in the history of the Palace of Parliament. In turn, these associations trigger Romanians' ambivalent and negative attitudes towards the place (Light, 2000), as the building represents a "reminder of a period of history which Romania is attempting to forget" (Light, 2001, p.148). On the other hand, there are also Romanians who have a positive outlook on the building viewing it as a Romanian accomplishment (Light, 2001).

The embeddedness of the building in different socio-political contexts is evident primarily through the shift in the ruling ideological powers i.e. from communism to democracy. Light (2000; 2001) argues that the relocation of Romania's democratic institutions in the Palace of Parliament, alongside the narrative presented during guided tours at the building, demonstrate Romania's attempt to distance itself from the former ideology. Moreover, Light (2000; 2001) argues that, for Romanians, the Palace of Parliament embodies two aspects definitory of their cultural identity after 1989 i.e. the nation state (through the fact that the building was built by Romanians and from Romanian materials) and the rule of democracy.

These studies, however, call for reflection on the employed methodology. The empirical evidence provided originates from interviews conducted with representatives of the Palace of Parliament. These findings are then generalized across the Romanian population and are used to portray one, harmonious public perspective on the building. Past and (at that time) current socio-political contexts are used to support these findings which, however, only represent an official view on what the place stands for. Hence, a clear separation needs to be made between an official stance and the views of the local people when studying meaningful places perceived as heritage (Smith, 2006). In this sense, these studies do not depict locals' perspectives on the Palace of Parliament, nor clarify whether they

regard this building as a national symbol representing their cultural identity. Revealing how locals develop and attribute meanings to the Palace of Parliament is fundamental in understanding the influence that past and current socio-political contexts have on the connection between people and place. Unveiling mechanisms which people use to create meaning for the Palace of Parliament is important because they can inform the development of place-planning strategies targeting the development of attachment to place.

1.2. Place attachment and heritage

In place attachment studies, scholars are requesting empirical evidence explaining people's connection to a diversity of scales and types of places (Manzo, 2005; Lewicka, 2011; Scannell & Gifford, 2010) such as buildings or streets (Scannell & Gifford, 2010). The lack of variation in the kinds of places investigated is attributed to two factors. On the one hand, only in recent years research of place related concepts has been moving from a purely theoretical discussion to an application stage (Lewicka, 2011; Manzo & Devine-Wright, 2014). On the other hand, researchers prefer investigating middle scale-places by using predictors already proven to demonstrate place attachment (Lewicka, 2010; Lewicka, 2011). As a consequence, the most explored places are homes, neighbourhoods, communities and cities (Hidalgo & Hernández, 2001; Hernández, Hidalgo, Salazar-Laplace, & Hess, 2007; Lewicka, 2010; Lewicka, 2011).

This knowledge does not only justify the call for the investigation of other scales and types of places (Manzo, 2005; Lewicka, 2011; Scannell & Gifford, 2010), but also motivates the exploration of attachment to specific places embedded in socio-political contexts (Manzo, 2005; Lewicka, 2011), such as places regarded as heritage (Hawke, 2011). Socio-political processes occurring through time influence and change (heritage) places, and as such, people's relationship to places alters as well (Puren, Drewes & Roos, 2006; Manzo, 2005; Manzo & Devine-Wright, 2014). Focusing on (heritage) places and the socio-political contexts used by people to develop personal perceptions of these (heritage) places can improve the conceptualization of the processes involved in developing attachment to place (Manzo, 2005).

Although there is some empirical evidence regarding the relationship between people and places regarded as heritage in the field of eco-museology (Hawke, 2011), it does not address the embeddedness of place in socio-political contexts. In eco-museology, the focus is placed on the importance the people-(heritage)place connection has for purposes of sustainable conservation and preservation of the environment (Corsane, 2006; Corsane et al., 2007; Corsane, Davis, Hawke & Stefano, 2009). Locals' involvement in heritage development shows a reinforcement of locals' identification with and feelings towards a place (Corsane et al., 2007), as well as an underpinning of self-affirmation and pride (Corsane et al., 2009). In this field, place is a constantly changing notion caused by the individually created perspective on place and due to the passage of time (Davis, 1999; Corsane et al., 2007; Corsane et al., 2009). While it underlines the importance of personally developed meanings attributed to place (Davis, 1999; Corsane et al., 2007; Corsane et al., 2009), when focusing on how sustainable conservation of heritage can be achieved through locals' involvement the opposite seems to happen. Corsane's (2006) evaluation of a heritage site uses a list of ideal indicators which are based on a harmonious view of place and heritage. Thus, the empirical evidence does little to explain people's connection to heritage places because such idealistic approach negates, to some extent the contested nature of heritage, and diminishes the multiplicity of place.

Even though people-place relationship is shaped by complex individual processes through which meaning is developed and attributed to places, in place attachment research little can be found on how these meanings are created (Stedman, 2003; Manzo, 2005; Lewicka, 2011). One of the few studies that focuses extensively on how people create meaning towards places is Manzo's (2005). In her research, she shows that people's connection to places can arise from all sorts of experiences (e.g.

day-to-day activities, walking), and the feelings they develop towards places are just as diverse (Manzo, 2005).

Although the connection between heritage and place is lengthily discussed (Graham, Ashworth & Tunbridge, 2000; Smith, 2006; Ashworth, & Graham, 2016), the contribution that heritage has in the development of a sense of place is rarely studied (Hawke, 2011). In their research Puren et al. (2006, p.194) found that locals' personal and profound connection with natural heritage stems from an interconnection of "personal symbolic meanings attached to the environment" and "the natural, social, historical and cultural processes in the area", and fosters self-identification with the heritage site. Similarly, Hawke (2011) shows that the strong bonds between locals and heritage (natural, built and intangible) underlie their 'feelings of self-esteem', 'distinctiveness' and sense of 'continuity across time', factors which underpin self-identification with a place (Proshansky, Fabian & Kaminoff, 1983; Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001), an element closely related with place attachment (Hernández et al., 2007). This is further verified by Erasmus and De Crom (2015) who found that locals' attachments to their natural heritage are expressed by psychological and spiritual aspects, but also by strong emotions towards the area encompassing a sense of belonging.

Exploring how people develop connections to heritage places has societal and academic relevance. Firstly, understanding which places are important and for which reasons they are perceived as meaningful, can lead to the development of planning strategies that integrate or expand on those aspects which are essential for the meaning of places (Scannell & Gifford, 2010). Secondly, by focusing on a highly contested heritage place and understanding the processes through which people develop meaning, the elements that create conflict can be brought to light (Tunbridge, & Ashworth, 1996). On the one hand, this shows what kind of socio-political contexts influences people's perceptions of place, and on the other hand, it reveals how they play a role in the connection between people and places (Manzo, 2006). Lastly, this study aims to clarify processes of meaning-making through which people develop a relationship with places, a theme lacking empirical evidence (Scannell & Gifford, 2010; Lewicka, 2011), and identify the influence that heritage has in the development of place attachment.

1.3. Research aim and research question

The main aim of this research is to explore individual processes of place-meaning making used by locals in Bucharest in their understanding of the Palace of Parliament. Therefore, this study's guiding research question is:

How do locals develop a connection with the Palace of Parliament?

To understand the development of locals' attachment to the Palace of Parliament, the following sub-questions have been formulated:

1. How do locals develop meanings for the Palace of Parliament and what role do they have in the development of place attachment?

2. Why is the Palace of Parliament an important heritage place and how is this influencing locals' attachment to the building?

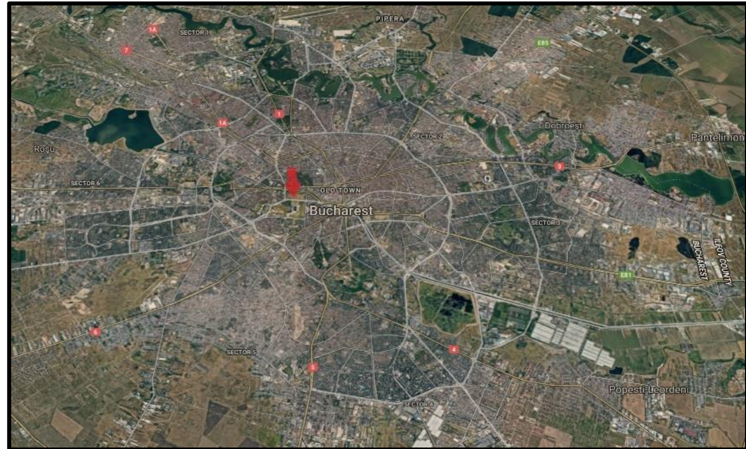
3. How do socio-political contexts influence the development of locals' attachment to the Palace of Parliament?

1.4. Thesis structure

After having briefly introduced the focus, relevance and aim of this study, in the second chapter I present an in-depth account of the history of the Palace of Parliament by focusing on relevant past and current

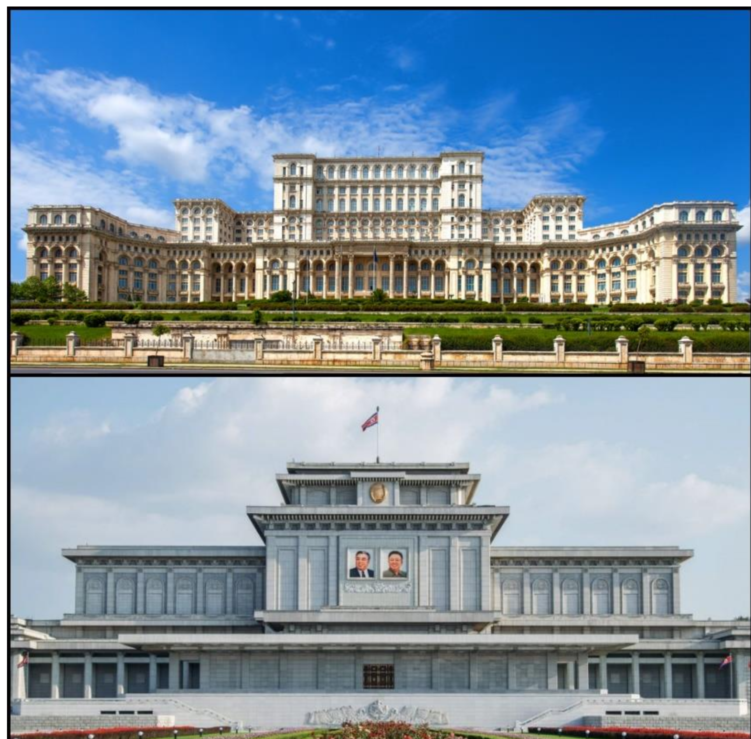
socio-political contexts. In chapter three, I elaborate on relevant theories and concepts related to place attachment, place-making processes and heritage. Further, in chapter four, I expand on this study's methodology by providing arguments for the methods used and choices made throughout the research process. Included here are also a description of the participants to this study, ethical considerations, researcher's positionality and critical reflection on the research process. In chapter five I present the findings of the conducted research by focusing on four themes which illustrate place-meaning-making processes. Lastly, chapter six comprises the answer to the research question and a discussion of the theoretical framework and concepts used in this study. Furthermore suggestions for further empirical and theoretical research are provided.

2. From the House of the Republic to the Palace of Parliament



The Palace of Parliament stands tall in the centre of Romania's capital, Bucharest. Covering 365.000 m^2, the building is located on top of Arsenalului Hill and it currently holds four world records awarded by Guinness World Records: it is the most expensive building in the world, the third regarding its volume, the heaviest and the largest administrative building for civil use (Chamber of Deputies, 2014).

Dominating the central landscape of Bucharest, the Palace of Parliament can be separated into three parts: the main sector (which consists of halls, galleries and cabinets), the office space and the rooftop area. The building is regarded as "one of the most controversial buildings in Romania" from an architectural perspective given its history (Chamber of Deputies, 2014) detailed in the following paragraphs. Moreover, the place is regarded as "a masterpiece" of the Romanian people and their culture (Ministerul Turismului, n.d.) due to the fact that Romanians worked to construct it, and it was built (almost entirely) from materials produced in Romania, such as marble, crystal and steel (Chamber of Deputies, 2014). As such, the Palace of Parliament is promoted as a symbol of Romanians and an emblem of Bucharest and Romania (Ministerul Turismului, n.d.). Still unfinished today, works on the building can be divided in two construction phases, namely, 1980-1989 and 1992-1996. However, the history of the building can be traced back to 1971, when Nicolae Ceauşescu, the communist leader of Romania until 1989, went on a trip to the capital of North Korea, Pyongyang (Burakowski, 2011).



In North Korea, Ceauşescu was fascinated with the authoritarian regime of the Kim family and by the powerful architecture of Pyongyang. As a result, in 1975 he made public his plans to remodel Bucharest based on the North Korean capital. The pinnacle of this modernization was going to be the House of the Republic (in the top picture), inspired by the Kumsusan Palace of the Sun (in the bottom picture). Although Ceauşescu desired the Romanian building to be similar to the North Korean one, he imagined a much more dominant, imposing and luxurious structure that was going to assert his dominance as a communist ruler and become his legacy for the Romanian people (Panaitescu, 2012).

In 1977, after the Vrancea earthquake destroyed more than 50.000 buildings in Bucharest alone, the first sketches of Ceauşescu's transformation plans for the capital were drawn. The earthquake, however, did not severely affect the Arsenalului Hill, nor the neighbourhoods surrounding it. However, as the highest location in the heart of Bucharest, it was chosen as the best position for the new building deemed to reflect the power of the former regime and of Ceauşescu. As such, preparations for the construction of the House of the Republic (also called the House of the People) started in 1980 (Panaitescu, 2012).

At the beginning of the first construction phase of the House of the Republic, from 1980 to 1984, Uranus neighbourhood located on Arsenalului Hill disappeared. With it, 20 churches, over 10.000 houses, important monuments and historic buildings were demolished, and over 57.000 families were forcefully evicted. These families were relocated to building blocks that had available apartments, scattered throughout Bucharest. They received no further compensation and because many of these families were given as short of a moving notice as one day, they lost most of their possessions (Panaitescu, 2012).

Desiring to leave behind a monumental legacy reflecting his grandeur and power as a communist leader, Ceauşescu claimed in 1984 at the inauguration of the construction site, that the House of the Republic will be

"an impressive testimony of the will of Bucharest's population, of the entire nation, designed to confer dignity and greatness to this country's capital city, to our socialist country, Romania."
(Burakowski, 2011, p. 74)

The House of the Republic was initially meant to be built in 5 years. However, since Ceauşescu did not grasp how architectural plans functioned in practice, he kept demanding more additions to the plans. Moreover, during every meeting with the team of architects, he made substantial and even contradictory alterations to what was already built, hence heavily impacting the allotted budget, time schedule and the materials used. The head architect of the building was Anca Petrescu (Panaitescu, 2012).

Ceauşescu pointing at the House of the Republic and its surroundings in 1977: Ceauşescu is in the centre, to his right is his wife; the team of architects is behind them, with the head architect to the far right.

The House of the Republic has 1.100 rooms and it was built with materials exclusively produced in Romania (with few exceptions), a feature indeed used to emphasize the Romanian identity of the building (Ministerul Turismului, n.d.; Chamber of Deputies, 2014). While the construction site was open continuously with employees working three shifts a day (Chamber of Deputies, 2014) especially between 1984 and 1989, Romanians were enduring drastic shortages of food, warm water, electricity and gas (Panaitescu, 2012). This implementation of laws and programs targeting the reduction of food portions (introduced in 1980) was the result of Ceausescu's decision to pay Romania's international debt and to finalize the construction of the building. Since 1984 Romanians had to use food vouchers for products such as sugar, oil and flour. Milk, meat and vegetables were rarely sold in shops. Moreover, warm water, electricity and gas were available only a few hours a day around the times people returned from work, while from 8pm, the entire country was set still (Burakowski, 2011).

By 1989, sources mention that The House of the Republic was finalized somewhere between 60% (Chamber of Deputies, 2014) to 80% (Panaitescu, 2012). Along with the 1989 Romanian Revolution, works on the building came to a halt. Regardless, the House of the Republic opened its doors for the public in 1990 for a very brief period of time, however due to the lack of amenities and because the building was still a construction site, public visits were suspended. Between 1992 and 1996 construction works resumed 'at a much slower rate' compared to the first construction period. The advancements made in these years are not shared with the public, however, during both construction phases more than 120.000 civilians and 12.000 soldiers worked on-site (Chamber of Deputies, 2014).

In 1991 Romanian politicians decided that the Chamber of Deputies would move to the House of the Republic. Subsequently, in 1993 the relocation occurred, and the building received its current name i.e. the Palace of Parliament. The building is however not only used by political institutions. In 1994, parts of the building were designated for the Bucharest International Conference Centre (Chamber of Deputies, 2014) and in 2004 the National Museum of Contemporary Art also opened in another part of the building (National Museum of Contemporary Art, n.d.). Moreover, promoted as a national symbol of the country in the Romanian tourism brochure (Ministerul Turismului, n.d.), the Palace of Parliament can be partially visited by attending guided tours provided in Romanian, English and French (Chamber of Deputies, 2014).

In the descriptions of the Chamber of Deputies (2014) and during guided tours at the building, the current presence of democratic institutions – Chamber of Deputies, the Senate, the Legislative Council and the Constitutional Court of Romania – in the Palace of Parliament is the aspect most emphasized, and through it, the building becomes an emblem of democracy.

Nevertheless, since January 2017, the square in front of the Palace of Parliament is one of the places where thousands of people have been gathering to protest decisions made by political representatives in power. At first, these protests were prompted by laws aiming to reduce sentences on corruption charges and ensure amnesty to Romanian politicians who were under investigation for various crimes of corruption. Since the government kept reformulating and trying to push forward the same laws, Romanians started demanding the resignation of politicians responsible for drafting and supporting those laws. In Bucharest, people protested for two years, time in which the Palace of Parliament was more inaccessible to locals than ever before having been guarded daily. While people were chanting "Give us back our House" in a massive protest in January 2018, I took this picture. Safe inside the building were the Romanian politicians.

3. Theoretical framework

In this chapter relevant theories and concepts encompassing the scope of this research are presented and examined. Section 3.1 introduces the concept of place attachment. The second section focuses on the theoretical framework used in this research i.e. the tripartite model developed by Scannell and Gifford (2010). The framework is discussed in-depth and every element of place attachment – people, place, processes – is described. In 3.3 the concept of heritage and its connection to place related concepts are explained. Moreover, the significance of heritage for people-place relationships is emphasized by focusing on theories which complement the tripartite model. Lastly, the conceptual framework of this thesis is illustrated in section 3.4.

3.1. Place attachment

Scholars encounter methodological and theoretical challenges when employing the concept of place attachment due to a lack of agreement on its definition and on what makes place attachment distinct from other place-related concepts (Hidalgo & Hernández, 2001; Scannell & Gifford, 2010; Lewicka, 2011; Manzo & Devine-Wright, 2014). This is evident from the abundance of notions used to address place attachment, such as, community attachment (Matarrita-Cascante, Stedman & Luloff, 2010), sense of community and sense of place (Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001), rootedness (Hidalgo & Hernández, 2001; Lewicka, 2011), involvement and insidedeness (Lewicka, 2011).

Although a fairly large variety of place-related concepts is used in place attachment research, it is generally agreed that place attachment emphasizes the attachment a person experiences towards a place (Altman & Low, 1992; Hidalgo & Hernández, 2001; Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001; Scannell & Gifford, 2010; Lewicka, 2011; Manzo & Devine-Wright, 2014). Therefore, place attachment relates to "involvement, ties, sentiments, and potential interactions with local elements" (Matarrita-Cascante et al., 2010, p.201). Even though there are scholars who view place attachment solely as an emotional response to a place (Riley, 1992), most researchers agree that attachment is "an interplay of affect and emotions, knowledge and beliefs, and behaviours and actions in reference to a place" (Altman & Low, 1992, p.5; Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001; Lewicka, 2011). In other words, place attachment can be defined as an interaction between the person or group who develops attachment, emotional responses, cognitive perceptions and practice regarding a place, and the characteristics of that place (Altman & Low, 1992; Lewicka, 2011; Manzo & Devine-Wright, 2014; Scannell & Gifford, 2010).

In place attachment theory two traditions have evolved that aim to conceptualize the notion: place attachment as an element of the multidimensional concept of sense of place (Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001), and place attachment as a multidimensional concept in itself (Altman & Low, 1992; Scannell & Gifford, 2010; Lewicka, 2011; Manzo & Devine-Wright, 2014). The theoretical framework of this study is based on the latter understanding of place attachment, on the tripartite model developed by Scannell and Gifford (2010). Their framework combines various theories on place-related concepts with the intention of providing a coherent structural framework for place attachment research (Scannell & Gifford, 2010; Lewicka, 2011). To gain a deeper understanding of the tripartite model next section discusses its components, as well as the causes triggering and stimulating interactions between these components.

3.2. The tripartite model

Scannell and Gifford (2010) propose a three-dimensional model which focuses on investigating *who* is attached, to *what* kind of place and *how* are psychological processes expressed through attachment. These three factors, namely, person, place and process, interact with one another, and at times, they can even coincide (Scannell & Gifford, 2010; Lewicka, 2011). However, place attachment research is

primarily focused on people's individual and collective attachment to places, to the detriment of the latter components of the tripartite model (Scannell & Gifford, 2010; Lewicka, 2011).

3.2.1. *Who* is attached?

Personal experiences between an individual and a place explain the subjectivity of place attachment (Scannell & Gifford, 2010). Private experiences, such as achievements, milestones and personal growth, through association to the place where they occur, render that place meaningful (Scannell & Gifford, 2010). These private experiences with a place are closely related with a person's memory of those experiences and/or of the place (Altman & Low, 1992; Manzo, 2005). In a study by Manzo (2005), one participant describes how she loathed her church, as a result of a personal spiritual crisis which occurred due to her father's death. In other words, her personal experiences enabled the process of conveying a new meaning for the church. The interplay between meaningful individual experiences, memory and place, shows that "feelings about places cannot be divorced from one's experiences of them." (Manzo, 2005, p. 75). Therefore, places do not hold any intrinsic value or meaning, since each of us creates and attributes meaning to places (Altman & Low, 1992; Manzo, 2005; Williams, 2014). This process indicates the distinctive experience of place for every individual (Manzo, 2005; Williams, 2014) and the socially constructed character of meaning, and explicitly of place (Smith, 2006; Wójcik, Bilewicz & Lewicka, 2010; Ashworth & Graham, 2016; Ujang, 2012).

For this reason, separating individual attachment from group attachment can be difficult (Scannell & Gifford, 2010), since a sense of belonging to a group or a culture is a fundamental requirement for the development of one's identity (Hall, 1997; Smith, 2006). Having said this, through collective attachment to places it is meant "the symbolic meanings of a place that are shared among members" of a group (Scannell & Gifford, 2010, p.2). In this sense, attachment is then developed towards places which are perceived to retain the culture of the group – such as, places attributed historical significance –, and therefore, the group has the desire to preserve them (Scannell & Gifford, 2010). In their study, Su and Wall (2010) show how the attachment of locals living in a village next to the Great Wall of China is based on the perception that the built heritage reflects the identity of the community. In this case, tourism is seen as a platform through which locals exhibit their group identity, leading to feelings of pride and self-identification with the place and a strong desire to preserve the built heritage.

Individual and group place attachment should, thus, be regarded as complementary and interconnected. Cultural values and beliefs shape place meanings (Smith, 2006; Scannell & Gifford, 2010). In turn, these influence the levels of attachment of both, the individual and the group (Scannell & Gifford, 2010).

3.2.2. To *what*?

Scannell and Gifford (2010, p.4) believe that place might be "the most important dimension of place attachment" because it involves "the physical setting, as well as human experience and interpretation" (Stedman, 2003, p.672). Usually, two levels of attachment are investigated, i.e. physical and social place attachment (Scannell & Gifford, 2010; Lewicka, 2011). According to Hildago and Hernández (2001) social attachment is stronger than physical attachment, however, physical attachment is needed to determine place attachment to different ranges of places investigated, i.e. house, neighbourhood and city.

Nevertheless, empirical research has been conducted on the characteristics of place (Hildago & Hernández, 2001; Stedman, 2003; Scannell & Gifford, 2010; Lewicka, 2011). This might be explained by the numerous physical features of place which might affect attachment (Lewicka, 2011). Since there

is no guiding theory in the selection of variables, scholars encounter difficulties when operationalizing physical settings (Lewicka, 2011), or dismiss physical aspects of place entirely as insignificant (Malpas, 2008).

Identified as "by far the most extensive program of measuring perceived physical features of settings in relation to neighbourhood attachment" (Lewicka, 2011, p.217), the model developed by Fornara, Bonaiuto and Bonnes (2010) incorporates nineteen factors of 'perceived residential environmental quality'. It is beyond the scope of this study to address the model in its entirety, however, an example of physical features used in the model are the dimensions of buildings, such as density and volume (Fornara, Bonaiuto & Bonnes, 2010). According to Lewicka (2010) people tend to be more attached to small-scale places, such as a building or an apartment, than to bigger ones, such as, cities. Physical features of a place may also relate with how a place looks like, i.e. aesthetics (Fornara, Bonaiuto & Bonnes, 2010; Lewicka, 2011). In this sense, Rojak and Cole (2016) show how physical features of a brewpub underlie participants' attraction to the building and contribute to their place attachment by asking participants to take photographs of a local brewpub. Their photographs present a strong focus on aspects such as, design and architectural characteristics of the building.

The extent to which a place's physical settings provide support for the achievement of goals is also important for the development of place attachment (Scannell & Gifford, 2010). In empirical research, this instrumental feature influences attachment to place, both positively and negatively, and reflects the concept of place dependency (Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001; Scannell & Gifford, 2010; Lewicka, 2011). Its importance for the achievement of attachment is also emphasized by Fornara, Bonaiuto and Bonnes' (2010) model which includes more than ten factors relating place with the availability of services or activities needed to accomplish specific needs, such as transport services, social care services and commercial activities. For example, as stated by Lewicka (2011), empirical evidence shows that people tend to be more attached to places if they have access to (natural) environments.

Even though the notion of 'place' denotes an attribution of meaning led by people (Altman & Low, 1992; Stedman, 2003; Lewicka, 2011; Manzo & Devine-Wright, 2014; Ujang, 2012) "physical features may facilitate social contacts and thus influence place attachment indirectly" (Lewicka, 2011, p.217). In this sense, physical characteristics of place can influence the meanings created by people (Stedman, 2003) who then become attached to these meanings, and therefore, develop attachment to places (Stedman, 2003; Wójcik et al., 2010; Scannell & Gifford, 2010). As Manzo (2005) argues, through meaning making people can develop connections to various kinds of places of numerous ranges, such as built settings (e.g. a closet, a street, a building, a public square, a shopping mall) or natural environments (e.g. lakes, mountains and forests).

Research shows that people develop attachments to places which support social aspects, such as enabling social connections and aiding in reaffirming collective identity (Lewicka, 2011; Manzo & Devine-Wright, 2014). Social attachment includes a sense of belonging, familiarity with people from the same environment and social ties (Scannell & Gifford, 2010). Indeed, studies show that people tend to be more attached to their communities, the longer they live within that community (Lewicka, 2011). Even more, according to Rojak and Cole (2016, p.48) a place, such as the brewpub, facilitates social needs of the local community and it is perceived as a "social hub and as a repository of local culture".

However, people do not only feel attached to the place in which social ties develop, but also to others involved in social interactions (Proshansky et al., 1983; Manzo, 2005). As a result, the place then is associated with the people towards whom attachment develops (Scannell & Gifford, 2010). Nevertheless, the opposite situation can also occur. In a study by Manzo (2005), one participant remembers how he despised the building in which he worked because of the conflicts he had with his former co-workers. Whether social place attachment is positively strong or evoking strong negative feelings, the social construction of place is emphasized (Manzo, 2005). In either situation, the place "is

not the simple location to which meaning or human significance is attached, but the meaning or significances as such" (Malpas, 2008, p.203).

As argued, physical characteristics and social aspects of place contribute to the development of attachments to place. In their research, Hildago and Hernández (2001) show that place attachment is best predicted when both variables, physical and social attachment to place, are included in the statistical model. Therefore, physical and social attachments should be regarded as interrelated and complementary (Hildago & Hernández, 2001; Scannell & Gifford, 2010).

3.2.3. *How* do people attach?

Given that place attachment research has been focusing extensively on the first element of the tripartite model, not much is known about the ways in which people connect to places, and the processes underlying the relation between people and places (Lewicka, 2011). Scannell and Gifford (2010) separate these 'psychological aspects of place attachment' into three components i.e. affect, cognition and behaviour.

Affect

Attachment to a place implies an affective relationship to that place (Manzo, 2005; Scannell & Gifford, 2010). For example, in a study conducted by Fried (1963) people who were forcefully relocated showed signs of grief after losing their homes. The wide range of emotions and feelings that people's connection to places generates is also emphasized by Manzo (2005). In this study, participants expressed their affect towards places by using terms such as 'love', 'hate', 'comfort', 'anger', 'resentment', 'mixed feelings' and even 'uncertain'. For instance, a participant described how he was feeling unsafe and frightened when he had to work in a bar during the summer (Manzo, 2005). While Scannell and Gifford (2010) agree with the understanding that one's negative experiences in place may foster negative sentiments towards a place, they regard attachment to place as an exclusive result of people's positive emotions, their examples of affect being 'happiness', 'pride' and 'love'.

These different understandings of people's attachment to place can be explained as Brown, Raymond and Corcoran (2015) argue by the approach that scholars choose to adopt when conducting research. In other words, when research focuses on participants' personal view and experience of place, then as Manzo (2005) shows, people's connection to places can encompass a variety of feelings. However, even when exploring local community's attachment to place feelings appear to go beyond a dichotomy between negative and positive, as shown by Gu and Ryan (2008). In their study, locals' attachment to their hutong (i.e. a traditional type of living environment) in Beijing was primarily explained by a self-identification with their heritage. This was underpinned by feelings of pride, appreciation and distinctiveness as a result of living in such an environment. At the same time, however, locals expressed concerns regarding the growing number of tourists in the area, and as such, a protective, caring feeling towards place, can be identified because of their reservation for future tourism developments (Gu & Ryan, 2008).

In the light of these findings and because the aim of this research is to explore the processes through which locals' develop connections to contested built heritage, attachment is approached in its broader sense as any kind of "affective bond or link between people and specific places" (Hildago & Hernández, 2001, p.274), whether positive, negative, ambivalent, or neutral.

Behaviour

People's attachment to place can be reflected through the behaviour they exhibit towards a place (Scannell & Gifford, 2010). For instance, people's desire to be close to a place indicates a strong place attachment (Hildago & Hernández, 2001; Scannell & Gifford, 2010). Studies found that the longer people live in a place, the stronger their attachment to place becomes (Nanzer, 2004; Lewicka, 2011). This is illustrated, for instance, by Su and Wall (2010) who show that locals' strong bond the Great

Wall is fostering their willingness to stay in the village, an attachment to place due to self-identification with heritage. However, this bond is also triggered by locals' daily involvement in heritage conservation i.e. maintaining a good state of the Great Wall and of their village (Su & Wall, 2010). Day-to-day activities and behaviours in place create the circumstances needed for people to develop attachments (Nanzer, 2004). In other words, people get used to the places where they spend the most times in because feelings of familiarity and security are shaped (Scannell & Gifford, 2010; Lewicka, 2011).

Nonetheless, people's behaviour towards a place is not the only trigger for feelings of familiarity and security. Rollero and De Piccoli (2010) show that people's connections to other people are the basis of residential stability and attachment to place. Their findings show that identification with place is not needed for the development of attachment, as affect stems from social ties (Rollero & De Piccoli, 2010). While social ties foster attachment, they can also strengthen a sense of belonging to a community or a group (Scannell & Gifford, 2010; Lewicka, 2011). Interaction with others in the community, but also the safety of the area, were key predictors of place attachment in the case of locals (called Rāpaki) living in a Māori heritage area affected by earthquakes (Winstanley, Hepi & Wood, 2015). Not being able to recognize a place due to changes in place (Scannell & Gifford, 2010; Lewicka, 2011) can cause disruptions to place attachment and identity (Devine-Wright & Howes, 2010). In the case of the Rāpaki, new decisions on territory planning were threatening to further change a specific place perceived as highly significant for their Māori culture, and as such, endangering "the continuity of Māori culture, language and the community afforded by marae-based activities" (Winstanley et al., 2015, p.131). As a result, to protect their (tangible and intangible) heritage the Rāpaki became resilient to relocation and territorial plans which did not encompass a Māori experience of sense of place (Winstanley et al., 2015).

In the case studies chosen to illustrate how the development of attachment occurs, the type of place varies from a hutong settlement and a Māori area, to the Great Wall. What all these places have in common, however, is their importance for local culture and heritage. Special significances, narratives and beliefs are attached to these heritage places. As such, in their creation as significant places, people's cognitive processes have a determining role (Scannell & Gifford, 2010; Lewicka, 2011).

Cognition

Memory, beliefs, meaning and knowledge are the four cognitive elements identified in the development of place attachment (Scannell & Gifford, 2010). These cognitive elements reinforce the idea that the perception of place varies from person to person, thus emphasizing the complexity and individuality of place-making processes (Scannell & Gifford, 2010; Lewicka, 2011).

People use their knowledge and beliefs about a place to justify the significance they attribute to it (Scannell & Gifford, 2010; Smith, 2006). This helps people to make sense of their environment by categorizing information they have about a place and focusing on specific characteristics of place which are perceived as meaningful (Manzo, 2005; Scannell & Gifford, 2010). People's perception of place is also influenced by their belonging to a cultural group (Scannell & Gifford, 2010; Lewicka, 2011) because oftentimes the set of beliefs and value systems defining people's culture determines the way they perceive the world (Smith, 2006).

Memory plays a key role in the creation of meaning because people often become attached to places which remind them of significant personal events or important people in their lives (Manzo, 2005; Lewicka, 2011). The concept of place memory helps to understand personal views of place because it entails historical characteristics of place and the way that those aspects are represented in the memory of the individual developing an attachment to that place (Wójcik et al., 2010). Place memory is also connected with physical features of a place: architectural characteristics, for example, contribute to the creation of meaning (Stedman, 2003) and place memory (Wójcik et al., 2010), and at the same time, these physical characteristics are attributed specific meanings which connect the place to its ascribed memory (Lewicka, 2011). However, memory is constructed individually and collectively, and

as such even when specific events were “witnessed by an individual, their reconstruction can be distorted due to group norms and collective narratives” (Wójcik et al., 2010, p.195). Therefore, it is difficult, if not even impossible to differentiate between individually and collectively created meanings or memories of (public) places (Graham, Ashworth & Tunbridge, 2000; Wójcik et al., 2010).

As such, the meanings people attribute to places are also difficult to separate into individually or collectively developed. However, two views can facilitate the exploration of meanings. These, meanings can be separated into private and public (Van Patten & Williams, 2008). On the one hand, private meanings are defined by subjective experiences of place. This, however, does not necessarily mean that the individual develops the meaning of the place, and thus, the place can reflect a collectively developed meaning. On the other hand, public meanings reflect the information provided by authorities in relation to a place. In terms of heritage meaning, this official information provision is also known as authorized heritage discourse (Smith, 2006).

This section aimed to show that the tripartite framework is meant to provide a conceptual basis for place attachment researchers, and although incomplete, it enables a qualitative investigation of meanings and narratives attributed to places, providing clear elements of psychological elements used in place-making processes (Scannell & Gifford, 2010). The model also allows the exploration of the five aspects of place attachment described by Altman and Low (1992) the presence of social relationships in a particular place, the manner in which this place is defined by different societal actors, the particularities of the place, the manner in which one interacts with the place and the type of time frame in which this relation with the place is developed. In their view, place attachment “may contribute to the formation, maintenance, and preservation of the identity of a person, group, or culture” (Altman & Low, 1992, p.10), an understanding strikingly similar to the concept of heritage.

3.3. Heritage

Heritage is a product created in the present addressing the needs of the society which creates it and it involves representations of meanings, images and overall resources carefully selected for the completion of specific purposes. As a complex concept which addresses multiple users and usages, heritage “is simultaneously knowledge, a cultural product and a political resource” (Ashworth & Graham, 2016, p.8). Leading ideologies build and fashion heritage to foster the creation of an individual and collective identity which bonds people, places and time (Smith, 2006; Ashworth & Graham, 2016). As such, place memory is used in national histories which provide a canon of places that hold significant importance for the sense of national identity (Wójcik et al., 2010).

Due to the influence that leading ideologies have in heritage creation, Smith (2006) regards heritage as a discourse primarily established by the authorized entity qualified to represent the past, i.e. the dominant power. In this view, values and principles seen as worth preserving for future generations identified by experts are prioritized over the ones of non-experts, and it is this same group of experts that is entitled to modify or maintain heritage. It is important to examine this specific discourse because it supports the creation of public meanings (Van Patten & Williams, 2008) and collective identity (Smith, 2006; Ashworth & Graham, 2016).

However, locals also have their own view of heritage, and as such, place memory is not static (Wójcik et al., 2010). Defined by its contested character, heritage encompasses and reflects innumerable place memories that provide a sense of identity and continuity for the group that identifies with that heritage (Van Patten & Williams, 2008; Ashworth & Graham, 2016). As a result, through heritage, places are endowed meanings reflecting particularities of a group, such as values, norms and principles which anchor this group in place, while excluding others (Smith, 2006; Ashworth & Graham, 2016).

When the meaning of heritage does not match the view of the individual or group who identifies with that heritage, an incongruity called dissonance is formed between identity, heritage and the place to which the individual or the group is attached to (Ashworth & Graham, 2016). For instance, built heritage is often used for tourist promotion purposes and as such it reflects a particular meaning which may instigate frustration among locals when the meaning advertised does not accurately portray their current identity (Tunbridge & Ashworth, 1996). Thus, authorized heritage discourse does not help in solving dissonant views on heritage (Smith, 2006).

Therefore, because through heritage, places become "interpreted, narrated, felt, understood and imagined" (Van Patten & Williams, 2008, p. 449) and as such they are attributed different meanings from different people at different times (Smith, 2006; Ashworth & Graham, 2016), it is important to explore narratives and meanings attributed by locals to specific heritage places for conflict resolution (Tunbridge & Ashworth, 1996; Smith, 2006). Moreover, exploring heritage places uncovers the contribution of heritage to people-place relationships (Hawke, 2011).

While it is agreed that heritage encompasses a multitude of meanings (Tunbridge & Ashworth, 1996; Smith, 2006; Ashworth & Graham, 2016), it involves, just like places do, public and private meanings (Van Patten & Williams, 2008). To understand the processes of place meaning-making it must be emphasized why people develop meaning in the first place. According to Baumeister (1991) meanings can be explained by the human needs they serve: the four fundamental needs for meaning. Firstly, people develop meaning to justify their purpose. As such, the development of meaning can be based on goals which provides people with a purpose in life. These goals are often based on external motivations and are related to future improvements. Secondly, people create meanings to support their need of value. This is based on a positive or negative valuation of desirable versus prohibited behaviours and it is connected to systems of values and beliefs that people adhere to. Thirdly, meaning is formed because people need to have the feeling of control over their environment, i.e. efficacy. When people feel a sense of control, positive feelings arise, whereas a lack of efficacy triggers strong, negative feelings of oppression and helplessness. To overcome this, people either change themselves to fit the environment, or they change the environment to fit themselves. Lastly, people have to create meaning for self-worth. Baumeister (1991, p.44) states that people need to feel respected in order "to feel they have positive value". As such, they create meanings that render them superior in comparison to others by focusing on features they perceive as unique and definitory for themselves or for their cultural group.

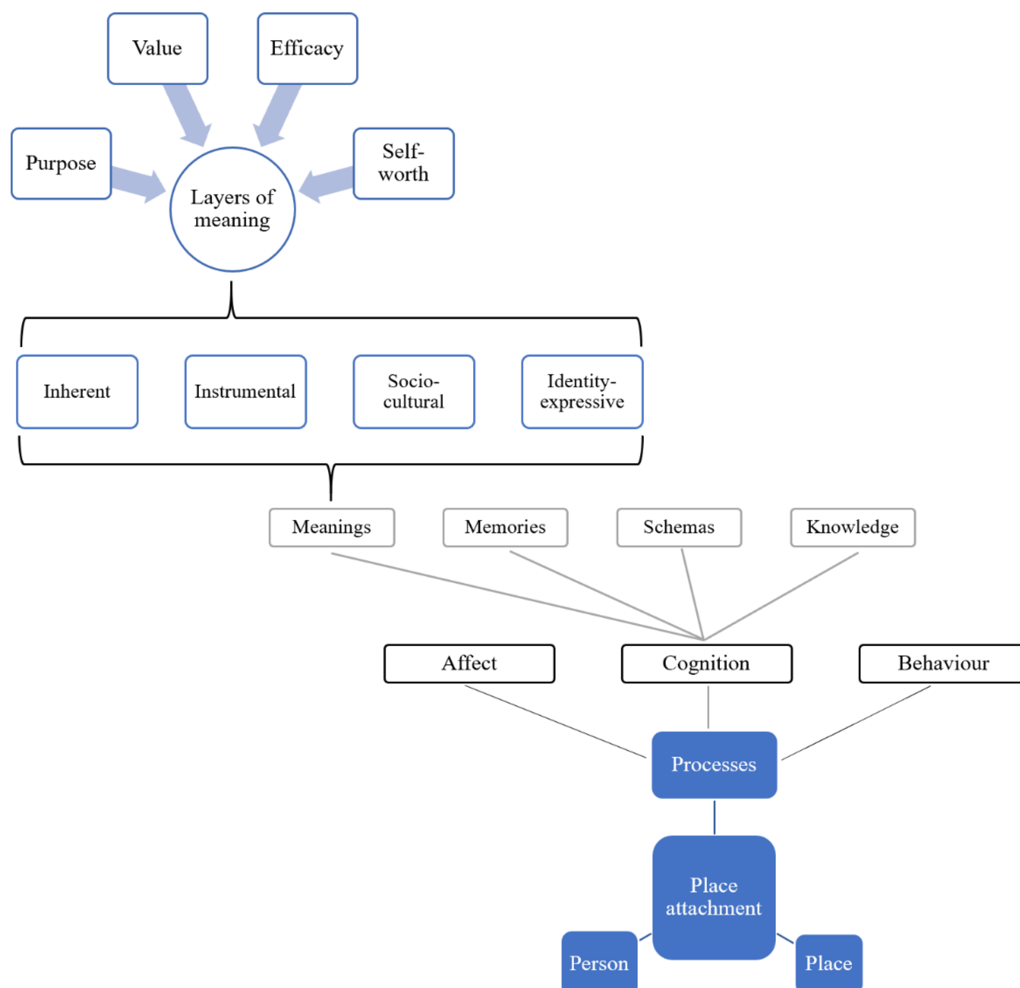
The specific meanings generated to satisfy the human needs explained above are endless because every individual creates them. Although it might serve the same need, the meanings developed can be contradictory and opposing (Baumeister, 1991), a central aspect in understanding heritage as a contested and dissonant concept (Tunbridge & Ashworth, 1996; Ashworth & Graham, 2016). In this sense, studying heritage as an example of place can unveil how people-place connections occur through the development of meaning.

This exploration can be facilitated by the four layers of place meanings explained by Williams (2014) which progress from surface to deep meanings. On a surface level, a place can entail a certain "degree of inherent meaning" which addresses those types of characteristics that most people would perceive such as scale, colour and the extent of pleasantness of a place (Williams, 2014, p.76). Perceived aesthetical features are important in the development of place attachment (Lewicka, 2011) and can support a strong identification of locals with heritage places as explained in 3.2.2. The second layer of place meanings is the instrumental meanings. They are formed through those characteristics of place which support desired behaviours or goals (Williams, 2014). As such, these meanings support the development of place dependency (Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001; Scannell & Gifford, 2010; Lewicka, 2011) and provide strong basis for emotional connection with heritage places as argued in 3.2.3. The shift form surface to deep meanings occurs with the third layer of place meanings i.e. socio-cultural meanings. These meanings are "socially or symbolically constructed within the cultural, historical and

geographical contexts of day-to-day life" and they support identification with specific cultural groups (Williams, 2014, p.76). As such, the contribution of heritage to place attachment becomes more prominent at this level of place meanings because, as argued at the beginning of this section, heritage is carefully selected (often from the past) to serve present needs of the ones who create it (Ashworth & Graham, 2016). The last layer of place meaning is represented by identity-expressive meanings (Williams, 2014) or, in other words, those meanings which support self-identification with a place, emphasized in 3.2.1 and 3.2.3.

3.4. Conceptual framework

The tripartite framework of Scannell and Gifford (2010) allows the exploration of places embedded in socio-political contexts, and thus it was deemed appropriate to research the Palace of Parliament as a heritage place. Nevertheless, because the aim of this research was to investigate how people develop and attribute meaning, additional information providing more insight into meaning-making processes was added to the tripartite model, as illustrated in the conceptual model below. Firstly, it is important to note once more that in this research the Palace of Parliament was regarded as an example of place, also viewed as heritage. The concept of heritage is encompassed by all three elements of the tripartite framework, however, in this study focus was placed on the processes underlying the relation between people and places (the third element of the tripartite framework), and more specifically, on how people develop place-meanings. To unveil processes of place meaning-making, emphasis was placed on why meanings are needed by addressing the human fundamental needs for meaning described by Baumeister (1991). Lastly, for a clear categorization of meanings, the four layers of place meanings by Williams (2014) were used.



4. Methodology

This chapter expands on the methodological implications and epistemological stance of this research. Firstly, in 4.1 I discuss the relevance of qualitative research when exploring individual perspectives and its suitability for the purpose of this study, and I position this research within the interpretative paradigm. Section 4.2. presents the data collection methods used. Here, I elaborate on the choice of semi-structured interviews, the decision to conduct pilot interviews and the influence this had on the interview guide. Additionally, I explain why it was important to attend an official guided tour at the Palace of Parliament and why information provided during that visit is used in chapter four. In 4.3. the participant-recruitment procedure is presented, alongside a description of those interviewees who took part in the research. Section 4.4. clarifies the method of data analysis, while 4.5. emphasizes ethical considerations, i.e. informed consent, harm, confidentiality, and anonymity. Lastly, also here I reflect on the research process and on my own positionality regarding the study.

4.1. Qualitative research

This study used a qualitative research approach to investigate how Bucharest's locals develop meanings and attribute them to the Palace of Parliament. The qualitative approach enables researchers to give "voice to individuals allowing viewpoints to be heard that otherwise might be silenced or excluded" (Winchester & Rofe, 2016, p.7). Thus, through qualitative research people's personal, emic perspective on a specific topic can be investigated by focusing on private feelings, meanings, stories, memories, and narratives (Clifford, Cope, Gillespie & French, 2010; Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2011; Mansvelt & Berg, 2016). In this sense, qualitative research is suitable because it facilitates the understanding of how people create meaning (Hennink et al., 2011) and it helps in "elucidating human environments and human experiences" (Winchester & Rofe, 2016, p.5). The qualitative approach is thus suitable for this research because it aims at understanding and exploring the views of Bucharest' locals regarding the Palace of Parliament within socio-political contexts.

As such, this study used interpretivism due to its focus on "understand[ing] subjective meaningful experiences and the meaning of social actions within the context in which people live" (Clifford et al., 2010; Hennink et al., 2011, p.14). Within the interpretive paradigm "reality is socially constructed as people's experiences occur within social, cultural, historical or personal contexts" (Hennink et al., 2011, p.15) and thus, it supports the absence of one universal truth (Hennink et al., 2011; Mansvelt & Berg, 2016). Therefore, in this sense it is not possible nor desired to reach a generalizable conclusion; instead, the researcher becomes part of the study by interpreting and connecting emergent material with the people and the contexts where research was conducted (Mansvelt & Berg, 2016). Section 3.4. elaborates on how data was analyzed in this research.

While interpretivism emphasizes the subjective construction of reality on behalf of participants, it also recognizes the researcher as a subjective observer whose views on the world are also socially constructed. Hence, the implications of the researcher throughout the research process must be critically analyzed and presented (Hennink et al., 2011), or else said, "how one's position in relation to the processes, people and phenomena we are researching actually affects both those phenomena and our understanding of them" (Mansvelt & Berg, 2016, p.401). In this thesis, section 3.6. includes a reflection on the research process and my positionality within this study.

4.2. Data collection methods

In this study, semi-structured in-depth interviews were used to explore participants' perspective on the Palace of Parliament and how they create meaning. Apart from explaining the method chosen, this section also discusses the reasons why pilot interviews were conducted. Lastly, although not a primary

research method in this study, the choice to use the information gathered during a guided tour at the Palace of Parliament is also clarified.

4.2.1. Semi-structured in-depth interviews

In-depth interviews involve a dialogue between researcher and participant in which highly subjective information is shared by the interviewee (Hennink et al., 2011). As such, it enables the researcher to explore an emic understanding of the themes researched by enquiring about participant's personal experiences, opinions, narratives and stories (Hennink et al., 2011; Dunn, 2016). Hence, by using this method, researchers uncover and can address the contexts in which participants live and through which they form their perspectives (Hennink et al., 2011). In-depth interviews with such a personal nature are often informal and the interviewer can react and adapt to the participant and vice versa (Hennink et al., 2011; Dunn, 2016). For the purpose of this research i.e. discovering contexts, personal experiences, feelings, stories, practices and narratives that form various meanings attributed to the Palace of Parliament, in-depth interviews are an appropriate qualitative method.

The choice of semi-structured interviews was made because they ensure that key aspects which emerged from the study of literature on the topic explored are addressed during the interviews (Hennink et al., 2011; Dunn, 2016). As such, according to Dunn (2016) semi-structured interviews provide the researcher with a predetermined, however, flexible scheme to follow while interviewing.

In this research, 16 interviews were conducted in Bucharest, Romania, in a variety of public places, such as cafés, restaurants and meeting rooms. The interviews were conducted in January-February 2018 and the exact location of these places varied as they were chosen by participants depending on their whereabouts around the time of the interview. For instance, one interview was conducted during the lunch break of one of the participants and therefore, it took place in a restaurant located next to the working place of the interviewee. Moreover, the length of the interviews varied between 45 minutes to 1 hour and 25 minutes. This aspect was dependent on the amount of available time of each participant, for example, the interview just mentioned took 45 minutes.

All interviews were audio recorded with the approval of the participants. On the one hand, this facilitated in documenting everything discussed, as I was able to re-listen to the audio information several times. On the other hand, not having to write down what participants were saying, helped me with concentrating on establishing rapport and engaging in a natural conversation with the participants. Although the audio recording does not capture non-verbal communication, I logged any sort of physical gesture that seemed relevant. For instance, when addressing his view of current political context, a participant expressed his frustration through an over usage of hand motions.

The interviews were conducted in Romanian and later on, the quotes used to illustrate the findings of this study in chapter four were translated to English. Further explanations on the process of translation can be found in section 4.4. The knowledge that the interviews were going to be taking place in Romanian and the fact that the research process before the interviews took place in English, prompted my decision to conduct pilot interviews on which I expand in section 4.2.3. Lastly, apart from wanting to ensure that all key aspects were covered in every interview through the interview guide, I also used an interview schedule to ensure that key questions had suitable translations from English to Romanian.

4.2.2. Interview guide and schedule

The interview guide can take the form of key topics which function as a reminder of what else still needs to be discussed (Hennink et al., 2011). Although the interview guide ensures interviewer's flexibility regarding which topics to address first, it is a tool recommended to advanced researchers who can create interview questions on the spot, and thus, for interviewers with less experience, the interview

guide does not help in avoiding unclear and vague phrasing of questions (Dunn, 2016). One way to overcome this issue during interviews is to use a combination between an interview guide and an interview schedule. The interview schedule complements the interview guide by keeping a record of thoroughly worded questions (Dunn, 2016).

In this research, key topics were covered by the interview guide, and key questions were formulated in the interview schedule. These topics and questions were formulated based on the conceptual framework described in 3.4. The Romanian translation of the interview schedule improved as a result of the pilot interviews, as questions such as 'Could you please argument that?' or 'What are the reasons for that?', became 'And why is that?' or 'Could you tell me why?'. Thus, a more colloquial language in the interview schedule was used, and it seems reasonable to suggest that this is the reason why participants did not need any clarification on language use.

The order of the questions however, changed only after the first three interviews conducted, as the participants in the pilot interviews did not have any remarks regarding the order of the questions. According to Dunn (2016) interviewers are advised to use a pyramid structure, in which they begin by asking questions considered easy to answer by the participant, such as 'Please, tell me about yourself' and end with more abstract ones, for instance 'How do you view this issue?'. During the first three interviews, it became clear that participants had difficulties with answering personal, easy questions, such as 'Could you please describe yourself?' and were very respondent to questions about current socio-political contexts, such as, their perception on Romanian politics. As a result, I adjusted the structure of the interview guide and schedule to a funnel structure, in which the interviewer begins with general or abstract topics first, and then turns to personal experiences and self-descriptions of the interviewee (Dunn, 2016). Therefore, I mostly began by asking participants 'How is life in Bucharest?' or 'How do you get around in this crowded city?' However, I changed the exact order of the questions according to the context in which myself and the interviewee were. For instance, one interview was conducted during a protest against Romanian government and parliament. I met the participant in a café close to the main road, which meant that we could see the protesters. In that case, I started the interview by asking 'What is happening here these days?'.

4.2.3. Pilot interviews

Apart from enabling the researcher to review linguistic issues and the structure of questions, pilot interviews are advisable because they help in deciding whether the information received might answer the research questions and whether new concepts must be included in the theoretical framework, i.e. checking the validity of the research (Hennink et al., 2011). As such, three pilot interviews were conducted in the first week of January 2018, before departing to Bucharest. The participants were recruited through convenience sampling, i.e. reaching participants on the basis of access (Cameron, 2016). Furthermore, they were selected based on three criteria: their knowledge of the Romanian language, their level of the English language and their familiarity with the subject researched.

All pilot interviews were conducted online: two via Skype and one via WhatsApp. These methods were chosen because, due to time and budget limitations, I was not able to fix appointments for face-to-face pilot interviews with participants meeting these criteria before my first scheduled interview in Bucharest. As such, online communication was the most suitable choice at that time. The main disadvantage of using such tools, in this research, was the inadequate Internet connection. The dialog was interrupted several times during the three interviews. To try and prevent further disruptions, both myself and the participants decided to not make use of our video cameras. This situation led to the difficulty of establishing trust and rapport: the lack of proper Internet connection and not using the video camera made me feel as if there was a sort of boundary between myself and the participants. Furthermore, it caused the interviews to take much more time than expected. My initial anticipation was that the interviews would have taken anywhere between 1 hour and 1 hour and 30 minutes. Due to

the interruptions, however, the interviews were with 30 to 45 minutes longer. Nevertheless, by using these online communication tools to conduct pilot interviews I was able to adjust linguistic problems found in the interview schedule. Lastly, the pilot interviews helped in determining that, although not fundamental for the purpose of this study, participants would have felt more involved in the discussed topic if they needed to describe their Romanian cultural identity and give examples of Romanian heritage. As such, I included these aspects in the interview guide to make participants feel more comfortable and engaged in the topic. The decision to include these questions proved to be appropriate because, on the one hand, participants had more time to adjust to the more personal nature of the interview, and on the other hand, they liked talking about their Romanian background and identity.

4.2.4. Guided tour

During fieldwork in Bucharest I attended a guided tour at the Palace of Parliament with an initial intention of audio recording the narrative provided by the guide. Since at the Palace of Parliament only officially led tours are taking place inside the building, my initial aim was to analyze the information provided by the guide as part of the authorized heritage discourse. Furthermore, this would have assured the triangulation of data and enhanced the validity of the research, as authorized heritage discourse is one of the main notions discussed in this study.

However, on the account that the Palace of Parliament is housing the government and parliament of the country, and security would be breached by using an audio recorder, I was unable to obtain any form of consent. On the official website of the Palace of Parliament regulations regarding audio recording are absent. Nevertheless, visitors are allowed to take pictures and videos with their phones. That is why, I assumed video recording would not be an issue. Although allowing to video record, but not audio record seem rather contradictory, official statements, I did not use my phone to video record the narrative due to the lack of consent. At first, during the guided tour, I decided to write down as much information as I possibly could. However, that turned to be inefficient, as writing while walking or standing was not an appropriate posture to allow me to take many notes.

To adapt to the described situation, I changed my approach. Since during my exploration of previous studies on the Palace of Parliament I identified the authorized heritage discourse reported by other scholars, I was able to compare the information provided during the guided tour with the previously identified discourse. Additionally, since by the time of the guided tour at the Palace of Parliament I had already conducted several interviews in Bucharest, I was able to focus on specific aspects discussed in these interviews. As such, in chapter four I refer to the guided tour in order to support what has been said by participants and literature on those topics. This usage of the information provided during the guided tour is further complemented by two other sources of authorized heritage discourse – the website of the Palace of Parliament and the official tourism brochure developed by The Romanian Ministry of Tourism – to achieve triangulation of data and reinforce the validity of the research.

4.3. Participant-recruitment procedure

Qualitative studies use purposive recruitment procedures i.e. selecting persons who have specific characteristics, who have particular experiences that are insightful for the study and who are able to provide in-depth data on the research topic (Hennink et al., 2011; Boeije, 2014; Cameron, 2016). Therefore, in qualitative approaches the decision about what kind of participant must be selected for the purpose of the research, begins along with the exploration of the research topic, the aim of the study and the methodological stance (Hennink et al., 2011; Cameron, 2016). As this research was guided by the interpretive paradigm and aimed at exploring locals' meanings and views about the Palace of

Parliament within their local socio-political contexts, this study used purposive criterion sampling, a recruitment procedure which focuses on all participants who meet specific conditions (Cameron, 2016).

First and foremost, because of the location of the Palace of Parliament, only participants who live in Bucharest were considered to enable the exploration of their experience of the building. Secondly, previous studies on the building emphasize its highly contested nature and suggest that people who had a direct experience of the former communist regime have an aversion towards the Palace of Parliament because of its past (Light, 2000; Light, 2001). Conversely, people who did not live through any of those experiences are less perceptive to its contested character. Therefore, in order to understand how people develop a connection to the Palace of Parliament and to gain an insight into their experiences of current and past socio-political contexts, three age groups of local inhabitants, born and raised in Bucharest, were considered:

- Local inhabitants of Bucharest who are in their senior years (above 56 years old) and have ample life experiences as they lived through different, if not opposite, socio-political contexts. Locals above 56 years old experienced either the same amount of years under the new political regime as they did under the old one, or they have a wider experience of the previous regime compared to both, middle age and younger locals.
- Local inhabitants of Bucharest who are in their middle age years (between 40 and 56 years old) and thus, have lived through both, the former socio-political context for some years, and (mostly) the current one. According to Burakowski (2011), the 1989 Romanian Revolution was fuelled especially by the desires of the (back then) young adults. It is known however, that teenagers also participated in these events, and therefore this age group also includes people who at the time of the Revolution were above 13 years old.
- Local inhabitants of Bucharest born after 1989 and thus have no direct experience with past socio-political contexts, who already turned 18 years old. This cut off point was used as a prerequisite in providing informed consent to participate in this study.

In this study, however, senior participants were not included. Although I had contacts of potential senior participants from other interviewees, after elaborating on the topic they refused to take part in the research. I also approached senior people during my fieldwork in Bucharest. While they were very friendly and curious about my study, it seemed to me that they were reluctant to discuss socio-political contexts. Due to time limitations, I decided to not include this group in the research after all.

The age criterion was developed in order to obtain rich information about individuals' meaning-making processes and explore how experiences of different socio-political contexts influence their relationship with the Palace of Parliament. After conducting the pilot interviews, I asked the participants for contact details of potential participants to the research, who met the described criteria and might want to contribute to the study. As such, snowball sampling was used, i.e. including participants referred to by other participants (Cameron, 2016). While conducting interviews in Bucharest, I used my personal and professional network to approach participants in their middle-age years, therefore employing a convenience sampling method. Lastly, I also used opportunistic sampling which "requires the researcher to be flexible and follow new leads during fieldwork, taking advantage of the unexpected" (Cameron, 2016, p.124). While I was working in a coffee shop in Bucharest on reviewing an interview and transcribing parts of it, two individuals approached me because they were curious about what I was busy with. I briefly explained the topic of my master thesis, and seeing that they were interested in the subject, I elaborated on the research aims. They asked if they could also participate in the research, and after confirming that they were suitable for the study criteria, I conducted a joint interview with the two participants.

4.3.1. Description of participants

In the qualitative method approach not an exact number of participants determine the validity of the study (Cameron, 2016) since the aim is not "to generalize findings to a broader population", but rather attaining data saturation achieved by continuing to investigate a topic until the information becomes repetitive (Hennink et al., 2011, p.84).

In this research a total of 16 participants were involved, 5 males and 11 females. Six of them were middle age participants, their age ranging from 40 to 56 years old. The age of the other ten participants ranged from 25 to 29 years old. Due to the recruitment procedures, especially snowball and opportunistic sampling, some participants were aware of other interviewees' participation to this research because they knew each other. Therefore, to guarantee anonymity, details i.e. name, specific age and occupation, which could potentially disclose participants' identity are not shared. Other characteristics of the participants can be observed in the table below.

Pseudonym	Age range	Sex	Highest education level obtained
Caesar	25 - 29	Male	Higher education
Fleur	25 - 29	Female	Higher education
Cajsa	25 - 29	Female	Higher education
Vidar	25 - 29	Male	Higher education
Bara	25 - 29	Female	Higher education
Damaris	25 - 29	Female	Higher education
Ida	25 - 29	Female	Higher education
Dado	25 - 29	Male	Higher education
Galia	25 - 29	Female	Higher education
Ranvir	25 - 29	Male	Higher education
Zaina	40 - 56	Female	Vocational college
Adria	40 - 56	Female	Vocational college
Sandor	40 - 56	Male	Vocational college
Dakini	40 - 56	Female	Higher education
Abela	40 - 56	Female	Vocational college
Ratree	40 - 56	Female	Higher education

4.4. Method of data analysis

In qualitative research, the process of data analysis involves interpreting, explaining and understanding the generated data and interconnections between theoretical concepts (Clifford et al., 2010; Hennink et al., 2011). The first phase in this process is to prepare the data for coding by, for instance, translating and editing it (Hennink et al., 2011). As the interviews were conducted in Romanian, my initial intention was to translate them to English to be able to supply transcripts to an interpretive community in order to establish rigor. According to Bradshaw and Stratford (2016) it is highly important to demonstrate that research results can be trusted, and thus involving research supervisors and colleagues in checking and assessing the research process causes a feedback loop which enhances the credibility of the research and ensures the trustworthiness of the study through triangulation of data. However, the translation of the interviews from Romanian to English was an extremely time-consuming task, requiring approximately five hours of listening and typing for one hour of audio recording. As such, due to time constraints, six interviews were entirely translated to English, while from the rest of the interviews, only relevant quotes were translated. Furthermore, these verbatim transcripts focus strongly on the information provided by participants, and less on their mechanics of speech, such as pauses and speech filters. Lastly, data was anonymized to protect the identity of participants.

The next step in the analysis process is coding the generated data (Hennink et al., 2011). In this research the six interviews entirely translated to English were used to develop deductive and inductive codes. Corresponding to the conceptual framework of this study, these deductive codes show the

connections between the data and the theoretical framework. The inductive codes stem from participants' processes of meaning and place-making which relate to personal views, experiences and stories. Considering these deductive and inductive codes, the rest of the interviews were then read and evaluated. Any new codes generated were included in the codebook, and thus, the six interviews were re-read and re-evaluated.

Such analysis process alongside deductive and inductive codes, reinforces the interconnection between theory and the generated data of the researched topic (Hennink et al., 2011). Due to my own preference and experience, I used Word to create a codebook. Firstly, I color-coded the data of the six interviews. I first identified the deductive codes, and then the inductive ones. Next, I used these color-codes throughout the rest of the interviews and identified new inductive codes which I then considered when re-reading the six interviews. Lastly, I grouped these codes alongside notes explaining their link and possible influences on that connection.

4.5. Ethical considerations

When approaching an interpretive methodology in qualitative studies, researchers gather highly personal information such as, individuals' stories about their experiences of places, personal meanings attributed to various events or experiences, perspectives on societal structures, private recollection of memories, personal opinions and narratives (Hennink et al., 2011; Boeije, 2014; Dowling, 2016). Therefore, in this section the ethical considerations of this research are addressed, namely, informed consent, harm, confidentiality and anonymity.

4.5.1. Informed consent

In qualitative research studies must provide a confirmation that each participant has agreed to be part of the research, without being coerced. Informed consent is an essential part in validating the fact that participants have willingly participated and contributed to the research, that they are aware of the research topics and of the purpose of the research, and that they understand the responsibilities of both, the researcher and the researched (Hennink et al., 2011; Boeije, 2014).

Before every interview, I explained the purpose of the consent form and then I asked participants to read it carefully. The consent form read by participants was written in Romanian, however an English translation can be found in appendix I. The form describes the research aim, topics covered and the responsibilities of the research and the interviewee. Although I asked each participant if I could record the interview, this aspect was also mentioned in the consent form. After I made sure that no questions regarding the consent form remained unanswered, the interviews began. Participants were asked to sign the consent form only at the end of the interviews. The consent forms are in my possession, and because they include the names of the participants, these documents will not be made public.

4.5.2. Harm

A crucial aspect when conducting research is minimizing potential harm towards the participants, but also towards the researcher (Hennink et al., 2011; Dowling, 2016). In this research, participants were (verbally and through the consent form) informed about my obligation as a researcher to cause them no harm throughout the research process. I also informed them that their responsibility towards me was based on the same principle.

Firstly, to minimize potential harm and to reduce the impact of the interview process on participants and on their personal schedules, I decided to conduct the interviews in areas of the city preferred by the them. As such, the interviews took place in public places, such as cafés, restaurants

and meetings rooms, located as closest as possible from the whereabouts of the participants at the time of the interviews. On the one hand, conducting the interviews in areas familiar to participants gives them a sense of security and a comfortable feeling (Hennink et al., 2011). Furthermore, participants were very pleased and grateful that I travelled to their location. In this way, they did not have to allot extra time to travel through Bucharest, which can be a frustrating and tiring experience since traffic-wise the city is one of the most crowded in Europe. On the other hand, interviewing participants in public places made me feel safe. Some participants invited me to conduct the interviews at their homes, however, since I did not personally know them, I did not feel safe enough to conduct the interviews there. However, since the interviews were conducted very close to their residences, these participants were happy with the location. The reason they wanted to be close to home was due to convenience (some participants had other appointments at their homes right after the interview with me, and others needed to pay attention to family members who potentially needed to enter the home).

Secondly, since this research explored personal views and connection to the Palace of Parliament painful memories and experiences from the past, especially in the case of middle-age participants, were discussed. Although they were open to discuss their painful past experiences, during the interviews I frequently verified that participants were not harmed by the conversation due to the nature of the stories shared. One of the aspects addressed by these interviewees was the lifestyle they had under the former political regime. When such topic came up, I repeated to every participant that they are not forced to share anything they do not feel comfortable with. I offered them the possibility of taking a break and either continue with the interview or stop it if they felt hurt by discussing those memories. I also provided the possibility of continuing the interview another time and reminded them of their right to make the decision of not participating in the study at all. Although participants did not experience any harm during the interviews, I cannot guarantee that discussing such painful aspects will not impact them later. Nevertheless, during the interview process, I believe I did what I could to make them feel safe and remind them of their right to end the interviews, and their participation in the research. They all signed consent forms at the end of the interviews, which I believe it reinforced their right to decide at any time throughout the interviews whether they wanted to be part of the research, and potentially empowered them in knowing that they could stop the interviews at any time.

4.5.3. Confidentiality and anonymity

In this study, most participants wanted to remain anonymous. This can be explained by the personal nature of the information discussed. Oftentimes, qualitative research explores personal views, considerations and perspectives, and if requested by the participant, the researcher is obliged to guarantee anonymity (Hennink et al., 2011; Dowling, 2016). To ensure confidentiality and anonymity, personal information such as, names, age, education and occupation is not disclosed. As such, to protect the personal identity of participants pseudonyms are used, instead of their ages, two age groups were created, and instead of their occupation, a general indication of the highest education level followed is given.

Since some participants know each other, the audio recordings of the interviews will not be made public thereby avoiding that participants recognize each other by their voices. Interviewees who know about each other's participation in the research cannot be guaranteed full anonymity. Nevertheless, based on the description provided for participants, they will not be able to identify each other. This, however, does not apply to the interviewees who participated in the joint interview, because they heard what the other one shared. To diminish the chance that these two participants recognize each other, the participant-recruitment procedure is not shared. Nonetheless, if they remember the entire dialogue, then they might be able to identify each other based on the quotes used in chapter four.

4.5.4. Researcher's positionality

Referring to qualitative methodological approaches, Hennink et al. (2011) state that researchers must reflect on their own role throughout the research – a research phase called researcher's reflexivity – by focusing on the way that personal background and world view of the researcher might influence the research process.

Firstly, the research topic of this thesis was driven by a personal curiosity developed many years ago when, after hearing the word 'communism' for the first time, I started talking to my family about life 'under Ceauşescu'. Hearing my family tell stories and seeing how affected they were every time they recalled those past days, impacted me and shaped my view on society, and thus, the focus of this study is very personal to me. Although I have not lived one single day in that past, I am hurt by the pain of those in Bucharest who watched their friends give their last breath, who ran as fast as they could to prevent their families from drinking poisoned water, who stood in line for hours for their portion of bread, who were silenced by guns and ran over by Romanian army tanks. It is therefore, not by chance that I chose to focus on the views of the people of Bucharest.

During communism, human rights were violated; the stories I heard emphasize that people had no freedom, they were oppressed, controlled, dominated and censored. People who shared their stories with me were most afraid by the thought of losing their voice. As such, through the perspective I take in my thesis, I intended to provide them with a bit of hope by giving participants a chance to be heard, and by using the thesis as a mechanism through which they can express their views. In my opinion, the success of my intention is only limited. On the one hand, this thesis is restricted to a particular reader group who does not have direct influence on societal change, nor on providing these people with what they need in order to come to terms with their past. On the other hand, however, participants were content that my thesis focused on their connection to the Palace of Parliament and they were excited about discussing their personal views. Participants were very appreciative of the study as they all had the feeling that they are being left out and that locals do not have a say in how the building is managed. In this regard, this study generated the feeling that for at least 45 minutes their opinion was being heard.

Unfortunately, I was not able to include in this thesis many of the personal stories shared especially by participants from the middle-age group. The sole reason for this is that those priceless, intimate stories were not providing answers to the research question of this thesis. Nevertheless, they provide insights beyond the scope of this study, such as psychological mechanisms of memory creation.

As I explained in section 3.3, while I was in Bucharest I was unable to recruit any seniors for interviews. Although the seniors I approached were very friendly and open to talk, when I told them I was conducting research for my master thesis most of them became insecure and said they would not know what to tell me. Even though I explained that I was only interested in hearing their personal opinions on those topics, most seniors insisted that they did not know if their opinions were the right ones. Although such a situation is an example of the expert status of the researcher (Hennink et al., 2011), as a Romanian myself, I suggest that this is best explained by culturally determined views. In Romanian culture, we are taught that personal opinions do not count and what really matters is the correct answer. In Romanian society, but also in my own experiences having lived 19 years in Bucharest, you do not question your parents, you do not question your teacher and you do not question your employer. If you are asked a question, you are expected to give a correct answer, whichever that may be in the eyes of the one who asks the question. Looking at the socio-political contexts in which seniors were brought up, I can only imagine that these cultural aspects – which are still very present in current Romanian society – were much more prominent in those past times. Therefore, I am inclined to believe that seniors' reluctance to discuss their own opinions is much more related with the above described culturally determined attitudes, than with my expert researcher status.

4.5.5. Reflecting on research process and future research recommendations

Although this thesis showed how place meaning-making processes are influenced by past and current socio-political contexts, one important limitation of the research is the absence of participants in their senior years. I acquired numerous contact details of seniors who were interested to participate in the research from other interviewees. However, when I explained what the study was about, they did not want to be a part of it even though they were very friendly and curious about the research. My personal belief is that their reluctance to discuss their views of the Palace of Parliament had to do with research formalities and cultural characteristics. Firstly, every senior I approached refused to be part of the research as soon as I informed them about my need to audio-record the interviews. They did not express any concern about consent, harm, confidentiality and anonymity; however, audio-recording was unacceptable and my detailed explanations on the purpose of it made no difference. Secondly, as I briefly explained in the previous section, their non-participation can be explained by culturally determined views. Moreover, Romanian seniors think highly of a person who is affiliated to a university because not many seniors attended school due to socio-political circumstances. Younger generations, however, do not perceive academia in the same way, because in their case, attending universities is nothing special as nearly everybody is able to pursue it. As a result, I was very aware that seniors were reluctant to share their thoughts, and one of the seniors even said he did not want to give me wrong answers. Due to a lack of time and budget, I could not investigate these constraints, and as such, I focused on the latter two age groups. I suggest that researchers interested in this group should explore research methods which help participants overcome such cultural barriers and research formalities, and encourage them to share their stories in a setting perceived as safe and comfortable by the participants. To fully understand how place meaning-making processes are influenced by past and current socio-political contexts, I believe the contribution of this senior group is of crucial importance because of their ample life experiences as they lived through different, if not opposite, socio-political contexts. Therefore, future studies focused on the Palace of Parliament, apart from expanding on the findings of these thesis and the theoretical framework, should enlarge the research by encompassing this group of senior citizens.

One supervisor and two colleagues were involved in checking and assessing the research process. This caused a feedback loop which enhances the credibility of this study and ensures its trustworthiness. Triangulation of data was further enhanced by attending a guided tour at the Palace of Parliament and including previous studies and theories on the topics researched. However, these research aspects are limited within the interpretive paradigm and as such, this study does not ensure generalizability of findings. Furthermore, it is important to bear in mind that this study was conducted in a specific socio-political context in Bucharest, Romania. As such, should this study be replicated in the future, the likelihood of finding similar processes is limited, yet the aspects uncovered in this study render it academically and societally relevant. Future research should consider studying place meaning-making processes in locations with similar or different socio-political contexts than the one in this thesis, to thoroughly comprehend the influences they have on the making of place.

5. Findings

This chapter provides a critical analysis of the findings of this research and their relationship with the theoretical and conceptual framework. The analysis of data reveals the complex processes through which participants develop and attribute meaning to the Palace of Parliament. Moreover, in the following sections I present empirical evidence which supports the additions made to the tripartite framework by Scannell and Gifford (2010) and suggests further considerations for its improvement.

Section 5.1 emphasizes the importance of pride in developing self-identification with the Palace of Parliament and unveils the meanings which support this affect, respectively the lack of it, towards the building. Moreover, it is shown how the meanings attributed by participants to the building support a multiple character of place and of heritage. In the second section, focus is placed on uncovering what lies behind the inability to connect with the Palace of Parliament of those participants who lack identification with the place. While drawing attention to past and current socio-political contexts, further clarifications are made regarding the difference in identification with place. As such, it is revealed how participants who lack an identification with the Palace of Parliament create an association between the building and events deeply rooted in collective memory which generate ambivalent and negative feelings towards the place. These feelings are further intensified when participants' opinions on current socio-political contexts are revealed. In this light, section 5.3 demonstrates that participants who do not feel represented by the Palace of Parliament create an analogy between the building and the presence of political leaders in it. Although participants who have a powerful connection with the place do not create this analogy, they desire, just as the other interviewees, a stronger relationship with the Palace of Parliament. Hence, 5.4 presents desired place changes addressed by participants with the purpose of solidifying their relationship with the building.

5.1. Pride and its absence

The Romanian Ministry of Tourism presents the Palace of Parliament as one of the most visited sites in Bucharest and an outstanding tourist landmark in Romania's official tourism presentation brochure (Ministerul Turismului, n.d.). Highly reliant on its record as the second largest administrative building in the world, through the description of the Palace of Parliament the Romanian Ministry of Tourism labels the building as 'the competitor of the Pentagon', and draws a parallel between the initial purpose of the building – housing former communist institutions – and the current use of the place i.e. accommodating democratic institutions and the Museum of Contemporary Art (Ministerul Turismului, n.d.). Its importance for tourism related purposes is shared by all participants. In the words of Bara,

"It makes me glad when I see that many foreign tourists visit it […]. It's an interesting landmark which brings us revenue." (Bara, female, 25-29)

The perspective of the building as a significant local tourist attraction suggests place dependency as a result of tourism practices. According to Su and Wall (2010) tourism can boost locals' attachment to heritage sites because they facilitate tourism related activities. Furthermore, it is argued that heritage tourism strengthens locals' feelings of pride towards heritage, and it also intensifies the feeling of belonging to a community (Su & Wall, 2010).

Indeed, several younger participants express this kind of affect towards the Palace of Parliament, however, it cannot be inferred that these feelings are caused by the building's usage in tourism. They view the building as a landmark of Bucharest representing the city and the country, but also as a symbol of local identity triggering feelings of pride, belongingness, admiration and distinctiveness, as described by Ranvir:

"[The Palace of Parliament] is more than a building. It is a node in Bucharest […]. […] a symbol of Bucharest but also of Romania. […]. It's a national pride, the idea that we still have something big

which represents us and which we can show the world that it was made by us, in Romania, without feeling inferior. It's the feeling that 'we also have something important." (Ranvir, male, 25-29)

In other words, the Palace of Parliament is attributed a meaning which transforms the place into a source for national pride. People develop this kind of meaning to accommodate, as Baumeister (1991) argues, people's inherent need for self-worth i.e. the desire to feel valuable in comparison to others. A place attributed such meaning can thus contain heritage which encompasses collective identity and national pride enabling people to distinguish between themselves and 'others' who are not part of the same (cultural) group (Smith, 2006; Ashworth & Graham, 2016). In this sense, symbolic significances are the main driver of place attachment at a group level (Scannell & Gifford, 2010), and it can be suggested that this group of younger participants is attached to the Palace of Parliament, a heritage building which they believe reflects their cultural identity.

Although the rest of the participants (most of them from the middle-age group, but also younger interviewees) also regard the building as heritage, they have a different view on the Palace of Parliament. These participants mentioned that tourists view this place as a landmark and symbol of the city because of its presence in the Guinness World Records Book and the historical background which connects it with communism, an affirmation also claimed by Light (2000). For them, the building is not representative for the city, since

"[...] there are other things on my list that truly symbolize Bucharest." (Dakini, female, 40-56)

In the view of these participants the Palace of Parliament is a symbol of Bucharest for foreign tourists, while for them as locals, the city is represented by other places (e.g. squares, parks, monuments, buildings and other personally significant places) and not by this building. This can be explained by the fact that tourists seek different kinds of experiences with a place than locals (Lewicka, 2011), however, even more important in this case, is the lack of identification with the building discussed by this group of participants. According to Jaśkiewicz (2015) such a place is fundamental for the identity of an individual because it aids in the process of self-identification with the nation by fostering a sense of belonging to a (cultural) group within specific territorial boundaries. In this case, participants who do not identify with the Palace of Parliament classify themselves as part of the same (national) cultural group – Romanians – as the younger participants who show a strong identification with the building. The descriptions that participants, regardless of their age group, provided when discussing their identification as Romanians, are very similar: there is a strong focus on native language, location, traditions and natural environment, but also on perceived difficulties and negative specific characteristics which form their identity. Therefore, although self-identification with the same cultural group exists, connection with the building is opposite.

While it could be argued that, in this case, from the perspective of participants who do not identify with the Palace of Parliament, the building does not represent their cultural identity, and thus it is not an important heritage place, the reasons for their lack of identification suggest otherwise. On the surface, the lack of identification with the Palace of Parliament is explained by a lack of pride, as illustrated by Abela:

"[That it represents me] I'm not going to say the House of the People [does], because [...] I'm not proud of it. [...]. It is a big, monumental building, built by Romanians and we should be proud." (Abela, female, 40-56)

The desire to be able to feel pride towards the Palace of Parliament suggests the importance of the place. The explanation for this desire to feel pride i.e. Romanians built the place, indicates that the place might reflect their cultural identity. However, self-identification with place underpins and strengthens place identity (Proshansky et al., 1983; Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001), and thus, place identity can only be achieved when one identifies with the place (Devine-Wright & Howes, 2010). The aspect that Romanians built the Palace of Parliament is also used in official narratives as a fundamental

reason to explain why the building is a Romanian heritage symbolising Romanian culture (Chamber of Deputies, 2014; Ministerul Turismului, n.d.). Conflictingly, these participants feel that the building does not represent what defines them. In the words of Sandor,

"[...] it is not a symbol of the people because it doesn't symbolize anything of ours." (Sandor, male, 40-56)

This statement complicates the process of understanding why this group of participants does not identify with the Palace of Parliament because it suggests that the building does not reflect aspects which these participants find definitory for their collective identity, contradicting thus their own view of the place as heritage. This inconsistency is explainable through the concept of dissonance and it affects the individual (or group) who feels that there is a mismatch between his identity, his heritage, and the place to which he is attached to (Ashworth & Graham, 2016). An underlying factor for this inconsistency in the case of participants who do not identify with the Palace of Parliament, is the lack of sense of ownership of the building. In their view, the building is not theirs, although it should be. Therefore, since the building does not belong to the people, it cannot represent them. As such, an emphasis is placed on people's exclusion from owning the building, an aspect found to indicate strong place identity and attachment when people own the place (Lewicka, 2011). However, when applied to heritage, this feeling is understood as a symbolic sense of ownership (Smith, 2006). A meaning which conveys such a feeling is important for people to satisfy their basic need for efficacy i.e. control of the environment (Baumeister, 1991). On the one hand, its absence does not only reinforce the difficulties in resolving dissonance (Smith, 2006), but it also strengthens the lack of self-identification with the place which suggests that place attachment is not strongly developed (Ujang, 2012). On the other hand, these participants perceive the Palace of Parliament as heritage, thus implying the desire to pass on the building to future generations (Ashworth, 2007; Ashworth & Graham, 2016), an indicator – the wish to preserve a place – found to predict strong levels of place attachment (Scannell & Gifford, 2010).

The Palace of Parliament encompasses various and even conflicting views, confirming that places are "user determined, polysemic and unstable through time", and just like heritage, their meaning is not stable and it is developed by the ones coming in contact with the place (Ashworth & Graham, 2016, p.3). Thus, individually developed meanings explain, to a certain extent, differences in how people make sense of places (Scannell & Gifford, 2010). However, the usage of the building for tourism purposes is perceived positively by all participants. Perceiving the building as a place facilitating specific goals corresponds with the layer of instrumental meanings (Williams, 2014) which supports place dependency (Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001; Scannell & Gifford, 2010; Lewicka, 2011).

As mentioned, not all participants regarded the place as a symbol of the city. This may be explained by the difference in affect expressed by interviewees. On the one hand, feelings of pride towards the Palace of Parliament are expressed by most representatives of the younger age group. Such feelings support self-identification with place (Scannell & Gifford, 2010), indeed expressed by these participants who feel strong identification with the building. The kinds of meanings they attribute to the place are encompassed by the layers of deep meanings (Williams, 2014), in which, as I argued in 3.3, heritage is most noticeable. Therefore, in this case, heritage contributes to the development of meanings addressing the human need of self-worth (Baumeister, 1991) and a relationship with place strongly generated by a sense of self-identification with a cultural group (Scannell & Gifford, 2010).

On the other hand, participants of the age group 40-56 and some younger interviewees, do not feel pride towards the Palace of Parliament due to a lack of identification with the place. For them, the human need of efficacy (Baumeister, 1991) is not achieved due to a lack of symbolic ownership of heritage (Smith, 2006). Intriguingly, interviewees unanimously attest the importance of the building as their heritage, encompassing their cultural identity, all participants identifying with the same cultural group. This suggests that the cultural/group attachment to place as described by Scannell and Gifford (2010) should be cautiously made, as this section showed that even if participants identify with the same

cultural group, their connection with the Palace of Parliament differs. Therefore, the meanings attributed to the place and their influence on the development of place attachment must be understood (Stedman, 2003; Manzo, 2005; Lewicka, 2011) in order to uncover how people appertaining to the same cultural group have opposite identification responses to a place they all call heritage.

5.2. Collective memory and its importance

One of the aspects emphasized in the previous section is the opposite identification that participants feel towards the Palace of Parliament. According to the tripartite model of Scannell and Gifford (2010) two types of identities are encompassed by the identity of a person: individual and (cultural) group identity. While it was established that the participants feel a sense of belonging to the same (cultural) group i.e. Romanian, and they all consider the Palace of Parliament their heritage, their place identification is very different. Is it then reasonable to argue that the difference in identification is caused by individual identity and personal place-making processes? To answer the question, this section reveals the cause for the lack of pride of participants who do not identify with the Palace of Parliament and explores whether this aspect has an influence on participants who strongly identify with the building.

One aspect explaining participants' lack of pride towards the Palace of Parliament is the absence of any commemorative symbol remembering what occurred in the past for the building to exist in the present. Firstly, the inexistence of a tribute that honours the people who worked to construct the building was discussed. During the interviews, knowledge about the death of many people and the wish to remember them was shared:

"We should think about how many people died there [...]." (Dakini, female, 40-56)

Curiously, although all participants to this research mentioned that people died during the first construction phase of the Palace of Parliament, the interviewees appear to have no precise information about these past events. As Ratree explains,

"Many people died on site, I don't know how many, but I remember some discussions – because obviously things like these were never made public back then, we were living the last years of communism – that thousands of people died, God knows what working conditions they had to endure." (Ratree, female, 40-56)

Intriguingly, while interviewees discuss this aspect, the official website of the Palace of Parliament (see Chamber of Deputies, 2014) has no mention of deaths of construction workers. Moreover, during the guided tour at the Palace of Parliament no reference is made to this aspect either. In fact, no official documentation is available that can prove or disprove these past events embedded in collective memory. Only unofficial sources elaborate on this aspect, however their reliability is questionable. For instance, according to Anca Petrescu the architect of the building, during that first construction phase between 10 and 15 workers died (Stoican, n.d.). The Telegraph (2013), however, claims that death on this construction site was frequent and usual, without supplying any further clarifications. Other sources mention that 27 workers died (Stirileprotv.ro, 2013) and even 3000 (Murgoci, 2013).

Despite the lack of official documentation and the variety of information provided by unofficial sources, the influence this aspect has on participants who do not identify with the building is indisputable. In the words of Abela,

"It's an accomplishment of the Romanian people, because the Romanian people worked to build it. The loss of life is what breaks my heart, but the building itself is monumental, it deserves all the praise [...]. [...]. So, because a lot of people died while building it [...] there is so much more that can be done [to honour them]." (Abela, female, 40-56)

Thus, pride towards the building is lacking due to the conviction that people lost their lives while building the Palace of Parliament, a belief triggering painful feelings. The current lack of commemoration is also further influencing the connection to the building because while official narratives do not address deaths of workers, participants believe they happened. This reveals a complicated issue because commemoration is likely to be achieved when the past is attributed a permanent meaning (Bernhard & Kubik, 2014). Moreover, when the officially presented past does not reflect collective memory the possibility of coming to terms with the painful past is removed (Jay, 2012). As such, the absence of an official narrative confirming these past events rooted in collective memory limits the connection between these participants and the Palace of Parliament.

A second aspect explaining participants' lack of pride is the failure of the official discourse about the Palace of Parliament to represent the 'horrifying tragedy' on which the building was founded. Ratree explains:

"I remember that they [my parents] had some friends whose parents were moved from their own house [...] and my parents remember what sorrow and weeping took place when they had to take all their stuff out and their house was turned to dust under bulldozers. [...]. For some, it [the Palace of Parliament] is incredibly personal, I mean, we are not talking about history books here! It's still a very recent history of Bucharest. Untold. There are many people who live and remember all this." (Ratree, female, 40-56)

In a large enumeration of numbers, the official website of the Palace of Parliament states "[…] 10000 homes were demolished, and over 57000 families were evicted." (Chamber of Deputies, 2014). During the guided tour at the building, however, there is no mention of this aspect. The information shared by these participants and the authorized heritage discourse about the Palace of Parliament show that the past of the building is interpreted differently and that each perspective values other characteristics of the past which they want to highlight. Thus, as Smith (2006, p.81) argues, in situations in which authorized heritage discourse does not attribute value to the same parts of the past that people hold to be important, it limits people's capacity to develop a sense of place because the place does not validate the past which they identify with and as such, weakening their sense of symbolic ownership of heritage. In this sense, heritage as a place of multiple coexisting narratives, "[…] has a particular power to legitimize – or not – someone's sense of place and thus their social and cultural experiences and memories." (Smith, 2006, p.81).

Therefore, in the case of these participants, their collective memory is not reflected by official discourses about the Palace of Parliament, an aspect interfering with their ability to develop a positive connection with the building. Interestingly, even though they show a strong identification with the Palace of Parliament, the other participants also discuss information about the same past events acquired from their parents and grandparents. Bara explains:

"I know from them [parents and grandparents] that the people who built it worked in inhumane conditions – just like other workers who built many other places which were left behind after communism –, many died. And I know that many lost their homes." (Bara, female, 25-29)

This statement uncovers two discussion points which need clarification. Firstly, every younger participant was aware of past events from family members even though official representations either avoid or do not elaborate on them. According to Hamilton and Shopes (2008) oral transmission of history occurs when people feel suppressed and might experience loss of identity. In this case, since parts of the past of the Palace of Parliament are deeply rooted in collective memory, but they find no representation in the authorized heritage discourse, people transmit the information they find valuable to the next generation, verbally. In this way, through oral transmission of history an act of commemoration and remembrance occurs, which ultimately aims at remembering, and keep transmitting a story and in so doing, legitimizing collective memory (Hamilton & Shopes, 2008).

Secondly, it seems that this orally transmitted history is not an aspect that has any significant influence on the connection between younger participants and the Palace of Parliament. Their relationship with the building is based on perceiving the place as an important heritage which distinguishes their cultural group from others, and as such, encompassing a meaning which provides for their need of self-worth. Thus, in their case, the meaning used for identification with the Palace of Parliament is in harmony with the authorized heritage discourse. Highlighted here are values and meanings seen as worth preserving for future generations as identified by experts, who often have a dominant power in the construction of heritage narratives (Smith, 2006). Subsequently, in this case, these are assimilated by younger participants who strongly identify with the Palace of Parliament, hence supporting the argument that heritage is a fundamental phenomenon in place and identity building (Ashworth, 2007; Ashworth & Graham, 2016).

This section showed that the events around which meanings are attributed to the Palace of Parliament by participants who lack identification with the building are linked to memories involving the traumatic experiences of other people with this place. In this situation, memory and meaning as aspects of cognitive processes of place making (Scannell & Gifford, 2010) are interconnected. Death and forced relocation caused by past socio-political contexts are definitory aspects in the making of place, which consequently trigger negative and ambivalent feelings towards the building. Supporting Manzo's (2005) study, these findings demonstrate that people's affect towards place is not expressed only through positive emotions. Therefore, this reinforces the argument that processes of affect in the tripartite framework by Scannell and Gifford (2010) need to encompass positive, negative and ambivalent emotions.

To a certain extent it can be claimed that apart from the influence that past socio-political contexts have on the making of place, experience with these contexts also plays a key role in the development of meaning. Participants from the age group 40-46 discussed the same kinds of past experiences when explaining their view of the Palace of Parliament. Hence, the individual experience as described by Scannell and Gifford (2010) included under the 'person' component is shaping place meanings. What is more, the strong connection with the building of most participants from the age group 25-29 demonstrates that knowledge about past socio-political contexts has a significantly different influence on meaning making, in comparison to a direct experience with those situations has. Thus, the knowledge aspect of the element of 'cognition' (Scannell & Gifford, 2010) is a determining factor in the development of meanings supporting place identification.

Finally, by not representing events rooted in collective memory, the authorized heritage discourse enhances negative and ambivalent feelings towards the Palace of Parliament and participants' inability to develop an identification with the building. Therefore, it can be argued that authorized heritage discourse has an influence on the development of deep place meanings, more specifically on the layer of identity-expressive meanings (Williams, 2014). Although it seems that the authorized heritage discourse was assimilated by younger participants who identify with the building, when the focus is placed the democratic symbolism of the place, a unanimous disagreement towards this meaning is addressed. Moreover, significant aspects of current socio-political contexts are revealed which further help explain participants' connection to the Palace of Parliament.

5.3. Politicians and their palace

In the previous section it was shown how the connection of one group of participants to the Palace of Parliament is limited by their lack of a sense of symbolic ownership caused by unrepresented collective memories in the authorized heritage discourse. Also discussed was how the other group of participants developed their strong identification with the Palace of Parliament on the basis of meanings which are

in harmony with the authorized heritage discourse. For them, the building is a national symbol reinforcing a sense of belonging to their cultural group.

However, an important meaning emphasized by official narratives is the democratic symbolism of the building (introduced in chapter 2), a connotation that only resurfaces when participants discuss their views on current socio-political contexts. The connection between these contexts and the Palace of Parliament exposes even more meanings attributed to this place which further clarify the relationship between participants and the building.

Heritage is often used as a mechanism to stimulate the creation of an identity that supports the governing political ideology (Smith, 2006; Ashworth, 2007; Ashworth & Graham, 2016). Such usage of heritage is exemplified by the authorized heritage discourse describing the Palace of Parliament:

"The building, once intended to be a construction that worshipped socialism, communism and totalitarianism is now, after 27 years from the Revolution in 1989, a symbol of democracy due to the public institutes located inside (Chamber of Deputies, the Senate, the Legislative Council, the Constitutional Court of Romania)." (Chamber of Deputies, 2014)

In this official perspective, the Palace of Parliament is attributed a democratic meaning which is instrumental in supporting and reinforcing identification with the democratic values defining Romania in current times. Likewise, during the guided tour the same aspect was emphasized. However, to assert dominance, current political powers often distance themselves from previous ideologies (Tunbridge & Ashworth, 1996), an aspect illustrated by the provided quote. To separate democracy from the former communist regime, officials attribute their own ideological meaning onto the Palace of Parliament thus removing the significance ascribed by the former regime. Indeed, during a guided tour Light (2001) observed that communism and the influence it had on the construction of the building was evasively mentioned. As a result of attending a guided tour of the building last year, I can confirm that Light's (2001) observation is still valid. Light (2001) attributes this officially designed symbolism of the Palace of Parliament to an image that the country desires to create for itself. However, weakening the importance of a former ideology in current interpretation and representation of heritage is often a cause for dissonance because the resulting official discourse is not consistent with unofficial views of that same heritage, therefore influencing the development of people's identity and meanings about heritage (Tunbridge & Ashworth, 1996).

In the case of this study, while the authorized heritage discourse accentuates the democratic symbolism of the Palace of Parliament, participants, regardless of their age group, perceive the place as a representation of communism:

"[...] the only thing I associate this building with is Ceauşescu and with communism. And this building represents [...] a legacy of those times, a proof that communism existed, it's something physical, which you can see, unlike all the stories which you only hear." (Cajsa, female, 25-29)

Hence, participants attribute to the Palace of Parliament the same significance that officials are trying to eliminate through authorized heritage discourse: for them, the building reflects the communism era. Light (2000) argues that because the Palace of Parliament reminds Romanians of a part of the past they wish to forget, they come to despise the building. However, his claim does not seem to have any support after understanding how the meaning is developed and attributed to the building.

In the provided quote, the Palace of Parliament becomes a repository of collective memory in which orally transmitted history becomes reflected thereby confirming firstly, that a part of the past took place and secondly, the accuracy of the heard stories. This confirmation is not only sought by younger participants who have little knowledge about and no direct experience with that past and thus, cannot validate the happenings themselves; it is an aspect extensively discussed by all participants who

feel that the communist past of the country is significantly ignored and concealed by official narratives and representatives of the state, as illustrated by Abela and Cajsa:

"They are trying to diminish or cover these things, like the communist era. Because it should be in history books, but I haven't heard to be there." (Abela, female, 40-56)

"I just think they are trying to highlight only the good parts of our history as a nation, not the bad parts. But, […] communism was not entirely and exclusively bad, it had its positive aspects and I do not believe that it should be excluded from our education, on the contrary, I think we should learn more about this period because, after all, it's a part of our history. […] We did not have one history lesson focused on Ceauşescu and that period." (Cajsa, female, 25-29)

The desire of participants is to see the past represented at the Palace of Parliament, but also in more general contexts for education purposes. Aware that state officials intend to erase communism from the country's history, triggers firstly, feelings of uncertainty. This can be explained by participants' view that the communist past of the country is part of their identity as Romanians. In this sense, the authorized heritage discourse is threatening fundamental aspects of identification (Smith, 2006), and as such, it becomes perceived as a danger to the sense of continuity of the cultural group (Tunbridge & Ashworth, 1996). Indeed, Hawke (2011, p.35) shows that heritage can generate "sense of place by providing a feeling of continuity across time". As such, developing a relationship with a place is difficult when the authorized heritage discourse excludes collective memory (Smith, 2006).

Secondly, participants expressed feelings of oppression and helplessness. In their view, this example of the official misrepresentation of the past is a reflection of current socio-political contexts. Unanimously, interviewees believe that the current Romanian political scene is governed not by the rule of law, but by the rule of corruption. On the one hand, the fervent desire of participants for an accurate representation of the past is tied with the responsibility they feel to ensure that the past does not repeat in the future, and it becomes more prominent in current socio-political contexts. On the other hand, by all middle-age group participants and a few younger interviewees, this observation was linked back to the Palace of Parliament and a direct comparison to their experience of the communist regime was made. In their perspective, while Romanians were heavily involved in the construction of the building by suffering electricity, gas and food shortages, the place was not designed for their use. Nowadays, while Romanians are still paying to maintain the building and are requested to pay entrance fees if they want to visit the place, not only that it is not theirs to use, but it is being used by corrupt politicians. This view triggers numerous negative feelings towards the Palace of Parliament, it accentuates the powerlessness felt by participants and their lack of identification with the building:

"[The Palace of Parliament does not represent the people] Because that's where the parliament is, they do what they want and if they picked this place, they have the power, not us. It will not change unless they want to. It's ironic: it is the central point in which the Romanian democracy lives." (Sandor, male, 40-56)

Thus, in the case of middle-age group participants and a few younger interviewees, their perceptions of current political context, combined with the presence of politicians in the Palace of Parliament, influences their relationship with the building. Firstly, this in turn triggers either negative feelings such as, 'dislike', 'shame' and 'disgust', or indifference towards the place. Secondly, it emphasizes the understanding of heritage as a mechanism through which the powerful claims dominance (Tunbridge & Ashworth, 1996). As such, it can be argued that these participants' lack of identification with the Palace of Parliament is the result of their direct analogy between the governing political representatives and the building itself, as explained by Sandor:

"The political power does not represent us. They represent themselves. […]. No [I do not feel represented by the building], because the politicians are in there."(Sandor, male, 40-56)

These findings show that respondents' identification with place is restricted by the presence of other people in that place. It is not the Palace of Parliament that does not reflect participants' identity, it is the political group. For Tunbridge and Ashworth (1996) heritage reflects the identity of the ones who see themselves reflected by and in that heritage. In other words, identification with a heritage place is only possible when people feel a complete representation of themselves in that heritage place. This also shows that identification with place (without it being a heritage place) goes beyond a self or group identification, extending to associations created in relation with current socio-political contexts. In this sense, one could argue that the concept of place identity can be used to discuss the identification of people with a place when the place is also identified as heritage. However, the definition of place identity is extensively focused on a self-identification with place, on the individual's perception that the place is a representation of himself (Proshansky et al., 1983; Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001; Hernández et al., 2007; Scannell & Gifford, 2010; Lewicka, 2011; Hawke, 2011), and as such, it does not reflect the multiplicity of associations which can influence one's identification with place, nor does it encompass the contestant character of heritage.

This section illustrated that while the authorized heritage discourse focuses on aspects meant to reinforce the power of the current ideology by portraying the Palace of Parliament as a democratic symbol, it influences participants in associating the building with its communist past. Not addressing this part of the past in official histories, prompts participants to regard this building as a representation and evidence of the past ideology. Thus, the Palace of Parliament is endowed with an inherent meaning – part of the surface meanings by Williams (2014) – i.e. it represents communism. Through this kind of meaning and through the presence of the building, collective memory and knowledge – both aspects of the cognitive component of the tripartite framework (Scannell & Gifford, 2010) – become validated and represented even if they are not encompassed within the authorized heritage discourse.

Moreover, the presence of politicians in the building is another important aspect which, for participants who do not feel represented by the place, forms a context leading to a direct equivalence between the building and the politicians. Consequently, due to a lack of symbolic sense of heritage ownership (Smith, 2006), alongside the presence of politicians in the building, participants' need to differentiate themselves from political representatives is reinforced. It can therefore be argued that the identity-expressive meanings (Williams, 2014) of these participants do not foster an identification with the building, as the place is perceived as a mirror of politicians.

While lack of identification with the Palace of Parliament prompted these middle-age interviewees and a few younger participants to discuss desired place changes leading to an identification with the place, the younger interviewees desire an even deeper connection which they also want to reinforce through place changes. According to Devine-Wright and Howes (2010), changes to place can cause disruptions to place attachment and identity, but they can also reinforce the relationship between people and places. In this case, understanding participants' envisioned changes is beneficial for three reasons. Firstly, focusing on participants' suggestions of changes to place brings to light how heritage dissonance should be approached from their perspective. Secondly, this allows the exploration of what kind of changes are perceived to have a positive influence on the relationship between participants and the Palace of Parliament, which, lastly, enables the investigation of processes used to reach these envisioned changes.

5.4. Place changes and their power

Prior sections highlighted multiple understandings of place by focusing on a variety of place meaning-making processes used by interviewees in developing a relationship with the Palace of Parliament. In the previous section it has also been established that all participants expressed a need for a stronger bond with the heritage building. As such, this section focuses on uncovering what kinds of changes to

the Palace of Parliament participants desire, why and what processes are used in determining these changes.

As shown in the previous section, the presence of the political elite in the Palace of Parliament is an aspect influencing the connection with the building of some participants. For them the removal of politicians from the Palace of Parliament is seen as a factor which could change their perception about the building. As Abela states:

"If it would be open to people and for the people, it might sound foolish, but if the parliament headquarters would move from there [...]. It's not the parliament per se, but the people that form this parliament, who shame and make life hard for us. So, the people make a parallel between the parliament and The House of People and that's not a positive thing." (Abela, female, 40-56)

In other words, two changes would need to occur for the identification of these participants with the building to improve. Firstly, politicians would need to be relocated for them to be able to create a new meaning of the Palace of Parliament which is not linked to the political elite. Therefore, the place would be attributed a meaning perceived as representative of the group reclaiming that heritage (Tunbrige & Ashworth, 1996; Smith, 2006). Secondly, by excluding politicians from the Palace of Parliament, the basic human need of efficacy would be satisfied (Baumeister, 1991) thereby reinforcing the symbolic sense of ownership of the heritage place and supporting a sense of identity continuity (Smith, 2006). This would also eliminate feelings of oppression or helplessness because it would provide people with a sense of control over their environment (Baumeister, 1991).

However, it can be argued that the human basic need for value (Baumeister, 1991) is the underlying cause for the desired removal of politicians from the building. The view that the Palace of Parliament should not be used by the political elite is justified by participants' perception of current political contexts i.e. they believe that the building should not be used by a group of corrupt politicians because the actions of these individuals do not serve the interests of the public and are unjustifiable. As such, a negative judgement of behaviour occurs and as a result, a negative value is attributed to the place because unwanted acts take place (Baumeister, 1991). Therefore, to satisfy the need for positive value, desirable acts need to happen (Baumeister, 1991), and as such, the Palace of Parliament needs to become more accessible to the public by providing amenities which fulfil people's needs.

The removal of the political elite is not, however, essential for the rest of the interviewees to develop a closer connection to the Palace of Parliament. For them it is only important that the building is used at its full potential and that the public is more involved in activities at the Palace of Parliament, a wish also expressed by the other group of participants who want the relocation of politicians. The interviewees envision the building as a multi-purpose place where both public and private facilities are included, such as concert halls, a hotel, a museum of communism, and open spaces surrounded by a public park and gardens. As such, the desire to make use of the place for specific goals suggests place dependency (Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001; Scannell & Gifford, 2010; Lewicka, 2011), and in this case, two overarching purposes are addressed.

Firstly, participants discussed the desire for a diversified usage of the Palace of Parliament for economic benefits. On the one hand, indignation towards the building is created due to the knowledge that the building is still being supported from public funds while there are possibilities for increased profits. As such, in participants' view the Palace of Parliament should generate enough money to support itself, result which would allow the current public funds allocated for the maintenance of the building to be invested in more urgent societal issues. On the other hand, strong negative feelings become associated with the Palace of Parliament because of its current state and the limited financial investments designated for its conservation. This perceived lack of care for the building also triggers feelings of guilt (expressed by all participants) developed as a result of the acknowledged death of workers and because people lost their homes. Furthermore, participants express their worries regarding

the current state of the building, and they fear that due to a lack of money, the building will not survive for much longer. As such, they believe that a more complex use with increased economic returns, could safeguard the Palace of Parliament, and therefore ensure the protection of heritage for future generations. Moreover, it would help dissipate negative feelings towards the Palace of Parliament and particularly help participants of the middle-age group to come to terms with the past by allowing them to feel that something meaningful is done with the building and as such, lives were not lost in vain.

Secondly, the imagined usage of the Palace of Parliament needs to satisfy social needs. Interviewees discussed their desire of the building to become a place where people have the possibility to gather, spend time, relax and socialize. This social aspect, currently missing, is a desired place-change which transforms the heritage building into a key spot for social cohesion and community identity building. The desire of participants to change the Palace of Parliament according to these two main economic and social purposes also denotes the creation of a new meaning for the building. Creating meaning based on goals is stimulated by external motivations which are interlinked to "possible future circumstances" and reflect the basic human need for purpose (Baumeister, 1991, p.34). As such, activities taking place in the environment, although they might create discomfort, they are attributed positive value because they are instrumental and necessary to reach the goals (Baumeister, 1991). In this sense, the imagined diversified usage of the Palace of Parliament would provide the building with a meaning founded on purpose that participants find justifiable for the place, as expressed by Dakini:

"We should think about how many people died there, the money that was spent…that's why I believe the building is not used to its maximum potential. And because of all lives, money, sacrifices, workforce and sleepless nights, it would be worth it to give it a more complex use." (Dakini, female, 40-56)

The dissonant character of the Palace of Parliament is also emphasized by participants' desire to alter the usage of the building. Their focus on economic and social goals reflects the goal-oriented approach described by Tunbridge and Ashworth (1996), a strategy which can be used to deal with dissonant heritage. Since heritage is used by multiple groups who have different interests, its contested nature cannot be resolved (Smith, 2006, Van Patten & Williams, 2008; Ashworth & Graham, 2016) because the creation of meaning is an individual process which is determined and influenced by the sort of needs that require attention (Baumeister, 1991). However, by focusing on specific goals instead of emphasizing the meaning of heritage, the goal-oriented strategy has the potential to tackle dissonance issues, raise awareness about heritage contestation and therefore, foster understanding between groups with conflictual interests (Tunbridge & Ashworth, 1996).

The participants believe that an increased usage of the Palace of Parliament would lead people to have a positive perspective of the building and to feel represented by it, an opinion elaborated by Adria:

"If the purpose would be changed… First of all, the gates would be open. A very big public garden should be built within it and I, I believe, I would go for a walk with dear heart in that interior garden […]. If the purpose would be changed and those fences that keep you from entering wouldn't exist […]. If something beautiful would function there […] related with our culture […], I think you would feel pride." (Adria, female, 40-56)

This section showed that desired place changes may in fact contribute to a sense of identification with the Palace of Parliament and to the reinforcement of people-place relationships. On the one hand, some participants expressed that in order to be able to connect to the building, the political elite would have to be relocated. In their view this change needs to happen to enable people to create a separation between the building and their perspective of current political contexts. These findings, once more, reinforce the argument that the identity-expressive meanings of this group are limiting the developed of identification with place. On the other hand, the removal of politicians from the Palace of

Parliament would reinforce a symbolic sense of ownership which fosters self-identification with the heritage place and serves the basic need for efficacy. Thus, it can be suggested that for place identity-expressive meanings to foster identification with place, they need to be in harmony with perspectives on socio-political circumstances.

Moreover, it was argued that an increased place dependency as a result of developments targeting economic and social goals is perceived to have a positive influence on the connection between participants and the Palace of Parliament. Firstly, place dependency can reinforce identification with heritage places (Su & Wall, 2010) if the use of the heritage building is considered appropriate by the people. This section demonstrated that perceived proper usage of place can satisfy basic human needs for purpose, positive value and efficacy (Baumeister, 1991). Subsequently, desired changes can generate positive attachment to place (Devine-Wright & Howes, 2010) caused by potential meanings that develop as a result of building's new usages. Finally, these desired changes are envisioned for particular goals which would ensure that people spend more time around the building, thus supporting the argument that maintaining proximity to a place can increase people's attachment (Scannell & Gifford, 2010).

6. Concluding remarks

The main aim of this research was to explore how the residents of Bucharest develop a connection with the Palace of Parliament by focusing on place meaning-making processes. These findings showed that participants' perception of the building develops through a complex interconnection of psychological processes, guided by past and current socio-political contexts. In section 6.1 I present the conclusions of the study by emphasizing the evolution of the processes used in place meaning-making. In this way, I aim to: highlight the complex connection between the development of meanings and the role they have in developing attachments to place; reveal the importance of heritage in the development of attachments to place; underline the influence of socio-political contexts in the development of attachment towards the Palace of Parliament. Hence, in the first section of this chapter, my focus is to stress the connection participants have with the Palace of Parliament and provide answers to the research questions. In section 6.2 I critically discuss the theoretical framework in light of the findings of this study and I provide recommendations for future studies.

6.1. Conclusions

The Palace of Parliament encompasses various and even conflicting views, thus these findings support the claim of Greider and Garkovich (1994, p.2) who affirm that "any physical place has the potential to embody multiple landscapes, each of which is grounded in the cultural definitions of those who encounter that place." Even though all participants discuss the importance of the Palace of Parliament as a landmark in tourism related activities, their identification with the building differs. On the one hand, a part of the interviewees from the younger generation perceive the building as a symbol of Bucharest and a representation of themselves. In their case, self-identification and attachment to the Palace of Parliament are strong, and feelings of pride and belonging are expressed. The development of meaning by focusing on features people perceive as unique and definitory for themselves or for their cultural group serves a basic human need for meaning, i.e. self-worth (Baumeister, 1991). The identification with the Palace of Parliament helps these participants feel superior in relation to others and that they have a positive value. These participants' perception of the Palace of Parliament is in agreement with the authorized heritage discourse, and such strong identification with the heritage place (Smith, 2006) supports the statement that heritage is essential in place and identity building (Ashworth, 2007; Ashworth & Graham, 2016).

On the other hand, there is another group of participants who, due to an absence of a feeling of symbolic ownership of the building, feels no identification with the building. This can be explained by a lack of meaning that satisfies people's need to have control over their environment, i.e. efficacy (Baumeister, 1991). Yet, just as every other participant, they acknowledge the place as their heritage, which they want to pass on to future generations. As such, an attachment to place can be inferred (Ashworth & Graham, 2016), a finding which supports the understanding that place identity and place attachment are two different place-related notions interacting with each other (Altman & Low, 1992; Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001; Hernández, Hidalgo, Salazar-Laplace & Hess, 2007; Devine-Wright & Howes, 2010).

Participants' lack of identification with the Palace of Parliament can also be explained by their inability to feel pride towards the building due to the absence of any commemorative symbol remembering what occurred in the past for the building to exist in the present. As such, events, memories and stories deeply rooted in collective memory become excluded from the authorized heritage discourse. This limits the participants' capacity of developing a positive connection with the building and also triggers the lack of a symbolic sense of heritage ownership. Interestingly, the connection to the Palace of Parliament of participants who strongly identify with the building, does not seem to be particularly influenced by these past events and their absence in official representations. It seems reasonable to argue that this might be the case because they have no direct experience with the past

socio-political context in which the building was constructed, nor with the hardships endured by the middle-age group. In this case, individual experiences represent an important factor in the process of place-making (Scannell & Gifford, 2010), triggering participants' differing degrees of identification with the Palace of Parliament.

In the case of both groups of participants their connection to the Palace of Parliament is not directly related to the place itself: the interviewees who are strongly attached to the building form this affect as a result of associating the place with a representation of their cultural group, and participants who lack identification with the building connect it with events embedded in collective memory. These findings support Ashworth's (2007) claim that in people's connection to places, place identity is not necessarily the most important type of bond and that, when it comes to heritage, this bond between people and places is much more complex. Therefore, this shows that when place is also heritage, it becomes difficult to categorize the connection between people and place through place-related concepts, such as place identity, because while the place provides a sense of identity and continuity for one group, it excludes the others who do not see themselves represented (Van Patten & Williams, 2008; Ashworth & Graham, 2016) yet claim the place to be their heritage. The knowledge, events and past socio-political contexts associated with the Palace of Parliament seem, however, even more significant for all participants when the focus shifts to current socio-political contexts.

Current, official representations of the Palace of Parliament focus on portraying the building as a symbol of democracy, of Bucharest and of Romania. As such, the place is used as a platform of meaning, to forward a narrative that reinforces national identification and pride (Smith, 2006; Ashworth & Graham, 2016). However, this same authorized heritage discourse influences participants to associate the Palace of Parliament with its communist past. On the one hand, participants feel that communism, an important period in country's history, does not receive enough attention, explanation and representation. They feel that the public needs to be educated on this matter and reminded about that specific part of history to ensure it will not be repeated in the future. The scarce official information about communism causes feelings of helplessness and oppression which prompted the interviewees to discuss their views on current socio-political contexts.

Unanimously, participants feel unrepresented by the current Romanian politicians, and because the political group is present in the Palace of Parliament, middle-age group participants and a few younger interviewees appear to draw a direct equivalence between the building and the politicians. In this sense, the feeling of being under or misrepresented by current politicians is also attributed to the building. Since this is the place where the political elite convenes, the Palace of Parliament cannot represent these participants as long as political figures make use of the building, and as such, the basic human need for efficacy cannot be attained (Baumeister, 1991). Therefore, the lack of a sense of symbolic ownership of heritage limits people in the development of a connection to place (Smith, 2006). Nevertheless, for participants who strongly identify with the building, the presence of politicians does not influence their connection with the place, findings which support the understanding that place identity can only be achieved when one self-identifies with a place (Devine-Wright & Howes, 2010).

The Palace of Parliament is a heritage claimed by multiple groups. When this occurs, various understandings of place are created to reflect each group's dominance (Tunbridge & Ashworth, 1996). In this case, whether they feel strong identification with the building or not, all participants express the same wish: a stronger connection to the Palace of Parliament. To accomplish this, interviewees feel that place changes need to occur for an appropriate usage of the place targeting economic and social goals. This suggests that an increased place dependency is perceived to have a positive influence on the development of attachment and identification with the Palace of Parliament. Moreover, the motivations for these goals relate with novel place-making processes. Participants feel it is their responsibility to protect this place because of the tragic past of the building and the investments made. The lack of care for the heritage building triggers feelings of shame and helplessness, and at the same time ambivalent

feelings towards the place. Therefore, envisioned changes would reflect what participants regard as proper usage of the place, thus supporting the need for purpose (Baumeister, 1991) and endowing them with a sense of symbolic ownership of the heritage as a result of satisfying the need for efficacy.

6.2. Reflecting on the theoretical framework and concepts

This research used the tripartite model by Scannell and Gifford (2010). The framework facilitated the qualitative approach of this study and the development of the interview guide and interview schedule for the semi-structed in-depth interviews. Moreover, the model allowed the general exploration of the Palace of Parliament as a heritage building and place at the same time. Nevertheless, several aspects need special theoretical consideration in further research.

Firstly, further research should focus on the interaction between the different elements of the framework. The findings of this study demonstrate their interconnectedness, a claim asserted by Scannell and Gifford (2010) as well. However, time and budget limitations hindered this research into delving deeper in exploring patterns of interrelations, an aspect missing from the tripartite framework. Only after more in-depth exploration, can we start testing causality hypotheses between the various factors involved in the making of place.

Secondly, the tripartite framework includes identification with place as part of place attachment, however the findings of this research support the understanding that place identity and place attachment are two different place-related notions interacting with each other (Altman & Low, 1992; Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001; Hernández et al., 2007; Devine-Wright & Howes, 2010). As such, for the exploration of places similar to the one researched in this study, I recommend scholars to consider one of the frameworks in which place identity and place attachment are two different responses towards place because this can help in a more thorough exploration of each type of connection to place. Moreover, participants in this study expressed an array of feelings towards the Palace of Parliament, this supporting previous claims that attachment to place or the connection to place is not only reflected by positive feelings (Manzo, 2005; Lewicka, 2011). Therefore, the affect element of the tripartite model must be expanded on negative, neutral and ambivalent feelings. Whether these feelings are caused by affect, identification with place, political contexts or the place itself, is not exemplified in this research, hence, future studies can explore how feelings to place develop.

Thirdly, Scannell and Gifford (2010, p.8) argue that "plans that incorporate or enhance elements central to the meaning of place are better-received, and so a clear understanding of individuals' attachment is an important part of successful planning." In the case of the Palace of Parliament, I argue that such approach is bound to fail and create even more problems. The building is an important heritage for several groups within the same cultural group. This thesis identified only three of them – politicians, participants who identify with the building and participants who do not identify with it –, however, the certainty that more interest groups exist lies in the contested nature of heritage (Tunbridge & Ashworth, 1996; Smith, 2006). Each of these groups develop their own meanings towards the place, and as such, one place encompasses a multitude of places (Greider & Garkovich, 1994). Moreover, each of these meanings is developed to satisfy diverse needs such as efficacy, self-worth, value and purpose (Baumeister, 1991), missing in the tripartite model, however added to the conceptual framework of this study. Finally, it was also demonstrated that meanings developed by participants in this study can be categorized according to Williams' (2014) surface and deep meanings. Therefore, this thesis provided empirical evidence that the differences entailed by the same attributed meaning to place (i.e. heritage), the variety and the opposing meanings attributed to the Palace of Parliament by various groups of people reinforce the claim that planning strategies should not be developed around place meaning (Tunbridge & Ashworth, 1996).

Fourthly, this thesis showed that participants discussed changes based on two types of future goals. Firstly, important to note is that change is not an aspect covered by the tripartite framework, and it must be included because changes to place can cause disruptions to place attachment and identity, but they can also reinforce the relationship between people and places (Devine-Wright & Howes, 2010). Secondly, focusing on future goals resonates with the goal-oriented approach in dealing with heritage dissonance suggested by Tunbridge and Ashworth (1996). Theoretically, the approach can be used to overcome the multitude of meanings attributed to heritage (Tunbridge & Ashworth, 1996). Practically, the findings of this research showed that participants focus on the same kinds of goals for the future, however it is difficult to conclude that such strategy might function in place/heritage planning because of the limitations of this research (see chapter four). Therefore, future research can explore whether a focus on future goals that may serve as an overarching purpose for planning could help in maintaining the multiplicity of place thus, encompassing various meanings without emphasizing them.

Lastly, the findings of this research raise several attention points about people's identification with place. Firstly, one group of participants expressed a strong self-identification with the Palace of Parliament. The other group of participants did not feel represented by the building. Although interviewees felt a sense of belonging to the Romanian culture and they all regard the place as heritage which reflects their cultural group, participants have different connections with the building. Therefore, this suggests that the cultural/group aspect of the tripartite model should not be regarded as a direct predictor of identification with place because we would wrongly assume that if people belong to the same cultural group, they most likely share the same understanding of place. This leads to a second remark i.e. if place identity can only be achieved when one self-identifies with a place (Devine-Wright & Howes, 2010), should there be a distinction between self-identification and cultural-identification with a place? In this sense, I argue that all participants identify with the Palace of Parliament, but they do so differently: one group has a strong sense of self-identification, while the other group does not. The lack of self-identification of participants reveals interesting aspects because this lack appears to have nothing to do with a reflection of the self in the place, but it is caused by other, external factors, such as such as the authorized heritage discourse, current socio-political contexts, presence of politicians in the building and current state of the building. Thus, in this case, it can even be argued that the discussion is not about self-identification with the building, but about feeling represented by aspects associated with the place.

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Appendix

Appendix I: Consent form

This form aims to inform you on your rights and obligations as a participant of this research and my rights and obligations as a researcher. Please read it carefully and sign it at the end of the interview should you wish to participate in this research.

The research is conducted as part of my master thesis for the University of Groningen, located in the Netherlands. This research explores the links between identity, heritage and place attachment. I have chosen Bucharest as a location for my study because of the interesting aspects of the past of each generation that currently inhabits the city. My focus is on the Palace of Parliament and the way locals perceive this building. The outcomes of this research will be used for academic purposes and they will be accessible on the website of the university, for any student, professor or public person.

For the purpose of this research I will be asking you various questions, ranging from your opinion on the present and past of Bucharest, to your own perception about heritage and private experiences of places. I would like to ask you to answer as truthfully as possible. Please feel free to refuse to answer any question which is too personal for you or you do not feel comfortable answering. The interview will take about one hour. However, you are free to stop the interview at any time. You have the right to leave the interview at any time and to refuse to participate in the research.

I am obligated to cause you absolutely no harm. If you feel threatened, harmed in any way, offended or endangered at any time during the interview, please interrupt me and express the issue at hand. At the same time, you are required to cause me, the researcher, absolutely no harm. In case I will feel threatened, harmed in any way, offended or endangered at any time during the interview, I will stop the interview.

The interviews will be audio recorded to ease the documenting of the rich information shared. The audio recording will not be shared with any third party, nor this consent form. The data from the interview will be used for analysis and will be publicly accessible as part of my master thesis. I will need to translate specific parts of the interview to illustrate the findings of this research and possibly provide an English transcript of the interview. However, your name and personal details (age, occupation) will not be disclosed in the master paper, nor will these details appear in any translation or transcript of the interviews. This research relies on guaranteeing you anonymity and confidentiality.

The undersigned …………………………., participate in this research willingly and voluntarily. I understand that parts of the information that I will provide will be used in the final paper and be publicly accessible. I am aware that the interview is audio recorded and I agree with this aspect. I am also aware that an English transcript might be created, but my personal details will not be disclosed. I intend to answer all questions truthfully and I know that I can stop the interview anytime I desire. I give the researcher full permission to use the information I provide for academic purposes. I understand that I am obligated to cause no harm to the researcher. I understand that my anonymity and confidentiality will be accounted for.

Name and signature

…………………….

If you have any questions related to this research or to your participation in this research, please do not hesitate to contact me on i.s.dragomir@student.rug.nl or reach me at my personal phone number.