

TOURISTS' ACCESS TO IMPORTANT MUSEUMS OF BUCHAREST FROM SATELLITE CITIES

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***Abstract:** The current trend shows an increasing desire among the population to indulge in cultural tourism, which includes museum tourism. Simultaneously, people are expressing their preference for living in less crowded areas such as satellite cities around Bucharest. This study aims to establish a correlation between living in the satellite cities and accessibility to a number of museums located in the center of Bucharest. The methodology involved creating maps to determine the accessibility of the population in these cities to five chosen museums and conducting interviews with museum tourism consumers residing in the satellite cities. The results indicate a connection between accessibility to Bucharest and the decision to live in these smaller cities, and museum tourism is one of the factors that influence the choice. However, there are differences between the inhabitants of these cities as consumers of museum tourism. The study aims to continue research on the economic component that could also play a role in the choice of housing and consumption of tourism, particularly cultural tourism.*

***Keywords:** museum, culture, heritage, accessibility, tourism*

INTRODUCTION

Many people visit interesting and relaxing places to unwind and relax. The daily activities can be quite tiring, and that is why people seek to detach themselves from their everyday routine and engage in activities that can help them in their spiritual evolution. These activities can include visiting different monuments with specific cultural significance, participating in festivals or group cultural activities, or simply visiting museums or cultural heritage sites. Several studies, such as those conducted by Szemkovics et al. (2021), Mazilu et al. (2023), Ducman et al. (2019), and Lequeux-Dincă et al. (2022), have shown that engaging in such activities can have positive effects on a person's well-being and personal growth.

These relaxation activities are also determined by the accessibility that consumers might have. A museum close to the housing area makes it more likely to be visited or at least to be known as a monument by those living in the vicinity. For this reason, the idea of easy or difficult accessibility can also keep people from visiting certain museums and from being more reluctant to visit others, which require more time to reach their destination physically. The need for knowledge is another reason that leads people to visit museum spaces (Teodorescu: 2009; Merciu et al:2022; Babăţ et al: 2023; Zheng Jia et al, 2023b). The economic component or income of the inhabitants could also be one of the conditions that condition the consumption of cultural tourism (Teodorescu et al: 2019, Szemkovics et al: 2018; Petre et al: 2023; Zheng Jia et al, 2023a). The need for knowledge and maintaining cultural standards is visible through the consumption of cultural tourism and, implicitly, museum tourism. After the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of people crossing the threshold of museums has increased. It is important to explore museums that showcase different aspects of art, history or literature as it helps individuals find themselves. This thirst for culture is not limited to a specific region or country, but is a universal desire observed across the world. (Kasagranda et al: 2026; Lazaro et al: 2022).

Data source

The museums that were chosen for this analysis were based on recommendations from the residents of the seven satellite cities. These museums are the most frequently visited by the locals and also attract a significant number of tourists from different regions. The popularity of these museums can be attributed to the interesting exhibits they offer, as well as the digital accessibility and publicity they have managed to achieve. Most of the residents came to know about these museums through modern sources provided by the museums themselves. The satisfaction levels of the visitors were assessed through interviews conducted between August and November 2023. A total of 103 participants from different age groups, educational backgrounds, and occupations were interviewed, all of whom hailed from the seven satellite cities of Bucharest.

METHODOLOGY

Selecting objectives

The museums in Bucharest are an essential attraction for those interested in learning about the city and country's history, as well as Romania's cultural and literary values. Visitors can gain insight into various

aspects of art, architecture, and other local and national values. The selection criteria for these five significant monuments were based on the needs and preferences of museum tourism consumers:

- A museum that caters to children
- A museum that provides information about the history of Romania
- A museum that offers information about the political world and the Ceausescu regime
- A museum that focuses on the royal world and their way of life as a component of multiculturalism
- The need for spiritual and romantic knowledge, which can be achieved through literature

Analysis of tourist accessibility

In order to estimate the time required to travel from home to the museums selected in the study, we used the traditional method involving the analysis of origin-destination (O-D) matrices using ArcGIS Pro 2.5.0 software. We obtained travel times using the API service for the selected museums. The administrative unit at NUTS2 level was used as the unit of evaluation of travel to tourist attractions in the centre of the capital. Data on the location of each tourist objective (the five selected museums) were available on the Municipality of Bucharest website. Each museum was geolocated using Google Maps, all addresses being exactly where they were indicated by the sources mentioned above.

Geospatial data consisting of road infrastructure, water bodies and county administrative limit were available on <https://geo-spatial.org>.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Recently, the cities around the capital have registered a rather sharp population growth of young population (Petre et al: 2023). Young people chose to live outside the urban space of Bucharest, predominantly towards areas with more quietness, more generous spaces, and lower housing prices. This last criterion is not generalized, the prices of these houses being comparable to those in Bucharest, sometimes even higher. With the existence of children in families and the need for education comes the desire to visit museums that satisfy them. Also, all of the chosen museums have educational offers for both children and adults. The accessibility to a place remains a factor influencing the choice of recreational activities.

The distance and the time spent in traffic influence our choices for weekend activities" (Violeta, 29 years old, from Otopeni, visiting the Antipa Museum with her family - 2 children and 2 adults).

After analysing the accessibility of Voluntari in relation to the five museums located in the capital's central area, it was found that the farthest point from Voluntari can be reached within 30 minutes. The southern area of the capital is the most accessible area to reach the central area from (see fig. 2). The analysis of the accessibility of Voluntari in relation to the five museums located in the central area of the capital shows that it can be reached in maximum 30 min, from the most challenging area in terms of accessibility. The southern part has the best access to the capital's central area (fig. 2).

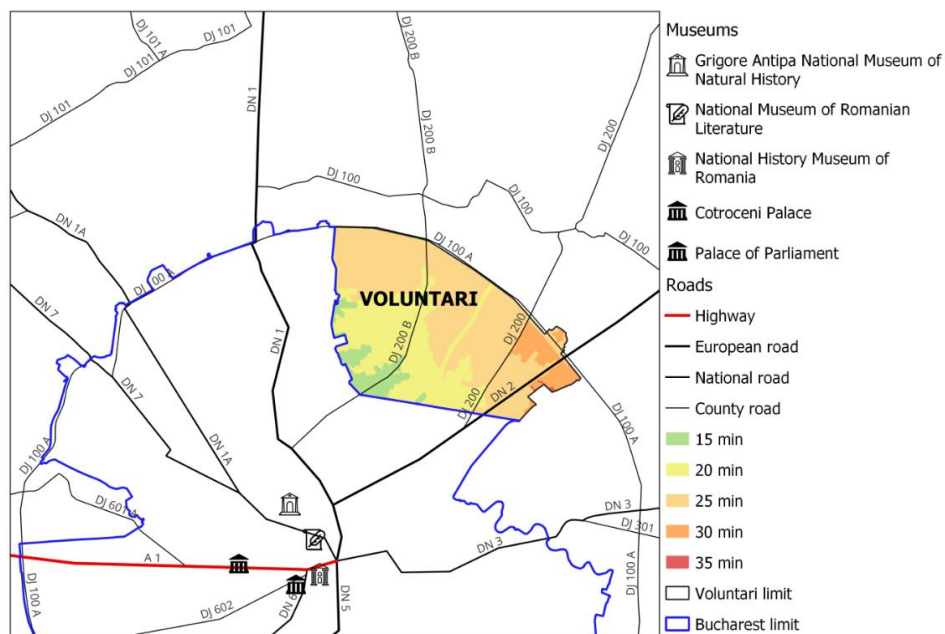


Fig. 2. Tourist accessibility of the population living in Voluntari

For Chitila, accessibility is primarily provided by the DN7 road, which connects to the DJ100A (fig. 3). This route is beneficial for those looking to visit the Cotroceni Palace and Parliament Palace, as it greatly reduces travel time. The DN7 road also facilitates access to other popular destinations, such as the Antipa Museum and the Museum of Literature. However, some areas may be more challenging to access, with travel times

exceeding 40 to 50 minutes. This can present a challenge for those looking to explore the city's central area and its museums. As a result, some visitors may reconsider their recreational plans rather than spend a long time in traffic.

A challenging accessibility to the capital is for Pantelimon residents since DN3, the only traffic artery connecting to the capital, is interrupted by DJ100A (fig. 4).

During our interviews, we met people from Pantelimon who stated that

".....We are planning to visit the Romanian History Museum with some friends. Although the distance is not so far, we will have to spend around 25-30 minutes in traffic. Since we visited the museum occasionally, we are excited about this trip. Time is also a factor to consider, but we have chosen to prioritize this museum visit for today. After visiting the museum, we plan to head to the Parliament Palace." (Florin, 46 years old, from Pantelimon, interview at the Romanian History Museum)

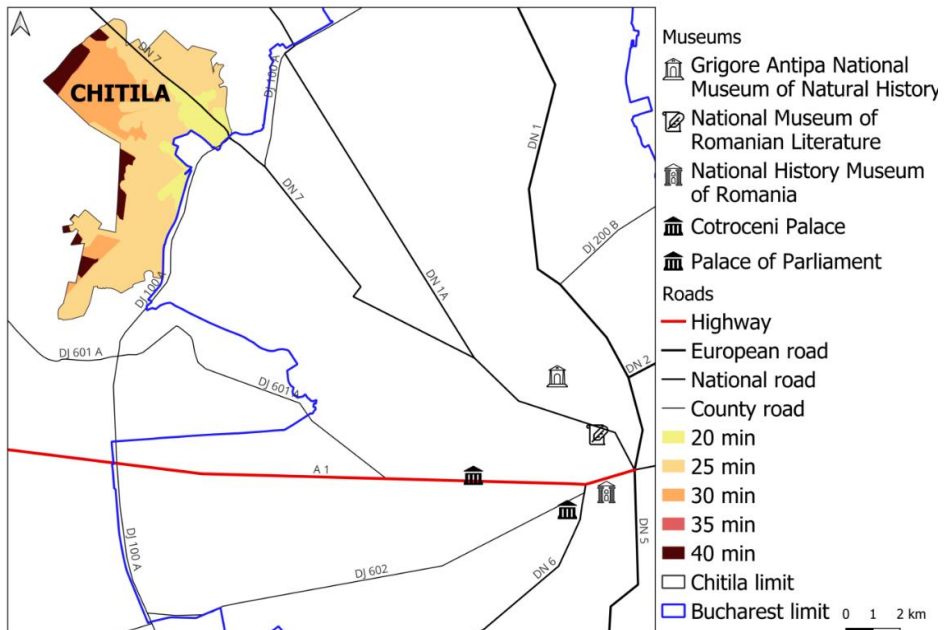


Fig. 3. Tourist accessibility of the population living in Chitila

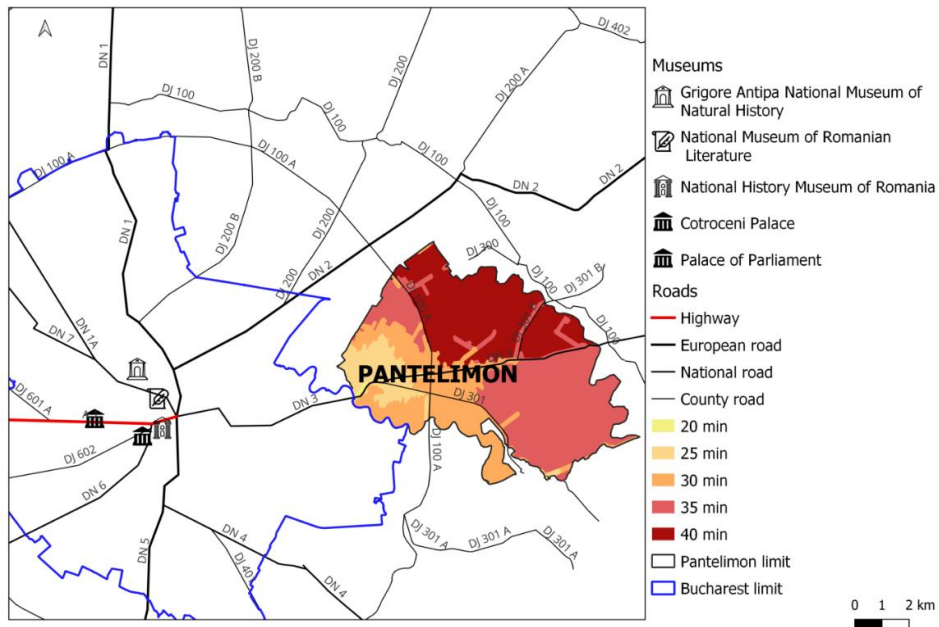


Fig. 4. Tourist accessibility of the population living in Pantelimon

The accessibility in Magurele (fig. 5) is quite good, with a range of 15 minutes for those residing in the northern part of the city, while it takes 40-50 minutes for those living in the southern part. The southern part of the city faces difficulty in accessibility as all the necessary services, including health services, are situated in the capital's central area. DN5 and DN6 are two roads located marginally, and access to the museum area is facilitated by DN6.

The city's accessibility to the capital or the central area of the capital has been improved due to the presence of an industrial platform of great interest and the intense circulation of the workforce towards the "laser of Magurele". As a result, there is now an opportunity for inhabitants to explore the values of Romanian culture easily through the museums in the central area of Bucharest. Planning the trip in advance can help make the most of the visit.

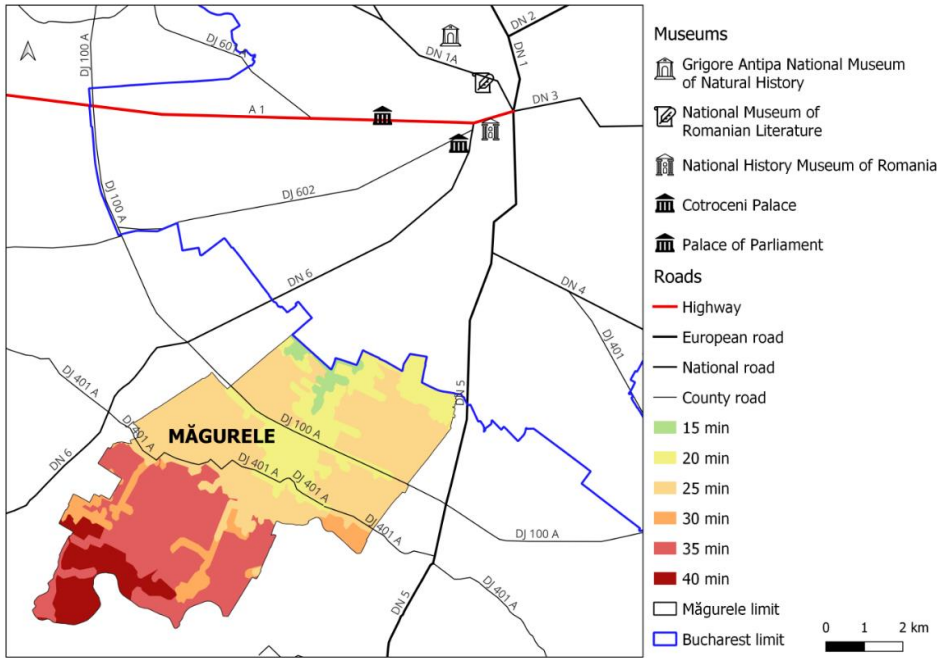


Fig. 5. Tourist accessibility of the population living in Magurele

Popesti-Leordeni has experienced significant population growth in the last decade, according to Petre et al. (2023). This growth can be attributed to the availability of housing in the city. However, reaching the capital's central area can be challenging, taking over 40-50 minutes (fig. 6). The DN4 is the only road connecting Popesti-Leordeni to Bucharest. However, the extension of the metro network has improved accessibility for residents in the NV area. Despite this, the DN4 remains the most commonly used route.

The city of Bragadiru could be an appealing choice for housing due to its accessibility (fig. 7). It takes only 15 to 35 minutes to reach most areas of the city by car. In fact, the majority of the city can be reached within 15-25 minutes. This accessibility may attract those looking to live in quieter areas outside the capital, while still enjoying good accessibility. The city of Bragadiru can be an attraction for housing considering its accessibility (fig. 7). This can be between 15min and 35 min. However, most of the territory of this city offers an accessibility expressed in time for travelling by car between 15-25 minutes.

This may lead to a reorientation of those who want to live in the outskirts of the capital, quieter areas with good accessibility.

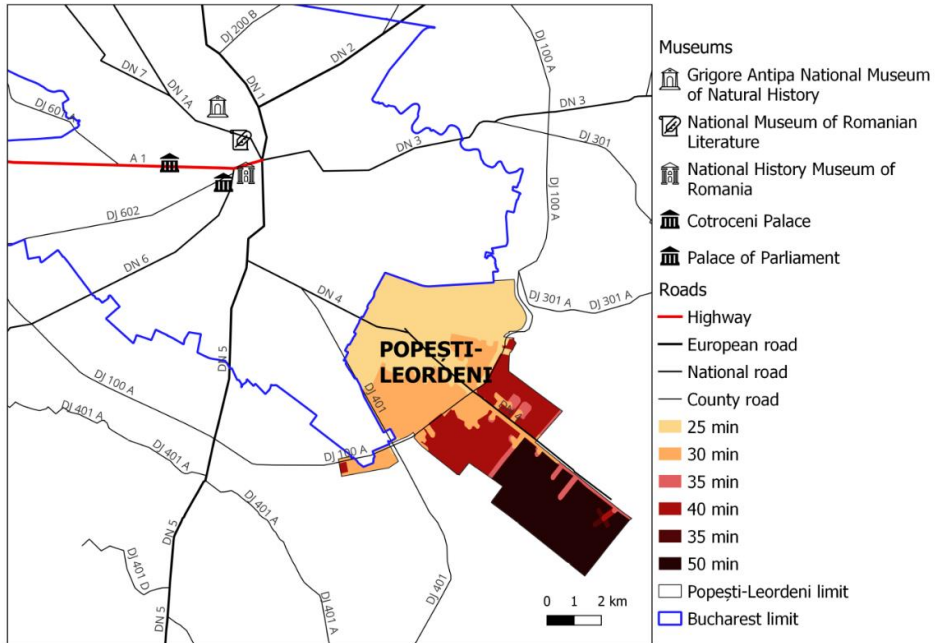


Fig. 6. Tourist accessibility of the population living in Popești Leordeni

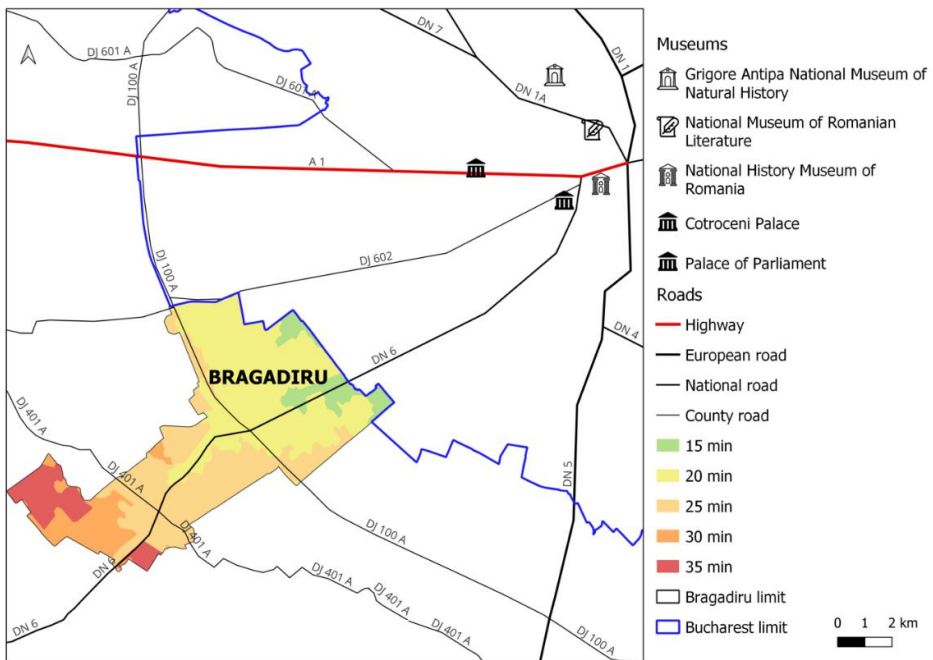


Fig. 7. Tourist accessibility of the population living in Bragadiru

CONCLUSIONS

At some point in their lives, everyone needs to satisfy certain desires or interests. One of the most popular activities is visiting museums, regardless of age. The cities near Bucharest are experiencing continuous growth, making them attractive to those looking for less crowded areas, tempting real estate offers, and workplaces nearby. As a result, many people have settled in these cities. The desire for knowledge, culture, self-education, and maintaining an intellectual and educational profile creates a need to visit museums in Bucharest or participate in their workshops. However, accessibility is a critical factor that can influence the decision of those who want to engage in recreational activities such as visiting museums.

It is essential to know how long it takes to travel by car from someone's home to the popular museums located in the central area of Bucharest. This information is particularly useful for people living in the urban area of Ilfov county who are interested in visiting these museums. Knowing the estimated travel time in minutes can help plan the trip more efficiently.

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