

Review paper

## **PRESERVATION POLICY OF HISTORICAL CITY CORES: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS NOVI PAZAR – NOVI SAD**

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### **Abstract**

*This paper focuses on the preservation of historical city cores in two culturally and historically significant cities of Serbia – Novi Pazar and Novi Sad. The preservation of these areas is vital for maintaining cultural identity, historical continuity, and promoting multicultural heritage. The main aim of this research is to explore how political decisions, economic factors, and social circumstances have influenced the preservation and revitalization of these areas. A specific focus is placed on the Old Bazaar in Novi Pazar, a symbol of Ottoman heritage, and the historical core of Novi Sad, representing Austro-Hungarian architectural traditions. The methodology includes a comprehensive analysis of legal frameworks, urban planning documents, and existing preservation strategies. A comparative analysis is conducted between the two cities, considering cultural, political, and economic factors that shape their preservation policies. The comparison emphasizes the influence of multicultural heritage in Novi Pazar and post-Austro-Hungarian heritage in Novi Sad, differences in financial investment in preservation efforts, and challenges posed by urbanization and tourism. The paper identifies specific challenges faced in the preservation of historical cores, such as limited funding, the impact of urbanization, and the difficulties in maintaining authenticity amid commercialization and tourism. The comparative analysis reveals differences in the preservation strategies between the two cities, particularly in relation to the cultural traditions that shape each city's approach, as well as the financial and political support for these initiatives. The findings underscore the need for better integration of preservation efforts into broader urban development plans, increased financial investment, and public education on the importance of cultural heritage. The research suggests that for both cities, preserving their historical cores is crucial not only for safeguarding physical structures but also for preserving their cultural identities and fostering sustainable development.*

**Key words:** preservation policy, historical cores, Novi Pazar, Novi Sad, cultural heritage, Old Bazaar, urban revitalization, multiculturalism, heritage protection law, authenticity preservation.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Architecture is one of the most important and influential areas of human creativity, with its rich material heritage preserved to this day [1]. Architectural heritage refers to everything that was built in the past and has specific monumental values that justify its protection and preservation. This includes monumental buildings, well-preserved structures, examples of folk architecture, buildings with artistic values, and those constructed from expensive and durable materials such as marble, as well as ruins that are subjects of archaeological research. Architectural heritage also encompasses significant technical achievements such as fortifications and bridges, as well as all cultural-historical spaces and immovable objects in the country that are part of archaeological sites [1]. Modern urbanization, driven by industrial development, population growth, and the demands of modern society, presents us with the challenge of preserving architectural heritage. The issue of the deterioration of cultural assets has become serious, leading to the need for legal regulations for protection. While European countries adopted laws for the protection of material culture as early as the 19th century, the Balkan countries only did so in socialist Yugoslavia, after World War II [1]. The protection of architectural heritage stems from a range of historical, cultural, scientific, national, social, economic, aesthetic, and other important aspects. The aim of this protection is to preserve significant objects and environments for future generations. This process is complex, as it includes research, evaluation, legal protection, documentation, spatial and urban planning, and care for the condition of cultural assets. On the other hand, technical protection involves a wide range of activities, from project design to the execution of conservation-restoration and other construction works, as well as full restoration, protection, revitalization, and presentation of immovable cultural assets [2]. Architectural heritage is crucial for the identity of a community and represents a source of its spiritual wealth. Novi Pazar, as the subject of this research, is a good example of a city with rich cultural heritage that nurtures cultural diversity as an invaluable treasure. Throughout history, the city has been attractive to various conquerors, which is reflected in changes in architecture and urbanism, and this evolution is manifested in its multiculturalism and different forms of life and business through the centuries [3]. Novi Sad carries layers of historical, cultural, and architectural heritage that testify to the dynamic past of the city and its cultural diversity. Developing at the crossroads of different cultures, the city has become home to a unique combination of architectural styles and urban solutions, making it rich in multicultural heritage [4]. The preservation of architectural heritage depends on many factors, and today's fast-paced life presents various challenges. The system of heritage valuation, as well as our awareness of its importance, are key to its preservation and to ensuring cultural identity and diversity for future generations [1]. However, there remains a significant gap in the existing preservation policies, particularly in their failure to effectively integrate heritage conservation into broader urban development plans. The challenges of modern urbanization and economic development in both cities have yet to be fully addressed within preservation frameworks. In this context, the research focuses on identifying these gaps and suggesting solutions for enhancing preservation strategies.

Novi Pazar and Novi Sad are ideal case studies for this research due to their distinct yet intertwined historical, cultural, and architectural trajectories. Novi Pazar's Ottoman heritage offers a unique perspective on the preservation of non-European cultural assets, while Novi Sad's Austro-Hungarian influences provide a contrasting example. The cities' shared multicultural heritage and contrasting political and historical experiences make them particularly valuable for comparative analysis.

This research introduces a new approach by comparing the preservation policies and their effectiveness in these two cities. It seeks to explore the impact of governance, political influences, and economic challenges on preservation efforts, offering a fresh perspective on the complexities of safeguarding architectural heritage in rapidly evolving urban environments.

## **2. LEGAL FRAMEWORKS FOR THE PRESERVATION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE**

Architectural heritage, which is an important part of cultural heritage, requires a holistic approach. It is defined as buildings and architectural groups on different scales that must undergo a conservation approach, considering all of their values. The first term used to represent architectural heritage was "monument." Until the late 17th century, this term was closely associated only with archaeology, but later it became correlated with memory and aesthetics. The need to protect cultural heritage arises from its scientific, aesthetic, and natural values, as well as its sociocultural, symbolic, economic, and spiritual values. However, the protection of cultural heritage is often limited by factors such as insufficient financial resources, natural disasters, wars, neglect, and disinterest, which negatively affect and lead to the loss of historical buildings [5]. The objectives of protecting and preserving architectural heritage are numerous. Some of the goals include discovering, recognizing, collecting, documenting, studying, interpreting, evaluating, presenting, raising awareness about the importance of cultural heritage, integral preservation, and protection of cultural heritage through protective measures, as well as managing cultural heritage resources and the risks to cultural heritage [6].

### **2.1. National Legal Frameworks**

Cultural monuments in Serbia are protected by the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments of Serbia, which was established by a decree of the Government of the People's Republic of Serbia in 1947. In 1960, the name was changed to the Republic Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments. In Novi Sad, the Institute for the Protection of Monuments has been operational since 1983, while in Novi Pazar, the responsibility for the protection of cultural and historical heritage lies with the Institute for the Protection of Monuments in Kraljevo. In 2009, an initiative was launched by the Novi Pazar City Council to establish a local Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments, but despite the recognized need for such an institution, the project has not yet been realized [7]. A cultural monument is defined as an individual immovable object of cultural, historical, architectural, archaeological, artistic, ethnological, technical, paleontological, or other social significance. Cultural monuments can include: architectural works, their remains, recognizable parts, objects with related immovable properties, archaeological objects or structures, works of applied arts, paintings or sculptures, inscriptions, geological sites, works or remains of technical culture, old industries, infrastructure, and other goods permanently associated with a particular architectural object or site, as well as memorials or other commemorative monuments [8].

### **2.2. Local Legal Frameworks and Strategies**

#### Novi Pazar

Local authorities in Novi Pazar have developed several key documents and strategies for the preservation of their historical urban core. Sustainable Development Strategy of Novi Pazar (2018-2028): This strategy emphasizes the preservation of cultural heritage as a crucial aspect of sustainable development. It focuses on an integrated approach that includes community participation, infrastructure improvement, and the promotion of cultural tourism [9]. Detailed Regulation Plan for the Old Town Core: This plan defines the legal and spatial frameworks for the preservation of the historical center of Novi Pazar. It includes the protection of cultural monuments, regulation of construction, and restoration of historical buildings [10].

Law on Cultural Property: This national law provides the basis for the protection of cultural heritage in Serbia, including in Novi Pazar. It regulates the protection, use, and management of cultural properties [11].

### Novi Sad

With its distinctive city core, which includes Zmaj Jovina Street, City Square, Dunavska Street, Pašičeva Street, and Katolička Porta, Novi Sad also has well-developed legal frameworks and strategies for preservation. Sustainable Development Strategy of Novi Sad: This document lays the foundation for sustainable development, including the preservation of cultural heritage. It emphasizes the importance of preserving historical sites as resources for cultural tourism and the city's identity [12].

General Urban Plan (GUP) of Novi Sad: The GUP defines spatial planning and construction regulation in the historical core, with special protection measures for significant cultural and historical sites [13]. Law on Cultural Property: As in Novi Pazar, this national law provides the basis for the protection of cultural heritage in Serbia, including in Novi Sad. It regulates the protection, use, and management of cultural properties [11].

Program for the Revitalization of the City Core: This program includes specific measures for the restoration, protection, and tourist promotion of historical sites in the center of Novi Sad. It focuses on the integration of modern technologies for the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage [14]. The preservation of historical urban cores in Novi Pazar and Novi Sad relies on integrated strategies that combine legal regulations, community participation, and international cooperation. Key documents provide guidelines and frameworks for implementing these policies, ensuring the preservation of cultural heritage for future generations.

## **3. THE OLD BAZAAR OF NOVI PAZAR**

Novi Pazar, a city with a rich history and heritage, has endured significant destruction in the past, resulting in the loss of many monuments that once testified to its history and development. Historical sources tell us that Novi Pazar once had something that few cities in this region possessed. Due to wars and devastating events, many hammams, religious buildings, fountains, gaps, and bazaars disappeared, diminishing the presence of the oriental spirit that once adorned this city, which was also known as the "tired key of Ottoman Bosnia" [16]. Despite numerous historical challenges, Novi Pazar has preserved a significant part of its historical artifacts and architectural heritage, among which the most important is the historical city center, or the Old Bazaar.

Definition of a Bazaar – The commercial and public part of an oriental city, where trade and craft shops are located, as well as other public buildings like inns, caravanserais, covered markets (bezistan), and mosques. The word "čaršija" originates from the Persian "čaršu" and the Pahlavi "čahar-sug," meaning four sides or quadrilateral, while the Arabic word "sut" refers to a market or marketplace. The Bazaar was the hub of public life in the oriental city – business was conducted there, people gathered, and it was a place for merchants and travelers to stay [17].

### **3.1. Historical Context and Significance**

The Old Bazaar in Novi Pazar is an important cultural and historical complex located on the right bank of the Raška River. The part of the old town situated on the left bank of the river was called "Narrow Bazaar." The first part of the Bazaar was formed on the left bank, along the Stambol Road, and was known as "Narrow Bazaar." It is believed that the Bazaar expanded to the right bank of the Raška River in the first half of the 19th century. Narrow Bazaar covered an area from the bridge over the Raška River to Potok-mahala, primarily formed in a linear system, with shops and buildings arranged along the street, as well as some cross streets near the bridge and Amir-aga's inn [17]. With the demolition of Narrow Bazaar in 1947, the name "Bazaar" was transferred to the right bank of the Raška River, where the Arap Mosque and the old shops were located. Although it functionally belonged to

the main Bazaar on the left bank, it was not a typical Oriental Bazaar in terms of its functional arrangement [19]. The development of the Bazaar followed the fate of the city: during peaceful times, it grew and gained new buildings, while during wars, it was often destroyed. The greatest destruction of the Old Bazaar occurred in 1689 during the Austro-Turkish War, when many buildings were burned or demolished, including not only wooden inns and shops but also stone structures such as the *bezistan* (covered market), *caravanserai*, and *hamams*. After this destruction, the Bazaar was rebuilt but became much more modest, lacking some key buildings, and its appearance changed significantly. Further damage occurred due to wars in 1737, 1809, and 1944, as well as frequent fires, which further shaped the fate of the Bazaar, which suffered its greatest destruction after the war [17]. The Novi Pazar Bazaar stretched from today's "Granata" tavern to the "Kosovo" Hotel, with a branch extending from Čemerli Inn (today's agricultural products market) to Hrvacánin Tavern (today's Stevan Nemanja Street) [20]. The development of the Bazaar began with Isa-beg Isaković, who built the first 56 shops. These shops were located near his mosque, along what would become the main street, Stambol-drum, which determined the direction and position of the further development of the Bazaar. The further development of the Bazaar was significantly influenced by the institution of the *vakuf*, whose funds were used to build many structures in the Bazaar [17]. *Vakuf* documents testify to the vital role these buildings played in the economy of the city. Analyzing *vakuf* documents shows that almost all donors (those who endowed the *vakufs*) in the 15th and 16th centuries, along with mosques and *mesdjids*, built economic structures such as inns, *caravanserais*, bakeries, *watermills*, and shops. Regarding the crafts that existed in the Bazaar, the majority of craftsmen belonged to the service sector, such as shoemakers, cobblers, hat makers, tailors, furriers, saddlers, and weavers. Additionally, there were bakers, butchers, cooks, confectioners, candle makers, barbers, and coffeehouse owners [19].

### 3.2. Urban characteristics

The Novi Pazar Bazaar was organized according to the classic oriental principle, with divisions based on different crafts, which allowed for the formation of separate districts for specific craftsmen. Although it was more modest than the bazaars in Skopje and Sarajevo, its organization and appearance were similar. The spirit of tradition of the Novi Pazar Bazaar is reflected in the historical memory of the built core of Novi Pazar, whose significance goes beyond its material value, representing a key element of identity and remembrance of the past [21]. The Bazaar belongs to the larger oriental bazaars where craft workshops and shops were built, while housing was not typical for this area. Typical buildings in the bazaar were single-story, while buildings with an upper floor, but without residential function, were only constructed in the part of the bazaar closest to the bridge. Residential buildings with an upper floor began to be built only in the early 20th century [22]. The Old Bazaar in Novi Pazar is one of the rare and best-preserved units in Serbia, despite the challenges of modernization, such as the construction of newer buildings in the immediate vicinity of high-value monument buildings, such as Isa-Beg Isaković's Hamam and Hasan Čelebi's Mosque (Arap Mosque) with commercial buildings. New buildings disrupt the traditional spirit and historical atmosphere of the old core with mismatched aesthetic proportions and urban character. Despite significant efforts to preserve the bazaar, its values have been compromised by numerous interventions, including the use of heavy machinery, the demolition of mosques without respect for their symbolism and tradition, as well as a lack of consultation with experts [22]. Although these challenges have impacted its appearance, the Old Bazaar remains a lively and active part of the city, leading to projects aimed at modernizing and "updating" its core. As an integral part of the modern urban center of Novi Pazar, it holds special significance, which has led to the need for the development of a Detailed Protection and Revitalization Plan, aimed at preserving its monumental values and further guiding the development of the bazaar [22].

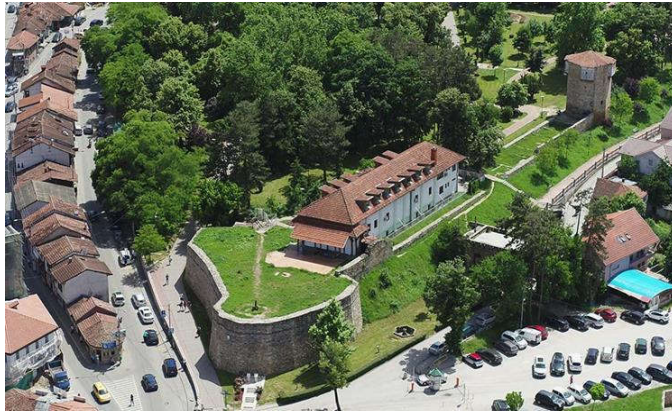


Figure 1. Novopazar Bazaar and Fortress,  
([http://novipazarspomenici.mi.sanu.ac.rs/stara\\_carsija\\_opis.html](http://novipazarspomenici.mi.sanu.ac.rs/stara_carsija_opis.html))



Figure 2. The Extent of the Old Bazaar, "Photograph from the book Nešković J.,  
The Old Bazaar in Novi Pazar."

### 3.3. Challenges of preservation

The preservation of the authenticity of the Old Bazaar in Novi Pazar presents a significant challenge, particularly in the context of contemporary trends in modernization and urban development. The lack of adequate funding for the restoration and preservation of historical buildings further complicates the situation, while modern urbanization often threatens the integrity of historical structures. In addition, balancing tourist development with the preservation of local culture is becoming increasingly difficult, as the growth of tourism may lead to the commercialization of the space, further eroding the authenticity and identity of the Bazaar. To overcome this, it is essential to adopt sustainable strategies that will ensure the

preservation of cultural heritage while simultaneously supporting the economic development of the local community [22].

These challenges are further emphasized by the following examples:

**Decay of historical buildings:** One of the oldest houses in the Bazaar, the Čavić House, known for its authentic architecture, recently suffered severe damage due to neglect. The owners lack the funds for restoration, and the relevant institutions have not provided adequate support. Such cases are frequent, as many buildings remain unprotected and are left to deteriorate.

**Modern urbanism and the construction of new buildings:** One of the most obvious examples of pressure from modern urbanism is the construction of a business center near the Old Bazaar. This project, the Smart City Center, has raised concerns among experts and the local community due to the potential disruption of the visual identity and integrity of the Bazaar. Similar projects often ignore the historical context and contribute to modernization that endangers the traditional structure.

**Commercialization of space due to tourism growth:** The rise of tourism has led to changes in the function of historical buildings. For example, one of the oldest bakeries in the Bazaar, which had been in operation for nearly 100 years, has closed and been transformed into a souvenir shop, Pazamica. This trend of turning authentic craft shops into tourist attractions threatens to erase the original character of the Bazaar, replacing it with uniform commercial contents.

## **4. THE CITY CENTER OF NOVI SAD**

Novi Sad was founded in 1694 as a trading settlement under the name "Ratzen Stadt" (Serbian: Ratna varoš). In the following decades, the city developed as a significant commercial and craft center, thanks to its position on the Danube and its location along trade routes between the Habsburg Monarchy and the Ottoman Empire [23]. During the 19th century, Novi Sad earned the nickname "Serbian Athens" due to its leading role in the Serbian national revival. In this period, the city became a center for Serbian culture, education, and literature. The establishment of the Serbian Learned Society in 1826 and its relocation to Novi Sad in 1864 contributed to the strengthening of the city's cultural significance [24]. Since its founding, Novi Sad has been a multicultural environment, home to numerous national communities, including Serbs, Hungarians, Germans, Jews, and others. This multiculturalism played a key role in shaping the city's cultural identity and contributed to its rich heritage [25]. The city center was the focal point of many events important for the Serbian national revival. Numerous schools, libraries, and cultural institutions were established in this part of the city, making Novi Sad a crucial center for Serbian culture within the Habsburg Monarchy [26].

### **4.1. Historical Context and Importance**

The historical core of Novi Sad, which includes Zmaj Jovina Street, City Square, Dunavska Street, Pašićeva Street, and Catholic Gate, represents a key part of the city's cultural and historical heritage. Zmaj Jovina Street, one of the oldest and busiest streets in Novi Sad, is named after the famous Serbian poet Jovan Jovanović Zmaj. This street has been a central artery throughout the city's history and today is a pedestrian zone that connects the main squares and historical landmarks. City Square, also known as Freedom Square, is the heart of social and cultural life, surrounded by buildings of significant architectural value, such as the City Hall and the Cathedral [27]. Dunavska Street, leading to Dunav Park and the banks of the Danube River, is an important part of Novi Sad's urban landscape. This street is known for its unique atmosphere and well-preserved examples of 19th and early 20th-century architecture. Pašićeva Street and Catholic Gate, with their significant cultural and religious buildings, further contribute to the historical importance of the city's core [28]. The historical center of Novi Sad represents the focal point of the city's cultural



and historical legacy. Over its rich history, Novi Sad has played a key role in the cultural and political life of Serbia. The urban structure of the historical core developed in line with European urban trends, with dominant architectural styles including Baroque, Classicism, Art Nouveau, and Modernism. These diverse architectural influences are reflected in the buildings in the city center, such as City Hall, the Bishop's Palace, and Zmaj Jovina Street, which form the heart of the historical core [29]. The construction of significant buildings with stylistic characteristics, which have been preserved to this day in the Old Core, began in the early decades of the 18th century and continued until World War II. Among the earlier built structures, which significantly contribute to the high aesthetic and architectural value of this area, the sacred buildings stand out: St. Nicholas Church (1730), the Cathedral of St. George (1741), the Assumption Church (1765–1777), the Greek Catholic Church (1820), and the Roman Catholic Church of the Name of Mary (1895). Due to significant damage to many structures during the 1849 Uprising, only rare examples, mainly secular, from the Baroque and Classical periods have been preserved. Special mention should be made of the house at Zmaj Jovina Street number 28, first recorded in 1720, as well as the one at the corner of Zmaj Jovina and Nikola Pašić Street, built in 1751, which is the only one fully preserved from that period. Stylistic and architectural similarities of these houses can be found in the Petrovaradin Suburb, with the possibility that they were built by the same masters [29]. The oldest architectural layers of the Old Core are preserved in a series of houses on Zmaj Jovina and Dunavska Streets, as well as in the blocks formed by Pašićeva, Miletićeva, Njegoševa, Grčkoškolska, Nikolajevska Streets, extending to Jovan Subotić Street. Further southwest, they are also preserved in the streets of Kralja Aleksandra and the Theater Square (City Hall block). These houses, mostly multi-story, were built in the first half of the 19th century, with many constructed immediately after the Uprising, during the period of intense city restoration. They are characterized by floor plans in the shape of the letters "L" or "P", with communicating balconies on the courtyard facades supported by vaulted constructions on Baroque-style stone consoles. The basements and ground floors of these houses are always vaulted with various constructive types. The upper floors often feature an "alcove," a niche in the corner of the house, with pseudo-Doric or later semi-columns, introduced as a functional solution during the Classicist period to provide lighting for the corner room where the two wings of the house meet. The roofs of the preserved houses are generally lower and gabled, which is also characteristic of Classicism [29]. It is common for the oldest buildings to have facades with stylistic features from later periods, the result of reconstructions carried out by the owners in accordance with the aesthetic and fashion trends of the time.



Figure 3. Novi Sad in 1920, Liberty Square,

[https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/f/f2/Novi\\_Sad\\_1920.jpg/250px-Nov\\_Sad\\_1920.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/f/f2/Novi_Sad_1920.jpg/250px-Nov_Sad_1920.jpg)



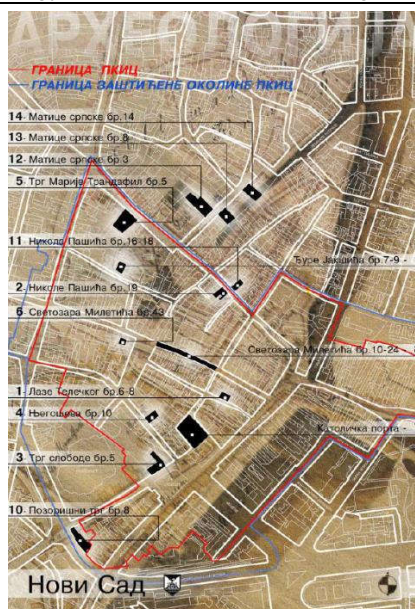


Figure 4. Photograph from the book *Srbulović, Đ. The Old Town Core of Novi Sad: Catalogue of Buildings*, 2017.

## 5. SOCIO-POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC FACTORS OF CULTURAL HERITAGE PRESERVATION

Social and economic factors have a profound impact on the life of the community and the perception of the historical center as a cultural and social hub. The different history and development of these cities have led to varying political factors that influenced the preservation of the core areas. The historical center of Novi Pazar has been protected since 1988, while the old town center of Novi Sad has been under protection since 2006 [9-12].

### 5.1. The Impact of Political Decisions

After World War II, Novi Pazar underwent significant urban transformation, in line with broader trends in former Yugoslavia influenced by socialist ideologies. The city received its first general urban plan in 1956, and the project for modernizing the city center began in 1968, with the aim of creating a new visual identity. This led to significant changes in the historical core of the city, where many buildings were demolished to open new roads and buildings, including the Municipal and Cultural Centers [33]. A significant milestone was 1977, when the Institute for the Protection of Monuments in the city of Kraljevo began documenting monuments and researching cultural heritage. From 1971 to 1973, a group of architects and architecture students conducted research that laid the foundation for the General Plan for the Valorization and Protection of the Historical Center of Novi Pazar from 1975. The Heritage Protection and Management Board was established in 1975 and set the foundations for a responsible approach to heritage protection planning, including the historical city center. This board was key in implementing a methodology that encompassed the protection of cultural heritage and urban planning principles with a special focus on a holistic approach to architectural heritage preservation. In that period, in 1986 and 1987, additional research was initiated, resulting in the creation of the Detailed Protection and Revitalization Plan for the Historical Center of Novi Pazar in 1988, which legally protected most of the buildings in the historical core [33]. The methodology used by the Detailed Protection Plan was based on the

protection of cultural heritage, considering urban planning principles and the importance of revitalization. The plan involved analyzing the current state of the bazaar, architecture, urban structure, the preservation of buildings and infrastructure, as well as the monument valorization of the entire space and individual buildings. Based on the research, the monument valorization included categorizing buildings according to their monumental value [22]. The state cultural heritage policy during the socialist period was oriented towards demonstrating the power of the new society through architectural and urban expression. This approach, although subject to changes due to economic dependence and shifts in political trends, was focused on modernist and international urbanism, which often led to drastic breaks with traditional architecture. However, the urban revolution in Novi Pazar, especially since the 1960s, had a specific character, as it combined the morphology of the terrain, cultural heritage, and unorthodox elements of the modernist urban matrix [33]. During the 1990s, the economic and social crisis in Serbia caused significant changes in the historical part of Novi Pazar, which mostly had negative consequences on the visual appearance and spatial values of the city. Illegal interventions, such as modernizing buildings without the approval of the Institute for the Protection of Monuments, led to a reduction in the authenticity of the historical center. Changes, such as replacing traditional wooden windows with modern aluminum or plastic windows, significantly impacted the visual identity of the city center [33]. Changes in legislation and reduced funds for cultural heritage protection after 1990 further worsened the situation in the historical center of Novi Pazar. Inconsistent planning and a weak management system created conditions for the destruction of monument values, undermining the visual-aesthetic and functional characteristics of this part of the city [34]. With the beginning of the 2000s, with the recovery of the country and the liberalization of the market, processes of development control began to be established, including the implementation of new urban concepts and tools, such as participatory planning processes and strategic plans. A key moment for the historical center of Novi Pazar was the adoption of the Detailed Regulation Plan for the Historical Center with the Park in 2017, which laid the foundations for the future development of this area, focusing on physical-spatial layout and land use [33]. However, despite efforts, the historical center of Novi Pazar still faces challenges. Mass urbanization and the influx of population from surrounding areas have created pressure on existing infrastructure systems, which has further contributed to functional obsolescence. Increased building heights, inconsistencies in material selection, and illegal interventions, such as the illegal reconstruction of the Arab mosque, represent a serious problem in the revitalization process. These changes highlight the need for better management, the enactment of appropriate laws, and raising awareness of the importance of cultural heritage preservation. In order to preserve the rich cultural heritage, a multidisciplinary approach, cooperation between institutions and the community, and continuous investment are necessary [35].

Social and economic factors have a profound impact on the life of the community, shaping the perception of the historical center as the cultural and social hub of the city.

Although significant progress has been made in preserving the architectural heritage of Novi Pazar, challenges related to the integration of cultural heritage into contemporary urban development remain. Recent studies emphasize the importance of adaptive reuse and participatory planning in the revitalization of historic cores, particularly in post-socialist contexts. For instance, a study on Belgrade highlights how the adaptive reuse of abandoned structures can contribute to the preservation of cultural identity and economic development [36]. Compared to these findings, local strategies often lack systematic support for stakeholder engagement and innovative heritage management models, indicating a need for improvement and alignment with contemporary global trends.

#### Novi Sad

The protection and preservation of Novi Sad's historic city center are key elements in maintaining the city's cultural and historical identity. These policies are the result of a combination of local, national, and international efforts that ensure the preservation of the

authenticity and integrity of historical buildings and urban structures. In 2006, the city center of Novi Sad was officially designated as a Spatial Cultural-Historical Entity. This decision, made by the Republic of Serbia, recognized the historical and cultural value of this area, encompassing key buildings and streets within the city core [27]. Cultural heritage protection in Serbia is regulated by the Cultural Heritage Law, which outlines measures for the protection, conservation, and restoration of cultural assets. Local authorities, in collaboration with the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments, implement these measures in Novi Sad, ensuring the preservation of the authenticity and integrity of the city center [37]. After the city center was placed under protection, strict urban planning regulations were introduced, limiting the construction of new buildings within the protected area. These restrictions are crucial for maintaining the historical character of the city and preventing the disruption of the visual identity of the core [13]. A special focus has been placed on the restoration and reconstruction of existing buildings, aiming to preserve original architectural elements. Restoration projects are often carried out in collaboration with international experts, enabling the application of modern conservation techniques [38]. Novi Sad is part of several European projects aimed at preserving cultural heritage. These projects include financial and technical support for the restoration of historical buildings, as well as the development of sustainable models for managing cultural assets [39]. As part of the preservation efforts, various educational initiatives have been carried out, engaging both the local population and tourists. The aim of these initiatives is to raise awareness about the importance of preserving cultural heritage and promoting responsible behavior in historical areas [40]. The preservation policy for Novi Sad's city center relies on a combination of legal, urban, and educational measures aimed at maintaining its historical character and cultural identity. Through cooperation at local, national, and international levels, it has been ensured that the city center remains an authentic testament to the rich history and culture of Novi Sad. The issue of new modern constructions in the Old Town has existed for some time, due to the mistaken assumption that replicas of old buildings should be created in their immediate surroundings. According to the protection service, future architecture in the Old Town should reflect the spirit of its time, both in design and shaping. Novi Sad has adopted a series of local action plans for cultural heritage preservation, which align with broader strategies at the national level. These plans define concrete steps for preserving and restoring culturally significant buildings, as well as improving cultural asset management. The plans also include measures to encourage cooperation between the private and public sectors in funding and implementing conservation projects. Novi Sad, as part of European Commission and UNESCO initiatives, has participated in programs related to the protection and promotion of cultural heritage. These programs often involve training experts and developing new technologies for conservation, as well as cultural tourism that contributes to the sustainable development of the city [41]. The local community plays a crucial role in preserving cultural heritage. Active involvement of citizens through various initiatives, such as volunteer programs and cultural festivals, helps raise awareness and foster a sense of shared ownership of cultural assets [42]. Cultural tourism has become one of the key elements in preserving and promoting the city center. Sustainable approaches to tourism, which respect cultural heritage and involve the local community, contribute to the economic development and maintenance of Novi Sad's cultural identity [43].

Despite the efforts invested in the preservation and revitalization of Novi Sad's historical core, challenges persist in achieving a balance between urban development and the protection of cultural heritage. International research points to the necessity of integrated planning approaches and sustainable tourism models for historic urban areas. For example, a study focusing on Safranbolu and Amasra in Turkey highlights the importance of a holistic planning approach to sustainable tourism to preserve both cultural and natural heritage [44]. In comparison, current practices in Novi Sad show a tendency toward partial solutions and project-oriented interventions, emphasizing the need for more comprehensive and long-term heritage management strategies.

## **5.2. Economic Pressures and Consequences**

The economic aspect refers to the commercial and trade activities that take place in the historic center, where there is a conflict between the need for modernization and the preservation of authenticity. Managing cultural heritage presents challenges that require specific financial resources. A key issue is how to develop a sustainable financing model that allows for the preservation of significant cultural monuments. The increasing number of properties requiring financing, both in Serbia and Europe, reflects a growing awareness of the importance of the past and the need to preserve national identity. This growth demands new policies and support, particularly in developing countries, so that cultural heritage can be preserved and used as a generator of economic development, especially through cultural tourism [2]. Given the upcoming financial commitments for heritage protection in Serbia, the existing European financing model raises concerns about the preservation of architectural heritage. It is necessary to improve heritage management to overcome financial inadequacy. Introducing mandatory financial subsidies for cultural monuments requires identifying incentives and capacities for financiers, as well as finding new financing models that can reduce maintenance costs. International organizations, state and local authorities, non-governmental organizations, as well as private and public donors play a key role in preserving cultural heritage. The key challenge remains how to develop an economically sustainable model for financing cultural heritage that can address contemporary challenges and prevent the loss of important cultural monuments. The economic definition of value has evolved over time, particularly in the assessment of non-market value, using methods such as CVM (contingent valuation method) and discrete choice method, which rely on direct responses from respondents in surveys [45]. In addition to these methods, travel cost and hedonic price methods are also used, although their application is considered theoretical in assessing public goods. By using these methods, researchers can estimate how much respondents are willing to pay for the protection or restoration of monuments. Practically calculating the economic value of these benefits poses a challenge. It is also important to consider the relevance of a given object in society, where nominal value (N) is often used as an independent unit of assessment. A restored historic object has a higher nominal value than a neglected one, which can lead to unexpected costs [46-47].

## **6. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE PRESERVATION OF HISTORICAL CENTERS**

Comparative analysis including the definition of methods and strategies for the preservation of architectural heritage in Novi Pazar and Novi Sad, comparison of preservation challenges, and recommendations for improving preservation policies.

### **6.1. Comparison of preservation challenges**

Challenges in Novi Pazar: Balance between modernization and preservation: The need for infrastructure improvements that do not threaten the cultural heritage and historical characteristics of the city [9]. Financing: Insufficient funds for the restoration and preservation of cultural monuments [10]. Community participation: The need for greater involvement of the local community in preservation processes and decision-making [11].

Challenges in Novi Sad: Urbanization: Conflict between the interests of preserving historical monuments and the need for infrastructure modernization [12]. Tourism: Managing tourism to preserve the authenticity of historical sites and avoid the negative consequences of excessive tourist pressure [13]. Cultural heritage protection: Pressure on infrastructure and the need to balance preservation and development [14].

## 6.2. Recommendations for improving preservation policies

Strengthening the legal framework: Improvement and strict implementation of cultural heritage laws to ensure effective protection of historical centers [11, 14].

Financial support: Increasing investments in the restoration and preservation of cultural monuments through state and international funds [10, 13].

Community participation: Greater involvement of the local community in preservation processes through education and participatory projects [9, 12].

Sustainable tourism: Development of sustainable tourism strategies that balance the promotion of cultural heritage with the preservation of the authenticity of the site [10, 14].

Technological innovation: The application of modern technologies in preservation and restoration processes, such as digital documentation and 3D modeling [12, 13].

## 7. CONCLUSION

Architectural heritage represents the core of the cultural identity of each community, providing not only aesthetic and historical value but also a deep connection to the past that shapes the present and future. In the context of Novi Pazar and Novi Sad, the preservation of historical cores, especially the Old Bazaar and the city center, is of vital importance for maintaining the identity and cultural continuity of these areas. In Novi Pazar, preserving the Old Bazaar reflects the commitment of the local community and authorities to maintaining the oriental spirit and tradition, despite challenges such as a lack of funding and the impact of modern urbanization. On the other hand, Novi Sad faces pressures of modernization and commercialization, requiring a balance between preserving authenticity and developing tourist infrastructure. The key to successfully preserving these urban cores lies in the synergy between local authorities, the community, and experts, who, through appropriate urban planning and preservation strategies, must integrate the protection of cultural heritage with contemporary development needs. Through comparative analysis, it is clear that although both cities have different cultural and historical contexts, they share the common challenge of preserving identity in light of modernization. Sustainable management of cultural heritage, which considers economic, socio-political, and cultural aspects, is crucial for maintaining authenticity and strengthening cultural identity. This approach not only protects the past but also lays the foundation for the future development of cities, ensuring that cultural heritage remains alive and relevant for future generations. Ultimately, the preservation of the cultural heritage of Novi Pazar and Novi Sad represents not just the protection of architectural objects but also the preservation of the soul and identity of these cities, enabling their further prosperous and sustainable development within the contemporary social context.

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