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Eleonora Narvselius, Julie Fedor (eds.)

# Diversity in the East-Central European Borderlands

*Memories, Cityscapes, People*

ibidem

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ELEONORA NARVSELIUS

JULIE FEDOR

# Introduction
## Remembering Diversity in East-Central European Cityscapes

*Eleonora Narvselius*

***Abstract:*** *The contributions to this special issue explore the multi-layered urban environments of East-Central European borderlands. They bring into focus the cityscapes of Wrocław, Lviv, Chernivtsi, and Chişinău, where the legacies of Nazism, Marxist-Leninism, and violent ethno-nationalism have been revisited in recent decades in search of profound moral reckoning and in response to the challenges posed by the (post)transitional period. While much has been written about the history of these cities, there is a dearth of knowledge about how their contemporary residents make sense of the cityscapes stripped of their historical populations, and how they deal with the history and memory of those populations. This introductory essay suggests a tentative approach to the analysis of engagements with the lost diversity in historical urban milieus full of post-war voids and ruptures. In particular, it tests the possibility of combining the theoretical propositions of Memory Studies with broader conceptualizations of borderlands, cosmopolitan sociality, and hybridity.*

## Introduction[1]

This volume explores the urban environments of the East-Central European borderlands, bringing to the fore the material and symbolic landscapes of four historically interconnected cities. Wrocław, Lviv,[2] Chernivtsi, and Chişinău were stripped of their historical populations in the twentieth century and continue to wrestle with

1 This text continues the theoretical line of argument presented in Narvselius (2020).

2 Different house styles suggest different transcriptions for the soft sign (ь) characteristic of the Russian, Ukrainian, Belarusian, and Bulgarian alphabets. In this issue, we have opted to use the spelling "Lviv" (except in Bo Larsson's chapter, where we retain the soft sign (L'viv) for consistency with the transliteration of the names of other cities discussed in the article.)

the legacies of Nazism, Marxist-Leninism, and radical ethno-nationalism. These "peripheral cities in the middle of Europe"[3] have by no means been "typical" sluggish provincial spots populated by people with uncertain identities and shifting loyalties; throughout history they were at the epicenter of pan-European and global political processes, trade, transcultural exchange, and the clashes of grand ideologies. Since the collapse of communist regimes, these cities have been keen to project an image of themselves as hubs of cultural diversity generating innovative spaces, inclusive identities, and multicultural common heritage (Murzyn 2008: 317). However, the actual state of affairs is more complicated; in fact, these urban landscapes provide plenty of examples of plural mono-ethnic heritage, while multi-ethnic hybridity and mutual engagement are less mainstream. A good deal of evidence indicates that although these cityscapes might function as effective channels for transmission of an array of outlooks, attitudes, and values, the surface impression of inclusive identities, tolerance, and peaceful sharing of the urban space may be misleading.

The most recent and memorable watershed addressed in each article is the collapse of the Soviet-dominated political system. While post-socialist transformations of urban landscapes and the quest for new urban identities have been addressed in a bulk of academic publications (see, for example, Czaplicka, Ruble, and Crabtree 2003; Huyssen 2003; Stanilov 2007; Czepczyński 2008; Young and Kaczmarek 2008; Bartetzky, Dmitrieva, and Kliems 2009; Czaplicka, Gelazis, and Ruble 2009; Darieva, Kaschuba, and Krebs 2011; Diener and Hagen 2013; Diener and Hagen 2015; Krase and Uherek 2017), much less is known about the ways in which contemporary urbanites make sense of cityscapes stripped of their historical population groups, and how they handle the history and memory of these populations.[4] How, and more importantly, why

3 I have borrowed this expression from the title of Bo Larsson's book *Periferin i Europas mitt* (Larsson 2011).

4 Nevertheless, there exists a bulk of academic literature on Jewish spaces of Eastern Europe, especially in Poland; see, for example, Gruber (2002); Murzyn (2006); Bartov (2007); Hirsch and Spitzer (2010); Meng (2011); Lehrer and Meng (2015); Törnquist-Plewa (2016). Also, the recent book by Uilleam Blacker (2019)

do contemporary residents invoke historical diversity and make of it a closed or an open-ended resource? What has changed since the previous socialist/Soviet epoch? Above all, what do contemporary transformations of the cityscapes tinted by the presence of historical "others" say about the present-day societies?

In the words of Henri Lefebvre, "City is forged as an appropriated space" (Lefebvre 1991: 31); cityscapes constantly produce new "lived, conceived and perceived realms" of representation and action (*ibid.:* 40). The fractured spatial texture of contemporary borderline cities is particularly suitable for experiments with (re)appropriations of "foreign" spaces, (radical) re-drawings of borders between "otherness" and "outness," and the (selective) recall of forgotten pasts. To facilitate analysis of these processes and without getting bogged down in their historiography, this introductory essay scrutinizes contemporary engagements with the lost diversity and appropriations of the East-Central European cityscapes. In particular, it makes the case for combining broader conceptualizations of borderlands, cosmopolitan sociality, and hybridity with theoretical propositions drawn from the field of Memory Studies.

## Texture of Diversity in East-Central European Borderland Cities: Voids Filled and Voids Still Gaping

In the 2000s, an interesting trend emerged in Wrocław, Lviv, Chernivtsi, and Chişinău. All of a sudden, small anthropomorphic statues and other decorative objects hinting at human presence popped up in the streets and squares. Wrocław is presently famous for its bronze dwarves, whose number since the installation of the first Daddy Dwarf in 2001 has exceeded 100. What on first impression looks like an extravagant branding gimmick, is actually a reference to the Orange Alternative, an anti-communist underground movement that claimed the dwarf as its symbol in the 1980s. On the other

dwelling into how residents of several Eastern European cities have addressed memories of lost population groups in the wake of World War II, is a valuable contribution to research literature on urban memory.

side of Poland's eastern border, in Lviv, tourists take pictures of funny *batiaryky*. These bronze figurines popping up along tourist routes in the downtown area allude to the pre-war subculture of *batiary*, "lovable rogues" immortalized in the local folklore. In the landscape of the western Ukrainian city, *batiary* evoke the myth of Polish Lwów, exciting and perilous at one and the same time. In Chernivtsi, yet another western Ukrainian city with a complicated history, several objects that disrupt the conventional understanding of public monumental art can be seen in the downtown area. One of these is a bronze horse carriage alluding to the *fin de siècle*, metropolitan elegance, and European fashion. Another is the antique bicycle with a huge front wheel, as if casually left by its owner at a plaza with the evocative name "Turkish Well." These two installations arouse the mixed feelings of amusement and melancholy which usually accompany abandoned status objects that no longer have utility in present-day life. In the capital of Moldova, one may see another interesting "urban hieroglyph." An illuminated shield at the entrance to a hip restaurant is decorated with a portrait of a bearded middle-aged man. The inscription below reads "Karl Schmidt." Evidently, owners of the venue decided to put their business on the map by referring to a legendary mayor of Chişinău that was then part of the Russian empire. From time to time one also comes across non-monumental visual references to the pre-war Jews. However, like the Jewish restaurant "Under the Golden Rose" in Lviv and figurines of "lucky Jews" on sale in Polish cities,[5] they follow the same logic of pop-cultural presentation that elevates stereotypic features and uncomplicated narratives.

Despite obvious differences between these post-socialist cityscapes, a knowledgeable observer may detect their common ambience. Wrocław, Chernivtsi, Lviv, and Chişinău have traditionally been hubs of the historical borderland regions of Silesia, Bukovina, Galicia, and Bessarabia, proverbial for their motley populations and patchworks of languages and religions. In turn, this also implied that from being sites of seemingly harmonious co-existence and cultural exchange, they periodically became arenas for interethnic

5 On "lucky Jew" figurines in Poland see Lehrer (2014).

conflict and brutal violence. The contemporary urge to "re-populate" their urban nooks and crannies might be interpreted in more general terms as an effort aimed at the re-scaling, de-monumentalization, and individualization of the cityscapes that still bear traces of socialist/Soviet grand mythologies. At the same time, this is also a remarkable act of civic magic triggered by reactions to the EU and NATO enlargements, the settling of scores with "two totalitarianisms," and fears linked to mass migration. This magical act highlights a perceived absence of human beings lost in the historical cataclysms and, consequently, emulates a presence of friendly, benevolent, and desirable "others." One may continue this line of argument by evoking the apt metaphor of ghosts and spirits of memory suggested by Aleida Assmann (2011: 1–5).[6] In places and times of existential and political insecurity people summon benevolent "spirits," or positively colored presentations of bygone times, in an effort to withstand the scary "ghosts" of an unburied past. Under such circumstances, the cute figurines and images serve as public amulets conveying a comforting aura of innocence and wellbeing.

Meanwhile, symbolic "re-populations" of the urban space might also be propelled by a different logic. It seems that in cities profoundly shaped by legacies of expulsions, ethnic violence, and the Holocaust, there is a need to "camouflage the wounds of failed diversity" (Czaplicka, Ruble, and Crabtree 2003: 17) or, in Kenneth E. Foote's terminology (2003), to "rectify" places of memory that for some people are still associated with disturbing experiences of injustice, loss, and crime. The latter treatment presupposes a partial and selective erasure of the traces of a disaster; in effect the place may become unarticulated and bereft of meaning, as "[n]o sense of honor or dishonor remains attached to the site; it is, so to speak, exonerated of involvement in the tragedy" (*ibid.*: 23). Resistance to rectification may come from different groups, including both representatives of the displaced urban communities, and local activists insisting on acknowledgement of the original sites of memory.

6 On ghosts as a metaphor with ethical and political potential, and on the theoretically informed "spectral turn" see Davis (2007) and Blanco and Peeren (2013).

Nevertheless, there is no guarantee that rectification will morph into the next phases, i.e. "consecration" and "sanctification" of memorable sites and establishment of healing commemorative practices (*ibid.:* 7–10).

Oftentimes, to describe the fragmentary and multilayered quality of the cityscapes that withstood historical cataclysms and massive human loss, one uses the metaphor of palimpsest. Like any trope, however, it has its conceptual limitations (Huyssen 2003: 7; Silverman 2013: 3–8). The image of a palimpsest visualizes the possibility of retrieving some undamaged authentic layers exposed through breaches of the recent overwritings and re-dressings. Yet such retrieval is hardly possible in places where the whole demographic structure and economic organization were obliterated while material structures remained practically intact. Under such circumstances, it makes sense to talk about voids—symbolic, epistemological, emotional—which are palpable and which the present-day residents of these cities try to patch up. Voids are not merely omissions that still presuppose the ability of the living population to "decode" and partially retrieve the urban text. They are rather "the multiple of nothing" (Bowden and Duffy 2012: 46), brought about by the paucity of information available for the urban explorer, by her emotional detachment from the collective past, and by the complexity of the loss that resists coherent representation. Perceived voids in the texture of the cityscapes produce disturbing voids of meaning which today's residents are tempted to fill in by inscribing them into "a bigger whole of being, a deity, a state, a nation, or the impersonal authority of the law" (Wydra 2015: 25). Such appropriation unavoidably disassembles the articulated "places of memory" associated with the "others" and substitutes them with "memories of place" projected by the present-day urbanites (Truc 2012).

The shapes and content of the urban milieus discussed in this book derive from combinations of cultural continuities and political ruptures, "representations of space" conceived by the elites, "representational spaces" of inhabitants and users (Lefebvre 1991: 3–50), present-day heritage industries, and individual efforts to make

sense of the contentious past. Gaping voids that interlock collective memories with built environments and their symbolic re-mediations, are profoundly political. They disrupt the imagined consistency of the urban landscape, they provoke efforts of interpretation and, subsequently, trigger competition and conflict among social actors coming up with their own, more or less articulated versions of the past (Dwyer and Alderman 2008: 171). Paradoxically, instead of filling the gaps, the practice of ornamenting the public spaces with fairy-tale entities, legendary figures, and melancholic artefacts oftentimes makes urban voids even more obvious.

## East-Central European Borderlands as a Cluster of Regional Distinctions, Banal Cosmopolitanism, and Urban Myths

The specificity and at the same time comparability of the selected cities stem not only from their modes of coping with the voids left by the legacies of large-scale violence, but from their position as frontiers of geopolitical expansion and stakes of great power rivalries. These characteristics can be aptly addressed with the help of the concept of borderlands. As particular types of spatial regimes, European borderlands have been formed by discourses focusing on their special anthropogeographic conditions, cultural-historical distinctiveness, and political designs (Mishkova and Trencsenyi 2017: 8). Borderlands are commonly regarded as peripheries or margins of certain territorial entities, usually nation-states (Diener and Hagen 2010), whose particular conditions and local color are rooted in the past. However, the cultural fragmentation and mélange of borderlands are anything but local anomalies belonging to history. On the contrary, they have to be acknowledged as basic features of modern spatial orders "where identities and experiences are constantly being contested in specific sites or localized centers of power" (Lugo 1997: 53).

The concept of borderlands connotes problematic places where competition, appropriation, and violence have been the flipside of the co-existence of various ethnicities, religions, and other

symbolic orders (Bartov and Weitz 2013). Hence, what is crucial to the understanding of borderlands is not only their material topography and location in political grand projects, but also specific modalities of power pertaining to appropriation, production, and contestation of diversity (Mishkova and Trescenyi 2017: 2). In particular, borderlands often assume centrality in matters of symbolic politics due to daily entanglements with "otherness" and the rich texture of constraints and opportunities. This is especially true in post-1989 East-Central Europe where labeling some regions as "borderlands" became an effective tool for crafting certain normative visions of the post-communist development. These visions are not always based on historically correct estimations of borderland diversity, as they are primarily aimed at serving the neoliberal agenda of the peripheral elites who exploit local cultural capital in the hope of enhancing the competitiveness of their regions (Zarycki 2011: 90–97). Nevertheless, such whipping up of regional distinction is not a completely new phenomenon. As pockets of social and political instability and spaces of non-compliance with centrally imposed regulations, borderland regions have often been used for large-scale social experiments and political projects combining transformations of material environments with fostering a new type of political subject (Bartov and Weitz 2013; Amar 2015; Gross 1988).

Political projects of uniformization notwithstanding, in East-Central European borderlands, and especially in their urban milieus, certain facets of cultural diversity pertained throughout the calamities of the twentieth century. One such facet is a constant exposure to the scrutinizing gaze of the "other," whether literally or metaphorically. This may happen through daily (and mostly unreflective) contact with material milieus, borrowed words, pieces of folklore, and family stories that hint at the presence of a "foreign" *spiritus loci* within a familiar cultural landscape. Another characteristic feature is a "banal" cosmopolitanism designating the borderland as "a prolonged time and a border space, in which people learn the ways of the world and of other people, … [and] thus the place where a … cosmopolitan subject is emerging" (Agier 2016: 9). This type of cosmopolitanism often emerges through public interactions

linked to specific places, "from market squares to basement taverns to elegant clubs: places that had indeed often been built to enable… cosmopolitan sociality" (Humphrey 2012: 20). As such, the cosmopolitan sociality serves as a strategy making it possible to quickly stich together the social fabrics torn by internal conflicts and rapid political transformations. It can efficiently conceal voids left by the drastic or gradual disappearance of whole segments of the urban populace by switching the focus to overarching symbols of central power, intellectual goods, and the latest fashions preoccupying local bohemians. It may be argued that the strategy of symbolic accretion described by Dwyer and Alderman goes hand-in-hand with "banal" urban cosmopolitanism. In a manner analogous to the geologic processes of sedimentation, uplift, and erosion, borderland cityscapes are susceptible to "over-writing, embellishment, and erasure… thought of in terms of what has been called symbolic accretion." As a result, "different historical meanings are layered onto them, thus challenging the notion that these symbols have a final, established meaning" (Dwyer and Alderman 2008: 169–70).

Symbolic accretion, cosmopolitan sociality, and urban pockets of difference link to another significant feature that makes this set of cities comparable. Wrocław, Lviv, Chernivtsi, and Chişinău are places that have generated a plethora of stories and projected their own—often competing—"myths" referring to their borderline status and the unique quality of their urban life (see in particular the chapter by Czajkowski in this volume). For more than a century, the *Semper fidelis* myth of Polish Lwów clashed with the myth of the same city as the capital of "Ukrainian Piedmont," but the present-day urban mythology elevates the "golden age" of the benevolent Habsburg empire and multicultural ambience of the city. In post-1991 Chernivtsi, the mythology of Ukrainian national liberation coexists with the *Bukovina Mythos* originating from the Habsburg epoch and pinpointing a one-of-a-kind patchwork of languages and cultures as well as an ideal version of urban tolerance. Wrocław/Breslau has been glorified as a unique place of creativity, academic achievement, and enterprise, contested in the German and Polish imagery, but nowadays the focus has shifted to bridging

the rifts with the help of a new EU mythology professing openness to the world and an end to national antagonisms. The Russian imperial myth of Chişinău as an urban patchwork with an oriental touch is nowadays eclipsed by national mythologies glorifying the great history of the Moldavian/Romanian people/s, but it is still viable in many contexts, not least artistic and literary ones. Urban mythologies expose complex transnational itineraries that connect Lviv with Wrocław, Chernivtsi with Chişinău, and Lviv with Chernivtsi in multiple ways. In turn, the issue of complex cross-border relations leads us to another conceptual pillar of this book, namely the problematic of transnational memories and memory cultures that both (trans)form and (re)mediate imagery of the historical diversity that is not here anymore, but still reverberates in multiple public and private contexts.

## Recollecting Bygone Urban Diversity: Performative Memories, Postmemory, and Prosthetic Memory

Following a long tradition of viewing cityscapes as books and literary palimpsests, it has often been assumed that traces of the bygone diversity can be read "between the lines," sometimes even as coherent subchapters, by philosophically-minded local flâneurs, scholars sensitized to cultural-historical details, and even by inquisitive tourists. Alternatively, cityscapes may be viewed as codes and signs (Huyssen 2003) relating not only to texts and narratives, but also to practices, emotions, and attitudes. The question is, what exactly can be "decoded" in the urban spaces nowadays, under what circumstances, and by whom? Can urban newcomers and their descendants feel deeper attachment to the sites that used to be "emotional magnets" (Collins 2004: 80) for the previous populations? How are these parts of the cityscape actualized in our time, if at all? And how can one make sense of urban "voids"? Contemporary cityscapes are populated not so much by ghosts and spirits of the past, but by living people with their own ideas about belonging, origins, and community. Hence, when dealing with present-day borderland cityscapes, the analyst steps into a hybrid space of action, memory, hearsay, and imagination imbedded into—and constitutive for—

the "material city" (see Boyer 1994; Crang and Travlou 2001; Srinivas 2001; Huyssen 2003; Crinson 2005; Legg 2007; Till 2005; Jordan 2006; Törnquist-Plewa 2016).

Throughout this edited volume, the contributors have tried to make sense of the complex interplay between the mosaic-like built environments typical of Eastern European cities marked by "dismembered multiethnicity" (Follis 2012: 181), and the contemporary attitudes to the pre-war urban populations who created these milieus, but perished in the twentieth century. The authors have been primarily interested in how some clues available in present-day urban environments correlate with identity-forming knowledge about the past, often referred to as cultural or collective memories (Assmann J. 2010: 123; Kansteiner 2002: 179–97; Radstone and Hodgkin 2003). Following the sociological current in Memory Studies (for example, Olick 2007: 114–115), it makes sense to abandon the idea of material milieus as something that "contains" or "preserves" cultural memories. After all, memories cannot emanate from the stones. Material environments are complex products of practices and ideologies, which actualize cultural memories of constantly changing urban populations in a myriad of ways (see Connerton 1989; Boyer 1994; Crang and Travlou 2001; Huyssen 2003; Hoelscher and Alderman 2004; Crinson 2005; Hebbert 2005; Jordan 2006; Foote and Azaryahu 2007; Legg 2007). Moreover, it cannot go unnoticed that for the current populations the legacies of urban pasts are a matter of active imagining and virtualization rather than a painstaking recollection of the past in its own right. As Andreas Huyssen explains, in urban contexts, "an urban imaginary in its temporal reach may well put different things in one place: memories of what there was before, imagined alternatives to what there is. The strong marks of present space merge in the imaginary with traces of the past, erasures, losses, and heterotopias" (Huyssen 2003: 7).

Following the analytical framework suggested by the anthropologist Setha Low, urban memories may be approached as a necessary attribute of the social construction of the city space. Unlike the social production of space that comprises social, economic,

ideological, and technological factors focusing on the physical creation of the material setting, the social construction of space is underpinned by daily exchanges, memories, and images which convey symbolic meanings (Low 1996: 862). Although urban memory links to concrete physical imprints of the city, nevertheless, much like other types of memory—personal, generational, political, and cultural—it tends to defy "the orthodoxy of correct interpretation" (Huyssen 2003: 19). Meanwhile, efforts to impose correct interpretations of the cityscape are a daily enterprise undertaken by multiple groups and individuals. If earlier it was Marxist-Leninist ideology that edited the East-Central European urban milieus by means of removing monuments, toponymics, and inscriptions and bulldozing religious edifices, nowadays one witnesses efforts to cleanse the urban landscape of the vestiges of socialist histories by similar means, removing undesirable traces from the streets and city maps, as has recently been the case in Ukraine on the wave that followed the adoption of the so-called de-communization laws.

An obvious specificity of urban memory compared with other analytically distinguished memory types is its complex relation to space and materiality. Well-used, but also vividly criticized for being too static and nostalgic, the concept of *lieux de mémoire* is still a workable analytical approach allowing us to frame entanglements of urban space, historical materiality and cultural memory (Nora and Kritzman 1996–1998). Alternative, but also complementary analytical suggestions evoke metaphors of texts, arenas, and performances, and thus enable unpacking of the dynamic and improvisatory nature of urban memorial landscapes (Dwyer and Alderman 2008: 165–78). Remembrance is performative rather than simply reproductive, as when people come together to do the work of remembrance, the story they fashion is different from those that have come before (Tilmans, van Vree, and Winter 2010: 7). Hence, again, the past is constantly affirmed and transformed through discourses and practices evoking imagination and virtualization of the past understood as "construction of what might, ought, or could have existed but actually did not; and, one step further, the construction

of what the visitors expect to have existed but actually could not have" (Ashworth 1991: 192).

The performative aspect of cultures of remembrance is underpinned by "imaginative investment, projection, and creation" (Hirsch 2008: 107) practiced by memory actors. Varying grades and forms of such actualization of memories about the urban past make the mnemonic landscapes of the four chosen cities dissimilar. As the chapters in this volume demonstrate, while the "weight of the past," exemplified by cultural links, architectural environment, and structuring of historical narratives, is largely comparable in Lviv, Wrocław, Chişinău, and Chernivtsi, the "choice of the past" (Mink and Neumayer 2013: 10)—charged with the interests, emotions, and imagination of the contemporary rank-and-file urbanites, mnemonic activists, politicians, and cultural experts—is what makes the difference. Or, to use the already mentioned metaphor from Aleida Assmann, while these cities are haunted by similar ghosts of the past, they purposefully seek contact with different spirits of the past.

Almost seventy years after the events that stripped Wrocław, Lviv, Chişinău, and Chernivtsi of most of their pre-war populations, the progeny of newcomers—much like today's descendants of pre-war urbanites that live mainly abroad—have no first-hand personal memory either of these dramatic events or of the way of life that preceded them. In this respect, these two important groups of memory actors—who currently commission monuments, renovate religious buildings, organize commemorative events, and make efforts to preserve memories about the cities they care about—are in the same situation. Both actively "choose" the past they strive to elucidate and reenact. Both experiment with imagination and virtualization of "their own" histories. Nevertheless, the sources of their creative work, second-hand knowledge, and emotional attachment to the past, are different. Typically, the offspring of the older population groups rely on family archives and personal stories of relatives, while the children of the newcomers extract their knowledge about the past primarily from much more fragmentary and impersonal sources that do not speak for themselves

(e.g., the architectural environment, movies, literary works, interiors, and artifacts). The difference between these two types of memory work may be conceptualized in terms of the difference between postmemory (Hirsch 2008), the afterlife of "living" memory of witnesses shared across generations of "legitimate custodians," and prosthetic memory, a past reconstructed from the position of emotional and aesthetical distance. Prosthetic memories are generated not within families, but rather through accessible public domains such as literature, film, museums, and theater (Landsberg 2004). As a product of various mediations, they tend to be visual-factual rather than sensual-emotional (O'Keeffe 2007: 5).

Combinations of both types of memory work are especially evident in connection with public commemorative initiatives and the symbolic marking of public urban spaces. Without denying that oftentimes "[g]uilt, resentment, denial, powerful political taboos, and the imperative of dealing with the national trauma all combined to block the formation of memory of vanished others" (Blacker 2013: 178), several contributions to this volume (in particular, the articles by Felcher, Larsson, and Otrishchenko) contend that the work of filling tangible and intangible "voids" of the postwar urban environments in Eastern Europe has not only frustrating limitations, but also enabling qualities. Although transnational commemorative co-operation around the legacy of the perished urban groups and partial Europeanization of commemorative discourses often looks like a superficial "disturbance of homogeneity" (Furumark 2013) from above and outside, nevertheless one should not dismiss their impact on urbanites and their perception of cultural diversity. Equally, despite the fact that the efforts of the present-day inhabitants of the four cities to come to terms with difficult pasts may not always be unalloyed success stories, it would be inherently wrong to imply that the capacity to "read" and "feel" urban places of memory is something reserved only for the legitimate custodians of postmemory.

## Engagements with Urban Diversity: Multicultural Heritage and Hybridity

Cultural diversity may be roughly defined as a field of representations organized along the axes of ethnic/non-ethnic difference of populations and material/immaterial diversity of their lived milieus. This conceptual grid embraces a huge variety of forms, events, performances, and discourses. As a mode of "being, doing and knowing" that helps to sustain group identities in times of rapid change and crisis (Fishman 1996: 65–66), ethnicity nevertheless still remains and will seemingly remain the most applicable lens for analysis of divisions emerging throughout history. To this one should add the present-day constellations of languages, religions, and, increasingly, races in the wake of economic migration, transnationalization of higher education, expanding tourist industries, and military conflicts. However, in the course of history, ethnic rifts typical of borderlands have been incessantly amalgamated, blurred, articulated, or neutralized by non-ethnic diversity and by a strategy of "national indifference" (Zahra 2010). Consequently, activities of local professionals, politicians, rank-and-file urbanites, and diaspora communities, as well as the artistic imagery and activities of local NGOs suspending lines of ethnic and national divisions should be given closer consideration as loci of transformative impact.

Being quite an abstract and all-encompassing term, "cultural diversity," similarly to "borderlands," requires a constant re-interpretation and contextual adaptation. In particular, a distinction should be made between multiculturalism that connotes a certain ideological prescription, and cultural diversity, multiculture, and historical diversity as descriptive notions. The concept of multiculturalism domesticated by means of translation into local languages (Polish *wielokulturowość*, Ukrainian *bahatokul'turnist'*, Romanian *multiculturalism*) is one of the neologisms that emerged in the wake of post-socialist transformations of public discourses. Nevertheless, frequent references to the term are not always and not necessarily an indication of growing multiculturalist alignment. What is denoted is rather a situational pluralism linked to the liberalization of

memory politics in East-Central Europe after 1989 (Narvselius 2012). This approach mostly dispenses with reflective critical interpretations and regards the multiple local pasts rather as a patchwork of internally homogenous presentations. In this context, the main corollary concept of multiculturalism becomes "multicultural heritage" (Polish *dziedzictwo wielokulturowe*, Ukrainian *bahatokul'turna spadshchyna*, Romanian *patrimoniului multicultural*), a term that in the post-socialist conditions mostly refers to tangible forms and material representations conveying the historical presence of various peoples and cultural groups. Multicultural heritage is often comfortably presented as an argument for attracting foreign investors, as a ticket to the European community and a tourist attraction (Murzyn 2008). Simultaneously, it poses a challenge to presentations of the cities as organic parts of uninterrupted narratives of the ethnonational Polish, Ukrainian, and Moldovan distinction and, when politicized by subversive actors, it may have serious consequences for state sovereignty.

In the absence of a shared understanding of what constitutes cultural diversity, it is possible to argue that all cities are multicultural to some extent (Kłopot 2012: 133–34) or, on the contrary, that no city ticks all the boxes for different aspects of cultural diversity. In a way, the impression that some cities are more culturally diverse than others is conveyed by the *material* built environment. Naturally, in borderland cities like Lviv, Chernivtsi, and Wrocław where stylistically different sections of the historical architecture were placed on the UNESCO World Heritage List, one may get an impression of a greater degree of cultural diversity. Nevertheless, on the basis of examination of *immaterial* (intangible, symbolic) aspects of daily life in the selected cities, it is not difficult to draw a conclusion that the pre-war diversity left quite shallow traces in the public discourses and memories of the present-day populations. Also, its transformative potential as a tool for fostering toleration of cultural differences and emancipation from xenophobic frameworks is quite limited. Although marking the symbolic presence of the perished urban groups with monuments, toponyms, and even theme restaurants has become common practice, a tendency towards the

selective exclusion of popular and academic knowledge about historical diversity persists. In some cases, one wants to eschew association with "uncomfortable" and traumatic historical episodes (the Holocaust, collaborationism, expulsions, political repressions) that might imply the complicity of those who repopulated the cities, or, alternatively, skip mentioning the prominent role and achievements of other ethnic groups (in particular, Poles, Jews, Germans, Romanians, Austrians) in some contexts. Tackling urban cultural diversity in the four cities suffers from many limitations caused by concrete policies and political discourses, and in many cases is also underpinned by inflexible daily patterns of sociability. To an extent, one may agree that "[m]ost European cities 'were plurally encoded by socially pluralist societies and are now also decoded pluralistically'... Much of the iconography is not decoded at all, less because it is unintelligible than because of its irrelevance to contemporary plural societies" (Ashworth, Graham, and Tunbridge 2007: 48).

The "irrelevance" of material tokens of the perished populations in contemporary East-Central Europe is nevertheless relative. It has been a commonplace to envision the post-socialist transformations as "rapid and simultaneous" (Gelazis, Czaplicka, and Ruble 2009: 1) and to present them in terms of a gap, hiatus, or cleavage. Nevertheless, this image of a sudden, drastic, and unanticipated break is actually a big simplification. A certain continuity of background culture (popular imagery, limited but viable contacts abroad, daily practices of sociability, tastes, city folklore, family stories) combined with sporadic official references to "otherness" in the Soviet/socialist urban landscapes paved the way to the post-1989 "return to diversity" (Rothschild and Wingfield 2000). However, the flipside of this relative continuity is not that unproblematic. Although the rhetoric of the "return" was necessarily adjusted to new socio-political demands, concrete ways of dealing with legacies of the previous populations mostly were not underpinned by alternative approaches. Indeed, in some cases restoration works and commemorative practices even relapsed into the previous negligence, as in the case of the old Jewish cemetery in Wrocław (see the chapter by Golden and Cervinkova in this volume). Adapting

Michel de Certeau's arguments, such non-linear development may be interpreted as indicating the endurance of previous (Soviet, "real socialist") tactics over novel strategies. In historical cities, the strategies of actors carving "readable spaces" in line with some disciplined visions have been constantly undermined by the tactics of those who elude the discipline of urban planning (de Certeau 1984: 35–36). Present-day inconsistencies between the centralized legislation, top-down politics of memory, expert restoration plans, and local policies, commercial interests, and personal ambitions is a well-known phenomenon observable in post-communist Europe (Murzyn 2008). Aside from exposing problems of the post-1989 governance, it might also indicate the persistence of multiple local ways of being and exercising power in the East-Central European borderlands.

Alongside diversity, another interesting concept that lends itself to the conditions of East-Central European multi-layered urban milieus is hybridity (Rosaldo 1995; Werbner 1997; Young 2000). The existing academic literature usually reserves this term for addressing intersections of the local and the global (anthropology, international relations), for describing mutual transformation of the dominant and dominated populations (post-colonial studies, migration studies), or for labeling prescribed spaces of dialogue and negotiation (political science, studies of multiculturalism). Several chapters in this book (by Golden and Cervinkova, Felcher, Otrishchenko, and Voronovici) explore the emergence of spontaneous rather than cultivated spaces of negotiations and site-specific engagements with otherness, which in hindsight may be labeled as hybrid. Such spaces are often unstable and limited, and their practical outcomes are difficult to estimate. Moreover, it should be kept in mind that "the concept of hybridity does not denote any specifics of identity that can be represented" (Mizutani 2013: 38). It may be underpinned by equality, but also by inequality of status of the involved parts (e.g., the present-day majority versus memory activists, experts versus users of the built environment, residents versus representatives of diaspora, the EU institutions versus local authorities etc.) It may refer to emerging civic identities (Czaplicka, Ruble, and

Crabtree 2003) and oil-and-vinegar ethno-cultural mixtures. It may be envisioned as a new emerging space charged with "dialogical re-inscription of various codes and discourses in a spatio-temporal zone of signification" (Kraidy 1999: 472), or as a liminal "culture's in between" (Bhabha 1996) spreading on both sides of a symbolic fault line without allegiance to any. In any case, "[h]ybridity as a subversion of political and cultural domination is but just one of many possible configurations" (Rewakowich 2018: 6).

Contributions to the edited volume address these themes of diversity, voids, hybrid spaces, and transformations of urban memory in various ways. The study by architect Bo Larsson provides a comprehensive overview of the history of the four cities with a focus on material transformations and urban planning projects that came in the wake of major political and demographic disruptions. The author points out differences in local approaches to the material legacy of the vanished populations, and finds evidence of an uneven, but by and large positive appropriation of the material sites connoting the presence of pre-war "others."

While Larsson's chapter largely focuses on Lefebvrian "representations of space" embraced by urban professionals and other local elites, urban sociologist Natalia Otrishchenko's chapter highlights "representational spaces" where "otherness" is encountered and domesticated on a daily basis. Drawing upon interviews with urbanites inhabiting pre-war buildings in Lviv, she demonstrates how memories about the perished urbanites reverberate in family stories. Attitudes to the previous dwellers and the ethnic groups they represent range in these stories from disinterest and denial to efforts to make sense of personal contacts with the "old Lvivians." The latter approach helps to reduce urban voids and make the domestic space more comprehensible and emotionally engaging.

A contrasting case is presented in the study by anthropologists Juliet Golden and Hana Cervinkova on the neoliberal marginalization of the Old Jewish Cemetery in Wrocław. The present state of this urban landmark exemplifies one of the possible, but questionable ways of appropriation of the multiethnic heritage. As the historical legacy of the once prominent Jewish community has been

managed primarily by pragmatic actors with no personal memories or postmemories of the pre-socialist period, the cemetery was gradually museumified and turn into a "cold" heritage site.

In the chapter that follows, historian Gaëlle Fisher delves into the post-1989 transnational re-imaginings of Bukovina. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the former Austro-Hungarian province and its main city, Czernowitz/Chernivtsi, became a meeting point of many mnemonic actors united by their vision of the region as exemplary and exceptional on the map of Europe. The crux is that the trendy conceptualizations of Bukovina as "Europe's forgotten region" and "European cemetery" have mainly been invented by external German and Jewish memory actors focusing on multiethnicity of their historical homeland, while the present-day Ukrainians and Romanians populating Bukovina have rather been on the receiving end. As such, post-1989 discursive constructions of Bukovina reveal asymmetries and dissonances of reappropriation and misappropriation of Eastern European diversity.

An expert in heritage management, Anastasia Felcher takes up the issue of heritage making and efforts to re-interpret parts of Moldovan historical diversity by cultural professionals and politicians. In Chişinău, as in many other post-Soviet cities, certain cultural components—most obviously, Russian and Jewish ones—cannot be unproblematically inscribed into the framework of a celebrated multicultural past. As a result, as the author observes, discourses and practices of multiethnic heritage preservation are often in discord, and the situation is further aggravated by "mutual non-engagement" of the ethnic communities and the local developers.

In a similar vein, sociologist Paweł Czajkowski analyzes continuities and ruptures of meaning associated with famous urban landmarks during the socialist and post-socialist periods. His study demonstrates that in the specific historical circumstances of Wrocław, the fate of monuments reflects changes in social consciousness of the urbanites and, on a more fundamental level, correlates with dynamics of urban mythology entangling the local and the national, the universal and the specific, the distant and the

proximate. Consequently, efforts to elevate the myth of ethnic pluralism result in paradoxes, tensions, and conflicts.

A similar state of affairs was also observable in Lviv, a native city of many postwar Wrocławians. For several postwar decades, public references to the historical presence and martyrdom of Poles used to pose a problem. Ethnologist Eleonora Narvselius tells the story of commemoration of a group of eminent Polish academics murdered during the Nazi occupation of the city. Disagreements over the memory of and the memorial to the murdered professors show that interethnic antipathies have had their aftermath in the form of enduring political-cultural divisions and conflicts about the past. At the same time, however, it is evident that despite the contradictions, different parties can come to an agreement, especially when the rapprochement is based on existing good personal relationships, friendships and loyalties.

Historian Alexandr Voronovici focuses on a comparable dynamic that generates multivocal meanings and practices in relation to one especially significant urban memorial. His study brings to the fore the vicissitudes of multiple physical transformations and commemorative re-framings of the Soviet-built *Eternitate* complex in Chişinău. As the author observes, "the Soviet internationalist narrative of the Great Patriotic War was also a convenient shortcut to the message of multiethnicity." This discursive opportunity became instrumentalized after Moldova's independence by those political forces and memory actors who were keen on articulating their specific messages in reference to the World War II mythology of victims, martyrs, and heroes.

The volume concludes with two studies that look at the problematics of handling diversity through a clear-cut sociological lens. The study by Barbara Pabjan suggests a theoretical generalization of cognitive strategies of collective memory. On the basis of a survey that measured attitudes to historical diversity among several groups of Wrocław's residents, she concludes that the postwar antagonism in respect to the German architectural legacy has been reproduced by means of specific cognitive patterns transferring Polish–German disputes from the sphere of action to the domain of

cultural discourse. Pabjan also provides an account of correlations between the levels of knowledge, education, and status of the respondents and their preferred strategies for tackling the city's multifaceted past. As her study demonstrates, the memory conflicts revolving around Wrocław's past nowadays are mostly underpinned by opinions and beliefs about history rather than by authorized historical knowledge.

Nadiia Bureiko and Teodor Lucian Moga proceed from a different perspective and compare the identities of two territorial minorities and residents of the cross-border region of Bukovina: Ukrainians in Romania and Romanians in Ukraine. Their article argues that these two communities display multifaceted identities which correlate with the ethno-cultural diversity of the region and are pre-conditioned by its complex historical evolution. Although the study does not focus specifically on urban conditions, it makes clear that the most significant cities of the region, Chernivtsi and Suceava, exemplify the distinctive Bukovinian landscape of diversity formed by several political regimes and demographic shifts. The authors call for a closer scrutiny of the relationship between the minority populations and the state, since different policies and institutional configurations of the previous political regimes (e.g., the Habsburg empire) might have their afterlife in a relatively non-confrontational contemporary approach to diversity in the Bukovinian borderland.

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# Urban Environment and Perished Populations in Chişinău, Chernivtsi, L'viv, and Wrocław

## Historical Background and Memories Versus City Planning and Future Perspectives

*Bo Larsson*

***Abstract:*** *The four cities examined in this article – L'viv, Chernivtsi, Chişinău, and Wrocław – were all transformed in manifold ways by World War II. Many of the residents of these cities were either killed or subject to forced migration beyond the new national borders as a result of the war. New people settled in the city environment which still bore the traces of the earlier population and the earlier urban life that had been brutally put to an end. This chapter summarizes the findings of a research project investigating changes in the urban environment in these cities during and after World War II, and the postwar knowledge and attitudes concerning the built heritage, especially in urban planning and development. Each of the four cities is examined in the following four frames: (1) the interwar urban environment in its historical context; (2) the events during and after World War II; (3) urban planning and treatment of pre-war heritage in the postwar socialist period; and (4) the handling of memories and cultural heritage in urban development and planning in the post-socialist era. The chapter ends with comparisons between the four cities.*

## Introduction

This chapter is based on an interdisciplinary research project on the history and memory of the urban environment in four cities where World War II atrocities and postwar totalitarian regimes and new national belongings crushed the societal system: L'viv and

Chernivtsi in Ukraine; Chişinău in Moldova; and Wrocław in Poland.[1] It sets out to examine the urban environment and daily life in the interwar years and during World War II, and the knowledge of and attitudes towards the built heritage among the postwar and present population and in urban planning. In-depth attention is devoted to the case of the Jewish population, which was particularly important in the pre-war urban environment and which was annihilated with particular brutality.

The four cities are examined here in the following four frames: (1) the interwar urban environment in its historical context, including details on inhabitants, shops, and selected meeting places and other urban spaces, and the breakthrough of modern architecture and urban planning; (2) events during and after World War II, which brutally brought the earlier urban culture to an end, and which are associated with remembrance sites linked to the Holocaust and other war crimes; (3) urban planning, attitudes to and treatment of pre-war heritage and historical traces in the postwar socialist period in the new national context; and (4) the post-socialist period with new possibilities for the discussion and treatment of history and memories, also reflected in urban planning.[2]

The aim of the chapter is not to develop theory or method or to confirm or disconfirm hypotheses, but to summarize and discuss concrete facts in the four cities. The pieces of the puzzle have been investigated as precisely as possible. These include the names of interwar inhabitants, shops, and enterprises linked to selected streets, identified via the study of archival documents, historical

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1 *The Memory of Vanished Population Groups in Today's East and Central European Urban Memory Treatment and Urban Planning in L'viv, Chernivtsi, Chişinău and Wrocław*, financed by Riksbankens Jubileumsfond, Sweden, associated with the Centre for European Studies, Lund University, Sweden, led by Bo Larsson. Through archival studies and interviews, the project accumulated detailed information about the urban environment, inhabitants, shops, etc. before World War II, but this article only has space for brief summaries of these findings.

2 The research project includes surveys and interviews with people now living in the four cities in question. The results of these studies are partially presented in the chapters by Natalia Otrishchenko and Anastasia Felcher elsewhere in this volume and in other publications.

directories, oral testimony and memoirs, and historical photographs and maps, and by extracting information from other available research and secondary literature on the cities. Historical figures with special significance for the urban culture and identity are also mentioned.

Today, a new urban culture is developing in the four cities, with new collective and cultural memories, lacking a direct relationship to the pre-war urban culture. In this situation, interest in the pre-war urban culture is rising today in all four cities, as part of an increasingly European orientation within these societies.

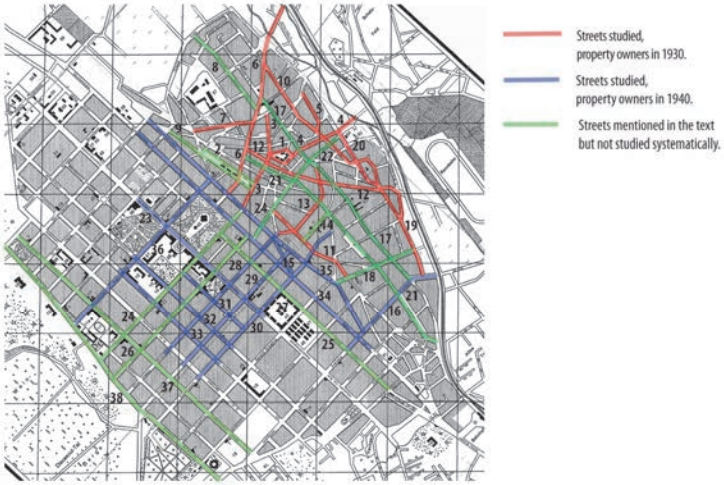
## Chişinău–Kišinev (Kishinev)

### *Interwar Chişinău in Historical Context*

Interwar Chişinău mainly consisted of two parts, the old, village-like Moldovan town, and the regular grid town, developed under Russian rule (1812–1918). The old, poorer Moldovan town had small churches and traditional buildings, sometimes with porches or columns. Near its center, Piața Veche (the "Old Market"), were the Michael and Gabriel Cathedral (1742), the Armenian church (1803–04) and several synagogues. Jews, who made up 46% of the population in 1897, lived in both parts of the city. The Roman Catholic (1940) and Lutheran (1838) churches represented first and foremost the Poles and Germans respectively.[3]

3 Information on churches and other historical buildings, including the tramway halls is available in numerous historical overviews, tourist guidebooks, and not least Iurie Colesnic's books (Colesnic 1997, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2015). There is no space here to define every source exactly, but most historical buildings, including vanished churches, are described here: http://www.monument.sit.md, and published in Gangal, Nesterov, *et. al.* (2010).

Chişinău - Kishinev. Streets studied.




1 Piața Veche / not existing today
2 Piața Sfântul Ilie / not existing today
3 Str. Gen. T. Râşcanu / Str. Arhanghelui Mihai
4 Str. Fântâna Blanduzia / not existing today
5 Strada Decebal / not existing today
6 Strada Petru Rareş / partly existing with the same name, partly Strada Al. Diordiță
7 Strada Iancu Văcărescu / Strada Pruncul
8 Str. Alexandru Cotruța / Str. Moara Roşie
9 Strada Sfântul Ilie / same name today
10 Strada Română / partly existing, same name
11 Strada Vineri / Strada Octavian Goga
12 Strada Cahul / partly existing, same name
13 Str. Alexandru Vlăhuța / same name today
14 Strada Miron Costin / Strada Rabbi Țirilson
15 S-la. Gen. Stan Poetaş / S-la. Habad-Liubavici
16 Strada Mareşal Abverescu / Strada Ismail
17 Str. Grig. Ureche / partly existing, same name
18 Str. Sfântului Gheorghe / same name today
19 Strada Ecaterina Teodoriu / not existing today
20 Strada Băcescu / not existing today
21 Str. Gheorghe Lazar / partly exist., Str. A. Hâjdeu
22 Str. Gh. Coşbuc / partly existing, same name
23 Str. Alex. cel Bun / Bd. Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt
24 Strada Regerle Carol I / Strada A. Puşkin
25 Str. Carol Schmidt / Str. Mitropolit Varlaam
26 Strada Regina Maria / Strada Vlaicu Pârcălab
27 Piața Nouă / same name today
28 Strada Mihai Viteazu / Strada Mihai Eminescu
29 Str. Gen. Brosteanu / Str. Vasile Alecsandri
30 Str. Mareşal P. Badoglio / Str. Armenească
31 Strada Mihai Eminscu / Strada Veronica Micle
32 Str. Regele Ferdinand I / Str. 31. August 1989
33 Strada Ion G. Brătianu / Strada Bucureşti
34 Strada Ştefan cel Mare / Strada Columna
35 Strada Haralambie / Strada Alexandru cel Bun
36 Strada Universității / Strada Mitropolit G. Bănulescu-Bodoni
37 Strada Mihail Kogălniceanu / same name today
38 Str. Ion Inculeț

**Figure 2.1.** Chişinău. Background map from 1941, showing streets where inhabitants and property owners were registered in 1930 or 1940, according to archival material. Map by the author, based on material from http://oldchisinau.com/starye-karty-i-ulicy/starye-karty-kishinyova/plan-kishinyova-1941-goda-2/.

After Bessarabia and Bukovina were formally incorporated into Romania on 27 November 1918, Romanian became the official language.[4] The Latin alphabet was introduced, and the streets renamed.[5] The main boulevard, Strada Alexandru cel Bun, was the location of the most important shops, cafés, restaurants, and hotels. By 1930, 48% of the inhabitants were Romanians, 36% Jews, and 17% Russians. Cultural life was intense.[6]

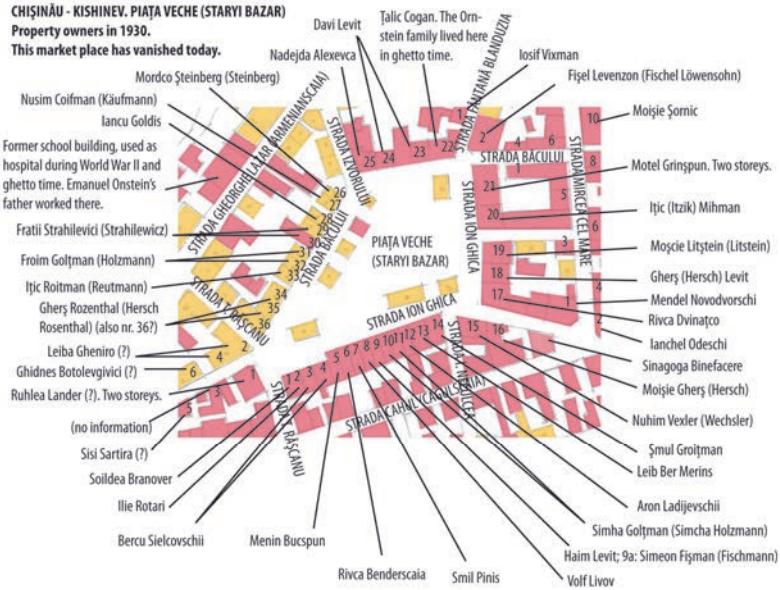



**Figure 2.2.** Chişinău. Property owners around Piaţa Veche (the Old Market) in 1930. Map by the author, based on material from *Archivă Naţională* in Chişinău, including hand-written lists from 1930, in the form *Tablou pentru revizuirea numerotării clădirilor in oraşe* (heads of households and number of persons in each household), and *Luftwaffe* aerial photos from May 1944. None of these buildings has survived. Buildings

4 See further "Sfatul Ţării (1917-1918)," istoria.md/articol/249/Sfatul_Ţării.

5 Largely different from the present-day street names, which are in the Romanian language.

6 Among notable opera singers were Maria Cebotari, Lidia Lipcovschi, and Giacomo Borelli. The film director Lewis Milestone (Leova Millstein) was born in the city. Prominent artists were Moisei Gamburd and Alexandru Plămădeala. The latter founded *Societatea de Arte Frumoase din Basarabia* in 1921, and initiated *Pinacoteca Municipală* in 1939, and also a sculpture park in Gradina Publică, with busts of prominent Romanian personalities of culture, art, and science. The latter was implemented in Soviet years, but the figures depicted were referred to as Moldovans.

confirmed by old maps are marked dark grey. Buildings not definitively confirmed by old maps are shown in light gray. Their size and location are estimated. This district was within the ghetto area in 1941.

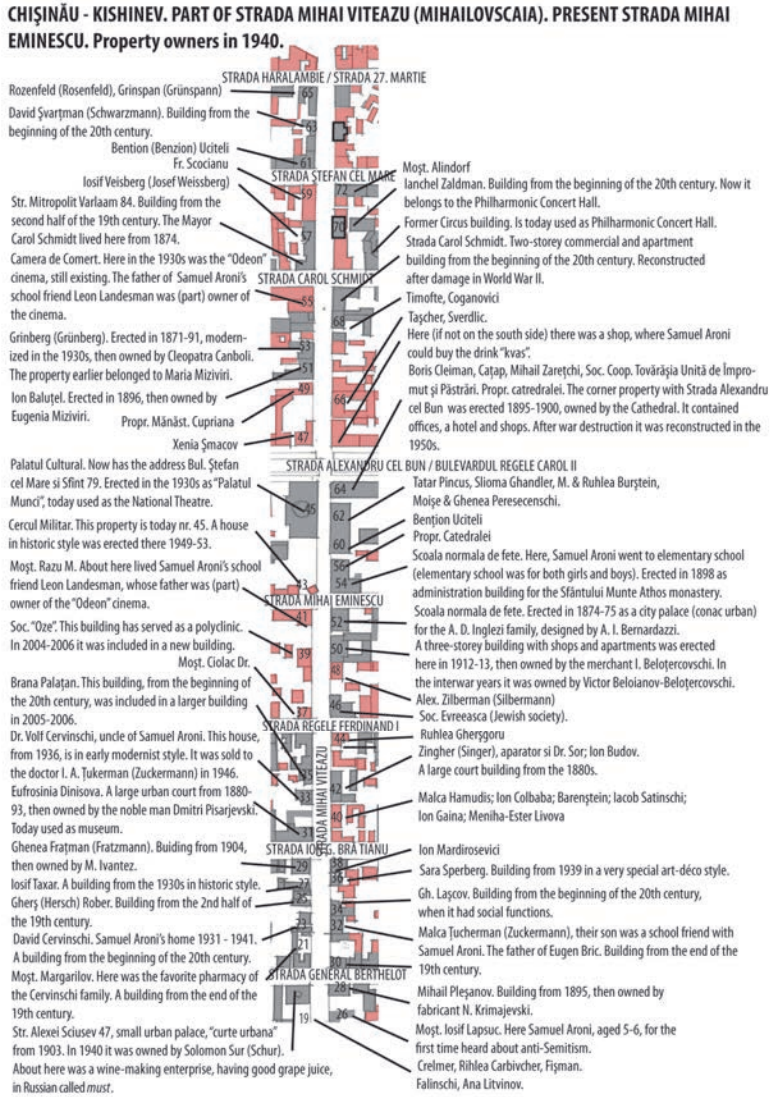



**Figure 2.3**. Chişinău. Buildings and property owners (1940) along the central part of Strada Mihai Viteazu (present-day Strada Mihai Eminescu). Map by the author, based on material from *Archivă Naţională* in Chişinău. From 1930 are hand-written lists, in the form *Tablou pentru revizuirea numerotării clădirilor in oraşe* (heads of

households and number of persons in each household), and *Luftwaffe* aerial photo from May 1944. Dark gray: Preserved buildings. Buildings that have not been preserved are light gray in the printed version.

The large industrial exhibition in 1925, erected on the slopes down to present-day Lacul Morilor, expressed the new national ambitions. The buildings were characterized by the national Romanian *neo-Romanesc* or *Brâncoveanu* style (Nesterov 2011a: 96),[7] Secession, and *Art déco*. From the 1930s, modernist architecture was used in parallel with *Brâncoveanu* style and neo-classicism. A guide book from 1932 (*Rumänien* 1932: 308 ff.) illustrates interwar urban life, mentioning the hotels *Londra*, *Paris*, *Suisse,* and *Național* as well as the cafés and restaurants *Susana*, *Varşovia*, *Bernstein,* and *Manicov*, and the travel agencies *Wagon-Lits-Cook* and *Europa*.[8] A postcard shows the *Hermes* fashion store opposite the City Bank.[9]

The grid town was largely inhabited by representatives of the more affluent classes, but also poorer tenants in backyard buildings. The names that appear in the historical address books hint that most inhabitants were Jewish or Russian.[10] The old pre-1812 town had poorer inhabitants; these were Jewish, especially around Piața Veche, and also Moldovan and Ukrainian. Around Strada Română were many synagogues. Important streets in the Old Town were Strada Petru Rareş, Strada Vineri,[11] Strada Cahul, and Strada Alexandru Vlăhuța. Strada Haralambie,[12] with a pronounced

7 *Neo-Romanesc* or *Brâncoveanu* style stressed the national and regional character. It was a merging of traditional Romanian architectural elements from churches, manors, and country houses with modern objectivity, also influenced by national Romanticism in other European countries.

8 Samuel Aroni, one of the interviewed persons, remembers the *Bat'a* shoe store, the *Capulschi* delicatessen, and a large bookstore in the area.

9 Postcard made available online by Yurii Shvets: http://oldchisinau.com/kishinyov-starye-fotografii/kishinyov-v-vysokom-razreshenii/centr-kishinyova-1930-e-gg/.

10 The detailed study of interwar inhabitants is based on material from *Archivă Națională* in Chişinău. From 1930 are hand-written lists, in the form *Tablou pentru revizuirea numerotării clădirilor in oraşe*, of inhabitants (heads of households and the number of persons in each household) in all buildings along a large number of streets. There are printed lists of the proprietors along the streets as well as hand-written notes about inhabitants of certain streets in 1940.

11 Present Strada Octavian Goga.

12 Present Strada Alexandru cel Bun.

Jewish character, featuring synagogues and prayer houses, formed the boundary between the Old Town and the grid town. There were also residents with Russian, Ukrainian, and Romanian names, for example on Strada Ecaterina Teodoriu and Strada Nicolae Bălcescu.

In the grid city, Strada Mihai Viteazu, Strada Ion G. Brătianu,[13] and Strada Ştefan cel Mare[14] had a mixed population. The listings for Strada General Brosteanu[15] and Strada Regele Ferdinand[16] include somewhat fewer Romanian names. At Strada Mareşal P. Badaglio[17] the Jews were the largest ethnic group, especially in the lower parts of the street.[18]

In spite of rising anti-Semitism in the 1930s, the Jewish share of the total Chişinău population of 128,000 rose to 50% prior to World War II. In 1939 there were 65 synagogues and prayer houses in Chişinău in total (Bric 2017: 156–58).[19] A central figure was Yehuda Leib Țirilson (Zirelson),[20] in 1918 appointed Chief Rabbi of Bessarabia and from 1920 representative of the Bessarabian Jews in the Romanian parliament.

### *Chişinău During and Immediately After World War II*

When Bessarabia was ceded to the Soviet Union on 26 June 1940, around 10,000 Jews from remaining Romania fled to Bessarabia to escape anti-Semitism,[21] while Jews from Bessarabia fled to Romania

13 Present Strada Bucureşti.
14 Present Strada Columna.
15 Present Strada Vasile Alecsandri.
16 Present Strada 31. August 1989.
17 Present Strada Armeneasca.
18 Since 48% of the inhabitants were Romanians in 1930, it is noteworthy that the Romanian share of the names seems to be smaller on the investigated streets. One reason could be that many Romanians (Moldovans) lived in the more or less rural suburbs. Another reason could be that many persons registered as Romanians may have Slavonic names, due to mixed ancestors.
19 Bric also refers to material from Steinchik, www.oldchisinau.com/sinagogue/sinagogue.html.
20 *Hasidism and "Enlightenment,"* in www.jewishgen.org/Yizkor/kishinev/kis035.html, p. 53.
21 Testimony of Samuel Aroni, interviewed as part of our research project. Most of them would die within a year.

to escape Soviet confiscations, hoping to continue on to Palestine (Levin 1987).[22]

From June 1940 to June 1941, Soviet power rapidly reorganized the society. Around 86,000 persons from the annexed Romanian territories were arrested, deported, sent into forced labor or executed (Caşu 2011: 39–56).[23] Out of 60,000 Jews in Chişinău when the Soviet rule began in 1940,[24] around 10,000 were deported. When the German-Romanian forces approached Chişinău in 1941, around 20,000 Jews fled eastwards; many of them were captured and killed. Around 10,000 Jews escaped with the retreating Soviet troops. In July 1941, German-Romanian troops killed about 10,000 Jews. The survivors were locked in the ghetto that was established the same month (Shapiro 2015: 14–30, 51–57, 65–74)[25] around Piața Veche in the Old Town.[26] Soon the Romanian troops took over most of the Holocaust activities.[27] *Encyclopedia Judaica* estimates that as many as

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22 Because most Bessarabian Jews were more Russian- than Romanian-oriented, many Romanian politicians regarded them as possible fifth columnists in relation to the Soviet Union. Among poor Jews, there was in fact a socialist movement, hoping for better living conditions in a socialist society. However, there were also negative Jewish experiences of (tsarist) Russian rule—the Chişinău pogroms in 1903 and 1905—compared with the interwar Romanian time.

23 From Chişinău 589 persons were deported, 158 of them (26.82%) Jews. Caşu (2011: 39-56) refers to D. Boicu (ed.), *Cartea memorei, calatog al victimelor totalitarismului communist* (Chişinău: Ştinţa, 1999), mentioned in the *Final Report of the International Commission on the Holocaust in Romania* (2004), chaired by Elie Wiesel.

24 According to Samuel Aroni (1995). *Encyclopedia Judaica* even mentions the figure of 70,000; jewishvirtuallibrary.org/Kishinev-moldova.

25 The ghetto was described in two documents, undated but probably from December 1941 and January 1942, from a high commission appointed by Marshal Antonescu. Samuel Aroni translated these documents into English and published them, after adding some additional historical data and his own eyewitness memories (Aroni 1995). The English titles of the documents are "Report of Inquiry of the Commission Appointed by Order of Marshal Ion Antonescu, the Leader of the State, for the Investigation of Irregularities in the Ghetto of Chişinău" and "The Establishment of the Ghetto in Chişinău and the Camps in Bessarabia."

26 The ghetto gates were at Strada Fântana Blanduzia (street not existing today) and Strada Cojocarilor. Strada T. Râşcanu, present-day Strada Arhanghelui Mihail, was crossed by the ghetto fence.

27 Ion Antonescu, Romanian dictator from November 1940, strongly supported the ideas driving the Holocaust. He was responsible for the deaths of 180,000–380,000 Jews (Friling 2004: 42–43, 61–65, 178 and 381–82).

53,000 Chişinău Jews died in the Holocaust and as a result of Soviet deportations.[28]

Chişinău was damaged in several stages. Altogether, 70% of the buildings were destroyed or badly damaged during the war (Nesterov 2011b: 136). An aerial photo taken by the German *Luftwaffe* on 3 May 1944 shows a city with many burnt out buildings, with only the walls remaining.[29] After the Soviet re-annexation of Bessarabia and Chişinău in 1944, arrests and deportations resumed.[30] The total number of victims of Stalinist war and postwar terror in 1940–41 and 1944–53 and following famine in present-day Republic of Moldova and the interwar Moldovan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic[31] is estimated at around 300,000–350,000 (Caşu 2010: 51–52). In the 1940s, Soviet industrialization and urban growth in Chişinău began. Immigrants, including Jews, lacking roots in the city, came from other parts of the Soviet Union. Later many of them emigrated to Israel and elsewhere.

### *Chişinău/Kishinev in the Postwar Soviet Period*

Soviet power legitimized itself by memorial policies that were also linked to ethnic questions. The Soviet narrative merged all war victims together as "Soviet citizens," thus eliding the Holocaust. Romanians and Moldovans were described as different nationalities and Romanian troops as "foreign occupiers."

Although it would have been possible to restore the main features of the old urban fabric in Old Chişinău, the Soviet authorities proceeded to demolish many old buildings, including the St. Ilie church, the Michael and Gabriel Cathedral, the Lutheran church,

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28 According to *Encyclopedia Judaica,* jewishvirtuallibrary.org/Kishinev-moldova.

29 "Nemetskaia aeros"emka Kishineva. 3 maia 1944 goda," available at *OldChisinau.com*, http://oldchisinau.com/panoramy-i-ayerofoto/nemeckaya-ayerosyomka-kishinyova-3-maya-1944-go/.

30 The first targets were people regarded as collaborators with the Romanian regime or as disloyal to the Soviet rule. Many Bessarabians had received Soviet citizenship against their will (Caşu 2010: 43, 50).

31 The interwar Moldovan Autonomous Soviet Republic in Transnistria was part of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic from October 1924 to August 1940. Half of it was later included in the Moldovan Soviet Socialist Republic, and today claims independence from Moldova.

and several synagogues. The Metropolitan Palace was replaced by the local Soviet building, now the parliament, furnishing it with a large square for 1st of May-parades. The streets were once more renamed, with the central boulevard now becoming Lenin Avenue.

Urban planning was used to glorify the new rule through monumental, neo-classicist buildings and memorials (Caşu 2011: 111). According to the new city development plan for Chişinău produced by the architects Aleksei Viktorovich Shchusev (1873–1949)[32] and Robert Kurtz (1911–80), the Russian grid city was to be extended into the very heart of the pre-1812 Moldovan town, with a new boulevard to the airport as the pinnacle.[33] Parts of the plan were implemented, replacing and erasing all traces of the former Piața Veche with adjacent churches and synagogues. Only the Armenian church was spared, surviving in a rear courtyard of a set of apartment buildings. Elsewhere, buildings were restored, sometimes in a process involving abusive expropriation, plunder, and corruption, disregarding ownership rights (Caşu 2011: 111–12; Nesterov 2011b: 136).

The Odeon cinema was inaugurated in 1946 (and later completely reconstructed and re-opened in 1962), and the National Theater in 1954. The Officers' Club was finished in the 1950s on a smaller scale, as the Hotel "Moldova," today used by the bank *Mobiasbanca*. Although building projects began in the interwar years, they were claimed as "Soviet" projects (Nesterov 2011a: 96–97).[34] Several buildings representing the Russian rule (1812–1917), selected for ideological reasons, were restored. The Noblemen's Club was replaced by the cinema *Patria*, partly using the old foundations, and the *Schwarzman* and *Barbalat* buildings by new apartments (*ibid.:* 138). The City Hall, Hotel Suisse, the Metropolitan Hotel, and some government buildings were reconstructed. The large Choral

32 Born in Chişinău, Shchusev was prominent before 1917. He was also the author of the Lenin Mausoleum in Moscow.

33 The Romanian architect Octavian Doicescu had together with Dimitrie Ghiulamila already in 1940 presented a rather similar plan. This is studied by Tamara Nesterov within the frames of the research project connected with this chapter.

34 The interwar architects and project initiators were not mentioned.

Synagogue was radically rebuilt to house the Russian Chekhov Theater, and the main Cathedral was used for industrial exhibitions. The central part of present-day Bulevardul Ştefan cel Mare was already from 1947 edged by monumental three-story buildings in Soviet neo-baroque style with shops, offices, and apartments. The new railway station, Hotel "Chişinău," and *Patria* cinema were designed in a pronounced Moldovan style, reminiscent of *neo-Romanesc* or *Brâncoveanu* style (*ibid.:* 128–41). This so-called "Socialist Realist" architecture that utilized national forms was followed by rationalistic modernism from around 1960 (*ibid.:* 136–41).

The Soviet attitude towards the old, lower part of Chişinău is illustrated by a text by Shchusev from 1945: "The lower part of the city, the old Moldovan Chişinău […], with crooked streets and old churches and poor urban planning, was abandoned […]. Here, huddled the poor […]. With the help of radial boulevards and squares, it is becoming a very well-organized part of the modern city" (Shchusev 1945).[35] In the same year, Robert Kurtz wrote about the small streets and malls of the city: "These narrow limits do not fit into the life of Soviet people, united in large groups looking at an early age to public initiative and collective recreation and sports" (Kurtz 1945).[36]

The General Plan of 1969 aimed to replace the area around Strada Vineri with a new thoroughfare, in practice erasing the remaining urban fabric of the Old Town (Kurtz, Shoikhet, and Miselsky 1965: 84).[37] Parts of the Old Town were replaced by high-rise apartment buildings of the suburban type in the 1970s and 1980s. Some houses were destroyed in the 1977 earthquake.

35 Citation provided by Anatolie Gordeev (translated from Russian into English here).

36 *Ibid.*

37 Notably, the Old Town was not shown at all on a tourist map from 1976, except for the post-war boulevard.

*Chişinău in Post-Soviet Moldova*

After 1991, socialist urban planning was partly replaced by anarchy and uncoordinated building projects that gave priority to economic interests, often at the expense of old architecture. However, an opinion has subsequently emerged for preservation of old buildings and restoration of the Old Town on a human scale. By the 560th anniversary of Chişinău in 1996, V. Lupaşcu wrote in the review *Literatura şi Arta*:

> The Old Town, the so-called "lower city," which was formed in the 17th–18th centuries, had an undeniably typical Moldovan character—with crooked, narrow streets and very different houses surrounded by gardens […] it is necessary to return to and keep our national architecture, including the pre-Russian architecture of Chişinău. Little remains of it, but all the more reason to carefully preserve what we have left. We believe that it is possible to regenerate the medieval part of the city […] The absence of the major focus of the old city—the Old Cathedral—can raise the question of its return (Lupaşcu 1996: 8).

The Moldovan contribution to *Heritage at Risk. ICOMOS World Report 2006/2007 on Architectural Monuments and Sites in Danger* underlined that in 1993 the historical city center was officially declared an architectural and historical monument of national importance, including many listed buildings.[38] In 2010, a *Black Book* (Ştefanița 2010) presented 75 demolished and 49 degraded architectural monuments in Chişinău. Of crucial importance for preserving architectural heritage in Chişinău is the huge inventory of historical buildings produced in 2010 (Gangal, Nesterov, *et. al.* 2010). A question is whether the simpler buildings in the Old Town will also be regarded as cultural heritage.

From 2011, a series of symposia entitled "Chişinău Identities" (*Identitățile Chişinăului*) have been arranged by academics and activists, also acknowledged and supported by national and

38 Written by Sergius Ciocanu, president of ICOMOS Moldova (the Moldovan department of UNESCO's advisory body on monuments and sites), and entitled "Chişinău—A Historical City in the Process of Disappearing."

municipal cultural bodies.[39] The growing opposition towards the new thoroughfare and the continued demolition of old buildings still meets resistance from construction and financial interests and parts of the national and local government. Foreign-assisted Jewish organizations have begun to collect and disseminate knowledge about the Jewish heritage. A map of this heritage has been published and a small Jewish museum has been opened.

## Chernivtsi–Cernăuți–Czernowitz

### *Interwar Cernăuți in Historical Context*

Under Austrian rule (1774–1918), the former small Moldovan town Cernăuți developed as the capital Czernowitz of the crown-land Bukovina into a "little Vienna," a melting pot of cultures, receiving Germans, Poles, Jews, Armenians, and others, with a remarkably high level of cultural, scientific, and commercial life. Of 87,000 inhabitants in 1910, 33% were Jews (47% in 1919), 17% Ukrainians, 17% Poles, 15% Romanians and 14% Germans. All five major nationalities had their own palaces of culture, open to visitors of all ethnicities, in the tolerant "Czernowitz spirit" (*Geist von Czernowitz).* German was a lingua franca and mother tongue of around 40%, including the Europe-oriented "emancipated" modern Jews, who had a crucial position in commercial, cultural, and scientific life.

The old town core around Springbrunnenplatz[40] and Synagogengasse was an early center of Jewish culture, with the Old Synagogue, prayer houses, Jewish institutions and the ritual Mikwah bath at Türkenbrunnen. From this "lower town," the settlement gradually grew uphill southwards in the "upper town" towards the

39 The conferences were arranged in 2011, 2013, 2015, 2017, and 2018 by *Grupul Civic pentru Patrimoniu Cultural and Asociația Nationala a Tinerilor Istorici din Moldova* in cooperation with *Direcția Cultura a Primariei Municipiului Chişinău*. Proceedings, from the conferences 2011–2017 to date, have been published in four anthologies edited by Musteața (2012–2018).

40 In the description of Habsburg Czernowitz in this article, the Austrian street names are used.

Austria Platz, 105 meters higher than the Prut River and 70 meters higher than Springbrunnenplatz. Monumental buildings supported the metropolitan character.[41] The largest complex was the residence of the Greek Orthodox Metropolitan of Austria and Dalmatia.[42] Stately hotels, commercial and office buildings lined the popular *corso* Herrengasse and other main streets. This rapid development and strong belief in the future was interrupted by World War I and the collapse of the Habsburg empire. The base of Czernowitz now disappeared, and the city did not fit into the new postwar pattern of European national states.

From 1918, under Romanian rule, Romanian was the only official language. Romanian street names and memorials replaced Austrian ones, but still, much of the "Czernowitz spirit" survived. Modern times were reflected in architecture, city growth, and aviation. The Jewish theater *Scala* from 1920 was a precursor of modernist architecture, which in the 1930s developed in parallel with the Romanian national romantic *Brâncoveanu* style.[43] In 1930 the city had 111,000 inhabitants.[44]

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41 Monumental buildings include the *Generalsgebäude*, the Roman Catholic, Greek Catholic, and Evangelical Churches, the Great Jewish Temple, the Greek Orthodox Cathedral, the Jewish Temple, the *Musikvereinsgebäude*, the University, the City Hall, the City Theater (designed by the Viennese architects Ferdinand Fellner and Hermann Helmer), the Military Casino, the Government, the *Landhaus* (parliament), the railway station, designed under the influence of the prominent Austrian architect Otto Wagner (the first railway opened in 1866), and *Bukowiner Sparkassengebäude* (designed by architect Hubert Gessner, pupil of Otto Wagner).

42 Architect Joseph Hlávka.

43 The Romanian national movement used both. For example, the Sfântul Nicolae church in *Brâncoveanu* style and the Romanian Palace of Culture in the modernist style were both erected in 1938.

44 After Poland's partition at the end of 1939, some thousand Polish citizens, mainly Jews, escaped to Cernăuţi; Mark Tolts, "Population and Migration. Migration since World War I," *The YIVO Encyclopaedia of Jews in Eastern Europe,* undated, http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/printarticle.aspx?id=2533.

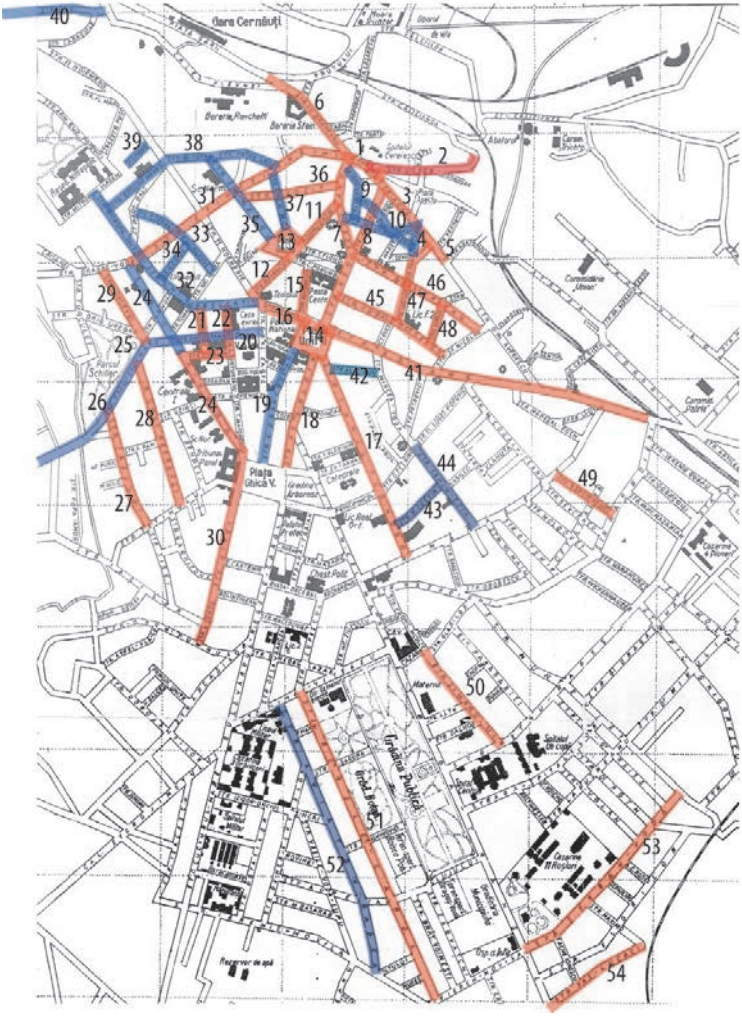


**Figure 2.4.** Chernivtsi. Streets where inhabitants or property owners in 1912, 1936, or 1940 are registered, based on archival material. Map by the author, based on background map from the 1930s: *Planul municipiului Cernăuți*. Comp. De Ing. Cad. I. Lerch. Exec. De C. Arh. I. Tomorug. Provided by Ihor Piddubnyi from the City Museum in Chernivtsi.

**Figure 2.5.** Chernivtsi. Buildings and property owners at Springbrunnengasse (interwar Strada Fântanei, present-day Vulytsya Petra Sahaydachnoho) and Synagogengasse (interwar Strada Wilson, later Vulytsya Henri Barbusse'a, now again Vulytsya Synahohy) in 1912 in the "Lower Town." Most buildings are preserved. This was within the ghetto area in 1941–42. Map by the author, based on archival materials from the municipal archive in Chernivtsi, gathered by Mykola Kuschnir, participant in the *Memory of Vanished Population Groups* research project.

Most inhabitants in the old, "lower" town were Jews, many of them merchants, shopkeepers, tailors, furriers, carpenters, other craftsmen, and different kinds of teachers and clerks. In the upper parts of the city there lived many lawyers, physicians, artists, university professors, and middle-sized entrepreneurs, the largest group Jewish. Successively, more Romanians settled in the city, but still many Germans lived in the western suburban hills, cultivating fruits and wine.[45]

45 The digitized address books of 1914 and 1936, available at Edgar Hauster's *Czernowitz Blog*, http://czernowitz.blogspot.com, give an overview of working inhabitants with names, addresses, and professions. Archival documents show several property owners on different streets before their properties were nationalized by the Soviet authorities in autumn 1940.

*Cernăuți/Chernovtsy During and Shortly After World War II*

The first Soviet rule (28 June 1940–5 July 1941) destroyed much of the traditional urban culture. Thousands of people were arrested and deported. Soviet threats and German propaganda prompted Germans to leave. The new border through Bukovina separated many families. Russian and Ukrainian became official languages and the Cyrillic alphabet was introduced. Streets were renamed and Romanian memorials replaced by Soviet ones. On 27 June 1941 the Soviet authorities celebrated the first anniversary of "The liberation of Bessarabia and North Bukovina from the yoke of the Romanian boyars."[46]

In the first days of Romanian-German power in July 1941 the *Temple* was set on fire and thousands of prominent Jewish men were murdered. On 11 October, a ghetto was sealed off in the "lower" town. Fifty thousand persons were located in an area that had previously housed five thousand inhabitants.

Already in November, 28,000 Jews were deported to Transnistria.[47] Before being dismissed from his position in spring 1942, the city mayor Traian Popovici, maintaining some "Czernowitz spirit," managed to save from deportation 19,000 Jews, including the poet Paul Celan, on the grounds that they were needed in the city. Thereafter, persecutions resumed and in June 1942, 5,000 Jews, including Paul Celan's parents, were deported to Transnistria, where the majority perished.[48]

After the Soviet army recaptured Cernăuți on 29 March 1944, the Sovietization process resumed. Poles were transferred to

46 Citation from the local communist party committee (Masan 2000: 38) (translated from German by the author of this chapter.)

47 According to Andrei Corbea-Hoisie, "Chernivtsi," translated from Romanian by Anca Mircea, *YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe*, http://yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Chernivtsi.

48 According to Yad Vashem, Popovici saved the lives of 16,500 persons; "Traian Popovici," *Yad Vashem*, https://www.yadvashem.org/righteous/stories/popovici.html. According to Masan (2000: 39), the ethnic Polish lawyer Grzegorz Szymanowicz, consul for Chile, in cooperation with the Chilean chargé d'affaires in Bucharest, Samuel del Campo, saved the lives of another 1,000–1,200 Jews by issuing Chilean passports; "Chilean Diplomat Who Saved over 1,200 Jews Honored as Righteous Among the Nations," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, 22 October 2017, https://www.jta.org/2017/10/22/israel/chilean-diplomat-who-saved-over-1200-jews-honored-as-righteous-gentile.

Poland and around 30,000 Romanians (Braun 2005: 77) escaped to Romania within its new borders (cf. Brenner 2010: 112–13). From 75–80% of the population had vanished, but the built environment was relatively unscathed. Most of the conductive layers of culture, science, and business were gone, as was the special spirit of the cosmopolitan, multi-ethnic city. German and Romanian were no longer viable languages. The surviving, mostly German-speaking Jews left, when possible, for Romania and later Palestine or even Germany or Austria. In the first postwar years, around 50,000 Ukrainians (Braun 2005: 78) were deported eastwards, reducing even further the number of persons with local roots. By 1959, as a result of immigration from other parts of the Soviet Union, Chernivtsi already had 150,000 inhabitants. According to the *Encyclopedia Judaica*, 20% of them were Jewish, mostly without any roots in Bukovina.[49] By 1989, in Soviet Bukovina, 66.5% were Ukrainians, 17.8% Russians, 7.5% Romanians/Moldovans, and 6.1% Jews (Hausleitner 2005: 78).

### *Chernivtsi/Chernovtsy in the Postwar Soviet Period*

After the war, the Jewish National House was turned into a Soviet Palace of Culture. The Romanian National House, used by the SS in 1941, was taken over by the Red Army. The Greek Orthodox Cathedral was used for industrial and agricultural exhibitions and the Jesuit church as archives, both divided into several floors. The Metropolitan Palace was changed to a university and in 1959 the ruined Israeli Temple was re-purposed as a cinema.

Soviet street names and memorials replaced the old ones.[50] Strada Iancu Flondor (Herrengasse) was renamed after the local Ukrainian writer Olha Kobylyans'ka, whose monument replaced the previous statue of Mihai Eminescu,[51] in front of the Municipal Theater, also now renamed after Kobylyans'ka.

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49 "Chernovtsy," *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (Jerusalem: Meter Publishing, 1971–72).

50 Franzensgasse, earlier renamed Strada 11 Noiembrie by the Romanians after their takeover in 1918, was renamed June 28 Street by the Soviets after their takeover in 1940. This name is, remarkably enough, still used.

51 In its turn, this monument had itself replaced a monument to Friedrich Schiller.

**Figure 2.6.** Chernivtsi. Buildings, users, and inhabitants at Piața Unirii (Austrian Ringplatz, present-day Ploshcha Tsentral'na), Strada Bucureştilor (Austrian Postgasse, present-day Vulytsya Khudyakova), and the southern part of Strada Regele Ferdinand (Austrian Enzenberg Haupt-strasse, present-day Holovna vulytsya) in 1936 and earlier. Dark grey: preserved buildings. Buildings that have not been preserved are marked light grey. Map by the author, based on material from the municipal archive (1940) and from the digitalized address book (1936), available at czernowitz.blogspot.com/2010/02/address-book-for-czernowitz-for-yeare.html, as well as old photos in several books.

Wartime destruction was limited to small areas, north of the central square, partly replaced by a space for political placards and posters and later by a memorial to Taras Shevchenko. "Socialist Realist" buildings were erected opposite the former Temple and the Post Street, rather well adapted to the location. Most old buildings were preserved as useful to the newcomers after the war. Soviet planning focused on city expansion towards the south, leaving the old city center in peace, but somewhat neglected. Important city institutions remained there, such as the university, the City Theater, the Town Hall and the main *corso,* Kobylyans'ka Street. In 1965, some proposed street widening would have eliminated several buildings, among them the former *Musikverein*. Luckily enough, this plan was not implemented.

During the perestroika era, a thorough inventory of buildings in the historical city center began, classified in relation to their architectural and historical significance. A great deal of attention was paid to the Austrian heritage of the "upper town," less to the "lower town" and the Romanian heritage. The inventory was strictly architectural, paying little attention to social and historical aspects.

### *Chernivtsi in Post-Soviet Ukraine*

From 1996 to 2001 the city population decreased from 264,000 to 240,000, consisting of almost 80% Ukrainians, over 11% Russians, just over 6% Romanians/Moldovans, and only 0.6% Poles and 0.6% Jews. The General Plan for Chernivtsi in 1993 suggests frameworks for saving the old city center, but shows industrial blocks along Synagogue Street (the old name has now been reinstated).

Several Soviet street names have been replaced, sometimes by the Austrian names, translated into Ukrainian. The main street is simply called Holovna.[52] The former Jewish house provides space for a Jewish Museum and a Klezmer Orchestra. Most churches have reopened. The literary historian Petro Rychlo summarizes the cultural situation:

52 "Main Street" in Ukrainian.

> Slowly, only hesitantly, the historical memory awakens of the time when the city was part of the Central European cultural space. Sometimes, on the peeling walls, behind the Soviet plaster, German or Romanian texts appear—advertisements for companies that no longer exist, names of people who are long dead or scattered all over the world. The city can be read as an ancient palimpsest, whose secret signs testify to a spiritual world that has yet to be rediscovered (Rychlo 2004: 294–95).

Awareness of the uniqueness of Chernivtsi is growing. Historians, literary scholars, and architecture researchers devote much time to international co-operation, especially with Vienna, about the multiethnic cultural heritage of the city, including the Romanian heritage. Historical environments, buildings, streets, and squares have been upgraded. Prominent residents of the city—especially Ukrainian and Jewish ones—are honored with numerous plaques and statues. Old wall inscriptions, like *Wolf Mandel* and *Isaac Eisikowicz, Pictor de firme, Fondat 1910,* have been found and preserved. New bookstores and meeting places promote the memory of authors from the city. The small publishing house *Meridian sertsia*, which also runs a book café, has published many local authors. The Municipal Anatoly Dobryansky Library, established in 2006, continues the "Czernowitz spirit" in literature and culture.

When the former Metropolitan Palace was included in the UNESCO World Heritage list, the whole Habsburg city was defined as a "buffer zone," essentially to be preserved. This also included most of the "lower town" including Synagogue Street. Among the restored buildings are the Mordko and Taube Korn Synagogue, the Chewra Tehilim Synagogue (now a Baptist church) and Türkenbrunnen.

## L'viv–Lwów–Lemberg

### *Interwar Lwów in Historical Context*

From medieval times, the Polish and Ukrainian/Ruthenian cultures met in L'viv/Lwów/Lemberg. The Ruthenian rule is represented by the "Old Town" under the High Castle Mountain, and the Polish rule (1340–1772) by the regular "New Town," around the

Rynek (market square) with the City Hall. Outside the fortifications came a girdle of monasteries, churches, and gardens. The Austrian period (1772–1918) is represented first and foremost in the boulevard and park system, replacing the former fortifications, and outside them a rapid city growth with apartments, villas, parks,[53] industries, and a large number of monumental buildings. As capital of the Kingdom of Galicia and Lodomeria with the Duchies of Auschwitz and Zator within the Habsburg Empire, Lemberg was a major center of Polish, Ukrainian, and Jewish culture, and had, like Chernivtsi, a distinctly Central European character.[54] Polish replaced German as the official language in 1867. Later, the integrated Jewish population changed from German to Polish. The Greek Catholic St. George Cathedral and the "Dnister" building were the main centers of Ukrainian culture. World War I resulted in growing ethnic conflicts, mistrust, and violent confrontations between Poles and Ukrainians. In 1918, a bloody pogrom was staged (Wierzbieniec 2005: 239; Mick 2016: 47; Amar 2015: 31).

53 Especially the City Park (a former Jesuit garden), Kiliński (Stryjski) Park, Castle Hill Park, and also the Łykaczów cemetery.

54 Cultural figures with ties to the city include Leopold von Sacher-Masoch, Joseph Roth, Sholem Aleichem, Martin Buber, Stanisław Lem, Józef Wittlin, Wilhelm Feldman, Ostap Ortwin, Olena Kulchycka, Jan Lam, and the Jewish religious philosopher Nachman Kohen Krochmal. Several cafés functioned as popular meeting places for writers, artists, philosophers, academicians, etc. Franz Xavier Mozart, son of Wolfgang Amadeus, was music conductor in the city for thirty years.

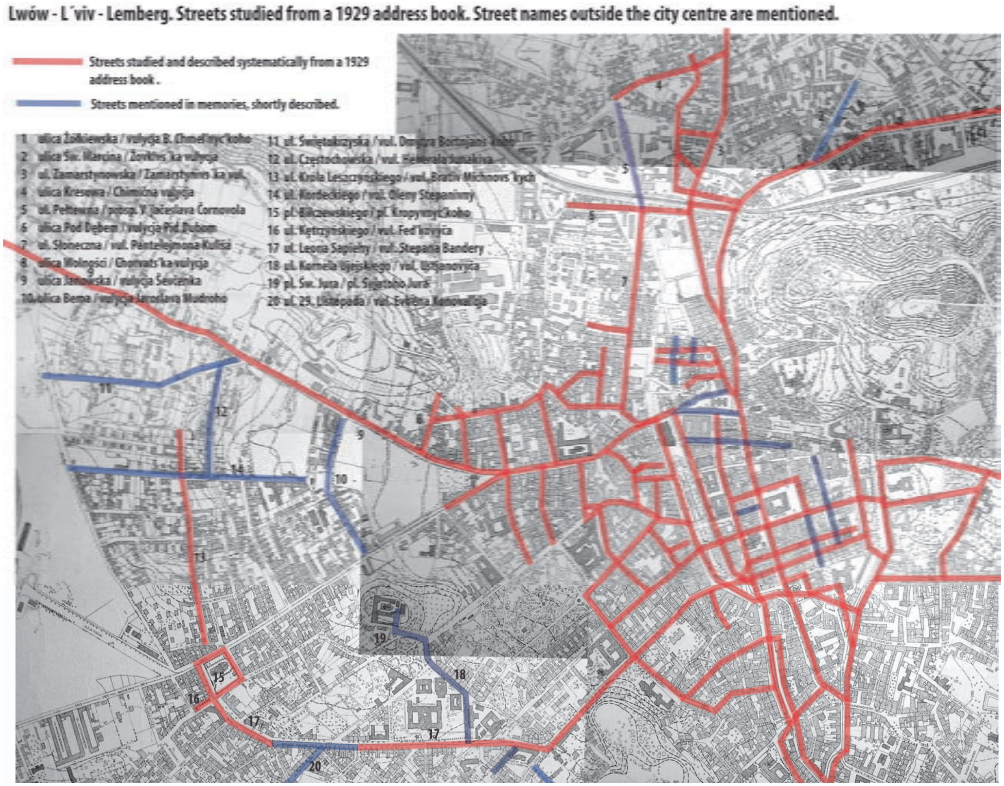


**Figure 2.7.** L'viv. Streets where property owners or business activities were registered in 1929 and in some cases earlier, based on archival material. Map by the author. The background is from a 1936 map, found at *Mistoproiekt* urban planning office in L'viv and scanned and provided by Vitaliy Shulyar, participant in the *Memory of Vanished Population Groups* research project, in 2012.

Interwar Lwów remained a vital city, growing in 1921–31 from 219,000 to 310,000 inhabitants, 31.2% Jewish and 16% Ukrainian (mostly Greek Catholic). An address book from 1929 shows that the northwest area contained many small Jewish enterprises like shops, tailors, carpentry and masonry workshops, restaurants, and pubs. Better-off citizens, mostly Poles and emancipated Jews, inhabited streets west and south-west of the Old Town, like Jagiellońska, Akademicka, and Leona Sapiehy. Rynek and the boulevards Legionów and Akademicka were centers of commercial and cultural life with numerous cafés and restaurants. Nearby streets had a concentration of bookstores, antiquarians (especially on Batorego Street, most of them Jewish), and newspaper and journal editorial offices.

Krakowska, Halicka, and Rutowskiego streets were known for their numerous fashion stores.[55] Café Roma at Akademicka and Atlas at Rynek were popular meeting places. Modernist architecture broke through in the exhibition "Living and City" in 1926. L'viv has many excellent examples of interwar modernism, among them the Sprecher building at Akademicka and several apartment buildings.[56]

55 Information about shops and other enterprises is based on the Lwów section of the Polish business directory from 1929, available via the *JewishGen KehilaLinks* website, at: https://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/lviv/DirectoryMain.html.

56 Early modernist architects included Ferdinand Kassler, Zbigniew Wardzala, Julian Awin, Tadeusz Wróbel, and Witold Minkiewicz. Cf. Hofer, Leitner and Tscherkes (2010).

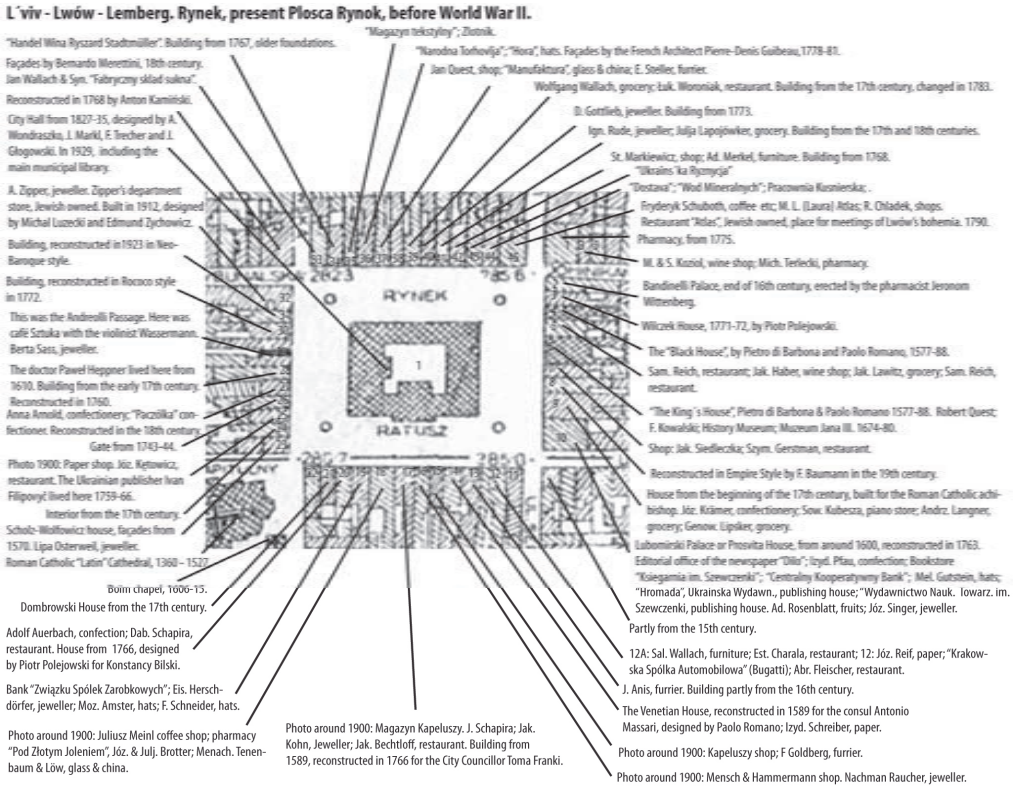


**Figure 2.8.** L'viv. Buildings and business activities in 1929 and earlier around Rynek (present Ploshcha Rynok). Map by the author. Background map from 1936, details as for Figure 7.

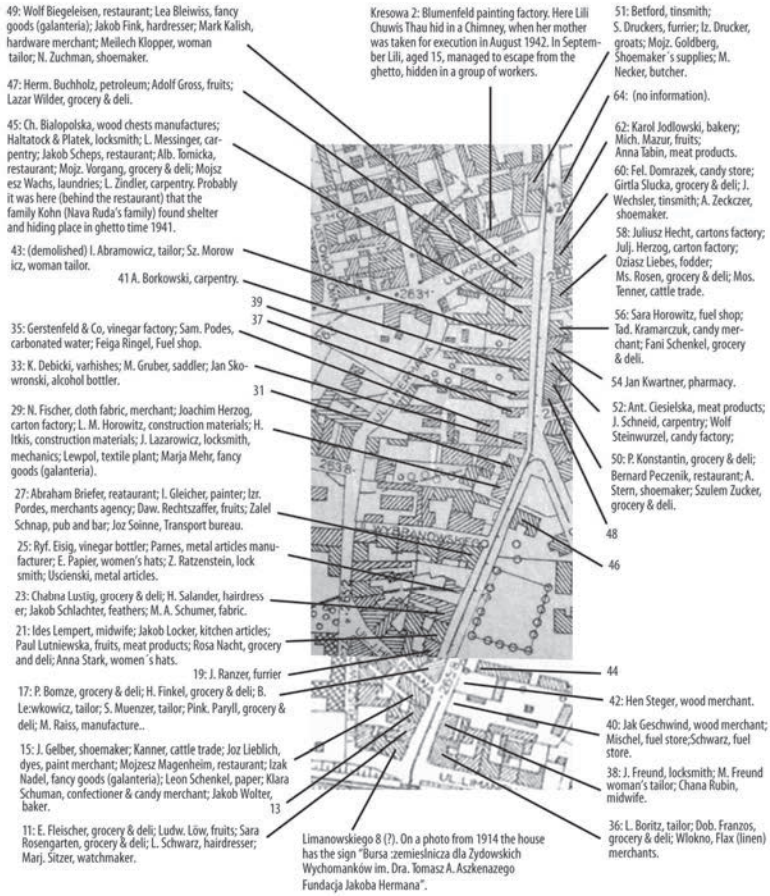


**Figure 2.9.** L'viv. Buildings and business activities in 1929 along the middle part of Ulica Zamarstynowska (present Vulytsya Zamarstynivs'ka). Map by the author. Background map from 1936; details as for Figure 2.7. Ulica Zamarstynowska was the ghetto limit in 1942–43. The western side was part of the ghetto area.

## *Lwów/L'vov During and After World War II*

From 17 September 1939, the Soviet occupation legitimized itself through social and national arguments, professing the aim of uniting a "Soviet Ukrainian" nation. Soviet urban planners set out to transform the pre-war central European, multi-ethnic city into a

Soviet industrial city.[57] Having little understanding of the historical legacy, some "even viewed the unfamiliar environment with actual hostility" (Tscherkes 2005: 206). Nevertheless, the chief planner Oleksandr Karsianov allowed some authors of the 1938 General Plan to take part in the new planning process.[58] He recognized their competence but added that "this culture has been acquired during the era of capitalism. In an architectural and artistic sense, it is barren, and lacking ideas." He wrote that these shortcomings "can be fruitfully resolved when architects learn to implement correctly the theories of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin—the key to understanding all knowledge" (*ibid.:* 206).[59] A new General Plan concept was presented in 1940. New monumental buildings at crucial locations were to change the architectural landscape, as viewpoints from different directions and from old and new street axes. A new central square was to be created "on the ruins of the medieval ghetto" (quote from Karsianov 1940, in Tscherkes 2005: 208). These plans were never implemented.

The Nazis, too, played on the Ukrainian hope for independence. Armed conflicts between Poles and Ukrainians in 1942–43, partly instigated by the Nazis, claimed around 100,000 victims. Immediately after the German troops arrived on 30 June 1941, a pogrom, supported by many local inhabitants, until the beginning of August, claimed 8,000–9,000 Jewish victims (Friedman 1945). Labor camps were soon established on Janowska and Czwartaków Streets.[60] From 15 December, all Jews were forced to live in a delimited district in north-west Lwów, including the old Jewish cemetery,[61] where they had to destroy tombstones and crush them into

57 The following passage is mainly based on Tscherkes (2005: 205–18). He writes that urban planning was carried out by the L'viv branch of *Dipromist*, the Ukrainian State Institute of Urban Planning.

58 Namely, P. Pen'kovs'kyi, W. Leiber, and Solomon Keil.

59 Karsianov also criticizes the traditional immense commercial preoccupation of the population and refers to the "parasitic character" of L'viv. He also described L'viv as the "center of the papal Catholic-Uniate reaction," where "the proud veil of European culture masks the offensive face of a capitalist barbarian."

60 Polish street names.

61 "Lviv Ghetto," *Aktion Reinhard Camps* website, www.deathcamps.org/occupation/lvov%20ghetto.html.

street paving.[62] In 1942, the *Golden Rose* synagogue from 1594 was destroyed.

From 16 March 1942 Jews were regularly either deported to the Bełżec death camp or taken to the Janowska camp, mostly to be shot at the nearby "Sands" (*Piaski*). Within the next ten months, 80,000–85,000 Jews were murdered. From 7 September 1942, the remaining Jews had to live in a reduced and successively shrinking ghetto north of the railway under extremely difficult conditions, causing a typhus epidemic.[63] They were systematically killed until autumn 1943.[64] Around 136,000 Jews from Lwów fell victim to the Holocaust, and at Janowska camp, around 200,000 persons from different places were killed (Sandkühler 1996; Wiesenthal 1989).[65] Very few Lwów Jews survived, helped by other local inhabitants, with false documents and hideouts. Some were hidden by the Greek Catholic metropolitan Andrei Sheptyts'kyi in churches and monasteries (Ther 2005: 268). In spite of wartime damage to the northern and northwest sectors of the inner city, most of historical L'viv was undamaged.

After the Soviet re-conquest of Lwów/L'viv in July 1944, Russian and Ukrainian became official languages. In July 1946, 787,000 Poles were expelled from west Galicia, almost 125,000 of them from L'viv. In 1947, only 30,000 inhabitants (8.7% of the 1939 population) remained.[66] New Soviet settlers gradually raised the population to 410,000 by 1959 (Ther 2005). In 1971, the city's 566,000 inhabitants comprised 68.2% Ukrainians, 22.3% Russians, and 9.5% others. Around 25–30% of the Poles that settled in Wrocław, formerly Breslau, after the war, came from the former Polish regions ceded to the

62 The later limitations of the ghetto are shown on a map at the site www.deathcamp.org/lvov%20ghetto.html.

63 Important testimonies of the Holocaust and ghetto in L'viv are given by Nada Ruda (2000) and Lili Chuwis Thau (2012).

64 The last execution, at Janowska camp on 18 November 1943, was called the *Aktion Erntefest*; cf. Friedman (1945: 593 ff).

65 For more information, see also the *Aktion Reinhard Camps* website, www.deathcamps.org.

66 Within a few months, the Soviet authorities had "repatriated" 117,000 Poles from western Ukraine to Poland, partly still under German occupation; cf. Åberg (2005).

Soviet Union. In winter 1945–46, 30,000 people from Lwów settled in Wrocław, but not all of them stayed (Thum 2003: 93–99). The Poles replaced the expelled German population. In part, the former Polish urban and academic life of Lwów was able to continue in Wrocław. The university library Ossolineum opened a new branch in Wrocław, for example. To some extent the notion of Wrocław as a "second Lwów" is a myth, but there are still special relations between the two cities even today.

### *L'viv/L'vov in the Postwar Soviet Period*

A second Soviet General Plan was conceived as early as in 1946. Largely unrealized, it had two specific features: on the one hand, street axes and memorials glorifying the Soviet ideology, making L'viv "Soviet, not only in essence but also in form," and on the other hand, some acknowledgement of L'viv's historical and cultural heritage. One of the plan's authors, Anatolii Shvets'ko-Vinets'ky, was a Soviet pioneer in the field of cultural heritage preservation, drafting a list of important architectural monuments of L'viv and thereby saving them (Tscherkes 2005: 217–18).[67]

A three-kilometer-long north-south axis following present-day Chornovola,[68] Svobody, and Shevchenka Avenues was planned, and also a west-east axis, from the main railway station to the High Castle area, along the present Horodots'ka and Uzhhorod streets. At their intersection, near the Opera, a central parade square of 250 x 160 meters was planned, requiring demolition of parts of the Old Town, distinguished by its Jewish character.[69] The square, with a huge Stalin statue and an honorary tribune for party and military leaders, was to be surrounded by monumental neo-classic buildings with apartments, hotels, and offices and the local Soviet and party building, with a tall clock tower. A fifty-meter-high Lenin statue was planned at the Castle Mountain, to be visible from all

67 Also material provided by Vitaliy Shulyar, within the *Memory of Vanished Population Groups* research project.

68 In this section, present-day street names are used.

69 The Old Synagogue and the Reform Synagogue had been destroyed in the war. New buildings were also planned at the main railway station, giving the visitor a "Soviet" welcome to the city. Material from Vitaliy Shulyar.

over the city and symbolically erected on the former Union Hill, established in 1869 to commemorate the 300th anniversary of the Lublin Union of Poland and Lithuania. These expressions of the Soviet triumph over the old, Central European Polish, Austrian, and Jewish culture, never materialized. A modest Lenin memorial was erected in 1952 in front of the Opera building, not conflicting with the surrounding buildings.

The 1956 General Plan for L'viv, also remaining on paper, was intended to develop the city center northwards along the new Chornovola Avenue. A new square with a monument was planned in this area. The revised 1966 General Plan, anticipating 700,000 inhabitants in 1990, included extension of the main west-east axis through the Old Town between the Church of Our Lady in the Snow and the Benedictine monastery, destroying the urban space of the Rybna and Pisha Streets. Widening of Chornovola Avenue would cause the demolition of all buildings between Bohdan Khmel'nyts'kyi Street–Zamarstynivs'ka Street and present-day Panteleimona Kulisha street, among them the preserved Glanzer synagogue from the 1840s. Hotel L'viv was erected according to this plan, on the former marketplace Zbożowy. The plan would also cause extensive demolitions along Pid Dubom, Tatars'ka, Bazarna, Zamarstynivs'ka, Horodots'ka, and other streets.[70] Compared with the 1946 plan, urban design was now changed from neo-classicism to modernism with larger and free-standing constructions and open areas, more demolition, and greater contrast to the older, traditional urban blocks. However, the historical area around the Rynok Square was to be preserved together with the medieval Old Town east of Bohdan Khmel'nyts'kyi street.

A 1970 plan revision, likewise never implemented, would have introduced four motor tunnels and a larger system of pedestrian streets and areas. Under this revision, Chornovola Avenue was to be extended into a pedestrian urban space, 650 m x 130 m, partly furnished with free-standing tower buildings and edged by huge constructions. The "New Town" was not affected by the plan. In the building inventory of the Old Town, only a few buildings

70 Material provided by Vitaliy Shulyar.

north of the Opera (excluding the old churches) were described as valuable, although they formed a partly well-preserved environment with nineteenth-century buildings along medieval streets. The Glanzer synagogue was marked as valuable, but nevertheless to be demolished.

### *L'viv in Post-Soviet Ukraine*

The General Plans of 1993 and 2008 included new ring roads, partly in tunnels, through the outer suburban zone, but leaving the central areas intact. Although Ukrainian culture and language dominate L'viv after independence in 1991, cultural and scientific contacts with Poland are increasing. There is a general understanding that the historical center of L'viv, since 1998 listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, must be preserved and relieved from car traffic. In fact, preserving buildings there means protecting the traces of the city's earlier Polish and Jewish populations.

Several old wall texts have been found and earmarked for preservation. Memorial plaques have been erected, and a ghetto monument was unveiled in 1992.[71] In 2011 an architecture competition was arranged concerning memorial sites at the Golden Rose synagogue, the former Jewish cemetery, and the Janowska camp. A museum in the Lonts'koho prison commemorates the Soviet repressions more than the German misdeeds at the same site. A museum called "Territory of Terror" has opened within the last ghetto area of 1943, also the site for "Transit Prison nr. 25" in Stalin's time. Half a million people from Galicia and Bukovina passed through this prison before deportation eastwards in the years 1944–55. Among new memorials is a monument to the controversial OUN leader Stepan Bandera, completed with a colonnade in 2011.[72]

71 The monument was created by the Israeli sculptor Luisa Sterenstein, one-time resident of L'viv, together with her son Yoel Schmukler.

72 The OUN was the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists, founded in 1929.

## Wrocław–Breslau

### *Interwar Breslau in Historical Context*

History had shaped the interwar structure of Wrocław/Breslau: the oldest town district on and around the river islands, the planned medieval town, for centuries surrounded by fortifications, and the new city districts outside the fortifications. The Cathedral Island with several medieval churches is the oldest core. Magnificent buildings and churches reflect the flourishing cultural life of late medieval Wrocław/Breslau as a rich Hanseatic and ecclesiastical center.

Interwar Breslau, first mentioned around 1000, was a 95% German-speaking city, although its history also included periods under Bohemian, Polish, Hungarian, and Austrian rule. German language and culture dominated from the thirteenth century, but for centuries there were also Poles, Czechs, Jews, and some Walloons and Frenchmen living in the city. The Protestant faith became dominant from the 1520s, but Roman Catholicism was nevertheless sustained. From 1811 the University had theology departments for both Roman Catholics and Protestants. In 1854 a Jewish Theology Seminary opened. From 1827–29, the district around the White Stork Synagogue (*Wallstraße* etc)[73] had a largely Jewish character with association premises, schools, and canteens.[74] A large number of theologians, medical scientists, philosophers, writers, poets, and composers worked in the city.

73 It was designed by Carl-Ferdinand Langhans, who also designed the second City Theater (1841). The first theater (1787) was designed by his father, Carl Gotthard Langhans, who also designed parts of the *Stadtschloss* (1796–97).

74 Not far from there, the Jewish social democratic pioneer Ferdinand Lassalle was born.

**Figure 2.10.** Wrocław. Streets where inhabitants and users in 1936 are registered, according to archival material. Map by the author. Background map from the 1930s, provided by Arno Selten.

From 1871 Breslau rapidly developed as an industrial, cultural, and commercial center with buildings conveying a metropolitan image.[75] Of 422,000 inhabitants in 1900, 58% were Protestants, 37% Roman Catholics, and 5% Jewish; 5% were Poles or Czechs. The Jewish population, around 30,000 in 1930, was well integrated into the

75 In the nineteenth and early twentieth century the renewed City Theater (Opera), the Main Railway station, commercial and bank buildings, municipal buildings, and the large Market hall were erected, as well as museum, university, and hospital buildings, the Royal Court building, and the Silesian government building. Prominent architects in this process were Karl Klimm, Richard Plüddemann, Carl Ferdinand Busse, and Karl Friedrich Endell.

German society and played a prominent role in science, culture, and business, reflected in the magnificent New Synagogue from 1865–72.[76] Jewish commercial houses were precursors of new architecture, such as the Barasch department store in Art Nouveau and the early modernist Petersdorff and Wertheim department stores. Six out of 11 Nobel Prize winners with connections to Breslau had a Jewish background.[77] Modern urban planning and architecture developed rapidly. The *Jahrhunderthalle* (Centennial Hall) from 1913, designed by Max Berg and Hans Poelzig, was included in UNESCO's World Heritage List in 2006. Modernism broke through in the exhibition *Wohnung und Werkraum* in 1929, arranged by the architect Hans Scharoun and others. The housing districts Pöpelwitz[78] and Zimpel[79] were at the forefront of European settlements.[80]

The main commercial center comprised Ringplatz, Blücherplatz, and Schweidnitzer Straße. Many cafés, restaurants, theaters, cinemas, and hotels were located at Tauentzienplatz and around Gartenstraße near the main station. Near the Centennial Hall was a fashionable villa district. The northern district had a working-class character, with small local shops. Along

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76 An important source of this passage is Davies and Moorhouse (2003). Jewish culture in Breslau is described in detail in Łagiewski (2010). Notable figures of Jewish background include the Nobel Prize winners Lenard, Stern, Born, Haber, Ehrlich, and Selten (see further note 75); social democratic leader Ferdinand Lassalle; philosophers Edith Stein and Ernst Casssirer; sociologist Norbert Elias; reporter Henry Kamm; and historian Walter Laqueur.

77 Theodor Mommsen (1902) and Gerhardt Hauptmann (1912) in literature, Philipp Lenard (1905), Erwin Schrödinger (1933), Otto Stern (1943) and Max Born (1954) in physics, Eduard Buchner (1907), Fritz Haber (1918) and Friedrich Bergius (1931) in chemistry, Paul Ehrlich (1908) in medicine, and Richard Selten (1994) in economics. The famous psychiatrist Alois Alzheimer was active in Breslau. In 1879, Johannes Brahms was honorary doctor of music in Breslau. In 2019, Wrocław acquired its twelfth Nobel Prize laureate: Olga Tokarczuk (literature).

78 Popowice (1919–28) by Theodor Effenberger, Moritz Hadda *et al.* Moritz Hadda, from a Jewish family, was murdered in Riga in 1941. Other significant, murdered Breslau Jewish architects were the brothers Ruben and Paul Ehrlich and Martin Hadda, brother of Moritz.

79 Sępolno (1919–35) by Hermann Wahlich and Paul Heim.

80 Information about modernist interwar architecture in Breslau is based on Bińkowska (2004), and Beelitz and Förster (2006).

Kletschkauer Straße lived numerous artisans and people employed by the railway or local public transport, many with Polish names.[81] The interwar population increased to 600,000. However, many Poles left for re-constituted Poland and their share decreased to 1% (Thum 2011: xvii).

81 Information about inhabitants, shops, and other enterprises is based on the address books from 1927 and 1937: *Breslauer Adressbuch 1927* (Breslau: August Scherl Deutsche Adressbuch Gesellschaft, 1927), available via the website of *Dolnośląska Biblioteka Cyfrowa* website, https://www.dbc.wroc.pl/publication/9272; and *Breslauer Adressbuch 1937* (Breslau: August Scherl Deutsche Adressbuch Gesellschaft, 1937), available at *Antykwariat Sobieski*, https://antyksobieski.pl/breslauer-adressbuch-1937-ksiega-adresowa-miasta-wroclawia.html (1937).

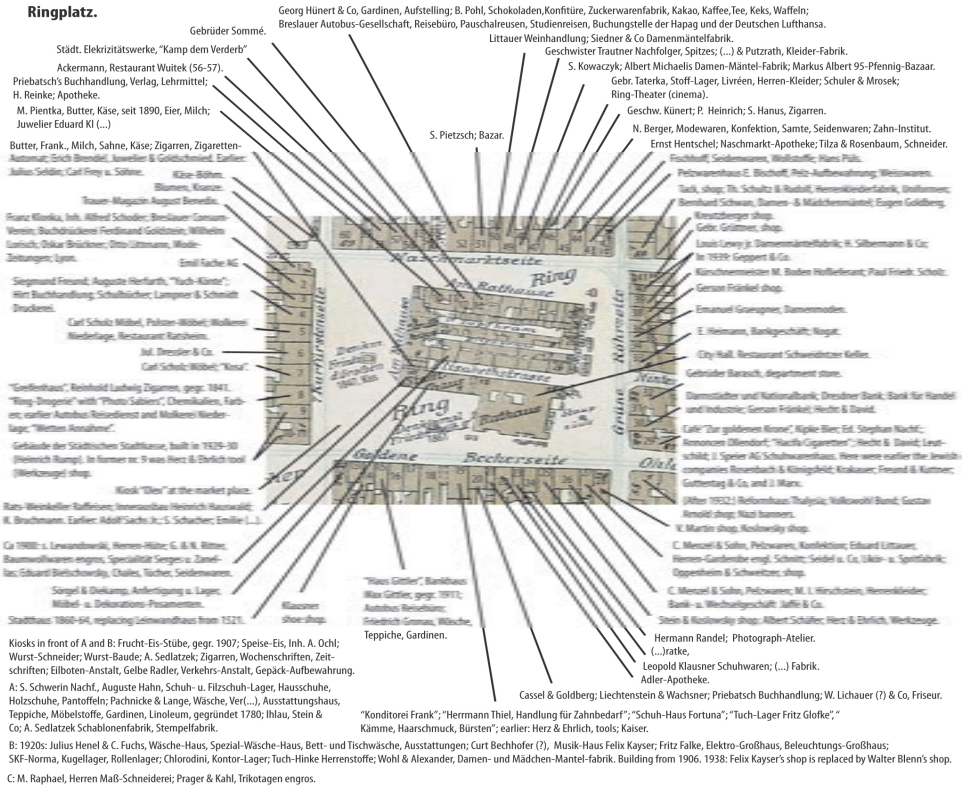


**Figure 2.11.** Wrocław. Buildings and business activities in 1936 around Ringplatz (present Rynek). Map by the author. Background map: from *Plan der koeniglichen Haupt- u. Residenzstadt Breslau*, Staedtisches Vermessungsamt, Breslau 1910, available at http://www.posselt-land-karten.de.

**Figure 2.12.** Wrocław. Buildings and business activities in 1936 around Wallstraße (present-day ulica Pawła Włodkowa) and Antonienstraße (present-day ulica Świętiego Antoniego). This was the old Jewish center of Breslau. Map by the author. Background map: details as for Figure 2.11.

From February 1933, Nazi rule brought a drastic and rapid change in the city life and culture: In March, concentration camp in the Dürrgoy suburb;[82] in April, a boycott of Jewish shops; and in May: book burning. From September 1935 the Nuremberg laws deprived Jews of civil rights, step by step. Jewish companies and stores were "Aryanized." Thousands of Jews emigrated, but 10,000 remained at the *Kristallnacht* in 1938, when the New Synagogue was destroyed, and around 2,500 people sent to concentration camps. The Centennial Hall was used in manifestations such as Hitler's visit in March 1933 and the 125th anniversary of the Iron Cross Foundation in 1938.

Large urban planning projects were designed to glorify the new regime. A north-south and an east-west axis were proposed.[83] A National Socialist Forum was planned as a space of 400 x 800 meters from Schuhbrücke and Ritterplatz to Lessingstraße, connected with a regional government building, a *Volkshalle*, and a seventy-meter-high clock-tower. This project would imply demolition of the market hall (1909), the regional government building (1883–86), the *Akademie für Kunst und Kunstgewerbe* (1911), and the former Bernardine monastery from the 15th–16th centuries. The project was never implemented, but a neo-classicist Silesian government building, still used by the regional government, was erected at Lessingplatz.[84]

### *Breslau/Wrocław During and Shortly After World War II*

The city's remaining Jews were excluded from the society and concentrated in special *Judenhäuser*. Between July 1941 and June 1943 they were deported to death or concentration camps. The Storch Synagogue and the police department at Odertor (today Nadodrze) station were used as assembly places for deportation.[85] Many

82 The social democrat leaders were placed there, including the former Mayor of Breslau Jarl Mache.

83 This plan, parallel to the Speer plan for Berlin, was proposed by the Berlin architect Werner March.

84 1935–37, architect Felix Bräuler, inspired by Hitler's *Reichskanzlei* in Berlin.

85 Among the deported was the philosopher Edith Stein (1891–1942), who lived at Michaelisstraße/ul. Nowowiejski 38, converted to Roman Catholicism and became a Discalced Carmelite nun, but was nevertheless murdered at Auschwitz.

inhabitants were fooled into a false security, because Breslau was spared from fighting and served instead as a logistic hub supplying the eastern front. Among the local opponents of the Nazis was the theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer from Breslau, executed in April 1945, who led the "Confessing Church" (*Bekennende Kirche),* combatting totalitarianism and anti-Semitism.

Among 150,000–250,000 civilians and tens of thousands of forced laborers, prisoners of war and concentration camp inmates remained when the Soviet Army arrived in February 1945. Street-by-street fighting through the affluent district around Hindenburgplatz, turned whole neighborhoods into rubble. Along several streets, the Germans burned down buildings, including the Museum of Applied Arts, to create defense lines. Buildings along Kaiserstraße were demolished to make space for an aircraft runway, which was never used. The Cathedral and other churches and historical buildings were destroyed in battles. *Festung Breslau*, not allowed to surrender, withstood attacks until 6 May 1945, claiming the death of around 60,000 civilians.

After the war, Breslau was one of the most severely damaged cities in Europe. Sixty per cent of the buildings were destroyed, but still the old urban structure and many important buildings remained (cf. Thum 2011: xxii–xxxi).[86]

### *Wrocław in Postwar Polish Socialist Period*

Poland took over the city in 1945 and renamed it Wrocław. The transfer was legitimized by the medieval connections with Poland and the myth of the Piast dynasty of Wrocław. The idea was that Poland had returned to its original location and "recovered its lost territories."

The expulsion of twelve million Germans living east of Oder-Neisse and in Sudetenland was one of the largest ethnic cleansings

86 According to Mühle (2015: 259–60), 70% of the buildings in the city were destroyed, in south and west districts up to 90%, in the north and east district 10–30%; and in the old city center, around 50%.

in history.[87] Poles immigrated, many of them having been expelled in their turn from regions ceded to the Soviet Union. Significant groups of Polish academics and intelligentsia arrived from the Lwów region. Numerous newcomers settled around Blücherstraße and Moltkestraße, a district that had previously been populated by many local Poles.[88]

It was general policy to erase German heritage and instead highlight the remains of the old, Slavic heritage, for example by restoring the medieval, "Bohemian" or "Polish" façades of buildings that in the seventeenth century were refurbished with "Austrian" or "German" baroque façades (cf. Netsch and Greiner 2012). German street names, memorials, symbols, and inscriptions were replaced by new ones, representing either Polish culture or socialism.[89] Nazi victims were commemorated without special attention to the Jewish atrocities. In 1954–68 most remaining German cemeteries were dismantled, but one of them and two Jewish graveyards have remained (Thum 2011: 244–87). In 1945–49, many Polish Holocaust survivors settled in the region. In 1946 Lower Silesia had 90,000 Jews, without ties to the earlier Jewish communities. Due to the anti-Semitic campaign in 1968, most remaining Jews emigrated (Davies and Moorhouse 2003: 438 ff).

Architectural transformations proceeded in parallel with the societal changes. Lutheran churches were converted into Roman-Catholic ones, with the exception of Court Church at Kazimierza Street, which was taken over by Polish Protestants. In 1952, new Polish chapters in Wrocław and Opole (Oppeln) replaced the former German ones.

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87 Two million of them died very soon, about half a million directly in the course of flight and expulsion. By 1947 most German Breslauers had been expelled, including surviving German Jews.

88 At Blücherstraße no. 23–27 three apartment buildings were confiscated for use by the local Polish authorities. The German residents were given twenty minutes to leave their homes; only the owner of no. 27, a baker, was allowed to stay, after he agreed to provide the Polish officials with fresh bread (Thum 2011).

89 The Kaiser Wilhelm I monument was replaced by a statue of the Polish king Bolesław Chobry. The statue of Friedrich Wilhelm III was replaced by a statue of the Polish poet Aleksander Fredro, recovered from Lwów, where he was replaced by Mykhailo Hrushevsky with Ukraine's independence.

An extensive Soviet looting of the city hampered reconstruction of Wrocław. So too did the actions of the Polish authorities, who sent thousands of tons of brick-stones from the ruins for the reconstruction of Warsaw. New apartments were constructed, but old ones were insufficiently maintained. In 1951–58, 28,000 new dwellings were built or renovated, but 27,000 were lost through deterioration (Thum 2011: 135).

After infrastructure and several factories and administration buildings had been repaired, restoration of historical buildings began (*ibid.:* 244–87). Ruins and rubble were cleaned up before the prestigious Exhibition of the "Recovered Territories" in 1948 at the Centennial Hall, now renamed "People's Hall." It hosted an International Congress of Intellectuals in Defense of Peace with participants such as Graham Greene, Pablo Picasso, Salvatore Quasimodo, and Bertolt Brecht (Davies and Moorhouse 2003: 448).

It was only after 1953 that rebuilding of the city really took off. Priority was given to the city center, with reconstruction of the most important Old Town streets and squares. By the 1960s, old buildings at Rynek (Ringplatz) and Solny Square (Blücher-Platz) had been reconstructed, as well as most churches and monasteries, the armory, parts of the ramparts, and several other medieval buildings. This was in fact preservation of German heritage.[90] Frequently, restoration was limited to the façade, with modest apartments behind. Some restored façades were given a more original look than existed before the war.[91]

In the early 1950s two monumental "socialist realist" buildings were constructed for the Polytechnic University at Plac Grunwaldzki (Kaiserstraße). They referred to Max Berg's project from 1913, but in a more symmetrical and neo-classical form. The project was continued with modernist buildings.[92]

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90 The reconstruction process required that several German skilled workers and specialists remained.

91 An inspiration for this work was a model of Ringplatz around 1800, constructed by the building commissioner Rudolf Stein in the 1930s.

92 An important source for the passages about war destruction and post-war reconstruction and plans in Wrocław is material, not yet published, from the Department of Architecture, Politechnika Wrocławska, 2011–12, collected for the project *Memory of Vanished Population Groups in Today's East and Central European*

Comparisons of the urban plans expose gradually changing planning ideologies. A 1952 program stipulated restoration of all churches and palaces, several other monumental buildings, and many old merchant and residential buildings along the streets (Małachowicz 1976: 119). It aimed to restore a system of historical streets and squares (Rynek, Plac Solny, and Nowy Targ as well as the Świdnicka, Wita Stwosza, Świątej Katarzyny, Piaskowa, Świątej Jadwigi, and Katedralna Streets) and to adapt new buildings to the old environment while enabling scenic walks along the historical streets.

The city plans from 1949 and 1955, but not the program from 1952, included a new, and later implemented wide street along the former inner ramparts, replacing earlier malls and passages.[93] The 1949 plan proposed to reconstruct the whole moat surrounding the Old Town, but the 1955 plan left it at status quo. Outside the moats, the 1949 plan proposed a large motor ring road and a modernist urban layout. The 1955 plan changed this to a more classic city layout, reconstructing urban streets and spaces, including Plac Kościuszko (Tauentzien-Platz). More traditional streets replaced the broad motor road.

"Socialist Realism" implied harmonizing new façades with old ones. The shift to modernism reduced the historical considerations. The planned historical reconstruction of Nowy Targ was replaced by modern blocks in 1961–65.[94] This followed a plan from 1960 showing an extended ring street along the former inner ramparts, leaving the eastern part of the Old Town generally open with freestanding buildings, without traditional street spaces. The 1960 plan proposed a motor road crossing the Odra islands very close to the old "Sand" church and the former university library. A plan from 1968 shows a modernist urban concept on the empty grounds to the east.

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*Urban Environment. Memory Treatment and Urban Planning in L'viv, Chernivci, Chişinău and Wrocław.*

93 Reconstruction and development plan for Wrocław Old Town and downtown (1955). Elaborated by the City Planning Office under A. Kulicz (Małachowicz 1976: 160).

94 Development plan for the Old Town area (1961–65) (Przyłęcka 2012: 33).

Generally, Wrocław is an example of impressive resurrection from the ruins of the war and the reconstruction of one of Europe's most beautiful urban centers. Modernist buildings from the interwar years, such as the Wertheim and Petersdorf stores, have also been brilliantly restored, and the Centennial Hall has been improved.[95]

*Wrocław in Post-Socialist Poland*

As a whole, Breslau/Wrocław reflects central aspects of European twentieth-century history, including Nazi terror, the Holocaust, severe wartime fighting and damage, changing frontiers, and expulsion of the population. The post-socialist authorities have aimed for the city to play an important role in European reconciliation and East–West contacts (Thum 2011: xv–xvi). Today there is a more open attitude towards the German, Jewish, and Czech heritage. Wrocław has been launched as a multicultural and tolerant city, especially symbolized by the rather well-preserved district *Dzielnica Czterech Świątyń*, "The Four Shrines Neighborhood," with the Jewish center and the restored White Stork Synagogue, the Roman Catholic St Nicholas Church, the Greek-Orthodox Cathedral of the Virgin Mary's Nativity, and the Evangelical-Augsburg Lutheran Church of God's Providence. The revived Jewish center also includes cultural organizations and a restaurant around the courtyard where Jews were assembled for deportations. However, the small present Jewish community has no roots in the pre-war city. The Nobel Prize winners, although none of Polish origin, are commemorated in the university. Memorial plaques have been put up for figures such as Edith Stein, Max Born, and Norbert Elias, for the destroyed large synagogue, and the assembly site for Holocaust deportations.

95 The Pope spoke there in May 1997.

## Comparison between the Four Cities

### *Memories Reflected in the Built Structure and Urban Environment*

All four cities underwent a period of prosperous development in the interwar years, accompanied by the breakthrough of modern architecture. Wartime destruction was most extensive in Wrocław/Breslau and Chişinău, up to 60–70%. In L'viv/Lwów, some resident and industrial areas were damaged, but mostly, the city was well preserved. Chernivtsi/Cernăuți was least affected by wartime destruction.

Cernăuți and Chişinău had both a division between a poorer, old "lower town" and a better-off newer "upper town." Jews lived in both districts, depending on their economic circumstances. The "lower towns" had small-scale buildings mostly associated with Jewish small craftsmen, merchants, innkeepers, and teachers. The north-west districts of Lwów had a similar ethnic and social structure. The World War II ghettos were located in these areas. In Chişinău, only minor parts of the "lower town" are still preserved. The more representative "upper towns" reflected the leading commercial, financial, academic, and cultural layers, in Cernăuți dominated by emancipated Jews. In Lwów, the more affluent districts around Legionów, Akademicka, Jagiellońska, and Leona Sapiehy Streets[96] had a mixed Polish and emancipated Jewish character. In other lower- and middle-class districts, including suburbs, the ethnicities were rather mixed. In Breslau, the differences between urban districts were more social than ethnic, but there was a concentration of Jews in the district around Wallstraße, and north of the river Oder lived many Poles.

In present-day L'viv and Chernivtsi, urban history has a prominent role. In L'viv, the emphasis is placed more on Ukrainian than Polish culture and history. Major monuments of architecture from the Austrian period are well accentuated, but more connected with the general city culture than with Austrian power. The

96 Polish street names.

situation differs in Chernivtsi, where since 1991 the Austrian period has been regarded as a golden age, reflected in the most important and admired streets, places, and also nostalgic cafés and restaurants. The focus is more on the city's artistic milieu and the "Czernowitz spirit," than on specific ethnic groups. In the UNESCO discussions in 2004–2010, the architecture of the former Metropolitan Residence was regarded as reflecting the city's multi-ethnic character. In Chernivtsi itself, Ukrainians and Jews attract more interest than other nationalities, but an increasing amount of attention is also paid to the Romanian period and its architecture. The post-Soviet library and research center *Bukowina-Zentrum* at the university, now closed, played an important role in exploring Chernivtsi's multi-ethnic heritage.

Although historical Lwów is mainly Polish, guidebooks, popular historical literature and inventories do not explicitly accentuate Polish culture and history. Interwar modernist buildings are presented more as an expression of their time than as elements of Polish heritage. This practice could indicate a desire not to bring into question the belonging of L'viv to Ukraine. Perhaps for similar reasons, it is rare for distinctions to be drawn between the Moldovan (Romanian) and the Russian in descriptions of old buildings and the city environment in Chişinău. In Chernivtsi, a focus on Austrian heritage, which is no longer "dangerous," makes it possible to avoid more difficult discussions of relations between Romanians and Ukrainians. Nevertheless, numerous memorial plaques also commemorate Romanians.

The old built environment of Wrocław comprises first and foremost German and German-Jewish heritage. Although the postwar population of Breslau/Wrocław almost totally lacked historical connections, the historical town was well reconstructed after wartime damage. This reconstruction of German heritage, although legitimized by a certain linkage to Polish history, may reflect an appreciation of the old built environment as such, independent of its history. The UNESCO World Heritage site of Centennial Hall is highlighted, but mostly as purely architectural heritage. However, recently German culture as such has begun to be recovered in books

and reprinted photos and maps. The exhibition of Nobel Prize winners also partly implies recognition of the German heritage. The heritage of the Jews is well-integrated into the present-day story of the city.

In recent years Jewish heritage is highlighted in all four cities, although somewhat less in Chişinău. Everyday life, such as old shops, cafés, restaurants, and other establishments are recollected in books, old photos, and postcards, and, with the exception of Chişinău, old address books have been uploaded to the Internet.

### *Treatment of Memories in Urban Planning from Early Postwar Years until Today*

Stalinist neo-classicism, or "Socialist Realism," left most visible traces in Chişinău, especially around the central boulevard. The plans, not implemented, for grandiose street axis and parade squares, at the expense of cultural heritage, in Nazi Breslau and Stalinist Soviet L'viv had clear similarities. In Wrocław, the damaged area around the former *Tauentzienplatz* was reconstructed in a classicist manner, well adapted to the adjacent buildings. In Chernivtsi, some neo-classical buildings were well adapted to the site.

Although beyond the official Soviet planning, experts in L'viv managed to begin an inventory of historical buildings to be preserved. In Wrocław, the ambitious program for restoring old buildings and historical street façades was mostly achieved in the 1960s. In Chernivtsi, urban planning left the historical center unchanged and preserved by default. Chişinău had no special plans for preservation, except for a few chosen buildings, representing the Russian heritage. Several churches and synagogues were demolished after the war and the whole Old Town was to be replaced by new structures.

The modernist breakthrough in the 1960s strongly affected urban planning in the four cities. Modernism lacking respect for historical heritage reflected international trends. In L'viv, only minor parts of the planned open structures in the central city materialized. In Wrocław, modernist architecture replaced damaged blocks outside the most important historical streets. In Chernivtsi, planned

broadenings of some streets in the city center were not implemented. In Chişinău, large parts of the Old Town were transformed into suburb-like apartment districts.

In Chişinău, Chernivtsi, and L'viv, inventories of historical buildings have been made after 1989. They provide architectural descriptions, focusing on monumental buildings, their builders and their initial use. Residential houses are also included, but little is described about their users. Generally, the inventories do not include details on social aspects. Simpler buildings are often ignored, although they tell much about the city history and urban life. The "lower towns" of Chişinău and Chernivtsi and the north-west part of L'viv have only been studied only cursorily. In Chişinău, where demolition of the "lower town" was planned, slowly an interest in preserving what is left is rising. The previously endangered "lower town" of Chernivtsi seems now to be saved, like parts of north-west L'viv. This changed paradigm harmonizes with inclusion of Chernivtsi and L'viv to the UNESCO World Heritage list. In large historical districts is decided to avoid demolition and to adapt new buildings to the old fabric and scale. In L'viv, guidelines for preservation of the old architecture have been formulated and published.

### *Historical Values as City Branding*

Historical values are utilized for city branding and attracting tourists, somewhat less in Chişinău than in the other cities. In Chernivtsi and L'viv, cafés and restaurants revive old traditions and interiors. In Chernivtsi, local publishers and literary scientists open bookstores, book cafés, and literary centers highlighting the prewar city culture. In all four cities there is a growing interest in preservation and improvement of old environments, reinforced by NGOs and private initiatives. Such movements are also strong in Chişinău.

Numerous books, conferences, and exhibitions focus on the history and heritage of the four cities before World War II. Much effort has been devoted to beautifying streets and squares with historical references. Jewish, Polish, German, and Romanian heritage

is now well-exposed. Highlighting the Central European heritage of western Ukraine also marks a distance to Russia.

Several initiatives focus on preservation of the historical city districts and the multicultural past. Center for Urban History of East Central Europe, founded in Lviv in 2004, leads and coordinates several research projects concerning Jewish and Polish heritage in L'viv. The "Four Shrines Neighborhood," exposing Jewish culture as well as the Holocaust, has played a special role in the branding of present-day Wrocław as a city of multi-ethnic tolerance. The closing of Bukowina-Zentrum in Chernivtsi is a backlash, but its aims continue in other organizations, including Lvivcenter.

Generally, future prospects for saving cultural heritage and commemorating perished population groups are rather good, but there is still a need for better understanding, not least among investors and other decision-makers. The Holocaust and the Stalinist repressions have attracted increasing interest in all four cities, especially in L'viv. The first *Stolpersteine* have been placed in Chişinău. In Chernivtsi and L'viv, there is a policy of preserving old wall texts as palimpsests of historical layers. In Wrocław, as in L'viv, the present population takes care of the architectural heritage, even though it was created by vanished population groups. In Chişinău, the tensions between Romanian and Russian culture are not very noticeable today, and both languages are frequently used in daily conversation.

## Concluding Remarks

In all four cities, conditions for preservation of cultural heritage have improved, although the Old Town of Chişinău is still in danger. The attainment of World Heritage status for the historic centers of L'viv and Chernivtsi, as well as the German "Centennial Hall" in Wrocław, has been an important factor.

The increasing attention being paid by inhabitants to the historical value of the old city districts is slowly coming to be reflected in daily politics and city planning. While the postwar generations to a large extent regarded many old buildings as primitive and "unmodern," to be replaced by new modern apartments, new

generations, as in many other countries, have a greater understanding of their historical value and potential for future restoration.

Climate change and the need for a more sustainable development is also impacting urban planning at different levels step by step, although at a rather slow pace in post-communist countries. With the end of communist rule there arose counter-movements, on one hand, to increase the use of personal automobiles, and on the other hand, to reduce societal planning and favor private investment. In turn, an awareness of the need for a new, sustainable urban planning is on the rise now.

The international situation will impact future developments. Moldova is currently poised tensely between orientation towards Russia and orientation towards Romania and the EU. West Ukraine has increasing contacts with the EU. Chernivtsi has special connections with Austria (Vienna) and Germany, while L'viv is reconnecting with Poland. As the center of the Greek Catholic Church, L'viv also has contacts with Rome. Wrocław has potential as a city of both reconciliation and multi-ethnic tolerance and as a scientific center, in parallel with L'viv. The 2019 Nobel Prize Laureate Olga Tokarczuk is a part of this movement. The role of Wrocław in the EU and Europe will to a great extent depend on the future political development of Poland, today affected by the PiS regime.

Generally, in all four cities, there is a growing interest, at least among intellectuals and enthusiasts, in the history of the city's populations during the interwar and earlier periods, and their cultures and achievements. There is also a growing interest in the end of the previous urban culture; the misdeeds of both the Stalinist and Nazi regimes, including the Holocaust; and generally the history of persecution, one-sided narratives, and obfuscation of the truth in the Soviet and communist years. This search for historical facts is a source of discomfort for some, however. There are issues concerning Polish, Ukrainian, and Moldovan/Romanian collaboration in the Holocaust; cooperation with Nazi Germany against Soviet power; and collaboration in Stalinist atrocities. Nationalist political movements in all three countries tend to focus on some events and neglect or conceal others.

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# **Between Anonymity and Attachment**
# Remembering Others in Lviv's Pidzamche District

*Natalia Otrishchenko*

***Abstract**: This chapter uses oral testimony to examine how the present-day residents of the Pidzamche district in Lviv remember "others" – that is, how they remember the district's former residents: representatives of other (non-Ukrainian and non-Russian) ethnic and religious groups, who were killed, deported, or otherwise forced to flee during and after World War II. After the war, Lviv underwent Sovietization, rapid industrialization, and massive in-migration. What do Lvivians living in Pidzamche today know about the district's previous inhabitants, and what are their attitudes towards them? What (if any) role does the remembering of others play in shaping present-day relationships to place and to identity? In this study, based on twenty five in-depth interviews collected in 2012, the author outlines a set of key narratives through which the remembering of others takes place in Pidzamche, from stories about empty houses previously occupied by nameless people, to very personal relations with specific individuals. The study is located at the intersection of the interdisciplinary fields of memory studies and neighborhood studies, and contributes to the growing body of scholarship on memory culture in post-Soviet cities.*

## Introduction

Eastern European cities experienced turbulent times during the twentieth century. They were arenas for two world wars, the fierce competition of different national projects, and the radical transformation of social structures. The fate of the city of Lviv and its inhabitants is no exception—between the years 1939 and 1946, the people who lived here went through the horrors of World War II and the totalitarian politics of German occupation and Sovietization. Thousands of Lvivians lost their lives, many had to flee, often never to return, and almost everyone who survived this period lost

close friends and relatives. According to the 1931 census, Lviv had a population of 312 231 (including over 157 490 Roman Catholics; 99 595 Jews; and 49 747 Greek Catholics) (Mick 2011: 211); by 1944, the population had shrunk dramatically to around 154 000 (Susak 2000: 80). Lviv was a site of the Holocaust—the Jewish population was moved to a ghetto, and later sent to the Janowska forced-labor camp, deported to Bełżec, or killed. In late July 1944, Lviv was retaken by Soviet troops and became a part of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. In the postwar decades, the city's ethnic composition went through radical changes: Poles constituted 62.8% of population in 1944, however, by January 1955 their proportion had dropped to 2.3% *(ibid.)*, mainly as a result of forced migration. According to the 1959 census, 60.2% of the city's inhabitants reported as Ukrainians, and 27.1% called themselves Russians (Bodnar 2010: 314). By this point, Lviv's population had grown to 410 000 *(ibid.),* primarily due to the Soviet policies of industrialization and population exchange. In this way, the war and its aftermath utterly changed the demographic composition and cultural outlook of the city. People from all over Ukraine and the Soviet Union moved into the old buildings to start new lives there and became "the new society of the old city" (Bodnar 2012: 15). In this article, I set out to investigate how present-day residents of the Pidzamche district in Lviv remember the city's missing others,[1] whose lives in the city were ended by violence, war, and ethnic cleansing, the memory of which was subsequently suppressed for decades.

Depopulated by the war, Lviv was an experimental field, where the Soviet government attempted to create a community

1 My usage of the term "others" is similar to that employed by, for instance, Uilleam Blacker (2013), Mateusz Magierowski (2017), Eleonora Narvselius and Niklas Bernsand (2014: 67), and Anna Wylegała (2015). For instance, Mateusz Magierowski studies violence committed by Poles against members of other ethnic groups—Jews, Ukrainians, and Germans—within local communities during World War II, placing emphasis on the ethnicity of both victims and perpetrators. In this chapter, I draw attention not only to ethnicity, but also to the religious affiliation and language used by representatives of various groups. I am conscious that this is a somewhat essentialist approach, but in the case of this text, I do not intend to conceptualize ethnicity, but rather analyze memory about people from specific social groups.

with a new common history and culture. Erasing the memories of previous inhabitants was one of the instruments of this policy. Olga Sezneva has analyzed similar postwar policies in Soviet Kaliningrad, the former German city of Königsberg which became part of Soviet Russia after the war. Sezneva (2002: 48) identifies two main directions in the implementation of this politics: spatial reordering—the reconfiguration of material space, on the one hand; and temporal reordering—the reconstruction of the city's history, on the other. The same strategy was applied in Lviv. However, though the official version of the past was presented as solid and invariable, individual recollections were in fact diverse and created a mosaic of popular memories in both cities during the decades of state socialism.

From the mid-1950s, Lviv was turning into a Ukrainian city in terms of ethnic composition, due to the intensive in-migration from villages in the West-Ukrainian region (Bodnar 2010). The Soviet authorities were focused on building a Communist future, people were preoccupied with more immediate present-day problems, and thus there was not much space left for the past. The city's pre-war life was a blank spot for a large section of the newcomers; historian William Risch has provided an illustrative example of a conversation in 1968 in an "Intourist" hotel between a Polish-Canadian tourist and a young female employee, in which the latter said that Lviv was Ukrainian before the war (Risch 2011: 27). This quote shows the results of the politics of memory in Soviet Lviv—a public statement indicating ignorance of the genuine pre-Soviet history of the city among some of the locals or at least unwillingness to talk openly with foreigners about the past. As the sociologist and memory studies scholar Viktoriya Sereda has argued, during the postwar period, alternative memories about pre-war Lviv "had very limited space for their manifestation, and were restricted primarily to the private sphere (hidden family stories and commemorations, usage of old street or place names) and semi-legal or underground activities, as with Samizdat" (Sereda 2009). The city became a new home for many people, and the strategies and practices they employed for creating collective and individual senses of "belonging" were

highly varied. Some people appropriated private and public spaces, while others constantly lived among ghosts of the past; some kept themselves separate from previous residents and their culture, while others attempted to preserve (or reinvent) the unique atmosphere of the pre-war city.

After the collapse of the USSR, a new phase in the city's history began. As in other post-Soviet cities, different actors started to develop a new urban "identity." In the case of Lviv, this identity combined "local," "regional," "pan-Ukrainian," and "multicultural" aspects (Hentosh and Tscherkes 2009: 276). There are also a number of contexts in which the city's past has come to be used as commodity, for example, in thematic restaurants (Blacker 2013: 186-87; Narvselius 2015: 4–5, 9–12). Lviv's inhabitants have been re-discovering the history of the city and of those spaces that they considered their own. In my study, I delineate the complex relations between the current inhabitants and those who lived in the city before World War II, through a case study of one of Lviv's oldest and the most industrialized districts, Pidzamche.

## Pidzamche: A Brief Introduction

The name "Pidzamche" literally means "under the castle." This is not an official toponym, but it is common in everyday usage among Lvivians. The district exists mainly on mental maps, and so its borders are blurred. Traditionally it refers to the territory under the western and northern sides of the hill where Lviv's High Castle (Vysokyi Zamok) was located, although only a fragment of its walls remains. In this article, I use the term Pidzamche in order to refer to the area along Bohdan Khmelnytsky, Promyslova, and Zamarstynivska streets, surrounded by industrial buildings and the High Castle hill.

Researcher and philosopher, author of the project "Pidzamche: Spaces and Places"[2] Andrii Bondarenko has dated the "birth" of this district as we know it to the 19th century, "when the sky of

2 A description of this project is available here: https://lia.lvivcenter.org/en/projects/pidzamche/about/ (accessed 10 January 2019).

Pidzamche was quickly fogged with the smoke of numerous industrial chimneys" (Bondarenko 2013: 5). During the Soviet time, the industrial profile of Pidzamche became even more apparent (see Fig. 3.1). The traditional production of food (meat, flour, confectionery, preserves) and drink (beer, liqueurs) was complemented with specialized technological industries such as the Radio Electronic Medical Instruments Plant (established in 1944) and the Artificial Diamonds and Diamond Tools Plant (established in 1965). Separated from the rest of Lviv by a railway and filled with different kinds of manufacturing, Pidzamche lived its own life: a mixture of hard work, a gray economy, commerce, alcohol consumption, and a semi-criminal atmosphere, which in various combinations existed throughout the 20th century.

**Figure 3.1.** Panoramic view of Pidzamche from the High Castle (circa 1960s–'80s) © copyright 2018 by Urban Media Archive, Center for Urban History of East Central Europe, Lviv. Collection of Tanas Nykyforuk.

For a long time Pidzamche differed markedly from other districts of Lviv. Bondarenko explains the specificity of this area as being home to a large Jewish population before World War II

(Bondarenko 2013: 16). In 1941 the Nazi regime established a ghetto in the territory of western Pidzamche, which existed until June 1943. The vast majority of Lviv's Jews did not survive World War II. Then, with Poles forced to leave the city shortly after the end of the war, Lviv in general and Pidzamche particularly became a place of empty houses. Compared to other parts of Lviv and its various green suburbs, postwar Pidzamche was a rather depressed and neglected area whose industrial profile made it unattractive as a place to live and poorly suited for tourism. In the 21st century, however, the rediscovery of the district's difficult and long history, including the resurfacing and reinvention of the memories of its lost ethnic diversity, together with its closeness to the city center, and its status as part of the "buffer zone" of a UNESCO World Heritage Site, all catalyzed popular interest in the area.[3] During the 2010s a number of organizations started to invest in the development of Pidzamche. The key actors were the City Institute (a municipal entity with a non-profit status, based on communal ownership and subordinated to the executive committee of Lviv City Council); the City Council's Heritage Department; and the German development agency, GIZ, *Die Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GmbH)* (the German Corporation for International Cooperation). These organizations cooperated within the Ukrainian-German project "Municipal Development and Rehabilitation of the Old City of Lviv" aimed at renewing inner courtyards and facilitating local community.[4] The City Institute, together with the Institute of Urban Development in Kraków, also started a project focusing on the

3 According to the "Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention" a "buffer zone" is defined as the area surrounding the nominated property which has complementary legal and/or customary restrictions placed on its use and development to give an added layer of protection to the property. The historical center of Lviv (Lviv's Old Town) was listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1998. There are also a number of national landmarks located in this area. These are mainly sacred buildings, for example, the Church of St. Paraskeva, the Church of St. Onuphrius and Basilian Monastery.

4 More detail about this project is available here: https://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/21309.html (accessed 10 January 2019).

revitalization of Pidzamche.[5] This project involved the restoration of old gates of buildings, the development of local public spaces, the erection of signposts for tourists, regular meetings with residents, and master classes for willing residents and urban activists. In this way, these various actors have launched processes of spatial re-evaluation and civic engagement in the area.

**Figure 3.2.** People on the streets of Pidzamche. Collage made of photos from Urban Media Archive, Center for Urban History of East Central Europe, Lviv. First row (left to right): Diamanda Street, 1957; Promyslova Street, 1953; Naftova Street, 1960–65. Second row (left to right): Diamanda Street, 1956–57; Bohdana Khmelnytskogo Street, 1964 © copyright 2018 by Urban Media Archive, the Center for Urban History of East Central Europe, Lviv. Collections of Teodor Senycia, Yulia Kvit-Shvets, Marian Kuzemsky, Mykhailo Tsimerman.

According to the results of the survey "Quality of Life in the Pidzamche District" conducted in the area in August 2011, 15% of

5 Information about revitalization of the central historic part of Pidzamche district is available at: http://www.city-institute.org/index.php/en/projects/74-pidzamche-2011 (accessed 10 January 2019).

respondents cannot imagine their life in another place, and another 40% would prefer to remain at Pidzamche; however, 36.8% of research participants would be happy to or would like to change their place of residence (a figure that is higher than for any other district in the city).[6] This data indicate that the surveyed population of Pidzamche has very different, sometimes opposite opinions in regard to the area of living, and they are divided almost equally in their attitudes. Therefore, a little over half of the respondents could be called "rooted" or connected to Pidzamche. Connection with a place implies the presence of some degree of knowledge about it (either about the buildings and spaces or about the people whose life is or was connected to the area), which corresponds to the cognitive aspect in the scheme devised by Leila Scannell and Robert Gifford (Scannell and Gifford 2010).[7]

The main questions discussed in this text are the following: how do the current inhabitants of Pidzamche remember their predecessors and former neighbors? What (if anything) do they know about these people? What are the contexts for such memories? The chapter aims to contribute to the fields of neighborhood and memory studies, while at the same time give some broader context about social lives, interethnic relations, and perceptions of place in borderland Soviet and post-Soviet Lviv. It has a purpose to demonstrate the variability of situations, in which memories about different ethnic communities spontaneously arise, since research on others often focuses on topic of intergroup violence. Furthermore, my intention is to give voice to people who have lived and are living in Pidzamche, and whose remembering is constantly symbolically creating and recreating this place (Fig. 3.2). By providing space for

6 This survey was part of the project "Improvement of Life Quality of Inhabitants as an Effect of the Central Lviv Revitalization Program," implemented by the City Institute of Lviv with the support of the Institute of Urban Development in Kraków and the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs Program "Polish Help." The study was conducted with face-to-face interviews and had a sample of 400 respondents (multi-stage proportional selection with age and gender quota at the last stage).

7 This scheme defines place attachment through a three-dimensional, "person–process–place" framework, in which the personal dimension includes the affective, cognitive, and behavioral components.

their narratives and experiences, I hope to highlight their agency and to show multi-vector links between current inhabitants and their "others."

## Methodological Note

This study was conducted with an interdisciplinary mindset, deploying historical, sociological, anthropological, and architectural components. It was produced as part of the research project "Searching for Home in Postwar Lviv: The Experience of Pidzamche, 1944–60," which focused on how different processes such as industrialization, Sovietization, and the creation of new political and social norms have changed this district and influenced its identity.[8] One of the project's aims was to discover how new city inhabitants have developed a sense of "home" and belonging. For this purpose, a team of sociologists and historians employed the methodology of semi-structured in-depth interviews. Our research strategy was based on collecting oral history testimony and on qualitative sociology (Denzin, Lyncoln 2005, Gillham 2004, Kvale 2004). We were interested in recording conversations with people who lived in Pidzamche during the postwar period, especially in 1944–60. Most of them were children at this time. Some of our narrators were locals, but the majority of them had arrived in the area as a result of their parents' migration: their families had moved to Pidzamche from other parts of Lviv or came to Lviv from other parts of Ukraine or the broader Soviet Union.

The fieldwork was conducted during summer 2012: we collected 25 in-depth interviews with seven males and 18 females, who were selected using purposive and snowball samples. The average

8 The study was a part of the program "Historical Workshop Europe," funded by the German Federal Fund "Memory, Responsibility, Future," and coordinated by the Institute of Applied History in Frankfurt-on-Oder and the European University Viadrina, as well as the Center of European Studies (Lund) together with the Center for Urban History of East Central Europe (Lviv), and in cooperation with the museum "Territory of Terror" (Lviv). It took place in 2012 and resulted in a number of academic and public outreach activities and outcomes such as a street exhibition and interactive maps of the area. Andrii Bondarenko was the coordinator of this project.

length of these interviews was one hour. Some of them were recorded at the home of the interviewee, and others were conducted in the library of the Center for Urban History (depending on the wish of interviewee). The interviews were built around ten blocks of questions concerning family history, everyday life, relationships with neighbors, education, work, leisure, and general perceptions of the district. The questionnaire was divided into lead and follow-up questions; these acted as a framework for the interviews, but the flow of the conversation largely depended on the narrative of the interviewee.

I was one of five interviewers (three females and two males). Recruiting was one of the most difficult parts of the process: some people were reluctant to allow us to record conversations (mainly because of a lack of trust in the researchers—they were afraid that this study might be politically motivated). At the same time, we found a few highly committed persons who provided us with deep and interesting narratives.

Before describing how "the others" are remembered, I want to stress four issues that should be taken into account while reading this text. They are rooted in the traditions of memory studies and theoretical discussions in oral history, and are based on the experience of fieldwork in specific places:

1) This chapter builds on verbal data obtained through semi-structured in-depth interviews with people who lived in Pidzamche in 1944–60. However, any interview is a result of interaction between two people—interviewee and interviewer—and its content and quality largely depend on the development of this interaction. For example, the interviewer could be perceived through the lens of his/her gender and/or age, and the wording of questions is also important in shaping the interview. This research works with the fragments of personal memories of encounters and relations with "new" places; these fragments may be rather subjective and/or provoked by the actions and reactions of the interviewer. Sometimes narrators produced solid stories almost without guiding questions, while in other cases the interviewer had to use "probing techniques." This extract from one of the conversations shows the

dynamics of interaction between interviewer (I.) and narrator (N.), when direct questions were used:

> I.: And the apartment... Who lived before her [interviewee's mother] in the apartment, do you know?
>
> N.: So, I don't know who was living there. Were they Poles? I don't know.
>
> I.: Really? And what happened to those people? Where are they all?
>
> N: Well, probably, they left here [of their own accord] (female, born 1946, recorded 25 July 2012).[9]

This quote also illustrates a strategy which sociologist Anna Wylegała calls "the tabooing of violence" (Wylegała 2015: 6), a psychological mechanism of "not-knowing," when people (either witnesses or members of the next generation) choose to "not remember," deciding not to ask questions about events from the past, and instead using simple explanations for these events. This aspect will be discussed in more detail below.

2) The narrators are talking about the past from the point of view of the present. People create their narratives at specific points of time as answers to specific questions, and so often there is a long period of time between the answers and events they describe. Informants organize past experiences according to the system of values they have now, and which may be different from the ones they had before. What was important after World War II may now have lost its value and vice versa. This social framing of individual memory (Halbwachs 1992) is one possible reason for stressing some aspects of a story and smoothing out others. Distance in time can change the perspective of the interviewee. The evolution over time of sensual memories connected to Rohatka (Slingshot, a nickname for the part of the Pidzamche district at the crossroads of Bohdana

9 For all interviews cited in this chapter, the following details are provided: gender of interviewee, year of birth, date of interview. In order to preserve confidentiality, only information about the gender and age of participants is provided here. All interviews are preserved in the "Urban Stories" oral history collection of the Urban Media Archive of the Center for Urban History of East Central Europe in Lviv. Interviews were conducted in Ukrainian or Russian, and all translations into English given here are my own.

Khmelnytskoho and Promyslova streets), is reflected vividly in one of the interviews:

> Generally Rohatka was the industrial area, and there was a horrible smell all the time. The stench ceased only when these plants collapsed… just the whole soil was saturated with the stench. Therefore, though, I must have some negative [feelings]. But it doesn't matter [now]. Bad things go with the times, even the stench. And the warm scent remains: the smell of the walls, of a wooden balcony, where we sat, ten-twelve children, and grandmother brought us a plate of cakes (female, born 1949, recorded 15 August 2012).

This woman started her narrative with a description of a deep feeling of happiness, when she was on her way back to Lviv after several months abroad; it was clear that this later experience of being outside the city also had an influence on her attitude towards the area.

3) There are a number of differences between remembering (living-through) and knowing (knowing-about), between "memory" and "postmemory" (Hirsch 2012) embodied in the location where history took place. Uilleam Blacker has discussed the notion of "urban postmemory," when subjects of postmemory include the current population of Eastern European cities, who "have access to these pasts [the pasts of the places they inhabit] through a variety of postmemory media" (Blacker 2013: 173). Social groups such as witnesses, second, and third generations vary in their level of familiarity with a given place and have diverse experiences and levels of affiliation with the stories embodied in the urban landscape. It is important to make a distinction between people who remember and people who know something based on the accounts of others or from other sources. Both these types of memory are essential for creating a holistic view of the past; by distinguishing them it is possible to track how certain ideas become part of collective memory and/or urban legends. For example, here are two quotes from the interviews: the first one belongs to a woman who was born in 1946, so she cannot remember World War II, but she is very certain about the events in the city at that time. She is clearly referring to cultural production as one of the sources of her knowledge about the war.

> I.: And did someone tell you something about the war? How was it during the war? What happened here?
>
> N.: I saw the movie "Ivanna". You haven't seen that movie? [...] She [the heroine] was from a family of priests, she studied at the university. Then she was forbidden [to study]. […] Well, the Germans were greeted here in Lviv with bread and salt. Don't you know that? But I know. Well, in short, as before, and so it is now, there were… well, how should I put it, traitors *[zaprodantsi]* (female, born 1949, recorded 10 July 2012).

The second quote comes from a woman who actually remembers horrific moments of the war, even though she was a small child at that time:

> In [19]39 I only experienced grief: the Russians came, and brought nothing. And in [19]41 those executioners *[katy]* came. Executioners came and that's all… […] Those [Jewish] children were burned… And I saw that. I came home, I couldn't speak. "Where have you been? Where have you been?" — my mother asked. I said: "I saw people being murdered" (female, born 1935, recorded 2 August 2012).

Our sample included representatives of both groups: witnesses (born during the interwar period), and people who were born during or after the war.

4) Sensual (personal) and event-based (collective) memory both add to the comprehensive narrative about the past. Memories about colors, smells, sounds, and touch are rooted in concrete, well-remembered situations. They are very personal and cannot easily be shared by others, as opposed to memories of events, which, being more abstract, can more readily be shared and "owned" by a group of people as part of collective memory. This quote from a woman from Rohatka, whom we already met, is a good example of a sensual memory from childhood:

> Oh, and [people] washed the stairs, [they] even rubbed them up with paste. In our house, on Rohatka, there were wooden stairs. They were rubbed up with paste. Later I picked up this scent only in the library, you know, at the Market Square *[Ploshcha Rynok]*, or Zelena Street, as you come to the old library, the stairs are rubbed with paste (female, born 1949, recorded 15 August 2012).

Sensual memory is usually "deeper" and it adds a personal dimension to the general frame of the events. It is also essential for

discovering attachment to place, because it works on the level of emotions and the subconscious.

## Remembering Others in Narratives about Pidzamche

What is the place for Others—Poles and Jews—in the stories about postwar Pidzamche? The following section outlines how the current inhabitants remember those who lived in the city before, during, and immediately after World War II and whose ethnicity and/or religious affiliation was different. During thematic analysis of the transcripts of interviews I identified a number of contexts in which people talk about inter-ethnic relations and the histories of their new homes. The interviews did not ask direct questions about the district's multi-ethnic past; this was a theme that emerged while answering different questions about the everyday life of postwar Pidzamche. The subsections below are devoted to the discussion around different themes from the conversations. The order in which the themes are presented does not indicate their importance or frequency in the interviews. My intention here was to maintain a horizontal structure for this article and to avoid imposing potentially misleading hierarchies on the source material.

### *Empty Houses in Lviv*

One of the types of people's relationships with places, empirically examined by David Hummon and later by Maria Lewicka, is so-called "placelessness," that is, "place indifference and [the lack of a] need to create emotional bonds with places" (Lewicka 2011: 677). This can be illustrated with a quote from the interviews, when a woman talks about Lviv's empty houses as something obvious and ordinary:

> And it [the apartment] was just empty during the war. All apartments were empty. Only [after the war] people settled (female, born 1946, recorded 25 July 2012).

This statement exemplifies a tendency to anonymize space. It may represent a convenient strategy for preserving psychological comfort, bypassing any need to question the existing order of things and

enabling the wartime violence to be perceived as something impersonal and inevitable. However, this quote does not demonstrate the interviewee's current attitude towards the Pidzamche area or her personal attachment to it. Nor is it based on the interviewee's own direct experience, given that she was born in 1946. The "tabooing of violence" by those who did witness or may have witnessed it, was described by Wylegała based on her fieldwork in Krzyż and Zhovkva. She pointed out that "displacement and violence against the uprooted Others are present in the interviewees' tales of personal experience only when their fates cross the paths of the speaker's loosely defined community. If this does not occur, the interviewees only mention the Others when they are asked about them" (Wylegała 2015: 3). Furthermore, violence is also a sensitive area of research, especially when it comes to crimes committed by an interviewee's social group, as discussion of these crimes may pose a threat to the group's positive collective identity, and/or may carry the threat of negative consequences arising out of the act of popularizing knowledge about the "difficult past" or witnesses' trauma (Magierowski 2017: 94).

More detailed opinions on the subject of "empty houses" were given in other interviews. In the next two cases, our narrators knew about the previous inhabitants and their fate, but had no relation to specific people who had previously lived in their apartments:

> Well, it [settlement in the apartments] started already during the occupation by the Germans because many Jews lived there [in Pidzamche]. [Jews were] [e]victed, so there were empty apartments (male, born 1929, recorded 4 July 2012);

> And here the Poles left and there were a lot of empty houses. There, where my mother lived, I remember, [my parents] came and there was an empty house, completely empty. They washed [it], scraped [it], whitewashed [it] and we began to live there (female, born 1946, recorded 12 July 2012).

These two quotes show that even with the Soviet "politics of forgetting," the inhabitants of Pidzamche preserved memories about Poles and Jews who lived there before World War II. The first storyteller was a teenager during the early 1940s, therefore, he clearly remembered Jewish people and recalled the Lviv ghetto,

persecutions, and mass killings in his testimony. In the case of the woman, who was born in 1946, the story about settlement seemed to be part of her family narrative, because its main actors are her parents who cleaned the apartment and made it possible to live there.

When talking about "empty houses," inhabitants of Pidzamche sometimes use the strategy of emotional separation and refer either to abstract people or to the general categories of "Poles" or "Jews," with no names or stories behind them. Some of our interviewees simply do not know who exactly lived in their apartments before and during the war, either because there was nobody who could transfer these memories or because the witnesses were afraid to share.

### *Someone's Space*

In Soviet Lviv, stories about people who had been evicted or murdered were told mainly in private (Sereda 2009), because the public sphere was under strict control as part of the Soviet politics of memory. Such stories contradicted official narratives about a "common Russian-Ukrainian past" in which there was no place for others (Amar 2015, Risch 2011). In the atmosphere of fear and distrust that prevailed in postwar Lviv, people did not talk too much. Nevertheless, some stories were preserved in families, as demonstrated in the quote below, from a woman whose parents moved to the city after World War II:

> [Father] ended the war with the First Ukrainian Front. And they went through Belarus and Poland, and my dad said that [he] liked Poland a lot. The war ended, [and my parents] lived in Nizhny Novgorod, the former Gorky [...] Then someone said… I remembered: someone from his [father's military unit], with whom he served at the front, mentioned that there were many vacant apartments in Lviv, that Poles were leaving, and you could find some kind of a flat. And they [interviewee's parents] came here with their son in '46. But in '46, it was already a little late. Because the apartments were released in '44, I think so […] And they stayed at some friends' [apartment], and later [they] saw an ad "Firewood for Sale" on a pillar at Rohatka. It was a signal that someone was selling an apartment [...] A Polish man, who hadn't managed to leave in '45... And so they [settled] there, my grandmother from Kharkiv gave [them] some money, and brother [gave] something (female, born 1949, recorded 15 August 2012).

In this case the woman's parents bought (and she stressed this: they *bought*) a flat from a Polish man who was about to leave Lviv. As she recalls the story about moving to Lviv in 1946 in great detail (and she was born three years after), it seems to be a well-preserved part of her family narrative. Furthermore, this story indicates the broader context of post-war Lviv: people from the Soviet Army knew about the existence of empty apartments and the reasons behind the situation, and there were established informal mechanisms for sharing knowledge about available flats and the procedures for buying them.

Parents were not the only transmitters of memories about former Lvivians. There were people who survived the war and stayed on in the city—living witnesses, who remembered the interwar period and preserved stories about the previous owners of the apartments. Usually they were elderly women who served as janitors and concierges (Bodnar 2012). One of the interviewees recalled such a woman in his narrative:

> And one Polish woman, she lived for a long, long time. I still remember we had a little chat, she told me that here all this house belonged to one owner. All three floors. And there, in the yard, in this side [annex], a maid lived there (male, born 1949, recorded 19 July 2012).

We do not know the details of that conversation between the young man and the elderly woman, but such conversations were one of the ways in which new inhabitants were linked with old ones, and alternative vernacular narratives about the past established and handed on. Citizens of Soviet Lviv learned about previous dwellers from the old people who survived World War II (Bodnar 2012: 16), but these could be semi-legendary stories with very few specific details when it came to the names, ethnicities, or occupations of prewar Lvivians.

In addition to human witnesses, there are also other means through which memories are transferred. The built environment itself helped people to make personal discoveries:

> How do I know that it was a Jewish apartment? Because they have at the door, you know, the Jews, when they enter the room, they kissed [it]. It was like those thermometers outdoors (female, born 1935, recorded 17 July 2012).

This interviewee was referring to mezuzahs—traditional Jewish religious objects: a piece of parchment with the prayer "Shema Yisrael" which is put in a special case affixed to the doorframe. Here the interviewee tries to explain and make sense of an artefact from another culture with the help of something familiar from her own everyday life. In both these cases, the process of remembering enables a connection to be drawn between the house and the individuals who lived there. Even if they remain nameless, the previous inhabitants start to become apparent as real people with their own stories.

### *Unique Objects*

Post-war life in the city was full of twists and turns. There were problems with the supply of food and other everyday necessities. After the long years of war some buildings were destroyed, either fully or partly. Pidzamche had never been a rich neighborhood, but even in this atmosphere there were signs of another life, in the shape of the objects which interviewees found in their new homes:

> But this furniture, you know; now it would be antiques. Well, but in wartime it was cold, there was no gas, so we burned it all (female, born 1935, recorded 17 July 2012);

> There was one Polish sideboard. It was probably not even Polish, but Austrian. Very old work, very original... I'm so sorry that it was sold (male, born 1949, recorded 19 July 2012).

In both cases, the interviewees were very upset over the loss of these objects that had significant aesthetic and material value. They were forced to sell or destroy them in order to survive the early post-war years. Even half a century later, the interviewees remember those objects.

Inhabitants of Pidzamche described their everyday life after World War II as very austere—they had only the bare minimum of belongings and simple furniture. However, there were occasional exceptions to this poverty, and most often these were precisely the old things left behind by people who had lived in the city before:

> They [Poles] left the piano and they left a commode. The commode was very fashionable, [with] these drawers for underwear and bed linen (female, born 1938, recorded 6 August 2012).

> Such a cute bed was left behind, [with…] iron lacework, maybe, I have it somewhere, I don't know, in a photo, and a mirror with a stand […] and that stove, remembering it always brings up emotions for me. [It was] [g]reen, light green, high, thin. And they're still here now (female, born 1949, recorded 15 August 2012).

These things were unique, and people spoke about them with deep feelings and personal attachment. Halyna Bodnar identified a similar phenomenon in her interviews with migrants from the villages to the city; one of her interviewees commented that the old furniture and the preserved pre-war interiors created an "atmosphere of some other world" (Bodnar 2012: 16). These objects provided material evidence that contradicted official memory, since they proved the presence of other people in the history of Lviv. Newcomers' memories about the difficult post-war years were rooted in these objects, beautiful and valuable. Even if the previous owners of those objects remain unknown, they maintained a silent presence in the form of the old furniture and unique domestic items. The objects also created a frame for sensual memory—the sounds of the piano or the smell of the old wood became important markers and triggers for remembering. This phenomenon has been the subject of a number of recent "turns" in memory studies, connected to materiality and emotion. As Tracy Ireland and Jane Lyson put it, it can be helpful to "understand relationships between humans and the material world through devices such as object biographies. Such processes may challenge Western ontologies and transcend traditional Western oppositions, such as the division between object and meaning" (Ireland and Lyson 2016: 4). Through the "biographies" of different objects, we can comprehend the lives of both current and previous owners.

### *Helping and Empathy*

Our interviewees often emphasized that during and right after World War II people were more sympathetic and willing to help one another regardless of ethnic origin, because often it was a

question of basic survival. Such narratives could be the result of the defense mechanisms (like repression or denial) that operate when people do not wish to recall negative feelings or traumatic events. At the same time, in periods of extreme violence, manifestations of humanity are perceived with particular acuteness and thus remain in personal and family stories.

One group of memories is connected with the Holocaust and the Lviv ghetto; these memories are of course generally deeply traumatic, pervaded by death and suffering. Narrators described various attempts to help Jewish people, to provide them with food or shelter, or to preserve their valuables. Such claims should be approached with caution, because people are more likely to remember times when they helped than when they could not (or did not) help. When talking about her family history, one interviewee recalled a situation of mutual support in 1942:

> The war began; my mother gave birth to me here. I know, my mother told me, that she gave birth to me here in this house, a midwife helped her to give birth, and then Germans were looking for the midwife, because she was a Jew. Mom hid her, well, and so… (female, born 1942, recorded 9 July 2012).

There are also other stories, often horrifying and painful, about the fate of Jewish people, from narrators who were born in the 1920s–'30s and witnessed World War II as children and teenagers: they recall Jews—friends, neighbors, casual acquaintances—who witnessed the death of their children, who were hiding in the cellars, who were taken away and killed. For example, one woman recounted how, when their neighbors were taken to the ghetto, her mother prepared some soup for them, but she was not allowed to give it to them:

> They didn't take anything. And the crying, as they wept… I often woke up during the night and cried, because I remembered everything, how it happened, I was a child. It was such a pity because they [her neighbors] were very kind (female, born 1936, recorded 25 July 2012).

Witnesses' memories of war are often filled with sorrow and compassion for those who did not survive.

Another group of memories is about the post-war period and is related to the process and circumstances of moving into the houses which belonged to Poles:

> I was born here [in Lviv] and I've lived here all my life. I saw a lot of people, lots of nations lived here: Poles, Jews, and we Ukrainians. We lived together in a friendly way … And when the Poles left and Jews were taken, and then, I don't know whether he [a Polish man] left in 1944, it was his house. And he said, "Go, there's a place here," he said, "here you'll have more space, you have children." We had four children, and so we lived [there]. [The situation] with apartments was difficult (female, born 1936, recorded 25 July 2012).

A similar situation was described by a Ukrainian woman, also born before the war, who remembers the forced migration of Poles:

> So, Operation "Vistula" began. Poles were forced to leave to Poland and the houses became empty. And there was this old lady [pause]... And one family, who lived near our house, looked after her. They had a cow. There was a mansion and they had a small farm. […] I always went there with a cup, I went with a cup of fresh milk. Twice a day—in the morning and in the early evening. Or at lunch and in the evening, I don't remember. And so, our families knew each other and spent time together. And this old lady was their relative or close friend, I don't know, I was small at that time, I wasn't interested in this. Perhaps, she was a relative, I think... So, those owners, who kept a cow, they were of Polish origin […] They had to leave to Poland, they were deported *[ikh vyvozyly]* […] They asked us to move from the house near the mill to their mansion and to take this old lady with us... Well, my parents agreed to take this old lady and move there. She moved in with us. She'd been left alone, and began to live with us as our grandmother. And we called her "grandmother." Our grandmother, she was our grandmother. And so she was to her death, and we buried her at Yaniv cemetery, we made a monument at her grave and we still take care of this grave to this day (female, born 1938, recorded 6 August 2012).

The storyteller's family before and during the war seem to have been good friends with their Polish neighbors, who had taken the old lady into their family, seemingly because her sons had died in the war and her husband lived somewhere outside the city. When they were forced to leave, the Polish family invited the interviewee's parents to move into their mansion, which was in better condition than the Ukrainian family's home (an old mill house). It was clear that the woman loved this story—she described it in great detail, recalling, for example, the habits of her "grandmother." This

episode from the narrator's childhood shows the variety of ways in which mutual empathy played a crucial role during difficult times. Of course, people are more likely to remember (and talk about) "good" examples of inter-ethnic relations from the past, and the interwar period is thus often recalled as a kind of "Golden Age" in this respect. For instance, one interviewee, who was born in 1951, recounted a family memory about Jewish fabric and grocery stores at the beginning of her street:

> Aunt Ira said that her mother also went [to these shops], that the Jews sold there, that they didn't even want money, [they] said: "Take the material, take it, and when you have money you'll pay." People trusted [each other] here, that's how they lived, [they] trusted each other. And so it happened, you know, it's stuck in my mind since childhood, that all people should be kind (female, born 1951, recorded 1 August 2012).

After the war, the multicultural landscape of the city was radically transformed—new people were coming to Lviv, filling the social and spatial void. The next three themes illustrate situations of postwar interaction with others—the small number of Poles and Jews, who remained in the city or arrived here after the war.

### *Language and Communication*

In August 2011, inhabitants of Pidzamche participated in a sociological survey, in which they were asked the question: "With how many nearest neighbors (from your house or nearby) do you communicate, say by having a chat?"[10] Almost one-fifth of respondents answered that they had one or two neighbors with whom they often interacted. Nineteen percent of surveyed people said they communicated with three to five neighbors, and the vast majority, 60% of the sample, reported being close friends with more than six neighbors. Only 11.7% of respondents replied that they hardly knew anybody who lived in the area (not including immediate neighbors).[11] Understanding the structure of social networks in the area was also

10 The question is from the survey "Quality of Life in the Pidzamche District."

11 The formulation was "Do you know people who live in your part of town/neighborhood (not including immediate neighbors)?"

important for our project, which traced the links between current inhabitants of Pidzamche and their "neighbors from the past."

During our interviews we focused mainly on the post-war period, and communication was one of the main topics. When talking about their everyday life, inhabitants of Pidzamche recalled people with whom they shared public spaces (as well as semi-public ones, like balconies and staircases, and even private ones, although it is important to use this concept with caution when talking about apartments during the 1940s–'50s), and who were representatives of different ethnic groups. However, while answering questions about neighbors, our older narrators often started their stories in the interwar period. For example, one interviewee recounted that:

> There were four apartments on the balcony, right? You could go into every apartment, and it didn't matter if there was a Jew, or a Ukrainian, or a Pole—everyone lived together. Everyone spoke in their own language and no one got offended (female, born 1935, recorded 17 July 2012).

Usually interviewees talk about communication with others (either during the interwar or post-war periods) in a very positive way. This applied also to linguistic issues; interviewees reported that using another language was not a problem for them, especially when it came to everyday conversations, rather than official situations such as interactions with the state bureaucracy.[12]

Halyna Bodnar's informants—former villagers who had migrated to Lviv—also testified to the absence of substantial ethnic tension in the city during Soviet times. They explained this condition as being mainly the result of state policy whereby "from 1940 everyone lived under Soviet rule, everyone mixed and people of different nationalities got used to each other" (Bodnar 2010: 315). Often workers spoke Ukrainian and Russian, depending on the context: Russian was used at work, and Ukrainian at home. They argue that the possession of two languages was always a big advantage (*ibid.:* 326). Soviet Lviv was in many respects bilingual, but

12 Some problematic situations were described only in relation to the forced usage of a particular language by the authorities (either Polish during the interwar period, or Russian during the Soviet time).

some older people, who survived World War II, could also speak Polish (or German):

> N.: By the way, I hardly knew the Ukrainian language at all. Because I went to the Polish school [...]
>
> I.: And then after the war, how was it?
>
> N.: It was all Ukrainian, everything was said in Ukrainian (male, born 1929, recorded 4 July 2012);
>
> For me it's all the same how to speak, whether Russian, or Ukrainian, or Polish. We all know these [languages]. And we were laughing a lot, if someone came from the village and was eager to speak in Russian, and if he tried, and he couldn't (female, born 1942, recorded 9 July 12).

The second quote indicates that the Russian language was a status marker in some social environments of Soviet Lviv, and newcomers sometimes tried to speak it in order to demonstrate their belonging to (as they saw it) urban culture.

Emotional involvement in communication also varied: some neighbors were treated with caution, while others were close friends. A person's ethnicity was not a primary cause for a better or worse attitude towards them; people organized their social networks around common interests:

> These were so-called Saturday gatherings. They came to us, these neighbors, this Jewish family, we mostly socialized with them, because they were very sociable, very literate. And we played lotto, [drank] dry wine, [ate] fruits, if there were grapes, apples (male, born 1949, recorded 19 July 2012).

Different people shared common spaces—apartments, lofts, yards, streets, food markets—and had to interact in one way or another. Their ethnicity was not always something interviewees found it necessary to mention.

### *Holidays and Celebrations*

The idealization of interethnic relations before and after World War II is most commonly achieved through references to non-problematic contexts, such as shared celebrations of holidays. Inhabitants of Pidzamche recalled situations from their childhood, when people

respected the traditions of others and shared their festivals and celebrations. This is often compared to the present, when the sacred time of others is not respected and the tradition of emotional interaction and support has been lost:

> You know, I miss the environment when everybody kindly congratulated [each other] on all those holidays, those Jewish [ones], Polish [ones], all [of them]. Somehow people were so connected and friendly. And they weren't malicious […] And there were invitations to the holidays, Polish, Ukrainian. And on Jewish [holidays] [our neighbors] brought us matzo. Yes, that's how it was. You know, it was a kind of unity (female, born 1936, recorded 25 July 2012);

> As my mother said, "I celebrate Easter, both Russian and Ukrainian." We celebrated all holidays. And Polish holidays too. We just lived in the same house: Poles, and Ukrainians, and Russians, right?... See, if we had these holidays, then we knew that you can't wash anything and hang it outside… Now no one cares about it. Now they wash clothes every day (female, born 1949, recorded 10 July 2012).

These quotes from women who were born before and after World War II show that the tradition of shared celebration was not interrupted and continued to exist during Soviet times, even though it was not supported, and in fact was even actively suppressed, by the regime. However, this can also be read as another example of simplification—joint celebration does not, after all, necessarily imply deep engagement with another culture. Again, we find here the idealization of previous times, viewed through the prism of a constant comparison to the contemporary situation.

### *Everyday Life and Cuisine*

One of the most common contexts in which interviewees remembered and talked about others was cuisine. This may be an example of a strategy whereby the other culture is appropriated in a very simple way and is rendered non-threatening. Cooking and eating are universal human everyday activities which serve to break down the boundaries between people, perhaps especially in the context of the deprivation of the post-war years and the struggle to find a way to survive and to organize one's life under state socialism. As

representatives of different ethnic groups lived together, they learned from each other:

> I loved tomato soup. It's cooked with rice or macaroni. It's Polish, it's their [dish]. A Polish dish. And so. We learned from each other (female, born 1946, recorded 17 August 2012);

> Since my mother was from Russia, we had Russian cuisine. And Ukraine is here… and here is Ukrainian cuisine, and Polish. Here, in our house, Poles lived. So, we knew all cuisines, [we] learned (female, born 1949, recorded 10 July 2012).

Some dishes were perceived as traditional for a particular ethnic community and were associated with them, like Polish tomato soup or Ukrainian borsch. Recollections of food are part of sensual memory, because they involve memories of smell, color, and taste, so the stories about food are usually very personal and emotional (von Bremzen 2014). Finally, people tend to willingly speak about food, because it is a common-sense, everyday topic that does not belong to "big history." By contrast, inhabitants of Pidzamche were sometimes reluctant to talk about the broader political history of the period, perhaps because they were anxious not to appear ignorant, or because they wished to avoid discussing political questions.

Sometimes cultural practices around food were perceived as strange and it took a little time to get used to them. For Lvivians, Russian cuisine was especially unusual, because before the war there were almost no Russians in the city:

> Then I saw for the first time how they [Russian soldiers from Soviet Army] ate tiny fish, sprats, I couldn't understand how they ate it with the heads, with the bones. They somehow put it on the bread and ate... And later I saw that people ate [fish] in this way (male, born 1929, recorded 4 July 2012).

However, after World War II, Russians gradually became the second largest ethnic group (after Ukrainians) in the city, and their recipes were added to the cookbooks of the inhabitants of Lviv.

All these contexts show various ways in which others from the past remain present in the lives of Pidzamche residents. The list is not exhaustive, and it contains only those topics that arose spontaneously during the conversations. People from different ethnic

groups, though marked as representatives of a particular community, were still perceived according to their personal qualities:

> You know, mother once said to us: "The nation—that's the nation, and a man is a man. Man by himself shows who he is" (female, born 1936, recorded 25 July 2012).

Furthermore, inhabitants of Pidzamche have different relations to different others: to people who lived in the city before (others-from-the-past); and to neighbors, colleagues, and friends of various nationalities and religious beliefs (others-nearby). Others-from-the-past are semi-legendary, because contemporary citizens have not personally experienced interaction with them (or this experience was overshadowed by the war) and know about these people from the stories told in private during the Soviet period and only now revealed publicly. Others-nearby are part of the daily life of interviewees. They exist in personal memories, and people can recall specific encounters with them. Finally, the interviews showed a tendency towards idealization of interethnic relations in regard to unproblematic contexts (like leisure time, holidays, or cuisine). These conclusions are limited in space (Pidzamche) and time (the post-war period) and need further confirmation by other datasets. However, they provided us with material that goes far beyond the topic of this paper. They contribute to the oral history of post-war Lviv and hopefully will help future researchers to recreate the picture of the city's difficult past from a human perspective.

## Conclusions: Into the Future of Pidzamche

The Soviet politics of memory created an image of Lviv as an industrial Ukrainian city. However, the holistic official representation of the past was confronted with multiple different experiences and personal memories. Serving as a new home for people from all over Ukraine and the Soviet Union, Lviv managed to preserve stories about people who lived there before the war. In embarking on this quest for the contexts in which others are remembered, my aim was to uncover relationships to the city's multi-ethnic past using the example of one of the oldest city districts. It is possible to outline some

rather preliminary conclusions based on the interviews with inhabitants of Pidzamche, which may help to sketch out an agenda for further research. First of all, as the title of this chapter suggests, attitudes embodied in the memories about others range from emotional separation and anonymization to strong personal ties. When talking about the post-war city and its empty buildings, some interviewees refer to unoccupied apartments which were left behind by nameless people, while others recall houses or things with stories related to real individuals. Also, family histories carefully preserved cases of empathy and mutual help during hard times. These stories counterbalanced dominant historical narratives and created a number of alternative visions of the past. In this respect, my research supports Uilleam Blacker's argument that the attitudes of local population to their places of inhabitancy "cannot be reduced to wilful amnesia and/or hostility, although these undoubtedly exist. The experiences of 'new' or remaining inhabitants of those places are more nuanced, and a study of these experiences reveals both resistant forgetting and creative remembering" (Blacker 2013: 176).

While working with memories about Pidzamche and its inhabitants I was constantly thinking about the district's present and future: how can we make people who once lived here visible for current residents and future generations? How can we encourage the residents' active interest in their neighborhood's past? How can we talk about the area's complex but fascinating history in such a way as to make this appealing to city residents and visitors? My preliminary answers to these questions highlight the importance of active cooperation between academic research and public history projects. From 2012, when our fieldwork took place, Pidzamche became a popular area for various engagement activities. In September 2014, a people-oriented and entertainment-based "Pidzamche Festival of Neighbors" was organized by local residents and the "Iota" group in collaboration with artists, musicians, and designers. The festival aimed to bring together people living in the area with a view to provoking social change. The event's motto, "Relatives are important, but neighbors are closer," emphasized the role of spatial proximity in the development of community. The "Iota"

group used photos from this event to create a 2015 calendar entitled "The Year of Neighbors at Pidzamche." The calendar was designed to resemble a family album supplemented with local recipes and interesting local historical facts. Another project, "Sentimental Things of Pidzamche" (2015), could be seen an example of cooperation between community scholarship, anthropological research, and art. This project involved the recording of video interviews and the creation of a collection of small booklets, each devoted to one object and its owner. The authors of this collection aim to enrich big depersonalized history with private vernacular stories about meaningful objects.[13]

The Center for Urban History is another local actor for spatial change working in both the academic and public history fields. For example, the Center's research project "'Searching for Home' in Postwar Lviv: The Experience of Pidzamche, 1944–1960" is available online in the form of an interactive map.[14] It was also presented offline as a traveling street exhibition in 2012–2013: at first, it was displayed at the square in front of the Pidzamche railway station, and subsequently it was moved towards the city center through the Old Market Square to the entrance of the Lviv City Council. In this way, the output of this research project was put to work in the community for, about, and with whom it was created.

In addition, Lviv City Council together with GIZ started the "Urban Workshop" project—a platform for public initiatives and NGOs, which operates for two-three weeks during Summer at a selected location. The residents of Pidzamche were involved in "Urban Workshop" in 2014, during the discussion "Addresses of Our Memories," in which they described their district, recalled interesting and important places, and generated ideas for positive change in the area in the form of "mental maps." Some drew pictures and talked about the district's problems, while others painted their

13 This project is a result of collaboration between the Chair of the Philosophy of Art at Ivan Franko National University of Lviv; the Institute of Cultural Studies at Wrocław University; and the "Iota" initiative. It is coordinated by Zoriana Rybchynska.

14 Available at https://lia.lvivcenter.org/en/projects/pidzamche/places/ (accessed 10 January 2019).

dreams and visions for Pidzamche. Urban Workshop 2015 was held in Pidzamche (Saint Theodor Square) and focused on cooperation with initiatives in other cities, practical aspects of urban change, and initiatives aimed at the development of neglected areas. February 2018 marked the beginning of yet another journey into Pidzamche's past. "Tell Your Story" is an art and research project initiated by the Jam Factory Art Center, which aims to discover and reflect on Pidzamche's cultural landscape as well as to understand the distinct professional profiles of the residents of what used to be one of the city's major industrial districts.

Both institutional collaborations and public initiatives aimed through tactical interventions into the space of Pidzamche to create an environment fostering a strong sense of place, the development of active social networks, and responsible communities. This district has been the focus of the interest of researchers and activists for several years now. It is still difficult to talk about major changes in relation to the space or to make predictions about the future of the district, such as the prospect that Pidzamche will soon face gentrification. However, it is possible to say that this area is becoming more present and more alive in the imagination of Lviv inhabitants. In this process, Pidzamche's past, with its stories about its former inhabitants, has become an important and valuable resource.

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# On the Peripheries of Memory
## Tracing the History of the Old Jewish Cemetery in Wrocław's Urban Imaginary

*Juliet D. Golden and Hana Cervinkova*

***Abstract:*** *The Old Jewish Cemetery in Wrocław offers a unique perspective on the changing tectonics of memory construction in a Central European city. In this article, we trace the little known history of the cemetery and the ways in which its position in the urban imaginary changed in the context of large-scale geopolitical transformations. Through the cemetery's history, we can follow the fate of one of the most prominent Jewish communities in pre-World War II Germany, starting with its emergence following the emancipation of German Jews in the last quarter of the nineteenth century to its demise under Nazi rule. After the city's transfer to Poland following the Potsdam Conference (1945), the cemetery became an increasingly isolated relic of the Jewish past of the city until its grassroots-led revitalization commencing during the 1980s Solidarity era. After this important period of civic-led renaissance tied to the city's Jewish heritage, today, the cemetery has been pushed again to the periphery, an outcome of a process we refer to as the policy of memory containment.*

## Introduction

In this paper we consider the politics of memory in the Polish city of Wrocław, drawing on a site of remembrance in its built environment—the Old Jewish Cemetery. A monument to a vanished community and the multi-ethnic past of the city, the cemetery and its uses exemplify how the physical remnants of the destroyed German Jewish cultures have been both mobilized and silenced in the process of constructing the city's post-World War II historical memory. In our historical treatment of the Old Jewish Cemetery, we divide our considerations into several historical periods that reflect the different approaches to this site of memory since its

inception to the present day. Our goal through the study of the Jewish cemetery is to illuminate the ebbs and flows of collective memory construction by following how the Jewish past fluctuates between points of centrality and marginality in the Polish city's urban imaginary.

## Community (1856–1939)

The focus of our study is on the Jewish Cemetery established on what was then referred to as *Lohestrasse*[1] (now Ślężna Street) in the German city of Breslau in 1856 (further referred to as the Old Jewish Cemetery). This cemetery served as the main burial ground of the Jewish community until 1902 when a new, much larger cemetery was consecrated in the *Cosel* neighborhood located on the city's western edge. At the time the Old Jewish Cemetery was opened, the Jewish population numbered approximately 12,500 (7% of the city's population) (Wodziński 2010). At the beginning of the twentieth century, when the new cemetery was established, the Jewish population of Breslau had reached 20,000, just under 4% of the overall population (Ziątkowski 2000).

Filled with exquisitely carved gravestones and monumental architecture including mausoleums to the wealthiest families who were patrons to the city, the cemetery reflected the growing prominence of the Jewish community of Breslau. In this period, which coincided with the full emancipation of Germany's Jews following the unification of Germany in 1871, the Breslau Jewish community blossomed and its members occupied illustrious positions, including membership in the city council (Wodziński 2010). Among the prominent Jewish citizens of Breslau buried in the cemetery, we find Heinrich Graetz, a historian and lecturer at both the University of Breslau and the Jewish Theological Seminary, and the author of the massive oeuvre *History of the Jews*, the first volume of which appeared in 1853 (Wodziński 2010; Ziątkowski 2000); the botanist Ferdinand Julius Cohn (1828–98), considered to be one of the founders of modern bacteriology and microbiology (Meidner 1985; Kisch

1 We italicize former German names for places that currently carry Polish names.

1954; van Rahden 2008); and pioneer medical researchers and physicians such as Leopold Auerbach (1828–97) (Kisch 1954; van Rahden 2008), and Hermann Ludwig Cohn, the renowned ophthalmologist (van Rahden 2008). Other notable figures buried here include the merchant, landowner, and philanthropist Julius Schottlander (Ziątkowski 2000) as well as Ferdinand Lassalle, philosopher, political activist, and one of the founders of the German social democratic movement (Perrin 1910). After 1902 when the new Jewish cemetery opened in *Cosel*, burials at the Old Jewish Cemetery on *Lohestrasse* became rarer but still lasted into the Nazi rule, with the last interment taking place in 1942.

## Erasure I (1939–45)

In 1939, as a part of the growing repressions and marginalization of Jews in Germany, all aspects of Jewish communal life in the country were centralized under an umbrella organization called the Reich Association for Jews in Germany (*Reichsvereiningung*), a body that historian Saul Friedlander terms a prototype of the *Judenrats* that functioned in the ghettos of Nazi-occupied Europe: "For all practical purposes, the *Reichsvereiningung* was becoming the first of the Jewish Councils, the Nazi-controlled Jewish organizations that, in most parts of occupied Europe, were to carry out the orders of their German masters regarding life and death in their respective communities" (Friedländer 1997: 318). As stipulated under the Tenth Regulation to the Reich Citizenship Law, the decree that brought the *Reichsvereiningung* into existence, Jewish communal properties, including cemeteries, were to be transferred under centralized control, thereby severing all links with now defunct institutions and organizations of the Jewish community. Prior to 1939, the Old Jewish Cemetery had been jointly owned by the following communal bodies: *Synagogengemeinde Breslau* (the Jewish Community of *Breslau*), *Die israelitische Synagogengemeinde für den Stadt- und Landkreis Breslau* (the Jewish Community for the Breslau City and District), *Jüdische Kulturvereingung* (the Jewish Cultural Association), *Synagogengemeinde Breslau e.V* (the Jewish Community of Breslau Association) and *Israelitische Synagogengemeinde Breslau* (the Jewish

Congregation of Breslau). However, for reasons that remain unclear, the Old Jewish Cemetery was never formally transferred to the *Reichsvereiningung*, and existed in a state of legal liminality.

By 1943, however, with the German Jewish community largely decimated, the *Reichsvereiningung* ceased to exist, and the city of Breslau moved to purchase Jewish communal property, including the Old Jewish Cemetery (Połomski 1987). In what appears to have been an attempt to wait out the low wartime value of land, the new administrator, a regional tax office, blocked the sale in defiance of the trend that such properties should be sold off to municipal authorities. In a maneuver to prevent the sale, the head of the tax office proposed to lease the cemetery to the *Viola Gärtnerei A.C. Ghur* gardening company for five years. The lease agreement with *Viola* was to remain valid until August 1948. Although the city submitted offers to buy the property (with the last such attempt made in 1944), the owner of *Viola* made it clear that he did not plan to leave the cemetery before his lease ended in 1948. In this conflict, the tax office took the *Viola* owner's side (Połomski 1987). Our elaborate recounting of the shifting of ownership status in the shadow of Nazi rule is important for understanding how, thanks to a stroke of fate, the Old Jewish Cemetery, unlike many other places of Jewish heritage central to Breslau Jewish life, remained largely intact until the beginning of 1945.

In the last months of the war, when Breslau received the status of a fortress (*Festung Breslau*) that the German Army was to defend to the end, the city was heavily shelled by advancing Soviet troops. During intense ground battles, the front line eventually passed over the cemetery grounds. To this day, the signs of combat are visible in shrapnel marks on the stone tablets, collapsed mausoleums, and the gaps made in the perimeter wall, which were refilled in provisional fashion in the post-war years.

## Erasure II (1945–70)

After 1945, the fate of the cemetery was tied to the larger geopolitical transformation, which resulted in the shifting of Poland's Western border to the *Oder-Neisse* Line. This meant that cities such as

German Breslau, Stettin, and Danzig were transferred to Polish authority, thus marking a new phase in their history under a new national authority. The ensuing process of Polonization of the formerly German lands included the expulsion of the Germans and an elaborate erasure of the memories of their German and multi-ethnic past (Thum 2011; Douglas 2012). Writing from Wrocław in 1966, the *New York Times* journalist Henry Kamm concluded: "One city has died. In its place, and in its stone, there lives another" (Kamm 1966). Politically, the 1945–89 historical era is the period of the Communist one-party rule in Poland and most of East-Central Europe, which has mainly negative implications for both the historical legacy of, but also the continued presence of ethnic minorities within the Communist nation-states.

After World War II, Wrocław, as the largest city in the former German territories east of the *Oder-Neisse* Line, became a place important to the post-Holocaust history of the Polish Jewish minority (Szaynok 2000). Historians have estimated that approximately 100,000 Jewish survivors of the war returning from the Nazi concentration camps or from exile in the Soviet Union settled in Wrocław or the surrounding region of Lower Silesia (Ziątkowski 2000: 114). For some, the region served only as a transit point before departing for Israel, the United States, or other locations. At the end of 1946, an estimated 15,000 Jews resided in Wrocław, making up 7.4 per cent of the population (Ziątkowski 2000: 114). As a consequence, sites tied to the German Jewish history of the city and the region were now used by the Polish Jewish community. This is especially visible at the *Cosel* Jewish cemetery, located now in Polish Wrocław on Lotnicza Street. As the youngest of the Jewish cemeteries with space available for new burials, in the post-war years, it became and still remains today the main cemetery for the local Polish Jewish community. The Old Jewish Cemetery on *Lohestrasse* (now Ślężna Street) has had a different fate. Significantly damaged by warfare and not in active use in the post-war era, it remained an isolated relic of the German and Jewish past of the city.

After several migration waves, the last of which occurred following the anti-Semitic campaign of 1968, Wrocław, much like the

rest of Poland, lost most of its Jewish citizens, who had only just begun rebuilding their lives after the Holocaust. Their expulsion launched a dark period for Jewish historical sites in the country, many of which were confiscated or left to ruin. The Old Jewish Cemetery in Wrocław, no longer tied to any vital community, was subject to unmonitored vandalism and thievery, which did more to damage and erase the city-within-a-city than the war itself (Włodarczak 2016). We should stress, however, that the Old Jewish Cemetery does not share the fate of most other cemeteries from the German period, which were razed and largely converted into city parks. Of the seventy cemeteries from the German period taken over by Polish authorities in 1945, only the two Jewish cemeteries remain, along with a military cemetery for Italian soldiers, who died in Lower Silesia where they were sent as POWs after the Battle of Caporetto in 1917 (Burak and Okólska 2007). Against this backdrop, damaged and abandoned, the Old Jewish Cemetery remained a cast-off vestige of a no-longer existing world in the heart of a now fully Polonized city. As Karol Jońca, a professor of law and a researcher on fascism notes: "The cemetery's gravestones were witness to the destruction of the Jewish community by Hitlerism, and the tragic fates of the culture of many generations of those who gave worthily of themselves for Silesia" (Jońca 1991).

## Re-Emergence (1970–89)

The emerging prominence of the Old Jewish Cemetery in Wrocław's memoryscape during the late socialist period is closely tied to the figure of Ferdinand Lassalle and the burgeoning Solidarity opposition movement in Poland in the early 1980s. As the burial place of the founder of the first worker's party in the world, as early as the immediate post-war years the Old Jewish Cemetery provided an avenue to forge links between the city's German past and Polish present under the auspices of the new post-war Moscow-dominated political order. In 1947, the Polish Socialist Party (PPS) carried out the first of many renovations of the Lassalle mausoleum, which is located along the cemetery's eastern perimeter wall, and was almost totally demolished during *Festung Breslau*. To mark the

occasion of the 27th Party Congress that took place in Wrocław in December that year, the PPS placed a large commemorative stone slab that enclosed the family burial chamber that had been left exposed after the war, and at the same time, provided a ceremonial site of remembrance where socialist dignitaries from Poland and around the world could pay homage to Lassalle (Polska Kronika Filmowa 1948). As a result, the cemetery became a distinguishable landmark in the sea of foreignness and destruction. Through the revival of the Lassalle cult centered around the Old Jewish Cemetery, the site became, in the early post-war era, a conduit to legitimize communist Poland's claim to political authority over the former German territories and a way "to canonize a new, Polonized view of local history and anchor it in the collective memory of Wrocław's Polish residents" (Thum 2011: 289).

The lack of communal care for the Old Jewish Cemetery in the aftermath of the 1968 anti-Semitic campaigns and the overall acceleration of the liquidation of German cemeteries in Wrocław in the early 1970s meant that in the post-war urban renewal program of the city, the Old Jewish Cemetery was due to be razed in 1974 and the land reparceled for development purposes (**netha** 2016; Włodarczak 2016; Włodarczyk and Kichler 2017). But that fate changed, most likely due to the rapprochement between West Germany and Poland that culminated in the signing of the Treaty of Warsaw in December 1970, which initialized a process of the entwining of national and particular interests between countries and people that had virtually been cut off from each other since the end of World War II (Garton Ash 1993; He 2011). Largely anecdotal evidence indicates that in the interchanges with Polish counterparts in the context of his new approach to foreign policy with the Soviet Bloc, known as *Ostpolitik* (Eastern Policy), Willy Brandt made discreet appeals to save the cemetery where Lassalle was laid to rest (**netha** 2016; Włodarczak 2016; Włodarczyk and Kichler 2017). Whether this intervention on the part of Brandt proved central in the decision of Polish authorities to renege on the liquidation plans is unclear. The fact remains that in May 1975, the Old Jewish Cemetery was inscribed onto Polish Wrocław's list of protected

landmarks, thereby putting a halt to any further discussions of its erasure from the city's landscape, and launching a period where local Communist-era authorities assumed some degree of responsibility for its care and protection. The work on reversing the process of decay progressed slowly in the late 1970s (Łagiewski 1991). Under the auspices of the Regional Monument Preservation Office, a conservation plan was developed, and initial cleaning efforts began, mostly focused on bringing order to the jungle of flora so that future works could ensue. Some of the gaps in the perimeter wall were filled provisionally, and a metal gate was installed at the main entrance into the burial grounds (Łagiewski 1991; Włodarczak 2016).

It was the birth of the Solidarity movement in Poland and the surge in its wake of popular interest in silenced pasts that paved the way for the transformation the cemetery went through in the 1980s. In September 1981, two individuals, Tadeusz Włodarczak, a leader of the branch of the Solidarity Trade Union of the Sports Academy and the founder of its underground newspaper *Wyboje* (Potholes), along with Maciej Łagiewski, that publication's editor-in-chief, visited the Old Jewish Cemetery to take photographs to accompany an article devoted to the vanished German cemeteries in the city (Łagiewski 1981). The deplorable state of the only remaining cemetery of the German era in the city center prompted the two to pay subsequent visits to the Regional Monument Preservation Office as well as the Museum of Architecture to find out why the cemetery remained unkempt and so exposed, and to discuss steps to halt the continued devastation. Thus began a period of intense revitalization of the Old Jewish Cemetery, and its transformation into "a space of appearance and dialogue" (Matynia 2010: 9). It became a heritage site where Wrocław's Jewish and German pasts, long stifled by the Nazi and Communist totalitarian regimes, could now be explored freely. It is these two individuals, Włodarczak and Łagiewski, who would serve as the core team, augmented by other athletes, preservation specialists, architects, and builders leading the clean-up and reconstruction efforts from 1982 to 1989.

In those eight years, which coincided with the last years of communist rule in Poland, a small team eventually reassembled and raised at least four thousand gravestones, and repaired and stabilized numerous mausoleums. It is important to stress that these restoration achievements were preceded by three years of intense clearing away of 720 tons of trash as well as the removal of urban and industrial debris (including both individual household and mass factory waste) along with dismantled stone funerary pieces that had been dumped into vandalized tombs. Another challenge was the taming of the greenery that had flourished unrestrained in this isolated city center enclave. Unexploded ordinances were also defused and confiscated with the help of military minesweepers, a process that would continue for nearly two decades. Based on interviews with Tadeusz Włodarczak, who led these early reconstruction works, we are able to discern the crucial importance of these extremely arduous tasks of the clearing of the cemetery. It was these seemingly mundane efforts that created the condition of possibility for the recognition of the Old Jewish Cemetery as a heritage site in the eyes and imagination of the non-Jewish population of Wrocław and of Poland more broadly (Włodarczak 2016).

Eventually, cobblestone alleyways were re-laid, and a series of wells was installed to provide water for the upkeep of the valuable flora, integral to the cemetery's historic character. In the mid-1980s, when funding sources from the Regional Monument Preservation Office dried up, the Old Jewish Cemetery was formally incorporated into the Museum of Architecture as an independently functioning unit (Włodarczak 2016). Key in the latter half of the 1980s were the public education programs that emerged from the preservation and research work emanating from the cemetery renovation program. In 1984 a small exhibit titled "The Oldest Cemetery in Wrocław" opened at the Museum of Architecture, and on that occasion, a guidebook through the cemetery, which doubled as an exhibit catalogue was published (Łagiewski 1984). In the same year, Wrocław residents were permitted to visit the cemetery with one of two guides, Tadeusz Włodarczak and Maciej Łagiewski, who had first ventured to the cemetery in 1981. This marked the reentry of

the cemetery into the world of the collective memory of the current day Polish city. In the cultural pages of the local newspapers, among the theater, cinema, and museum offerings, Sunday tours of the Old Jewish Cemetery were announced, which began pulling in large crowds of visitors between May and October each year. Tadeusz Włodarczak recounts the extraordinary wave of public interest in the cemetery in the years following its opening. Under the political conditions of the still lasting Communist rule, the Old Jewish Cemetery in Wrocław became a place of open deliberation for diverse audiences. Each public tour, which normally drew between 60 to 100 people and lasted between two to four hours, became an occasion for critical historical discussion and exchange, otherwise impossible in the official space outside of the Cemetery walls due to Communist censorship. In this way, the Old Jewish Cemetery in Wrocław functioned as a public space for what Elzbieta Matynia refers to as the performing of democracy, a crucial element of the process of the building of civil societies and democratic citizenship (Matynia 2009). Tadeusz Włodarczak remembers:

> Topics not presented publically due to censorship were discussed [at the Jewish Cemetery] freely. It was Wrocław's Hyde Park. For the several thousands of people who visited the cemetery in the 1980s, thirsty to fill in the gaps in their knowledge about the city they lived in, it was Hyde Park and a university in one, a place to impart unknown knowledge to Wrocławians about the city they lived in and about the people who built the city before 1945. It was a time of extraordinarily intense, romantic work and adventure. The very search for information that interested visitors to the cemetery was inspiring for a wide range of professionals tied to the history and material heritage of the residents of the city of Wrocław (Włodarczak 2016).

In 1989 a second, and larger exhibit opened at the Museum of Architecture titled "Wrocław Jews 1850–1945" devoted to the Jewish Community of Breslau with particular emphasis on the prominent industrialists, scholars, intellectuals, and doctors as well as philanthropists and community activists buried at the Old Jewish Cemetery. After 1989, this exhibit under the German title "*Breslauer Juden* 1850–1945" traveled to the German cities of Mainz, Wiesbaden, and Stuttgart. In addition, it should also be mentioned that there were significant contributions made by the German Social Democratic

Party and German foundations, such as the *Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung*, that helped sponsor some of the renovation works. In this way, in the last decade of Communist rule in the Eastern bloc, the German Jewish cemetery in Polish Wrocław became a site of trans-border memory.

Before we move to the discussion of the Old Jewish Cemetery after 1989, we want to stress the importance of the largely overlooked civil action deeply grounded in issues tied to urban memory and heritage that took place before the political changes finally dismantled the one-party Communist system in East and Central Europe. Our account of the restoration and educational efforts carried out in the Old Jewish Cemetery in Wrocław challenges the dominant view that the resurgence of interest in memories of previously silenced histories took place only after the fall of the Berlin Wall. The Old Jewish Cemetery exemplifies the fact that the process of searching for and opening up of the urban archives of cultural memory (Assmann 1995) began earlier, when we see the emergence of civil action that included the growth of interest in alternative interpretations of the past that helped create foundations for the processes of democratization that were launched on the political level in 1989 (Traba 2006). The re-reading of city spaces in places like Wrocław began in the last decade of Communism when issues tied to historical memory and forgetting began shifting from the private to the public realm (Krajewska and Kamieńska 1982, Sieroń-Galusek and Galusek 2012). We see this shift as the prelude that prepared the groundwork for the subsequent events and approach to memory in the immediate aftermath of 1989, which seemed to favor a bottom-up approach to the past and held a promise for pluralistic formation of public memories.

## Marginalization (1989–present)[2]

In the early years of democracy in Poland, the urban spaces of Wrocław seemed to unleash intoxicating multilayered narratives

2 Parts of this section appeared in Cervinkova and Golden (2017). Reproduced with permission of Palgrave Macmillan.

that challenged the once dominant centrally commanded discourse of the post-World War II years. With eyes newly attuned, hidden contents in the battered and remade cityscapes revealed themselves. Local publishing houses were established that specialized in the printing and distribution of photographs and literature on pre-war Breslau that had long been locked away in the archives (Bińkowska 1993). Publications and conferences with international experts were organized on Wrocław's unique modernist architectural legacy from the interwar period (Lose 1998). Local historians started to reflect critically on the extent to which the city's pre-war German past had been silenced in scholarly work (Zawada 1996). To retell its history, the municipality itself ordered a new history to be written by outsiders—British historians Norman Davies and Roger Moorhouse (Davies and Moorhouse 2002). A wave of German nostalgia tourism began, with people visiting their families' former homes, interacting with Polish inhabitants, and undertaking joint efforts at preserving pre-World War II monuments. Finally, in this period of birth of the Internet era, an enormous public forum—Wratislaviae Amici[3]—was created where people could share their own archives on the city that spanned the distant past to the Polish present. As a result, in this period of transformation, the long-neglected parts of the city's archive of cultural memory began to emerge as a palimpsest of cityscapes that seemed to invigorate new notions of collective identity and citizenship informed by new pluralistic imaginaries of place.

Polish cities, now under locally elected leadership and decentralized self-government, were empowered to take charge of their historical and heritage policy. For cities located in the former German lands, this marked a move away from the Polonization propaganda of the Communist period and toward a gradual opening up to their German legacy:

> Polish Wrocławians have since 1989 sought ways to integrate the German past into the collective memory of the city. This development has been accompanied by the democratization of the politics of the past, which within a pluralist society is determined not only "from above," but is also subject

3 See further the website: https://polska-org.pl (accessed 14 January 2019).

> to powerful impulses from "below." In this way collective memory is continually reshaped and revised (Thum 2011: 10).

During this period, we therefore saw many formerly German monuments and buildings restored, including the City Hall, the *Rynek* – the Central Market Square, and the Prussian Royal Palace, as well as the UNESCO World Heritage Site – Centennial Hall, the Central Railway Station, and many others.

It was during this period of incorporation of the German history into Wrocław's post-1989 urban identity, that the Old Jewish Cemetery lost its singularity as a place linking the German past to the Polish present. This marginalization was supported by an administrative reform, as a result of which the cemetery became a peripheral unit of the Historical Museum of the City of Wrocław. Even though one of the two original curators of the cemetery from the 1980s, Maciej Łagiewski, now became the Museum Director, the team of civically minded activists and enthusiasts who saved the cemetery from physical destruction and turned it into a space of public remembrance, was largely dissolved. The tempo of work of the 1980s slowed to a halt, and the crowds coming for the public tours dissipated. By the beginning of the 2000s, the cemetery became overgrown. Poorly marked in promotional materials, it became a destination largely reserved for the determined and the well-informed. In 2021 as we are writing this chapter, the plaster on the perimeter wall is crumbling, and in the context of the new city landscape emerging in an era of rapid development, the Old Jewish Cemetery increasingly looks like a deteriorating ruin rather than a venerated landmark. On the cemetery grounds, the public displays for visitors have remained practically unchanged for more than twenty-five years, while the publications sold in the ticket office are graphically updated reprints from the 1990s.

In the landscape of booming urban development and rich cultural offerings of Wrocław, the Old Jewish Cemetery is both symbolically and physically left on the margins of official and public interest. This marginalization of the Jewish Cemetery is happening at a time when Wrocław, an economic success story of the post-1989 transformation, continues to cultivate its internal and external

image as a place open to other cultures (Cervinkova 2013, Cervinkova and Golden 2017), largely through references to its non-Polish, multi-cultural past. The city's official promotional slogan *Wrocław—the Meeting Place* (*Wrocław—miasto spotkań*), has come to embody Wrocław's self-portrayal as an open and friendly place also to the outside and outsiders. This branding, we have argued elsewhere, has facilitated Wrocław's economic strategy focused on attracting foreign investments and large international events as the drivers of the local economy (Cervinkova 2013, Cervinkova and Golden 2017). Not only has the city celebrated great success in attracting investors, but it has won several European and world-wide competitions to host large international events, including the European Soccer Championships (2012), the European Culture Capital (2016), and the World Games (2017). Wrocław is thus a good example of a Central European city that has been successful in the practice of place marketing, a key element of neoliberal urban economy, which thrives on intercity competition for a privileged position on the global market (Brenner and Theodore 2002, Harvey 2001).

The neoliberal containment of the Old Jewish Cemetery as a place of heritage is facilitated by its museumification. The cemetery does not belong to the local Jewish community but is an official institution of culture funded from the budget of the municipality, figuring as a branch of the Historical Museum of the City of Wrocław. The lack of ties to the historical legacy of the once prominent and active Jewish community and its members, and the emphasis placed on its role in the cultural landscape of the city is encapsulated in the institutional name: the Museum of Cemetery Art (Muzeum Sztuki Cmentarnej). The title, which silences entirely the ethnic and cultural provenance of the place, in effect banishes Jewish heritage, and reduces the site to a decontextualized museum artifact. The visitors' experience is framed as an excursion into the history of art and architecture and not into the past of the city and the people who participated in the building of this metropolis on the Oder. Further, regardless of whether someone is visiting the cemetery to pay respects to family members buried there, they must purchase an entry ticket.

Disturbingly, in the context of neoliberal transformation, the Cemetery grounds have been opened up for multiple commercial purposes. The City Museum has rented street-side sections of the cemetery along Ślężna Street, one of the principal city communication arteries, to an outdoor advertising company that has placed large, free-standing billboards advertising products and services of retail shopping centers in the city. More shocking is the opening up of a part of the former burial grounds razed after World War II to a private monument company specializing in the production of gravestones. Dominating the street view of the cemetery is a large backlit marble sign featuring the logo of the Thust stone manufacturing company, with no additional information available for visitors that this area is actually the site of the Old Jewish Cemetery. On display along a section of what were once family burial plots within the cemetery grounds are dozens of models of stylized hand-carved and machine-made contemporary Christian grave markers for sale to the residents of Wrocław. Part of what was once workshop space used by the staff renovating and maintaining the cemetery has been adapted into an upscale sales office and a showroom for the Thust company's staff and customers, while a section of the very small parking area in front of the entry gate has been reserved for Thust company operations.

This highly problematic act of appropriation through commodification is compounded by the fact that the choice of this renter was made by a publicly funded municipal institution of culture. In addition, the situation is made more disturbing by the lack of any critical reaction to this infringement on the site of memory on the part of the city authorities, the media, or Wrocław's citizenry. Known in pre-war Breslau and Lower Silesia as a prominent stone producer and quarry owner, the Thust company benefited from numerous orders for large, highly symbolic public works projects of the Nazi era (Thust 1994), including: the monumental stairs for the Zeppelin Field; the iconic Nazi rally grounds in Nuremburg; the imposing stone façade of the Nuremburg Congress Hall, which now houses the Documentation Centre for Nazi Party Rally Grounds; and the swimming pool built for the 1936 Olympics.

The local media took a notably uncritical view of the inauguration of the Thust company's business at the Jewish Cemetery in Wrocław. Announcing the grand opening of the point of sale in the early autumn of 2012, in a highly visible piece, local journalist Beata Maciejewska hailed the return of the "Legendary Thust Company of Breslau to Wrocław." Focusing on the Thust company's contributions to the stone architecture in the city, including gravestones at the Old Jewish Cemetery, Maciejewska concluded her article with the following: "On Saturday, the descendants of Carl Thust will re-open the office of his company in Wrocław at the Old Jewish Cemetery. This means you can see the oldest and newest products of the company in one place" (Maciejewska 2012). It is important to note that the piece was published in *Gazeta Wyborcza*, the most opinion-forming of Poland's dailies and one founded by leading figures of the pre-1989 opposition movement. Moreover, Maciejewska herself enjoys a reputation as one of the leading local authorities who popularizes the city's history and its multicultural past, which makes her lack of a critical take on this highly problematic appropriation all the more glaring.

It is these multiple strategies of containment that suppress the potential of the Old Jewish Cemetery as a site of memory important for the shaping of Wroclaw's contemporary urban imaginary. In our understanding of containment, we follow the work of Shari Popen (2012) who uses the term to refer to the practices of silencing and suppressing of critical democratic school culture in American classrooms after the attacks on the World Trade Center and the ensuing War on Terror. In our approach, we see containment as a form of heritage politics that appropriates the multicultural past of the city for marketing purposes, subduing its critical potential for the shaping of a democratic historical and civic imaginary (Cervinkova and Golden 2017).

## Conclusion

The Old Jewish Cemetery, one of the few existing material remains that so evocatively tells the story of the multicultural roots of Breslau, is muted by the practices of containment embodied in the

cultural politics of the municipality. The containment of this place of memory, which could provide continuity between the actually existing multiculturalism of pre-World War II Breslau and the nominal openness to other cultures flagged by the present city marketing strategy, happens on multiple levels. Little has happened to reinvigorate the site after the 1990s, letting the process of physical dilapidation of this historical area to continue. The absence of markers in the city landscape and promotional materials leaves finding the cemetery to the hearty and the determined. Finally, the permission to open what for many is sacred space to the development of commercial enterprises tied to the Nazi destruction of Jewish heritage and the very community to whom the cemetery rightfully belongs, has allowed for the denigration of this area as a site that might otherwise actively contribute to the shaping of culturally inclusive imaginaries of history, memory, and urban space.

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# Moving Forward through the Past
## Bukovina's Rediscovery after 1989–91

*Gaëlle Fisher*

***Abstract:*** *Over the course of the 1990s, the region of Bukovina, once the easternmost province of the Austrian half of the Habsburg Empire, gained unprecedented visibility in Western Europe. In the German-language space in particular, Bukovina became the subject of newspaper articles, books, films, and exhibitions; travel and tourism to the area developed; political agreements and partnerships were even established between German or Austrian and "Bukovinian" regions in Romania and Ukraine. These initiatives, reaching across "East and West," across the former Iron Curtain, were meant to bridge the former divide moving forward. But, overwhelmingly, these efforts were based on earlier historical and cultural connections. Historical Bukovina, by then split between Romania and a newly independent Ukraine, was not so much discovered as rediscovered, resurrected, reconstructed, and reinvented based on existing assumptions and ideas. This phenomenon raises a range of questions, including: Who was involved? What narratives developed? And why Bukovina? I identify different groups of actors, trends, and phases in the resurgence of interest in Bukovina after 1989–91 and highlight their origins, divergences, and overlaps. By tracing the activities and discourses of some of the key actors of the historical region's reinvention after 1989–91, this chapter explores the tensions between visions of the past and visions of the future in Europe after the end of the Cold War and contributes to a critical reflection on the meaning of Central and Eastern Europe's widely proclaimed "return to Europe."*

## Introduction

Over time, many commentators in Europe and around the world have come to think of the events of 1989–91 as not only a political but also a "spatial revolution" (Schlögel 2003: 66).[1] Indeed, the most

1 Schlögel used the German term *Raumrevolution*.

visible and immediate consequences of the collapse of communism and the end of the Cold War in Europe were spatial. This moment marked the end of the bipolar world and the division of the continent; it enabled people across the region to travel, trade, communicate, and migrate on an unprecedented scale; eventually, it opened the way for the European Union's expansion and a realignment of geopolitical forces in the region. These events resulted in a new map of Europe, pulling down the barrier between what was thought of as "East" and "West." As the widespread slogan read, the east of Europe "returned to Europe."

However, what concomitantly occurred—and what Karl Schlögel for instance meant to point to—was less a literal reordering of space than "a profound reordering of the spatial imaginary of Europe" (Bialasiewicz 2003: 21). The changes taking place had more to do with mental maps than real maps and history than geography. The notion of "return" itself suggests a process of normalization—the realization of a *status quo ante*. After 1989–91, many people dismissed the Iron Curtain as an artificial border and explored the area behind it by drawing on features of an earlier period: former administrative boundaries and names were reinstituted; past social and ethnic diversity celebrated; so-called historical traces were given special attention. Eastern, Southeastern, or East-Central Europe, whichever borders the region might be given, was not so much discovered as rediscovered, resurrected, reconstructed, and even reinvented on the basis of existing ideas and assumptions. The past seemingly informed the present.

This was the case in the area known as Bukovina, once the easternmost and most ethnically diverse province of the Austrian half of the Habsburg Empire. Bukovina disappeared from the political map of Europe as an independent political unit in 1918, when it became part of Romania, and ceased to exist as a continuous piece of land in 1944, when it was split between Romania and the Soviet Union. After the end of World War II, divided, ethnically "unmixed," and isolated behind the Iron Curtain, the region, which was once defined by its diversity and cosmopolitan identity, was widely described abroad as "lost," "sunken," and "forgotten." In

the words of its most famous native, the poet Paul Celan (1958), Bukovina had "fallen prey to history-less-ness."[2] With the political transformations in the region in 1989–91, however, the historical region re-emerged, apparently alive and well. In the German-language space, in particular, Bukovina became the object of a range of projects: newspaper articles, books, films, and exhibitions as well as trips, exchanges, partnerships, and even political agreements. In the decade and a half following 1989–91, Bukovina was a popular topic in the German and Austrian media and, with some delay, in academia as well.

Over the last three decades, several scholars have discussed critically the resurrection of post-imperial spaces in the wake of the collapse of communism in general. In the first years after 1989, a range of influential studies drew attention to the role of (often foreign or exiled) professional writers and intellectuals for the perception and image of the wider region and its history, and attendant processes of "(self)-orientalization" and othering (see, e.g., Okey, 1992; Le Rider 1994; Wolff 1994; Todorova 1997; Goldsworthy 1998). Others, tracing what might be described as "the search for a usable past or heritage" within the regions after decades of socialist rule, focused on the appropriation and—in some cases—instrumentalization of historical claims for domestic and regional political purposes and associated processes of inclusion, exclusion, and distancing (see, e.g., Batt 2002; Bialasiewicz 2003, 2005; Ballinger 2003). The revival of the so-called Bukovina myth, as a regional variation of the "Habsburg myth," has been widely noted and analyzed, especially from a literary perspective (see, e.g., Corbea-Hoişie 2003; Hainz 2005; Le Rider 2008). However, more recently, these insights have been usefully complemented and qualified in several significant ways. For one thing, some scholars have pointed to very real local, political, sociological, and cultural specificities and the need to account for these in the process of analysis (Sundhaussen 1999; Hirschhausen et al. 2015; Törnquist-Plewa, Narvselius and Bersand 2015). For another, an increasing number of studies have drawn attention to the fact that local memorial processes are shaped by

2 All translations from German, unless stated otherwise, are my own.

global trends and actors. Exploring these regional phenomena, therefore, requires taking into account both local conditions and transnational structures, agents, and practices and linking narrative construction and agency. As Aline Sierp and Jenny Wüstenberg (2015) have argued, people involved in symbolic politics, "memory entrepreneurs," including state and non-state actors (civil society and intellectuals), have become increasingly numerous and diverse since the end of the Cold War (323–25). Similarly, in her work, Eleonora Narvselius (2015) has drawn attention to the "democratization of intellectual work" particularly in Central and Eastern Europe, where institutions are weak. For this purpose, she has even coined the term "memorians," which she defines as "diffuse epistemic/interpretative communities and networks of various actors making regular intellectual 'interventions' in the public debate on the past" (4, 36).

Much of the more recent academic literature on the case of Bukovina explores the last decade's memorial discourses, practices, and disputes from a contemporary standpoint and focuses on the situation on the ground, especially in the urban space of Ukrainian Chernivtsi (see Frunchak 2010b; Heymann 2011; Blacker 2013; Koziura 2014, 2019; Wanner 2016; Bernsand 2019).[3] However, by considering external agents involved in the resurrection and reinvention of Bukovina as a whole in the first fifteen years after 1989 and the narratives developed outside of the region it is possible to shed new light on a key, extended historical moment.[4] This was a time when many of what Narvselius and Bernsand (2015) describe as the later "pillars" of memory were established (163); in addition, this moment involved a diverse group of actors leveraging different kinds of power and influence at different times. Those involved in this rediscovery included Germans, Austrians, Ukrainians, Romanians, Israelis, and Americans, among others; artists, intellectuals,

3 While Svetlana Frunchak's approach is historical, she focuses on the Soviet period and the transition from Soviet Chernovtsy to post-Soviet Chernivtsi.

4 The period considered extends until the mid-2000s. With the restoration of the city for the 600th anniversary, the opening of the museum of Bukovinian Jewry in 2008, and the expansion of Internet use and digital communication, the mid-2000s can be regarded as a turning point for the discourse about Bukovina.

academics, journalists, civic activists, politicians, and entrepreneurs; non-governmental organizations, businesses, and official institutions. Further—and this has to do with the specific timing of the end of the Cold War some five decades after World War II—these actors can also be divided into members of "communities of experience" (people who were contemporaries of Habsburg rule, the interwar period, and the war and Holocaust in Bukovina); members of the "communities of connection," whose ties to the first group link them to the region in a manner that feels like a duty or an obligation; and members of the "communities of identification," whose interest is purely voluntary and may rely—more or less firmly—on their contacts to either of the former (Fulbrook 2014). This categorization draws on existing conceptualizations of memory (Landsberg 2004, Assmann 2008, Hirsch 2012). However, this new framework makes it possible to differentiate more precisely between groups of actors in the immediate aftermath of 1989–91. Most importantly, it reminds us that what is often indiscriminately described as "memory" involves, in fact, a range of different relationships to the past. This is especially obvious if one considers the case of Germans and Austrians with an interest in the region after the collapse of communism, who are the main focus in what follows.

In this chapter, I look at the contribution of different loosely defined groups, with their distinct politics and worldviews, to the dominant narratives, tropes, and permutations of the Bukovina myth that have shaped the region's image and perception since 1989–91. These include so-called Bukovina Germans, who once lived in the region and have a distinct understanding of its history derived from their experiences and distinct memory politics after World War II; German and Austrian members of the 1968-generation with a strong interest in Jewish history; and a younger, more liberal and more diverse group of intellectuals as proponents of a less emotionally charged but also more comprehensive and integrative view of the recent past. The two latter groups also include researchers, who, as Wüstenberg (2019) usefully reminds us, are not merely observers but also participants in the discourse. In her work

on Poland, Erica Lehrer (2010) has suggested that rather than speaking of "*lieux de mémoire*," we may be able to think of contested spaces in Central and Eastern Europe as "*milieux de mémoire*"—spaces of encounter uniting a range of perspectives and actors. Indeed, though connected by their object, all those involved in Bukovina's post-Cold War resurrection pursued different goals. And yet, they nonetheless overlapped, contradicted, and influenced each other. Recent work on memory has drawn attention to processes of dissemination, reinterpretation, and reclamation as well as generational dynamics (most notably, Rothberg 2009). Appeals to the past are like trajectories that need to be viewed in light of their very real links to past experiences and local settings as well as present circumstances and global concerns. As scholars of memory have long shown, not only does the past inform the future but visions of the future determine what we think of as a relevant past (seminal works include Halbwachs 1992; Ricœur 2004). Most importantly, appeals to the past reveal who has agency, power, and voice and what norms and values prevail at any given time. With this in mind, it might be possible to organize, analyze, historicize, and clarify the different meanings and origins of Bukovina's and the wider region's rediscovery and metaphorical "return" after 1989–91.

## "Europe's Forgotten Region": Bukovina's Return to the Past

In the summer of 1990, a group from southern Germany set off on a study trip to the region of Bukovina. They went by bus from Augsburg via Munich through Slovakia to Lvov (L'viv) in Soviet Ukraine. They then went on to Chernivtsi in the Ukrainian north, of the historical region of Bukovina, and Suceava in the Romanian south—their final destination. On the way back, they drove through Debrecen, Budapest, and Vienna. While this was, of course, a trip to "the new Europe," made possible by the opening and relaxing of borders, many of the participants were also retracing the steps of a journey they had made decades earlier during the war. Indeed, most of the participants on the trip, which was organized by the recently founded Bukovina Institute in Augsburg, belonged

to the group of some 80,000 "Bukovina Germans"—ethnic Germans from Bukovina, back then around ten percent of the population—who had been resettled in "home to the Reich" by the Nazis in 1940.

Although many of them at the time had opted eagerly for resettlement by the Nazis, they had longed for their homeland of Bukovina after World War II. Fifty years on, they were delighted to be able to return to their native land once again. While some of them had traveled there during the Cold War, their access to sites and contact with locals had been limited, particularly in the northern half of the region, which was part of the Soviet Union. Now, in contrast, they could freely visit the landmarks of their youth, meet up with childhood friends, and reconnect with distant relatives. Under the new circumstances, they could liaise with remaining members of the German minority in Romania and Ukraine, which had recently obtained the right to form cultural associations. They could even help them. The region's diverse cultural heritage was no longer taboo or threatened with disappearance; the "German (national) houses" dating from the Austrian period, for example, were being reclaimed; the German churches and cemeteries could be taken care of and renovated. This was "Europe's forgotten region" because it was their "lost home" (*verlorene Heimat*) (Hampel and Kotzian 1991).

Upon their return to Augsburg, the participants helped to organize an exhibition and publish a book about their trip. The aim was to let other Germans know what they had seen and that this faraway place was indeed part of Europe. The exhibition was entitled "Bukovina/Buchenland: A European Region."[5] The book was published soon afterward and foregrounded the region's European-ness and forgotten-ness, but also the contemporary situation. In fact, while the subtitle remained *Europe's Forgotten Region Bukovina*, its short title was swapped from the initial, *Looking for Traces of German Culture* to the more evocative *Looking for Traces into the Future* (Hampel and Kotzian 1991). As the editors explained in the foreword,

5 The exhibition was organized together with Haus des Deutschen Ostens in Munich.

> The participants of the study trip searched in the north and south of Bukovina "traces of the future" and they found many. Traces of the coexistence of many peoples and confessions. Those who attended the exhibition "Bukovina / Buchenland: A European Region" saw this too. Even if they often searched for traces of their own past, they—hopefully—also discovered traces for the future. These are traces in the buildings of many different epochs and styles, traces on the gravestones of Jews and Christians of all denominations, traces in the memories of the people we spoke to, together with the expectations of young people in particular regarding a happy future in peace.

On the book's back cover, one could read further about the hope to draw useful lessons from the experiences of coexistence among different peoples and ethnic groups in the region. "Nationalism and communism" were mentioned in passing but what mattered was that people had got along well before these two ills had made an appearance. Bukovina had been "the Switzerland of the East"—Europe before Europe. From this perspective, not only could Bukovina "return to Europe," but it could be a model for Europe.

This idealized view of the relationship between Bukovina, Bukovinians, and Europe among German so-called resettlers or "expellees" from the region was not new. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, the Homeland Society of Bukovina Germans (Landsmannschaft der deutschen Umsiedler aus der Bukowina; later, Landsmannschaft der Buchenlanddeutschen), an organization founded in 1949 to represent members of this group in the Federal Republic of Germany, had also emphasized their "European" traditions and roots. According to Hans Prelitsch, one of the society's key spokespersons and the first editor of its newspaper, the figure of "the Bukovinian" known as *homo Bucoviniensis*, had been the symbiotic embodiment of different European ethnic, religious, and cultural groups. As for the system of rule in the region, which he called "Bukovinism," it had been a model of supra-national compromise and cooperation (Prelitsch 1950, 1956). As such, Bukovinians (and therefore Bukovina Germans) were not just European; they were models of tolerance and symbiosis and, with this, "the first pan-Europeans" (Prelitsch 1952: 7).

In general, during the Cold War, leading Bukovinian German figures such as Rudolf Wagner repeatedly emphasized that, as a

region under Austrian Habsburg rule, Bukovina had been part of "the West" (Landsmannschaft der deutschen Umsiedler aus der Bukowina in Deutschland 1951: 3–25). In the first post-war decade in West Germany, these claims had primarily served to demonstrate the "Western-ness," and hence "German-ness," of Bukovina Germans, who were sometimes dismissed as foreigners by locals in the areas in which they settled (Fisher 2017). What is more, by conflating the concepts of "Western-ness," "European-ness," and "German-ness" in this way, not only did Wagner suggest that Soviet rule over the area was illegitimate but also that "German" could be equated with "Habsburg," something which simultaneously inflated the significance of the ethnic German minority's contribution to the region's history and downplayed its complicity in Nazi aims. The organization of Bukovina Germans and their discourse were marginal even in West Germany. Yet, in view of this group's prerogative over the region's history after World War II, this idealized version of the past was nevertheless dominant and virtually unchallenged for the duration of the Cold War (Fisher and Röger, 2019; Fisher 2020; Röger and Weidle 2020).

What changed with 1989–91 and amid the political developments that preceded this caesura was less the content than the political relevance of Bukovina Germans' narratives and activities. In the context of the 1980s, their ideas gained importance as they could be deployed for practical political purposes. The Regional Government of Swabia in southern Germany, for example, had held the "godfatherhood" (*Patenschaft*) over the group of Bukovina Germans since 1955. In the mid-1950s, this agreement had served to acknowledge "the return" of Bukovina Germans to their ancestral homeland after World War II (not least since many ethnic German settlers in Bukovina were believed to have originated in the southern German lands), to alleviate their homesickness in postwar West Germany, and to help with their social integration.[6] But only in the mid-1980s, after thirty years, did they acquire anything concrete, namely, an institution—the Bukovina Institute—in the city of Augsburg. And, in fact, in the discussions about the creation of the

6 For more on such agreements, see Demshuk (2014).

institute initiated in the early to mid-1980s, the homesickness or "integration" of Bukovina Germans only played a minor role. Rather, its founding was justified primarily by the arrival in the Federal Republic of thousands of ethnic Germans (so-called *Aussiedler* and *Spätaussiedler*) from Central and Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union and by the importance of understanding more about these newcomers' backgrounds and experiences.[7] Furthermore, with the wave of liberalization in the Soviet Union, there was a growing awareness of the need for West Germany to open up to and relate to Eastern Europe. As the first director of the Bukovina Institute explained, the institute was to be "a bridge to the East" contributing to promoting "understanding among peoples" (*Völkerverständigung*) across the Iron Curtain (Hampel and Kotzian 1994).[8] These tasks became all the more important when, between the institute's founding and opening, the Berlin Wall came down, German reunification was set in motion, and the end of the Cold War began.

The activities of Augsburg's Bukovina Institute in the early 1990s capture the unique enthusiasm and optimism of this period. The institute not only offered study trips to the region but also language classes (German as a foreign language for ethnic German newcomers and Central and Eastern European languages for locals) and afterschool assistance for local (mostly newly arrived ethnic German migrant) children. In the Institute's library, staff collected huge amounts of newspaper cuttings and complete issues, magazines, journals, and books, as well as visual material and objects about both Bukovina and the wider Balkan and Central European region. They organized public events and conferences, published studies, brochures, and a trimestral journal (*Kaindl-Archiv*), and launched exchanges for students, teachers, and academics from Germany, and from Romania or Ukraine. They even made contact with "Bukovinians" elsewhere, including Bukovinian Jews in Israel (Hampel and Kotzian 1994). In particular, close links were

7 On this, see Bukovina Institute Archive: Allgemeine Korrespondenz: Bukowina-Institut 1985–1989.

8 See also "Brücke nach Sudosteuropa—Einweihungsfeier im Augsburger Bukowina-Institut," *Banater Post*, 20 May 1990.

established with the "Bukovina Institutes" founded in Romanian Rădăuţi and Ukrainian Chernivtsi.[9] In the mid-1990s, the "godfatherhood" (*Patenschaft*) was transformed into a triangular "partnership" (*Partnerschaft*) between the regional government of Swabia, the two Bukovinian regions—the region of Suceava (*judeţul Suceava*) in Romania and the region of Chernivtsi (*Chernivtsi Oblast*) in Ukraine—modeled on postwar agreements between France and the Federal Republic.[10] In this period, a relief organization, Das Hilfswerk Schwaben-Bukowina, was also created.[11] This formalized the humanitarian and social work projects of the Bukovina Institute and individual Bukovina Germans, who had been sending or taking aid to the region ever since this had become possible and mirrored a wider trend among organizations of Germans who had once lived across the region.

Across the border in Austria, historical Bukovina was also the focus of political and cultural diplomatic efforts in the immediate aftermath of 1989–91. Here, too, politicians and activists emphasized the relevance of historical ties and sought to rehabilitate the Austrian period and "multicultural" past for the sake of the present and the future. An official delegation of the Austrian Federal Ministry for Foreign Affairs (Bundesministerium für auswärtige Angelegenheiten) visited Chernivtsi as early as 1990 (Lang 2000: 2–23). In 1992, the Carinthian town of Klagenfurt—where Bukovina-German writer and poet Georg Drozdowski (1899–1987) had settled after the war and where a "Drozdowski Society" had been founded—established a partnership with the city of Chernivtsi. That same year, Austrians unveiled a memorial to Paul Celan and plaques on Celan's birth house in Chernivtsi and to honor the architects of the Ukrainian city's theater. Austrian institutions supported the creation of an "Austria library" and a "Bukovina Center" at the

9 A branch of the Romanian Academy, known as *Institutul Bucovina* opened in the early 1990s in Rădăuţi, and a Bukovina Center was founded at the University of Chernivtsi in the 1990s.

10 Swabia had an agreement with the French region of Mayenne.

11 For information on all of these activities see *Kaindl-Archiv: Zeitschrift des Bukowina-Instituts für den Kulturaustausch mit den Völkern Mittel- und Osteuropas*, 1978–2004. Though published since 1978, it was relaunched with this new subtitle in 1992.

University of Chernivtsi, which facilitated scientific cooperation in the following years. They also contributed to the renovation of the city's so-called German House.[12] The book *Kärnten und die Bukowina* (*Carinthia and Bukowina*), published in 2002, celebrated the "exemplary regional partnership" between Carinthia and Bukovina and emphasized that "in no other region of Eastern Europe are the common traces of Old Austria so unmistakable." (301). This process culminated in 2000 with the exhibition entitled "A Search for Traces: Bukovina Then and Now," organized by longtime Bukovina enthusiast Raimund Lang and the state of Lower Austria. Effectively, the exhibition focused on the heyday of Austrian rule in the region, from 1775 to the opening of the German university in 1875. But the curators nevertheless emphasized that they aimed to display Bukovina's "pan-European heritage" and that showcasing the region's rich history would serve to strengthen its contemporary ties to the rest of Europe (Lang 2000: 12).

Ukrainians and Romanians were the objects rather than the subjects of this zeal, but many welcomed these early initiatives that brought them into contact with people from the West and opened up new opportunities for cooperation, investment, travel, migration, and even enrichment. Although the ideas were not necessarily new, the possibilities were, and this German and Austrian so-called cultural work (*Kulturarbeit*) left a lasting and generally positive mark on the human level and on the urban and memorial landscape of Chernivtsi and other towns.[13] Yet, at the same time, the initiatives relied on an idealized reading of the region's history, which re-legitimated the history of individual national groups and national identity politics and resonated with national revivals in Romania and Ukraine happening in this period (Feichtinger and Cohen 2014). Indeed, in general, the rediscovery of Bukovina as "Europe's forgotten region" and the positing of it as "a model for Europe"

12 In 1999, the Carinthian Drozdowski Society even managed to secure a room, the *Drozdowski-Saal*, in the building, which functions as a space for seminars and events and a museum (Frass-Ehrfeld 2002)

13 The "German House" in Rădăuți was also renovated and in the early 2010s. Many of the people I spoke to in Chernivtsi fondly remembered the activities of the Austrian cultural organization and Bukovina Institute.

primarily served a kind of optimistic national restoration at a time of juncture and redefinition for Germany, Austria, and Europe as a whole, reinforcing traditional modes of national identification rather than challenging them.

Unsurprisingly, then, this process went hand in hand with glossing over some of the darker aspects of these countries' histories, which were eagerly forgotten by a portion of their citizens, and, from an ideological standpoint, much remained unchanged. As Stefan Wolff and Karl Cordell (2007) have argued, after 1989, Germany's aims of protecting co-ethnics and ensuring democratization in the region were premised on a conception of Germans as mediators and a distinct group with a positive historical contribution inherited from the Cold War. Political stances and objectives remained closely linked to those of the "community of experience" of the war in Germany and Austria, who, under the cover of a narrative of European reconciliation, sought recognition of their own losses, experiences, and historical narrative. Despite all the talk about cooperation and about the future, for these actors, the rediscovery was first and foremost a return to the past as it had been imagined by long-established stakeholders of Bukovina's history and identity already during the Cold War.

## "Europe's Forgotten Cemetery": Bukovina's Jewish Return

Bukovina's return to Europe as "Europe's forgotten region" was based on a literal attempt to return to the past. This was the idealized "lost *Heimat*" and defunct Habsburg Empire: a celebration of diversity under benevolent German cultural domination and the recollection of a past before or even without World War II and the Holocaust (Hainz 2009). By the mid-1990s, however, sustaining and supporting claims concerning Bukovina's—let alone Bukovina Germans'—exemplarity proved increasingly contentious. In general, in reunified Germany the role of Germans in Central and Eastern Europe before and during World War II became the subject of unprecedented scrutiny, especially in relation to the Holocaust (Aly and Heim 1991). At the same time, the renewed outbreak of war and

ethnic cleansing in Europe both spurred memories of German victimhood and challenged the idealization of ethnic diversity in the region (Niven 2006). In this context, to a growing number of people, the uncritical celebration of Bukovina as a peaceful and tolerant region seemed increasingly suspect. According to this group, not only had the version of history on which such an idealization relied ended, at the latest, in 1918 but this was also ahistorical—a past that had never been. To them, neither were the causes for the watershed at the end of World War I nor what followed given sufficient consideration; most importantly, this version of the past excluded almost completely the history of the region's Jewish inhabitants and the Holocaust.

For decades, the community of experience of the war, in Germany and Austria, had dominated and determined the discourse about Bukovina. But in the meantime, a new generation of Europeans who had had different experiences and developed a very different kind of historical consciousness, were gaining attention. As Avram Andrei Baleanu explained in a series of articles published in the Romanian-German newspaper *Hermannstädter Zeitung* in the early 1990s, the history of Bukovina was both one of "tolerance and intolerance." In his view, pointing to the region's Jewish literary heritage was not enough; one needed to explain why this culture no longer existed. Baleanu, therefore, called for more research into the Jewish character of the region. To some, the idealization of Bukovina was not only historically inaccurate but also morally questionable. As one could, for instance, read in the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* a few years later, in 1998, "Where, if not from the heart of the European continent, do these endless stories of persecution, deportation, and death come from?" (Breitenstein 1998). According to the author, the Swiss journalist Andreas Breitenstein, the East was the West's liability. As he wrote, "Europe's guilt … is also its duty." This appeal resonated with many western Europeans born after the war—members of what might be called the "community of connection," including members of the philosemitic 1968 generation (Assmann 2018). For them, Bukovina was not "Europe's forgotten region," but rather "Europe's forgotten cemetery."

The region's opening in the early 1990s thus triggered another rediscovery of quite a different kind. Many visitors started placing the events of World War II and the issues of Jewish life, German perpetration, and the Holocaust at the center of their interpretation (see, e.g., Schnetzler 1991; Dohrn 1991). For writer, journalist, and academic Verena Dohrn, for example, who traveled through the region as soon as it was possible, what mattered were not the traces of multiethnicity but rather the traces of its destruction. In her travel account entitled *Journey to Galicia: The Borderlands of Old Europe*, she wrote about Chernivtsi—at the time still Soviet "Chernovtsy"—as follows:

> Chernovtsy is the last stop on my journey through western Ukraine. Old Czernowitz is meant to be the high point, the measure for all of what Galicia and Bukovina were at their best. Legends about Bukovina had nurtured the desire to travel—poems by Rose Ausländer and Paul Celan, stories of the German-Jewish symbiosis, of the enlightenment, tolerance, and manifold cultural liveliness of this landscape. (Dohrn 1991: 159–60)

She went on to quote Rose Ausländer: "Rose Ausländer painted a picture for me in my mind of 'Green mother / Bukovina,' of the 'back of the Carpathians / fatherly,' of the 'songs in four languages' and 'people / who understand each other.'" However, Dohrn concluded:

> And yet, another image casts a shadow on this idyllic picture. The black milk of the *Todesfuge* runs across it and darkens it to the extent it is no longer recognizable. Paul Celan's *Todesfuge*—composed out of his own and others' words and suffering from Czernowitz—sings about the end of the dream of the related songs in four languages. *(ibid.)*

In her narrative, Dohrn not only gave an account of the region's Jewish past but also the German crimes and the contemporary Jewish absence. This was Europe—"old Europe"—not *despite* but *because* it had been trampled by the Germans.

Depictions of Bukovina as a scorched land of the Holocaust had predated 1989. Bukovinian Jews, particularly in Israel, where they were united in the *World Organization of Bukovina Jews*, had always commemorated the victims of the Holocaust from the region

and discussed their persecution (Gold 1958, 1962).[14] But for them, Bukovina no longer existed as a real place. It was a site of trauma and ambivalent nostalgia—a time/place that was lost and could not be recovered (Heymann 2003; Hirsch and Spitzer 2010). As Florence Heymann (2010a), who conducted interviews with Jews from Bukovina in France and Israel for her anthropological research in the 1970s, explains, "For the Jews of Czernowitz, the place of their childhood or of their adolescence has been lost and despoiled. It is in fact a 'no place.'" This feeling was heightened by the fact that, before 1989, research on the Holocaust in the region remained limited and marginalized as a result of both restrictions on access to sources and archives in Romania and the Soviet Union and local politics of forgetting, relativization, and denial (on Romania, see Glass 2007; on Soviet Ukraine, see Frunchak 2010a). In many ways, these events were also, as some survivors have argued, overshadowed by the experience of "Auschwitz" (Glasberg-Gold 1996).

Efforts to draw attention to Jewish life and suffering in the region gradually increased over the course of the 1980s. Yet these first "rediscoveries" of the region's Jewish past during the Cold War recorded first and foremost the advancing process of forgetting and erasure rather than what remained or what could still be saved. Members of the second-generation Holocaust survivors and Jews such as Ruth Beckermann (1987) and Laurence Salzmann,[15] as well as some non-Jewish Germans such as Martin Pollack (1984) and Romanian-Germans from Transylvania such as Edmund Höfer and Renata Erich (1988), were instrumental in this process. However, all these works were created under the sign of the "last-ness": survivors were dying, younger Jews were emigrating on an unprecedented scale, and traditional Jewish settlements and religious life were being destroyed by communist "modernization" projects. As Anna de Berg (2010) has argued, these accounts were primarily "historical epitaphs" of the Central European Jewish World (105).

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14 See also the newsletter of the community of Bukovinian Jews in Israel: *Die Stimme: Mitteilungsblatt der Juden aus der Bukowina*, 1944–2017, now online: https://www.difmoe.eu/d/periodical/uuid:118485d9-334d-4936-8fe7-e202737f1163.

15 See also http://www.laurencesalzmann.com/Photos/Last_Jews_of/radauti.html#_self (last accessed 3 March 2021).

The shrinking Jewish communities and, in particular, the abandoned and overgrown Jewish cemeteries, embodied this in a particularly powerful manner; these accounts were less about discovery than denouncing neglect.

Still, almost at the same time, the liberalization of the Soviet bloc was bringing with it considerable changes in the region itself and a shift of emphasis from absence to presence. Firstly, it made possible the revival of Jewish life and an interest in Jewish issues on the ground. A Jewish cultural society, the "Eliezer Steinbarg Jewish Cultural Society," named after the region's most famous Yiddish-language storyteller, was founded in Chernivtsi in the late 1980s. At this time, the Yiddish-speaking writer Josef Burg, who became the society's director, was able to re-launch the Yiddish-language newspaper *Czernowitzer Blaetter*, which he had published in the 1930s. By writing in Yiddish, Burg drew attention to both the consequences of the Holocaust and the remnants of eastern European Jewish heritage in the region. He thereby became, within a few years, a celebrity both at home and abroad, receiving international visitors and traveling internationally, too (Burg and Martens 2000).[16]

Secondly, by facilitating travel from outside on a wider scale, the liberalization of the region opened the way for people living abroad to make return trips and others to visit as well. Bukovinian Jewish survivors, mainly from North America, were some of the first to take the opportunity, but, in general, "Jewish heritage travel" developed into a veritable phenomenon (Gruber 1992; Heymann 2010b). To borrow from Erica Lehrer and Michael Meng (2015), memory became "something one could visit." The readers of the region's mainly German-speaking Jewish writers such as Paul Celan and Rose Ausländer could suddenly experience the "authentic" places about which they had been reading (Scharr 2015: 432). At this time, many other writers from the region such as Gregor von Rezzori, Aharon Appelfeld, Norman Manea, Edgar

16 In the early 1990s, Burg even visited the Bukovina Institute in Augsburg and in 1995, Burh featured in Jutta Szostak's TV documentary *Grüße aus der Bukowina: Erinnerungen an eine Welt von Gestern*.

Hilsenrath, and Moses Rosenkranz also started discussing their backgrounds more explicitly in their works and in the media, kindling and nourishing their audiences' curiosity about Bukovina (see, e.g., Rezzori 1989).[17] This was all the more fascinating, as the writers themselves had previously declared that the region was "lost," "sunken," and "forgotten." In turn, the memory of the region's mostly German-speaking and Jewish writers, whose existence had been denied under communism, "returned" to their hometowns through publications, translations, exhibitions, and memorials.[18]

Last but not least, in this period, in Bukovina as elsewhere, the taboo on the topic of Jewish persecution was slowly lifted.[19] Already in the 1980s, Ukrainian Evgenia (also Jewgenija) Finkel had started gathering Jewish testimonies in the region. These were published in Ukrainian starting in 1991 with the help of the Eliezer Steinbarg Society and later translated into German (Finkel 2004). Other similar publications soon followed (Coldewey *et al.* 1999; republished as Ranner *et al.* 2009). Over the course of the 1990s, the number of memoirs of Jewish survivors from Bukovina living all over the world grew exponentially. These not only displayed the extent and different dimensions of the Jewish tragedy in the region—deportation to Siberia by the Soviets, deportation to Transnistria by the Romanians, or precarious survival in wartime Cernăuți (Romanian Chernivtsi)—but also bore testimony to life before the war.[20] In the process, Jewish Bukovina was no longer about absence, but about the possibility of finding, recognizing, and protecting the traces of Jewish life in the region. The "international work camps" organized to clear the overgrown Jewish cemeteries, particularly in Chernivtsi, involving Jewish history activists from

17 See also the special issue about Rezzori published in 1990: *Die Horen: Zeitschrift für Literatur, Kunst und Kritik*, vol. 35, no. 159.

18 The works of Paul Celan, for example, were translated by the Ukrainian German Studies scholar Peter Rychlo working in Chernivtsi and discussed by the Romanian professor of literature Andrei Corbea-Hoişie in Iaşi.

19 This was also the case elsewhere. On Lviv, see, Narvselius and Bernsand (2015: 159).

20 There are too many titles to mention here. However, the largest collection of memoirs has been published by Ehrard Roy Wiehn in his "Schoah und Judaica" collection with Hartung-Gorre Verlag.

both in and outside Ukraine, can be seen as a symbol of this new approach to the region's history as something that could be recovered, salvaged, and even reclaimed.[21]

As Winfried Menninghaus (1999) has argued, for a long time, Bukovina was not included on the map of the Holocaust. But over the course of the 1990s, it gradually became increasingly integrated into this topography of terror. The works of the region's German-speaking Jewish writers were reinterpreted accordingly. In 1993, a widely reviewed and circulated exhibition, organized by the House of Literature (Literaturhaus) in Berlin and entitled *Czernowitz, Bukovina: In the Language of the Murderers* was dedicated to German-speaking writers from Bukovina (Wichner and Wiesner 1993). As the title shows, Bukovina was no longer conceived as the site of celebration of German–Jewish symbiosis and multiculturalism, but rather of its worst aberrations. In effect, this "literary landscape" stood for the fact that, in Central and Eastern Europe, the Germans had murdered or sought to murder German culture's staunchest defenders. With time, this paradox became the main source of interest in the region in the German-speaking sphere. Volker Koepp's 1999 documentary film *Herr Zwilling und Frau Zuckermann*, based on the life stories and interactions of two elderly German-speaking Holocaust survivors from Chernivtsi, Rosa Roth-Zuckermann and Matthias Zwilling, epitomizes this trend. Part of Koepp's wider series of documentaries on "the lost German East," this film was not just the only one focusing on Jews but also by far the most successful, being shown in cinemas in Berlin for over a year. Koepp's film framed "Bukovina" as "Austrian *Czernowitz*," "Austrian *Czernowitz*" as "a Jewish city," and "Bukovinians" as "Jewish survivors of the Holocaust."

The rediscovery of Bukovina as "Europe's forgotten cemetery" needs to be seen in the context of growing interest in the Holocaust across the world, the drive to collect testimony before it was too late, and a larger Jewish "return to Europe" in this period (Schoeps and Ben Rafael 2011). In other words, it was part of a

21 Some work camps were run by the German organization Aktion Sühnezeichen Friedensdienste while others were run by Ukrainian NGOs.

wider conjuncture of global Holocaust memory and memorialization, and the rehabilitation of Jewish history in Europe as a whole. But the suddenness and the scale of interest in Jewish Bukovina had to do with how Bukovina's history was interpreted in this period, as well as how Jews from the region portrayed themselves. There were many writers among Jewish survivors, but even those who were not identified with their region's literary figures and were eager to write and tell of a mythical "Czernowitz" where all spoke High German and high culture was the norm (see, e.g., Ranner 2009). In turn, German-speaking audiences were eager to listen to these urban, educated, and emancipated Jews, who not only spoke in German of a lost world but thereby bore witness to its existence.

From this perspective, one might say that Bukovina offered a politically inspiring, ethically rewarding, and aesthetically pleasing entry into Holocaust history and the region's history as a whole. Indeed, depicting Jewish Bukovinians as the ultimate Bukovinians and the ultimate Europeans had a redemptive quality. Not only did this approach give their story long-overdue visibility and satisfy a moral principle, but their regionalism, multilingualism, and supranationality also resonated with the putative aspiration among many Germans and Austrians of the "community of connection"—the descendants of the various communities of experience of the war—to overcome national modes of identification at the end of the century. As a result, by the turn of the millennium, Bukovinian Jews who had apparently remained loyal to the Habsburgs long after the fall of the monarchy had come to be identified as the "real people of Bukovina" even by some of the more traditional stakeholders of the discourse on the region (Rückleben 2005: 15), and this was why, by the late 1990s, Bukovina's "return to Europe" was mostly being performed as a Jewish return.

## "Europe's Shatterzone": Bukovina's Return from the Past

Bukovina's rediscovery as "Europe's forgotten cemetery" and as an almost exclusively Jewish space was not unanimously welcomed. Unsurprisingly, many Bukovina Germans and their representatives

felt misrepresented by these developments (Kotzian 2000: 10). But others expressed ambivalence, skepticism, or even disapproval as well. Some pointed to the hypocrisy of the obsession with Jewish spaces among non-Jews: not only was this "the right kind of diversity," but also a convenient celebration of diversity away from home and where it did not need to be dealt with. Indeed, Bukovina offered a prime example of what Michael Meng has called "redemptive cosmopolitanism"—a means of locating multiculturalism in particular spaces and performing *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* (the mastering of the past) at a comfortable distance (Meng 2011: 10). In addition, though the crimes of the Holocaust were different in kind, and the attempt to eradicate Jewish life from the region unquestionably unique, as Marianne Hirsch—herself a descendant of Bukovinian Jews—has noted, there is something rather essentialist about the Jewish search for traces and roots (Hirsch and Spitzer 2011). Such a rediscovery and return suggested this was an empty space, where history had ended after the Jews had left. This approach often implied indifference or even hostility toward contemporary inhabitants. At the very least, such a search entailed the conflation of the place with its traces (Schlör 2003).

Around the turn of the millennium, therefore, an increasing number of people started pointing out that what had been lost in Bukovina was not simply Jewish life but a more general and diverse lifeworld. The Jews had been deported and murdered, but the Germans, Poles, Hungarians, and Romanians had been resettled, the enemies of the Soviets banished, the region divided, the spaces reappropriated, and the history distorted. What made Bukovina so exceptional was precisely the fact that the traces, heritages, legacies, and experiences were multiple and layered. Bukovina was not simply "post-Holocaust," but "post-imperial," "post-fascist," "post-Soviet," and "post-socialist" as well and all at once. It was post-totalitarian in a more general sense. This was not simply "Europe's forgotten cemetery"; this was, more widely, "Europe's shatterzone."[22]

22 The notion of shatterzone, originally a geological term, has been used to describe the borderlands of multiple empires. It has, for instance, been used to challenge

To an extent, this had been present in previous depictions of the region, too. In her account, Verena Dohrn (1991) had not simply mentioned former shtetls or Bełżec but also Chernobyl, which "used to be shtetl" and was now "a desert of radiation" (55). The fascination with Koepp's 1999 film was undoubtedly linked not simply to the portrayal of two Holocaust survivors, but also to the incongruity of their survival and Austrian identification against the backdrop of the post-socialist, Ukrainian present. Yet, for many of those who rediscovered the region in the late 1990s, this dissonance and layering was not a sideshow but the main focus. Emphasizing the concept of "post," this new group of actors adopted what has come to be known as "the narrative of change" (de Zepetnek 1999). From their perspective, 1989—and not 1918 or 1945—had been the real turning point. Bukovina had been neglected, devastated, but it was changing; it had recovered; it had returned. For the German historian Karl Schlögel, for example, the Chernivtsi he had visited in the 1980s and the city he arrived in in the 2000s were not the same: the first had been divorced from Europe, denied its roots; the second was embracing its heritage and its multifaceted history (Schlögel 2000). The point was not simply the presence of traces but the attitude toward them—not just presence but reflexivity.

Others adopted a similar stance but viewed the situation with less optimism. The Habsburg heritage had not simply been recognized and re-acknowledged; it had been consciously and politically reactivated. This issue was addressed by two Austrians, journalist Otto Brusatti and photographer Christoph Lingg, in their book of photographs *Apropos Czernowitz* released in 1999. This publication was intended to be a corrective to recent German and Austrian representations of "Czernowitz" and Bukovina. Firstly, it portrayed the post-Soviet reality so often edited out of the memories of survivors from the interwar period. The black-and-white photographs captured a historical but drab and rundown city. This was Chernivtsi in the present and not through the lens of some rosy reminiscence. Secondly, Brusatti and Lingg attacked the efforts of foreign

Snyder's concept of "bloodlands" by showing there is more to the history of these areas than twentieth-century violence (see Weitz and Bartov 2013: 17–18).

"memory brokers," from Germany and Austria in particular, to resurrect the historical region in the guise of only positive aspects. According to them, what could be found today was not Bukovina but "ex Bukovina"—a "strange relict" and a "reproach" (7, 18, 8). As for these activities, they were simply a manifestation of the German and Austrian "mountains of guilt" (23). Finally, Brusatti and Lingg denounced the elevation of Jewish survivors to the status of icons and the reliance on their ambivalent, yet fundamentally nostalgic, views to understand the region's past. They included a portrait of Matthias Zwilling and Rosa Roth-Zuckermann, the main characters of Koepp's film, but also of the ethnic German Johann Schlamp, who had been persecuted as a communist and whose story, they believed, offered a counterimage to that of the Jews (75). Most notably, the book included portraits of young Ukrainians who spoke about their hopes and fears and for whom, ironically, the myth was not "Bukovina" or "Czernowitz," but "Germany" and "the West" (83). For Brusatti, this stood for the enduringly uneven power dynamics between Eastern and Western Europe, a legacy of the Habsburg's quasi-colonial rule, and something which had only been made worse by the fact that the region now was stuck "between Russia and the West" (17).

Even if not all rediscoveries of the region were as sardonic as Brusatti and Lingg's, many depictions from this period, a decade after 1989–91, were characterized by this kind of negative exceptionalism. This tenor and interpretation were supported by the uncovering and popularizing of a growing number of Bukovinian writers, poets, and artists, who appeared to have displayed both exceptional talent and uniquely harrowing experiences of suffering.[23] The concept of negative exceptionalism typified a series of more or less academic books published in the early 2000s, which mixed sources, first-hand accounts, and historical overviews and bore titles such as *Czernowitz: A Sunken Cultural Metropolis* (Braun 2005), *Czernowitz: The History of an Exceptional Town* (Heppner 2000), or *From the Edges of Times: Czernowitz and Bukovina; History,*

23 The rediscovery of the poems by Selma-Meerbaum Eisinger, who was murdered in Transnistria, is a case in point.

*Literature, Persecution, and Exile* (Cordon and Kusdat 2002). These representations offered a multiplicity of perspectives in an attempt to reproduce the wide array of voices from the region—especially those of members of the different ethnic groups—and their different experiences. Often, the stories constituted a series of parallel accounts rather than an integrated history, and bourgeois, liberal, middle-class, and German-speaking Jews (rather than more religious, poorer, left-leaning, and Yiddish-speaking or Russian-speaking Jews) still featured most prominently. But through their composition, these collections nevertheless reflected and triggered increasingly complex and critical discussions about the meaning of "tolerance" and "peaceful coexistence" in Bukovina before World War II (see, e.g., Werner 2003 or Asfari and Pollack 2008). They made clear that the "Bukovina myth" arose out of both pluralism and its destruction, and that the two could not be isolated from one another.

These representations also highlighted the paradox that Bukovinians' common denominator was not so much belonging to a place as the experience of dislocation. In less than a century, Austrian "Czernowitz" had been Romanian "Cernăuți," Soviet "Chernovtsy," and Ukrainian "Chernivtsi." Within the space of a lifetime, political systems, populations, official languages, and citizenships had changed some four or more times. Many were displaced, but even those who stayed had been "displaced without moving" as the borders and political regimes shifted around them. As a result, Bukovina was now somehow both everywhere and nowhere. Volker Koepp even made this the focus of his second film about the region, entitled *Next Year in Czernowitz* (2004)—a play on the Zionist phrase "next year in Jerusalem." For this film, Koepp brought native Bukovinians of different backgrounds and generations from their new homes in Vienna, Berlin, and New York back to the place of their birth and into contact with locals and the space of their ancestors. By choosing people from these cities and casting famous individuals such as the American actor Harvey Keitel and the writer Norman Manea, Koepp emphasized the apparent contradiction between Bukovina's physical remoteness and its cultural significance.

But what was at stake in this film, as in the multiple rediscoveries of Bukovina after 1989–91 in general, was the relationship between the real place and its people as well as the relationship between the real place and its manifold constructions in memory and imagination, and the broken links and tensions between the different elements and levels.

This dislocation was not only experienced by individuals but also inscribed in physical space: visible and tangible on the ground—especially on the urban landscape—as part of the cultural texture of these spaces. As Tanya Richardson (2008) has argued for the city of Odesa, the way states write history onto space is normally taken for granted. But in Odesa or, in this case, Bukovina, and especially Chernivtsi, these efforts were layered and the phenomenon therefore crude, conspicuous, and dissonant. By the start of the new millennium, this was a source of fascination among an ever larger and more diverse group of people in Germany, Austria, and beyond. Those engaging with the region and its history, by the mid-2000s, were members of what can be called the "community of identification," including locals, whose connection to events (and interest in history) was by choice rather than by force—voluntary rather than imposed. They had learned to read the signs in the environment thanks to the initiatives of previous actors. However, they did not simply see Bukovina as a site of formidable multiethnicity or of the Holocaust but rather as a site of multiple and layered events, features, and traces—a unique site of time-space compression. Tellingly, by the mid-2000s, the symbol of the city of Chernivtsi in much of the literature was no longer the German House or the overgrown Jewish cemetery but rather Czernowitz's largest Jewish temple, now known as the *Kinagoga*—a mix of words *kino* (cinema) and *synagoga* (synagogue)—after the Soviets turned it into a cinema. On the one hand, the reappropriation or misappropriation of this central and prominent building symbolized the former status of the Jewish community in the town, its destruction in the Holocaust, and its repression under communism. But on the other hand, the building also simply stood for the relentless pace of historical change, which

affects all humans and residents, regardless of ethnicity, and which is particularly visible in this location.

For many, this dissonance made Bukovina more and not less European and not lacking, but rather suffused with opportunity and potential. The city of Chernivtsi in particular became the object of a range of initiatives and projects. At the start of the twenty-first century, the urban landscape and its layers were perceived as an ideal starting point for international cooperation and a more complex reflection on the nature of the modern world. In the summer of 2006, for example, a group of students from Germany, Austria, Romania, and Ukraine met for a "summer academy," focusing on architecture and urban regeneration in Chernivtsi, which resulted in the publication of a book titled *Czernowitz Tomorrow* (2007). The idea here was that the tangible past would foster new perspectives on potential futures in the students' respective homelands. As this shows, increasingly, the image of the region in Germany and Austria was being discussed and shaped together with young intellectuals from the region who embraced the dissonant heritage and engaged with the question of defining and belonging in Europe (see, e.g., Prochas'ko *et al.* 2007).

Indeed, a growing number of the region's popular writers highlighted the fact that the region's traces—both good and bad—were primarily traces of European modernity. Most notably, in an essay translated into German and entitled *My Europe* (2004), the contemporary Polish and Ukrainian writers Andrzej Stasiuk and Yurii Andrukhovych described Bukovina and the wider region as divided and populated with ruins. But, as they insisted, this was not a curse. Rather, it meant the underlying truths of which one was usually not aware, including the arbitrariness of borders and the fragility of our political beliefs and systems, were laid bare. This was the space of the post-historical, the space of the post-modern (Marszalek 2010: 58); this was Europe's shatterzone. But it was Europe, *their* Europe, and thereby perhaps even more European than its typical bastions. From this perspective, therefore, Bukovina was not a model to emulate or denounce, but a place from which to launch a reflection on the meaning of European modernity and its

consequences. Bukovina's "return to Europe" was not to be conceived of as a return *to* something that had previously existed or had been destroyed but as a return *from* a conception of history as a source of stability and knowledge. In sense, it was a return not to, but from the past.

## Conclusion

The resurgence of interest in Bukovina in Germany and Austria in the first decade after 1989–91, Bukovina's "return to Europe"—at least in the German and Austrian media—was not a straightforward or singular phenomenon. Neither was it simply a result of nostalgia, political maneuvering, or instrumentalization of the past, nor did it involve a homogenous group of actors. Moreover, the different ways in which the history of Bukovina was mobilized, and why it was mobilized at all, has much to tell us about how different Europeans perceived themselves, others, and Europe as a whole in this moment of juncture. Indeed, the engagement of Germans and Austrians with Bukovina and its history in this period had complex, older roots and changing dynamics. It refracted wider identity issues linked to past experiences, backgrounds, generations, and changing historical consciousnesses.

In the first years after 1989–91, many Germans and Austrians emphasized human and historical links to Bukovina and drew on a positive heritage in order to engage with Central and Eastern Europe culturally, politically, and economically. Declaring that Bukovina was "Europe's forgotten region," they hoped to erase the differences between East and West created by the Cold War by drawing on the notion of Europe as a community of different peoples. Yet rather than bringing down the barriers between "East and West," let alone "Europe and the rest," this return to the past based on a static and idealized vision of the past ultimately reproduced earlier hierarchies and beliefs. However, this vision was not the only one. For others, particularly for members of the younger generation born after World War II, the region constituted, rather, an ideal prism to discuss what were perceived as repressed aspects of German and Austrian history during the Cold War—especially the

destruction of the region's diversity during World War II and the Holocaust. For them, the region was "Europe's forgotten cemetery" and its German-speaking Jews in particular—liberal, multilingual, and cosmopolitan—were the embodiment of true European-ness. This Jewish return was not a matter of politics but ethics, and Bukovina served to define Europe not in terms of peoples but in terms of values. However, this version was also soon viewed as too exclusive and narrow. By the turn of the millennium, for a further, younger, and more diverse group of people, Bukovina came to be conceived of more expansively as "Europe's shatterzone," a negative exception. For them, it constituted an ideal case study for discussing the tensions between past and present, concepts of East and West, and alternative models of modernity in Europe. From this perspective, Bukovina's return to Europe was not so much a return to but, rather, from the past and a chance to acknowledge the fluidity and constructed-ness of Europe and history as a whole.

An analysis of the different reinventions of Bukovina after 1989 shows that these were not just different versions of the past, independent from one another, but part of one and the same symbolic political and cultural process, aiming at defining Europe amid changed and changing political circumstances after 1989–91. Indeed, these were consecutive and overlapping attempts to move forward by looking backward. Their agents not only competed with each other but influenced and built on each other's narratives as well. By considering conceptions of Bukovina over the period 1989–91 to the mid-2000s from the perspective of Germany and Austria, therefore, it is not only possible to identify different actors, stances, and types of interventions in the region but also to trace the discourse on what Europe is and was. This development reveals a transition from united national stances typical of the Cold War to a pluralization, transnationalization, and democratization of voices after the end of the Cold War under the effects of generational change, growing civil society engagement, and the influence of globalized trends on local environments. This eventually led to the integration of different perspectives and locals gaining a voice and visibility. In this sense, the fifteen years after 1989–91 were a protracted moment

of change for the region and for memory, revealing a slow shift in narrative and agency. Hence, the region's return to Europe should not be understood as a literal development—a policy that could be measured, succeed, or fail. Rather, it was a discursive symptom and trope of the multiple and continuous efforts to define Europe by looking eastward and looking backward at the end of the Cold War.

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# **Thinking Differently, Acting Separately?** Heritage Discourse and Heritage Treatment in Chişinău

*Anastasia Felcher*

***Abstract**: This chapter compares how multi-ethnic heritage is conceptualized and how it is treated in reality. Focusing on the case of Chişinău – a borderland city that was once known for its cultural diversity – the chapter examines the complex nature of opinions about the city's multicultural heritage expressed by representatives of its cultural elite and collected as an interview corpus in 2012. Then, the chapter looks at several recent heritage projects in Chişinău and beyond (2010–2018) and analyzes to what extent the heritage discourse is realized in practice, in a context where the emergence of an approach focused on reconciliation and the promotion of diversity is only a very recent development.*

## Introduction

In May 2018, the first round of mayoral elections took place in Chişinău, Moldova's capital city. In spite of an abundance of political contestants representing a variety of political and ideological camps, many Chişinău citizens left the polling booths dissatisfied with the selection of candidates on offer. This was a consequence of a major crisis of trust in the country's political elite on multiple levels, including the city level. Some voters expressed their frustration in an unusual way: during the voting procedure, they added an additional "candidate" to the ballot by hand and then shared this action on social media. The extra "candidate" was Karl Schmidt, Mayor of Chişinău back in 1877–1903. Schmidt is widely considered the most competent mayor in Chişinău's history, famous in particular for his impressive push to invest massive energy and resources into the city's infrastructure, an effort which made Chişinău a modern city. Schmidt's achievements as mayor are often attributed not

only to his skills and determination, but also to his German origin.[1] By adding the name of a long-dead historical figure to the ballot, voters were using humor to make a serious point about the poor quality of the present cohort of mayoral candidates, with their emphasis on grand geopolitical allegiances and promises rather than on solutions for the city's numerous problems.

Against the background of growing public dissatisfaction with the state of the urban environment and contemporary urban governance, Schmidt's credentials made him something of a celebrity in Chişinău during the 2000s. The figure of the *fin de siècle* mayor came to be enthusiastically appropriated for public use. Apart from a memorial plaque at his former house (installed in 2013) and a bust nearby (installed in 2014), a restaurant in the city center bears his name (opened 2012). What's more, the year 2015 was officially proclaimed the "Year of Karl Schmidt" in Moldova. Yet, Schmidt's fame among Chişinău residents is something of an exception in the Moldovan context. It is a rare example of an appreciative attitude towards multicultural aspects of the city's past. Until very recently, neither Chişinău's rich history of cultural diversity nor the material heritage of vanished ethnic groups—former Chişinău residents—was viewed as an asset for the city's public image, or for its branding.

Among the terms "patrimony," "legacy," and "heritage," it is the latter that has been taken up by the academic discipline that has taken shape in recent decades. Since the academic turn from the object- and artefact-oriented approach towards the critical heritage perspective, the focus has decidedly shifted to the study of the multiple contexts within which cultural heritage operates and is understood.[2] Leading scholars in the field have shown a commitment to this analytical perspective, emphasizing the close relation between heritage and identity, as well as mechanisms of heritage-making, transmission, dissemination, and (ab)use for political purposes in

1 In fact, Schmidt was of German-Polish origin, but his Polishness generally goes unremarked upon.

2 For detailed accounts of the methodology of cultural heritage studies, see Marie Sørensen and Carman (2009); Waterton and Watson (2015); and Graham and Howard (2008).

both discourse and practice (Ashworth, Graham, and Tunbridge 2007; Anico and Peralta 2009; Graham, Ashworth, and Tunbridge 2016). The acknowledgement of various agencies that stand behind heritage-making unites scholars across the discipline. According to Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, "heritage is a mode of cultural production in the present that has resources in the past […] while it looks old, heritage is actually something new" (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998: 7). If one accepts that heritage is subjected to "making" both in discourse and in practice, then it is of core importance to understand who "makes" it.

The collapse of communism and of its control over the countries of the "Eastern bloc," as well as the establishment of independent states out of the former Soviet republics, triggered the liberalization of memory discourses and a highly dynamic process of remastering the national past. The possibility now arose to rethink the past publicly and to introduce the newly approved historical and cultural canon within the framework of national histories. An extensive academic literature has recently appeared on the complex economic, political, and cultural transformations in Central and Eastern Europe after 1989 (see Schmidtke and Yekelchyk 2008; Rampley 2012; Blacker, Etkind, and Fedor 2013; Mink and Neumayer 2013).

Since history and heritage may be used to legitimize territorial and/or other claims, heritage-related matters and initiatives by default contain conflict-generating potential. According to Monika Murzyn, there are three major factors that influence a peculiar attitude towards heritage within the framework of present-day East-Central Europe: a) the area was traditionally economically "backward" and was the subject of delayed industrialization and modernization; b) its state borders have been fluid and unstable for the last 200 years; and c) the communities and minorities that created the rich heritage of some places, no longer live there (Murzyn 2008: 316).

This chapter aims to examine controversies around the treatment of multicultural heritage in present-day Chişinău by bringing together heritage discourse and heritage practice in 2010/12–2018.

First, the relevant historical background is set out. Next, heritage discourse is exemplified by the sample of interviews with representatives of the city's cultural and political elite. The interviews, conducted in 2012, bring to light the spectrum of attitudes towards heritage and identity. We can identify four themes running through the interview content: (1) high levels of contestation over which sites/objects should be considered important Chişinău cultural heritage sites; (2) the local history timeline as a ground of competing victimhoods; (3) mechanisms of group identity construction; and (4) the symbolic map of the city as a canvas for projecting emotions ranging from affection to revulsion.

Next, I discuss heritage and memory treatment in Chişinău and beyond, analyzing a number of heritage and memory projects from 2010–2018. I am particularly interested in the agency and motivation behind activities/activism aimed at reminding the public about the city's lost cultural diversity. Such activities seek to raise awareness of the Jewish and Armenian pasts, to promote reconstruction of heritage sites from 1812–1918, and to erect memorial signs at the final residence places of the victims of Nazi persecution, parallel to marking the final residence places of those deported by the Stalinist regime. I aim to explore whether heritage discourses discussed in the first part of the article are followed (or not) in the heritage practices discussed in the second part of the article. Interviewed representatives of Chişinău cultural elites strongly promoted the discourse of national cultural heritage and urgent need to salvage it. Therefore, they spoke about heritage sites related to ethnic minorities not as about "our" heritage. Interviewed experts considered sites that remind of vanished cultural diversity as valuable assets to attract international tourists, but not as triggers for reconciliation regarding the past. Overall, recent heritage projects that emphasize a reconciliatory approach towards the common past (discussed in the second part of the chapter), deliberately target the non-conciliatory rhetoric seen in the first part of the chapter.

## Historical Background

Although the history of the city officially dates back to 1436, it was not until the Bessarabia region came under the rule of the Russian Empire (1812–1918) that the diversity of the local population was promoted as an important component of the (public) image of Chişinău (Kishinev).[3] Multiple Russian travel-writing accounts of the early 19th century "discovered" the demographic diversity of Bessarabia in general and of the city of Chişinău in particular. Bessarabia's oriental allure was associated with its colorful nature as well as with its multiethnic population, including the population of Chişinău. By the end of the century, the 1897 population census listed 108,483 people as residents of Chişinău. Across the entire province only 15.2% were urban dwellers (Troinitskii and Shchirovskii 1905: xxi). The census defined national belonging by mother tongue. According to the census, 49,829 people living in Chişinău (45.9% of the city's total population) spoke "the Jewish language," followed by 32,722 (30.16%) speakers of "Slavic languages";[4] another 19,081 (17.5%) of the city/town population spoke Moldovan, with the remainder comprising Poles, Germans, Bulgarians, Armenians, Greeks, Roma, and others. In general, this census placed the Jews (37.18%) as the major urban population group across the province, followed by the Great Russians *(velikorussy,* 24.42%); Little Russians *(malorussy,* 15.75%);[5] and only then by the Moldovans *(moldavane,* 14.16%) (Troinitskii and Shchirovskii 1905: xvi).[6]

In the nineteenth century and at the beginning of the twentieth century, the division of Chişinău into "lower" and "upper" parts reflected the composition of the population inhabiting those parts.

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3 The author acknowledges that the article includes discussion of time periods when the city was called Kishinev (1812–1918, 1940–41, and 1944–91), yet, for the sake of simplicity, the present-day name of the city is used throughout the article.

4 "Great Russian with Little [Russian] and Belarusian [languages – A.F.]" ("Velikorusskiy s malo- i belorusskimi [yazykami – A.F.]"); *ibid.*

5 On the category of the "Little Russian" ("Maloross" or "Maloruss"), see Kotenko, Martynyuk, and Miller (2011).

6 The 1897 population census did not include the category "Romanian."

The "lower" part was an area where traditional urban life was concentrated prior to the general planning introduced by the Russian administration (1834). The "upper" city emerged after 1817 and was inspired, in the spirit of that period, by more Western tastes. This contrast between the two parts of Chişinău, which reflected architectural and social divides rather than a geographical one, has been collectively imagined as a civilizational threshold in multiple memoirs, travel literature, and other texts. Within this discourse, the original "lower" part, inhabited mainly by non-privileged townsfolk, was described as a mingled, "chaotic," "Asiatic," and "Oriental" space in contrast to the European aspirations of the architecture and urban planning of the "upper" part. Thus, in the nineteenth century, the "local color" of Chişinău consisted of a mix of population and architectural styles divided by an imaginary border between the town's parts.

In spite of radical changes in political, economic, and social life after Bessarabia became a Romanian province in 1918 (it would remain as such till 1940/44), the interwar years had no significant effect on Chişinău's diverse ethnic composition.[7] What changed was the proportional composition of the urban population. The 1930 general census of the Romanian population listed a slight population increase in Chişinău, with 114,896 people living in the city.[8] That census introduced national belonging based on self-determination, while also keeping the category of mother tongue. Thus, according to self-determination (within the categories assigned by the questioners), the census introduced Romanians as a leading group of Chişinău citizens, numbering 48,456 (42.17% of all Chişinău city dwellers), followed by the Jews, with 41,063 (35.7%); Russians—19,631 (17%); Poles, Germans, Ruthenians/Ukrainians, Armenians, Greeks, Roma, and others.[9] The age of modernity fueled the dynamics of urban/rural migration, bringing people into towns and cities. In this respect, however, Bessarabia, was something of an

7 On the region's transformation at the end of World War I, see Suveică and Pâslariuc (2018) and Suveică (2014).

8 *Recensământul general al populației României din 29 decembrie 1930. Vol. 2: Neam, limbă maternă, religie*. Bucureşti: editura Institutuli central de statistică, 268–69.

9 *Ibid.*, 48, 100, 124, 216, 264, 268, 330, 422, 462.

exception. Bessarabia remained a mainly agricultural province, and by 1930 the share of the urban population actually dropped to 13% (2% less than in 1897). Yet, at the same time, the number of Romanians (the group labeled as Moldovans in 1897) moving into cities rose significantly, while the ratio of Russians in Bessarabian cities surpassed all other groups. Thus, by 1930, Russians comprised 26.7% of all urban dwellers in the province, with Romanians amounting to 19.9%, followed by the Jews (15.7%).[10]

The ethnic and cultural diversity of Chişinău underwent drastic changes by the late 1940s due to devastations caused by military action, genocide that primarily targeted the Jews, and forced displacements.[11] As a result of World War II, up to 70% of pre-war housing of Chişinău was also destroyed. Thus, architectural reconstruction and renewal, as well as development of infrastructure and public space, became important motifs used to legitimate the Soviet rule (1940/44–91) in the region.

In 1940, and then again from 1944, Chişinău became the capital of the Moldovan Soviet Socialist Republic (MSSR). The Soviet authorities embarked upon a total reorganization of political, social, and cultural life. Throughout the Soviet period, the city remained diverse in terms of demography, yet this diversity was now due to people returning from evacuation or relocated to Chişinău from other regions of the USSR. The Soviet administration consistently invested in urbanization of the area, and thus the population of Chişinău grew from 258,910 in 1959 to 770,948 in 1989.[12] Soviet architects, in their turn, stood behind a total transformation of the city's architectural landscape. The post-war reconstruction of the city was regarded by the Soviet authorities as both an infrastructural and an identity-making project. Soviet architects and urban planners significantly expanded the city; they linked the suburbs, making them into city districts; they introduced new industries and social facilities—but they sacrificed the original architectural look

10 *Ibid.*

11 See Dumitru (2016). On deportations see Casu (2010: 39–56).

12 "Population Census 2004," National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova, http://www.statistica.md/pageview.php?l=en&idc=295&id=2234 (accessed 8 January 2019).

of the city in the process. The "lower" part of Chişinău suffered most, as its authentic street configuration was almost completely destroyed.

It was not until the late 1970s that architectural heritage became a subject of concern in the milieu of local professionals, and it was only in the 1990s that such concern was voiced with regard to the architectural heritage of vanished ethnic communities who once populated the city. After Moldova gained independence in 1991, multiple actors, with varied relations to the state institutions, gained the opportunity to publicly commemorate the events previously suppressed by the Soviet regime. These actors were heritage and memory activists—representatives of a range of new NGOs. Their activity significantly diversified the memorial landscape of Chişinău but did not affect the architecture in any serious way.

The 2004 population census—the first one to be conducted in the independent Moldova—did not identify the Jews as a separate category of Chişinău city dwellers in a general overview of the census results, due to the small numbers of people. Out of a total of 712,218 Chişinău citizens, the majority were identified as Moldovans (418,126, or 67.6%); followed by Russians (99,149, or 13.9%); Ukrainians (58,945, or 8.3%); and Romanians (31,984, or 4.5%); Jews were included in the category of "others" (11,605, or 1.6%).[13] In spite of the irrevocable loss of a significant part of the pre-war population, mainly Jews, both during the war and as a result of Jewish emigration in the 1980s–'90s, traces of the former diversity are still visible in the city.

Pieces of architecture that previously belonged to the ethnic minorities are scattered throughout the cityscape. In Chişinău many examples of such architecture are officially listed on the national heritage register. However, till recently, cultural diversity and/or the idea of ethno-cultural pluralism was not prominent in Chişinău's city-branding strategy. Meanwhile, the traumatic past, changing loyalties, and divided collective memory created obstacles to reaching a consensus favoring a conciliatory interpretation of local history. Present-day Moldova is notorious for the split

13 *Ibid.*

among its political and cultural elites, as well as among its citizenry more broadly, concerning language, identity, and geopolitical preferences. This split finds expression in ambivalence over the question of national identity, namely, whether the majority of those living in the country should be called Moldovans or Bessarabian Romanians, as well as over the question of language. This controversy is deeply rooted in the country's political, cultural, and academic life.

## Heritage Discourse: Interviewing the Cultural Elite

The dataset analyzed here consisted of forty semi-structured elite interviews conducted in 2012 with Chişinău politicians and culture professionals.[14] The aim in creating this dataset was to reveal expert knowledge, interest, and attitudes concerning memory and tangible reminders of perished cultural groups such as the Jews, Germans, Armenians, and Russians. The sample is highly representative for the mainstream political and cultural agenda following the post-2009 changes on the Moldovan political arena. In 2001–2009 the majority of seats in the parliament were taken by the Party of Communists of the Republic of Moldova (PCRM). The PCRM was very active on the ideological front, and this is reflected in the interview data, with some interviewees clearly reacting to the politics and policies of the PCRM. The PCRM government pursued a distinct Moldovan identity project, openly opposed to a pan-Romanian Moldovan identity, and incorporating some (but not all) components of the Soviet Moldovan variant. The use of history,

14 Interviews were conducted (in Romanian) and transcribed in Chişinău in 2012 by Nicolae Misail for the international research project, *The Memory of Vanished Population Groups in Today's East and Central European Urban Environment. Memory Treatment and Urban Planning in L'viv, Chernivci, Chişinău and Wrocław* (2011-2014). The author of the current article joined the project in 2013 as a research associate, after the interviews were completed. The author gained access to the interview corpus and was allowed to use it for analysis presented in the current publication by the project co-coordinator Eleonora Narvselius and the project leader Bo Larsson. The interview corpus is currently not accessible for the public, but interested colleagues are welcome to contact Dr Narvselius. For more information about the project, see: "Project Outline," https://memoryofvanishedurbanpopulations.wordpress.com/ (accessed 7 January 2019).

collective memory, and symbolic sites was a highly important part of the PCRM strategy during its time in power.[15] In July 2009, PCRM lost its majority to a four-party center-right coalition, the Alliance for European Integration. The new government issued a condemnation of the country's communist past and brought the memory of victims of Stalinist repressions to the forefront of the political and public agenda (Cusco 2012: 175–210). Since then, the PCRM has not managed to regain dominance.

The absolute majority of the interviewees in the sample discussed here represent this post-2009 status quo. In 2012, when the interviews were conducted, a majority of respondents occupied key high-ranking positions within the political and cultural milieu of Chişinău. Though certain respondents are primarily labeled in the sample as politicians, all of them were also involved in the media, education, academia, and cultural industries, and were thus not radically different from those respondents who were labeled as belonging to the cultural/intellectual elite. It is the strong self-identification among the interviewees as representatives of the cultural and intellectual elite that makes the sample appropriate for the study of post-2009 mainstream heritage discourse in Chişinău and that partly also explains a certain unanimity in the opinions expressed.

Eleven politicians were interviewed, including former members of parliament, deputies, and present members of conservative political parties, as well as members of the Christian-Democratic People's Party, the (conservative-liberal) Liberal Party, and the Social-Liberal Party (former Party of Democratic Forces). Former representatives of the diplomatic corps were also among the interviewees. This part of the sample contained residents of Chişinău aged between 51 and 65 years old. Eighty percent of interviewees were men. The latter is explained by the snowball effect principle of data collection and the very high proportion of men in the Moldovan political and diplomatic milieus.

The remaining 29 respondents were high-ranking professionals and public figures active in architecture, journalism, writing, art,

15 See chapter by Alexandr Voronovici elsewhere in this volume.

academia (archaeology, sociology, history, and ethnography), education, environmental protection, publishing, civic activism, filmmaking, and museum administration. All residents of Chişinău and nearby towns, the respondents were between 41 and 77 years old at the time of interviewing. This part of the sample was almost entirely represented by men (95%). This largely reflects the real distribution of men compared to women occupying leading professional offices in Moldova, as women are under-represented in high-ranking managerial positions. In what follows, I critically discuss macro- and micro- themes developed via coding, discourse- and content-analysis of the interviews.

### *Theme 1: Heritage as a Shared Concern*

The interviewees revealed a rather unambiguous understanding of multicultural heritage. In most cases the interviewees defined it within an all-embracing framework of tangible and intangible values and assets that originate from different ethnic groups. This may be illustrated by the following definition of multicultural heritage, offered by one interviewee: "the totality of cultural values of ethnic groups from a certain territory" (male, 1951, journalist).[16] However, once actual examples were mentioned, the general formulations gave way to distinct types of sites, as in this definition: "archaeological sites, houses, mansions, fortresses, monasteries and churches, monumental art, monuments and technical installations, building ensembles" (female, 1956, journalist). The more modern the monuments under discussion were, the more likely they were to be considered "multicultural."

A non-inclusive understanding of the concept of multicultural heritage, underpinned by national(ist) identifications, was also voiced on several occasions. This vision presupposed a subordinate position of the heritage of non-titular minorities in respect to the titular nation. For example, one respondent defined multicultural heritage as follows: "It is a secondary, a derivative of heritage as such, or of national heritage that has formed along the history of

16 All translations of quotations from the Romanian are mine—A.F.

titular nation within (or outside) state formations created by it" (male, 1952, politician). However, it was not only ethnic minorities that were viewed through the prism of "otherness." The following example draws a division between the Soviet and the national: "Moldova's cultural heritage, particularly in Chişinău, largely, may be classified [in two categories] as Soviet heritage and national heritage" (female, 1959, politician).

Heritage was clearly identified as a tool for (primarily national) identity-building. Some respondents used the concept of ethno-cultural diversity to frame their discontent about the presence of the Russian language in Moldova's public sphere. For example, one interviewee commented that: "if, say, we, residents of Chişinău, of the Republic of Moldova, speak both Romanian and Russian, this means that Russians are supposed to speak Romanian too. This really means multiculturalism" (male, 1957, politician). This indicates the specific place occupied by Russian culture, language, and heritage within the hierarchy of other ethnic minorities in Moldova. Other respondents offered an inclusive state/territory-based interpretative framework. Some respondents preferred to give examples of sites they considered to be multicultural heritage instead of giving a definition of the latter. Such examples included material traces of Jewish, Armenian, and Greek communities, as in this response: "synagogues, Jewish cemeteries, which may be regarded as written sources and an open-air archive. Or Armenian churches […]. Alternatively, the Greek Church of St. Panteleimon and the Manuc Bey complex in Hînceşti" (male, 1980, heritage professional).

While expressing a vivid dissatisfaction with the state of affairs in the heritage protection field, both culture professionals and politicians emphasized certain improvements that took place after the country gained independence in 1991. Apart from specific policy measures taken in support of heritage, a general rise in awareness of heritage issues was mentioned in a positive light. The granting of freedoms and rights to ethnic minorities was also considered a positive, democratic development. Among the city's multiple past ethnic communities, the Jews were mentioned most frequently,

even though the informants did not seem to have any deeper knowledge about the history of the local Jewish community or the Jewish tradition. The efforts of the Jewish community in the matter of heritage preservation were emphasized as outstanding. Respondents considered the engagement of civil society and grassroots actions by local communities in heritage-related matters a clear success achieved in spite of inertia on the part of the authorities.

An absolute majority of culture professionals (but not politicians) were prone to blame the authorities for failure to take proper measures and for the poor quality of heritage preservation, as well as for all-pervading corruption that had contributed to the loss of historic sites. Some expressed dissatisfaction with weak professional structures and insufficient funding for the existing heritage institutions. A disconnect between the country's European aspirations and the state of affairs in the heritage field was also noted by some respondents. This comment by one interviewee is broadly representative of the general tenor of the responses from culture professionals when it comes to the issue of the government's role in the heritage sphere: "I consider it to be criminal indifference on the part of the authorities—that in Chişinău one builds a lot and in a luxurious way, but obviously with quite bad taste" (male, 1964, writer).

All the interviewed experts were in general agreement that heritage preservation is a responsibility and obligation for both civil society and the authorities. Within the discourse of responsibility one may observe how closely the concept of heritage is connected to the concept of memory, as in this statement by one interviewee: "through preserving heritage we in fact preserve and communicate the memory of the city" (male, 1954, archaeologist). Respondents also agreed that responsibility for heritage is an indicator of the civic maturity of a community. However, no specific concern for the need to preserve heritage of vanished population groups was voiced. On the contrary, some respondents claimed that responsibility for preservation heritage sites should be divided according to

ethnic "belonging" of heritage and stressed this argument vehemently.

Practical suggestions by officials/members of the political establishment for improving the situation in the heritage field included the provision of support for extensive research, the building of replicas of buildings that were lost in the course of the 20th century, improvement of legislation and institutional structures, awareness-raising activities, increases in penalties for maltreatment of heritage sites, and the construction of new memorials and museums.

The "lower part" of the city, that currently constitutes a significant part of the official "historic nucleus of Chişinău," was most often mentioned by respondents as an area that deserves museification. Suggestions for how to improve the institutional structure often involved proposals to create new bodies and practices focused on heritage preservation and popularization, such as a National Foundation for the Restoration of Monuments. Notably, some respondents considered strict or even radical measures to be the most efficient for improving the situation, as in this example:

> so far we have not a single case of someone being sentenced for destruction of a monument of cultural heritage. In spite of the fact that within the last year [2011—A.F.], here in Chişinău 40 monuments were destroyed [...] The Baltic states worked out their legislation in this sense. According to it any violation of this kind is to be punished by 3 years of imprisonment. And they managed to preserve heritage (male, 1952, ethnographer).

Last but not least, another sign of the close connection between the concepts of heritage and collective memory is the tendency to consider the politics of history to be an efficient tool in heritage management. The measures suggested by interviewees on this front were underpinned by anti-Communist rhetoric and an emphasis on national victimization. None of the interviewees mentioned the need for Holocaust commemoration in this connection.

### *Theme 2: Local History Timeline*

There was a clear absence of consensus among interviewees when it came to the question of how to define the titular ethnic group

living in present-day Moldova, who were variously referred to as Moldovans, Romanians, or Bessarabian Romanians. In their responses to the written questionnaires, the formulations most often used by interviewees were "Bessarabian Romanian" and "Romanian/Moldovan."

Several respondents observed the existence of an ongoing schism in the treatment and use of history in Moldova, as in this example:

> the major problem that we currently have in the Republic of Moldova is that of identity […] those who insist on Moldovan identity seek confirmation of their position in the period of the Moldavian principality, Romanians—in the period when the space between the Prut and Dniester rivers was part of Greater Romania, and the pro-Russians—in the period after 1812, but also in the Soviet period (female, 1956, ecologist and politician).

The interview sample clearly demonstrated that this disunity may be easily articulated in labelling some citizens of Moldova as the "others." For example, one interviewee commented that:

> in regions populated by national and ethnic minorities—Russians, Gagauz and Ukrainians—they glorify the period of Soviet occupation, as well as old Soviet holidays, while in the areas inhabited by native people the most attention is given to religious holidays, commemorative dates related to deportations and crimes of the totalitarian Communist regime (female, 1962, politician).

Within the sample, historical periods or events related to the Russian and Soviet periods were seldom regarded in a positive light. Instead, for an absolute majority of the respondents the Russians are clearly a "threatening other." The majority of respondents spoke about the timeline of local history as a field of ruptures and continuities, where the ruptures are caused by the so-called "Russian periods" and viewed in strictly negative terms, as in this example:

> in the period up to 1812 and in the historic interval 1918–1940 and 1944 national heritage was developing naturally, including harmony and creativity of minorities who lived nearby and who had all the diligences and state protection to create and develop their heritage. With the invasion of tsarist Russia in 1812 and then of Soviet Russia in 1940–1941 and after 1945 promotion

> of national heritage was directly labeled as a manifestation of nationalism and became a crime (male, 1952, journalist and politician).

One episode from the period of Russian Imperial rule (1812–1918), the Jewish pogrom of 1903, was specifically mentioned by up to ten interviewees, as a devastating and unprecedentedly violent upsurge in intolerance.[17]

The interwar period is of crucial importance for the discourse that stresses cultural unity between present-day Moldova and Romania. This period was widely praised by the respondents as a "golden age" of local history. Respondents linked the interwar period primarily to the reawakening of national (understood as Romanian) culture, but also to the notion that ethnic minorities gained freedom of self-expression during this period. Several interviewees noted the fact that ethnic minority organizations, including Jewish ones, were able to legally exist and act openly during this period, and they cited this as an important indicator of multiculturalism in action. This comment is a typical example of how the interwar period was viewed by respondents:

> very little is known about the Chişinău of the interwar years, a period of transformation and architectural flowering, when the city was famed as the Paris of Romania. In the interwar period several people of primary importance for history, people of culture, of politics, of religion lived and worked in the city. This is a period of spectacular affirmative action, of spiritual awakening" (male, 1954, heritage professional).

Strikingly, this discourse elides measures introduced by the Romanian government that in fact limited the rights of ethnic minorities, especially the Jews, during this period.

The topic of World War II and the ongoing questions surrounding its narration also arose frequently in the interviews. One respondent asked rhetorically: "and in 1940 were we liberated or occupied?" (male, 1980, heritage professional). The Holocaust is often mentioned in this connection. Nevertheless, none of the politicians or culture professionals referred to the Holocaust as a phenomenon of unique or outstanding significance; instead, it was

17 On the 1903 and 1905 Chişinău pogroms, see Zipperstein (2018) and Judge (1992).

framed as one of a series of tragedies of the 20th century. The Holocaust is present in the discourse as a rather abstract concept, with no clear reference to responsibility for the mass murders. No special details on the scope of the Holocaust in Bessarabia or the location of the wartime ghetto in Chişinău were mentioned.[18] None of the respondents referred to the genocide of the Jews within the framework of common memory or responsibility for heritage preservation.

In comparison to other events of the twentieth century, the forced deportations of civilians from Soviet Moldavia on 12–13 June 1941 and 5–6 July 1949 were conceptualized by all experts and politicians within the sample as the major historical tragedy of the region. The analysis of the interviews shows that in present-day Moldova, the deportations is the single most prominent issue when it comes to commemoration. Respondents positioned this event at the core of the national memory canon, as in this example:

> The political deportations of the Soviet period, whatever one calls them, Communist or Stalinist, they represent the Holocaust of our people, and of other nations [...] It is rather a multinational Holocaust since […] representatives of all peoples of the former USSR were subjected to repressions (male, 1954, archaeologist).

This line of argument follows the official vector of memory politics that prevailed in the country since 2009. In 2010 a strategy of decommunization was consolidated via a series of government actions, such as the creation of a special commission for study and assessment of the totalitarian communist regime in Moldova, installation of a memorial stone "In Memory of the Victims of Soviet Occupation and Totalitarian Communist Regime," the declaration of 28 June 1940 as the "Day of Soviet Occupation," and the opening of the Museum of the Victims of Deportations and Political Repressions.

A significant anti-communist stance was shared by the majority of the interviewed politicians and professionals. Aside from deportations and other unpleasant episodes attributed to the Soviet

18 On the Chişinău ghetto, see Shapiro (2015).

authorities, or references to heritage sites destroyed as part of the Soviet post-war urban reconstruction, no mention was made of the Soviet period of local history (1940/1944–91). Interviewees distanced themselves from the post-war Soviet Moldovan past. In sharp contrast to the interwar period, the Soviet past was reduced to a series of episodes of national trauma. At the same time, respondents were not immune to nostalgia for the "good old times" they themselves had lived through. Ironically, these "good old times" coincide with the Soviet period that for the majority of respondents was the time of youth and their first professional achievements. A limited number of respondents reflected on the existence of multiple layers of memory that have been used and abused by a number of competing actors, as in this example:

> Pain, the tragedies of the war, the famine organized by the Stalinist occupants, forced collectivization, deportations of the crème de la crème of this area may present interest to historians as a subject for research, to politicians as tools of manipulation of the electorate in hunting for votes, while for those who have suffered these atrocities, for descendants of those victims this is nothing but a constantly bleeding wound (male, 1949, journalist).

The contested character of commemorations and their correspondence to different traditions of public memory were also mentioned. For example, one interviewee commented that: "what happens at the Memorial [the *Eternitate* Memorial Complex—A.F] on May 9th is that one camp tries to get the most out of the end of WWII. What takes place in July is another camp trying to capitalize on the wave of deportations of 1949" (male, 1967, publisher).

Respondents unanimously emphasized the importance of nationwide mobilization at the end of Soviet rule as a development of high importance for the national canon of memory. Only a few referred to the 1992 conflict in Transnistria, and they pointed out the problematic nature and ambiguity of this territorial dispute, as in this example:

> for all of us Transnistria is, how shall I put it, a wound that we ourselves have caused. Because then, within that euphoria of having a free country, we told those not speaking Romanian to "go away." And we drove them all out, including those in Tiraspol, without realizing that 37 percent of the national economy was located in that city (male, 1948, art critic).

Not many respondents referred to the mass protests and unrest of April 2009 as an episode of high importance for the local history.[19] This contrasts sharply with the case of Ukraine, where the history of civil unrest is one of the most important pillars of the country's identity and the legitimacy of political changes in the years of independence.

*Theme 3: The Collective "We" as "Elites"*

The third theme emerging from the interviews relates to mechanisms of group identity construction and their relationship to heritage and memory issues. We find a tendency here on the part of both politicians and culture professionals to self-manifest a symbolic role ascribed to "elites" to produce and carry out memory and heritage-related activities. Culture professionals emphasized the role played by cultural institutions and their employees as "orchestrators of memory" who empowered non-governmental grassroots activists. Politicians ascribed the leading role in formulating the politics of memory to the political class, state institutions, and fellow politicians. Due to dissatisfaction with corruption in official institutions, the respondents often praised culture professionals for their work with and on behalf of civil actors and NGOs, rather than complimenting state-employed dignitaries for their administrative achievements. It was very rare for interviewees to praise state officials in this regard, presumably largely because by 2012, when the interviews were conducted, the state authorities were largely inactive in terms of heritage preservation.[20]

The respondents were asked who they considered to be "maestros of memory." Answering this question, the respondents often pointed to their own professional activities, such as editorial, educational, and cultural activities, museum work, research, raising awareness for heritage and its problems, as well as working on legislation. This reflects a self-estimation of the group as promoters of cultural and aesthetic values and possessors of expertise that

19 For an analysis of the 9 April 2009 events, see Hale (2013: 481–505).

20 On the history and dilemmas of heritage preservation in Chişinău, see Musteață (2012: 199–208).

enables them to judge the presence or absence of these values within the society. One respondent commented that, "I believe that people of culture and science, first of all the writers, as well as the experts in history as an academic subject, are the deliverers and promoters of history" (male, 1951, journalist). Thus, the interviewees reinforced their own symbolic role and stated community commitment as members of the elite.

Two individuals were named most often as "maestros of memory": a writer who popularized local history through multiple encyclopedia-style publications; and an official whose professional activity is directly related to raising awareness and concern for the need of heritage preservation. Interviewees also mentioned public historians involved in heritage promotion and politicians involved in work on culture legislation. Such unanimity of choices highlights the importance of a public persona and skills in cooperating with the media for recognition among colleagues. Extending the major line of argument about cross-pollination between professional knowledge and the politics of memory (all respondents agreed on this), the respondents also named libraries, museums, and the Agency for Inspection and Protection of Historic Monuments as institutions of high importance for promotion of heritage awareness among the general public.

### *Topic 4: Cityscape and Infrastructure*

The final part of the survey set out to examine each interviewee's "mental map" of Chişinău, using the responses to sketch out a collective mental map of the city. In particular, we were interested in investigating whether this collective mental map included places related to (former) cultural diversity. This part of the survey also tested the emotional bonds the respondents share with the urban environment, including both positive bonds (of pride, for example) and negative ones (such as those linked to feelings of discontent).

When asked to identify sites of high significance and interest, interviewees mentioned most often buildings in the city center, such as museums, residential housing, and the general architectural profile of the "lower part" of the city, two parks in the city center,

and the Cathedral ensemble. Urban spaces that were claimed as sources of pride tended to be associated with the national history canon, as in this example: "I'm proud of the Square of the Grand National Assembly with its vast spread and the memory of the events that brought our national revival" (male, 1936, professor of engineering). Feelings of comfort and pride were recalled multiple times in connection to the richness of greenery in the city. Respondents may not have been aware that in fact, the planned greenery was a core feature in the post-World War II branding of the city by the Soviet authorities. For some respondents, the trees were the only attraction of the capital: "not much to show here. We're lucky to have trees covering the ugly buildings of Chişinău. If winter comes and there's no snow, it's a disaster, nothing to show" (male, 1967, publisher). The interviewees said they were discontented with Chişinău infrastructure and contemporary architecture: "nearly everything built since the independence doesn't pass the threshold of ugliness and kitsch. There's not a single building in Chişinău built within the last 20 years, which would remain emblematic for a capital city" (male, 1953, politician).

The interviews were initially designed to reveal the elite discourse about the former cultural diversity of the city, but they revealed much more. In particular, they demonstrated that the discussion about multicultural heritage of the city and responsibility for its preservation are subordinated to the discourse about the essence of national heritage, as well as to the discussion about those responsible for its destruction. While recognizing former cultural diversity, the respondents expressed practically no concern for preserving its memory, and rather preferred to leave this matter to the ethnic communities and their representatives.

## Heritage Treatment in Chişinău and Beyond

In this second part of the chapter, I analyze several specific examples of heritage practice in Chişinău and beyond with a view to uncovering whether and if so how the major tendencies in heritage discourse discussed above are manifested in the heritage practice at the practical level, with a particular focus on engagement with

memory of the city's former cultural diversity. First, I examine recent projects related to the city's Jewish and Armenian heritage, namely: Jewish Chişinău and reconstruction of the former almshouse with a synagogue (2010–2018); and reconstruction of the former mansion of an Ottoman and Russian diplomat of Armenian origin, Manuc Bey near Hînceşti (2013–2015/18). Second, I examine a set of three projects that address different groups of victims of terror—victims of the Holocaust, on the one hand, and of the Stalinist deportations, on the other. These projects pursue reconciliation between competing victimhoods and emphasize the richness of Chişinău's historical cultural diversity (2017–2018).

### *Jewish Chişinău between Abandonment and Reconstruction*

Several Chişinău sites related to the Jewish past have been officially recognized as landmarks of national and local significance. These are former synagogues (and one functioning synagogue); a former Jewish hospital; a former Jewish primary school for boys; a former Jewish college for girls; private houses that formerly belonged to Jews; and a Jewish cemetery. All these locations were listed in the registry of monuments after 1991 and are officially recognized for their original purpose. However, the state-sponsored concern for Chişinău Jewish heritage sites is limited to such recognition and does not extend to intervention or sponsorship of rehabilitation projects.

According to available estimates, by 1940 the city had more than 70 synagogues (Kleiman and Shihova 2010: 7; Moscaliuc 2014: 34–38). This number included small prayer houses in the city or in the neighborhoods, within private as well as shared courtyards (Bric 2012: 164–68). Such sites, many of them "ordinary synagogues," contained no rich architectural details. The majority of these sites have been lost due to the 1940 nationalization of Jewish communal property, wartime destruction, several earthquakes, and post-war redesign of the city, especially its "lower part." Not a single architectural site is preserved in its wholeness; rather, it is either parts, or ruins, that have survived.

The first landmark, *Lemnariya* (or the woodcutters' synagogue), stands as an example of a former religious site getting its Jewish "identity" back for housing a Jewish community campus. Originally built in 1835 and nationalized in 1940 together with other religious edifices, it was officially returned to the local Jewish community by the Republic of Moldova after the dissolution of the USSR. Damaged during World War II, redesigned after the war, and dilapidated after being used as a factory and a warehouse, the building required a major reconstruction. The reconstruction was finished in 2005 with the help of funds provided by a number of sponsors under supervision of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC). Although after the reconstruction the only remaining parts of the original edifice were the façade wall and the basement, the building is listed in the inventory of Chişinău monuments of history and culture as an architectural monument of local significance. The building stands as an emblem of present-day Jewish Chişinău. It houses the Jewish community headquarters and a museum explicitly devoted to Jewish heritage of Moldova and is used as a venue for various other community events and activities. The 2005 inauguration day of the United House of Jews in Moldova (KEDEM), as well as further use of this office building, were not devoid of tensions between local Jewish community organizations and the JDC in relation to ownership and joint use of the building (Krichevsky 2005; Sheveliov 2014: 58–66); in this the Chişinău case is not unique (for more examples, see Gitelman 1995: 136–58).

The former Choral Synagogue is located in the same neighborhood, an eight-minute walk from what remains of *Lemnariya* synagogue. Built in 1913 with the help of local Jewish community funds, the Choral Synagogue eventually became the main and the biggest prayer house in the city till 1941. Surprisingly, it was not severely damaged during World War II, but, following the nationalization, in 1945 the edifice was given to the Russian Drama Theater named after Anton Chekhov. Due to the needs of the theater, in 1966 the building was re-designed and its internal layout changed completely. Today only the foundations and parts of the exterior walls of the original building remain intact. Currently the building is state

property, not considered to be a landmark, and is still used by the theater. The duration of the site as a Russian theater significantly exceeds its time of existence as a synagogue, which has prompted discussion on whether the building should be primarily known for its original or present-day function.

A ten-minute walk from the former Choral Synagogue stands a bone of contention between the Chişinău authorities and the local Jewish community. This disputed place, which has been officially classified as a landmark of local significance, consists of the ruins of the one-time yeshiva *Magen Dovid*, a former synagogue named after Yehuda Leib Tsirelson (the chief rabbi of Bessarabia) and an adjacent retirement home (see Fig. 6.1).[21] Initially constructed in the late 19th century, the building had two wings, which contained all its facilities. After 1945 it hosted a printing house; in 1977 an earthquake of 7.5 on the Richter scale damaged the building significantly, yet after 1991 it hosted the state enterprise "Poligraf Servis." In 2010 the ruin was purchased from the state by the local Jewish community via an investment competition. The Jewish community and private donors (including local businessmen of Jewish descent) funded a reconstruction plan, but the total cost of works needs further fundraising. The project would keep the general layout of the building complex in its original form and the renovated complex would house a synagogue, a yeshiva, a mikvah, a kosher restaurant, a market, and provisionally a Holocaust museum. The project was advertised internationally, for instance, at the international seminar "Managing Jewish Immovable Heritage in Europe: A Working Seminar on Projects, Challenges and Strategic Thinking" in Kraków in 2013, where the reconstruction of the former yeshiva project was described as "one of the most important starting points towards renovated Jewish Chişinău."[22]

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21 Located at Rabbi Tsirelson street, 8–10, see "Clădirea fostei sinagogi cu azil," in Nesterov, Gangal, Râbalco *et al.* (2010: 495).

22 Marina Lecarteva, "Tsirelson Yeshiva Project—Big Plans to Restore this Huge Ruin as Jewish Cultural Center," presentation at "Focus on Development" session in Kraków during *Managing Jewish Immovable Heritage in Europe: A Working Seminar on Projects, Challenges and Strategic Thinking, 25* April 2013, https://vimeo.com/66379441 (accessed 6 January 2019).

The reconstruction was due to start in 2012 but was frozen due to tensions between the Jewish community and the municipal administration. The latter tried to claim the purchased property back, arguing that since the Jewish community had not finished the restoration by the time scheduled at the moment of purchase, it had not complied with the conditions of the contract. Having claimed this, in December 2014 the Public Property Agency appealed to the court against the Jewish community for termination of the contract of sale with provisional return of the property to the state ownership. The Jewish community has extensively used media, especially online resources, to distribute information and raise social discontent over the non-collaboration of the municipal bodies: the Public Property Agency, the Territorial Cadaster Authority, and the Mayor's Office. In its official statement the Jewish community defined the actions of these official bodies as "re-confiscation,"[23] suggesting that the behavior of the present-day authorities was no better than the Soviet treatment of the Jewish community and its property. The case was finally resolved in September 2017. The newspaper of the Moldovan Jewish community, *Nash Golos* (Our Voice), announced that an amicable agreement had been reached between the community and the government. According to the agreement, the Jewish community was granted three more years to complete the reconstruction and continue investing in the integrity of the site.[24] The Gordian knot of this building complex case indicates that in the absence of collaboration and mutual engagement between state institutions and other interested agents in the matter of heritage preservation, the fact of state ownership of the site may stand as a stumbling block for accomplishment of the reconstruction.

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23 "Gosudarstvo obmanulo evreiskuiu obshchinu," *Vedomosti News Portal*, 29 December 2015 http://www.vedomosti.md/news/gosudarstvo-obmanulo-evrejskuyu-obshinu (accessed 6 January 2019).

24 "Pravitel'stvo zakliuchilo mirovoe soglashenie s Evreiskoi Obshchinoi," *Nash Golos. Newspaper of the Jewish Community of the Republic of Moldova* 14 (October 2017), 1.

**Figure 6.1.** Chişinău, former yeshiva *Magen Dovid* and former synagogue named after Yehuda Leib Tsirelson. © copyright 2013 by Andrei Gherciu.

The fourth building worth discussing in the light of heritage agency and treatment of cultural diversity in Chişinău is the ruin of *Bait Tahara* pre-burial house[25] at the Jewish cemetery in Chişinău (Fig.

25 Other terms used in the region include "funeral chapel" and "burial synagogue."

6.2). The Jewish cemetery located in the Sculeni district itself stands out as a unique example of sepulchral architecture that partially survived the urban redesign experiments of the late 1950s–early 1960s.[26] The *Bait Tahara*, located at the cemetery, was severely damaged during World War II, and until recently no attempt was made to restore it. By 2018 it stood as an emblem of the dilapidation of and disregard for Jewish built heritage in Eastern Europe. In 2004–2006, when the cemetery and the ruin were under supervision of the charity foundation *Dor Le Dor*, the foundation mapped and registered the graves, cleaned the cemetery, and improved the infrastructure. In these years, the discussion on provisional restoration started. However, this initiative came to an end with the 2006 transfer of supervision over the cemetery to the municipal institutional body.

The former Jewish pre-burial house was brought to the attention of the public and the authorities in relation to the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau in 2015. On 6 February 2015 then mayor Dorin Chirtoacă publicly expressed an intention to help reconstruct the ruin.[27] The city authorities subsequently made it clear, however, that the Jewish community would be responsible for the financial burden associated with any restoration works. In any event, no further developments ensued. The concern for the ruins of *Bait Tahara* voiced spontaneously by the mayor and the absence of solid measures afterwards indicates a nearly total absence of strategy for approaching the Jewish heritage sites of Chişinău on the part of the authorities—or at least this was so till 2018 (Fig. 6.2).

26 Located at Milano street, 1.

27 "Restaurarea capelei din cimitirul evreiesc din Chişinău," *Chişinău Mayor's Office*, 6 February 2015, https://www.Chişinău.md/libview.php?l=ro&idc=403&id=10828 (accessed 6 January 2019).

**Figure 6.2.** Chişinău, former pre-burial house *Bait Tahara* at the Jewish cemetery. © copyright 2013 by Anastasia Felcher.

In contrast, the attitude of the Jewish community towards the city's Jewish heritage is highly engaged. In the 2000s and 2010s the Jewish community played an active role in multiple endeavors aimed at bringing the memory of Chişinău Jewish past into the country's public discourse. Apart from the initiatives discussed above, the Jewish community invested in building in Chişinău three memorials to the victims of anti-Jewish violence: one to the victims of the Chişinău ghett0 (built in 1993) (Fig. 6.3); one of the victims of the Chişinău pogrom (built in 1993) (Fig. 6.4); and one to the victims of fascism (1982/2015) (Fig. 6.5).

**Figure 6.3.** Memorial to the Victims of Chişinău Ghetto (1993). © copyright 2013 by Anastasia Felcher.

**Figure 6.4.** Memorial to the Victims of Chişinău Pogrom of 1903 (1993/2003). © copyright 2013 by Anastasia Felcher.

**Figure 6.5.** Memorial to the Victims of Fascism (1982/2015). © copyright 2016 by Vladimir Winter.

The Jewish community of Moldova was responsive to the rise of a new phenomenon that has gained unprecedented fame across the world in very recent years: the Jewish museum. In the 2000s, the question of opening a Jewish museum/Holocaust museum in Chişinău was discussed on several occasions, despite the fact that

the city already housed a small-scale grass-roots Jewish museum at the KEDEM center, which has welcomed visitors since 2005, as well as housing a virtual exhibition since 2015 (Felcher 2018: 147–72). However, it was not until 2018 that the decision to open a Museum of the History of the Jews of Moldova in a new building was announced. First, in the summer of 2018 it was broadcast that the new building for the museum would be constructed in the city center, next to the KEDEM center.[28] Then, in October 2018 the officials decided to approach the above-mentioned Jewish cemetery as a space that, once rehabilitated, will be transformed into a place of interest and international tourist attraction instead of a place of desolation.[29] In line with this approach, the *Bait Tahara* would host the new museum. Deliberately or not, such approach to Jewish heritage management and representation echoes the one practiced in Chernivtsy, a town in Western Ukraine, where the Jewish cemetery has long ago since become an attraction and a pre-burial house at the cemetery is currently being transformed into the museum of the Holocaust. Apart from reconstructing the *Bait Tahara*, the restoration plan includes zoning and landscaping the territory, installing commemorative plaques to the victims of World War II, and creating tourist routes. The graveyard clearance work started in December 2018. As the state-sponsored restoration of the Jewish cemetery progressed to the removal of trees in early 2019, the great number of graves remained damaged.[30]

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28 "V Kishineve otkroiut Muzei istorii moldavskikh evreev," *NewsMaker.md,* 9 June 2018, http://newsmaker.md/rus/novosti/v-kishineve-otkroyut-muzey-istorii-moldavskih-evreev-37762 (accessed 14 June 2018).

29 "Moldovan PM Says Restored Jewish Cemetery from Chişinău Might Be Jewish Cultural Centre," *Moldpress State News Agency*, 10 October 2018, https://www.moldpres.md/en/news/2018/10/20/18009429 (accessed 9 January 2019); and "Moldova: Government will Restore, Clean up Chisinau Jewish Cemetery to Anchor Jewish History, Heritage, Cultural Center," *Jewish Heritage Europe,* 12 December 2018, https://jewish-heritage-europe.eu/2018/12/12/moldova-government-will-restore-clean-up-chisinau/ (accessed 9 January 2019).

30 See "Moldova: First-Stage of Restoration of Jewish Cemetery in Chisinau Lays Bare Vast Space; Reveals—But Also Causes—Damage," *Jewish Heritage Europe*, 2 April 2019, https://jewish-heritage-europe.eu/2019/04/02/moldova-restoration-of-vast-jewish-cemetery/ (accessed 3 April 2019).

All four of these former Jewish religious sites are entirely absent from the mental map of the city imagined by the respondents. This points to their perception of sites related to cultural diversity through the lens of ethno-national division. The only episode associated with the Jewish history of Chişinău that persistently appeared in the heritage discourse as discussed by politicians and culture professionals interviewed in 2012, was the notorious and internationally known Jewish pogrom of 1903.

### *Manuc Bey as a Tourist Attraction*

In Chişinău, it is not only Jewish heritage sites that stand for the realms of cultural diversity. Among other groups we might distinguish Armenians—a group that occupied an important position in the rich mosaic of multicultural Chişinău. The Armenians are continuously present in the symbolic geography of Chişinău. The most famous landmark related to the Armenian community is a famous Armenian Church of the Holy Virgin built in 1804 in the "lower" part of the city. In the city center, there is an Armenian Street, as well as the Central Cemetery, a spacious nineteenth-century graveyard often referred to as the "Armenian cemetery."

Recently, another circumstance served as a reminder of the Armenian contribution to Moldovan history. In 2013, an ambitious reconstruction project near Hînceşti town (40 kilometers south-east of Chişinău) was launched. Though this complex is territorially detached from Chişinău, the specialists who contributed both to restoration of the building and the promotion of the entire project, came from the capital city, which justifies discussing this case in the current study.

The project targeted the former mansion/palace of an Ottoman and then Russian diplomat of Armenian origin Manuc Mirzoyan, also known as Manuc Bey (1769–1817).[31] The palace was

31 Manuc Mirzoyan was a diplomat and an interpreter at the court of the Turkish sultan and gained the prefix "Bey" for his excellent service in the financial department of the Ottoman Empire. He resettled in Bucharest at the beginning of the Russo–Turkish war of 1806–12, and took an active part in the preparation of the Bucharest peace treaty of 1812, but after being accused of treason by the Turkish side, resettled again—this time in the part of Bessarabia that fell under

built by Manuc Bey's successors in 1857–61. At the end of World War II, the palace was hastily restored for the first time and adapted for the needs of a college. In 1993, the palace gained the status of an architectural monument. The first discussions on the need for a thorough restoration took place in 2006, and it soon became obvious that a fundraising campaign would be necessary. Then Prime Minister Vasile Tarlev appealed to the Armenian community for financial assistance as the Ministry of Culture was not able to provide sufficient funding. Eventually, a significant portion of funding was provided via the EU Joint Operational Program Romania–Ukraine–Republic of Moldova 2007–2013.[32] The reconstruction of the main palace was finished by 2015 with a grand inauguration (Fig. 6.6–Fig. 6.8). Further reconstruction works continued as the "Manuc Bey Manor Museum Complex" contains several buildings that required further investment. Since 2015, the palace has hosted multiple events and has become a major tourist attraction in the area, which under the Soviet rule was known primarily as the birthplace of the politician and Russian Civil War Red Army commander Grigorii Kotovskii (1881–1925).[33]

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the rule of the Russian Empire. He acquired the mansion near Hînceşti in 1817, but hardly managed to oversee any construction works there due to his death the same year. Manuc Bey is buried in the courtyard of the abovementioned Armenian Church in Chişinău.

32 See the complex's official website: http://www.manucbey.md/ (accessed 15 August 2018).

33 In 1940/44–65 the town Hînceşti was named Kotovskoe and later—until 1990—Kotovsk.

**Figure 6.6.** Manuc Bey Manor Museum Complex, Hînceşti; the palace before the works began (2013). © copyright AIRM, licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0 (s. https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/deed.en)—image stored at Wikimedia Commons.

**Figure 6.7.** Manuc Bey Manor Museum Complex, Hînceşti; the palace during the works (2015). © copyright AIRM, licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0 (s. https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/deed.en)—image stored at Wikimedia Commons.

**Figure 6.8.** Manuc Bey Manor Museum Complex, Hînceşti; the palace after completion of the restoration works (2015). © copyright AIRM, licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0 (s. https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/deed.en)—image stored at Wikimedia Commons.

Currently, the palace serves as an open space that hosts various projects while the hunting house exhibits numerous objects collected by the Museum of History and Ethnography. Thus, the museum complex serves as an exhibition space for objects that illuminate local history more than the history of the manor or of the region's Armenian community. This example of heritage work identifies the changing image of Hînceşti from a site known for the revolutionary past to a site exemplifying the 19th-century land ownership and wealth. Yet, within the context of the museum complex, the figure of Manuc Bey functions more as a brand to attract the attention of potential visitors than an invitation to further reflect on the region's complex history. Again, this corresponds with the tendency to separate the heritage of minorities from the heritage of the major population group that we saw in heritage discourse analyzed above.

### *A New Trend: Heritage Practice as Reconciliation*

The heritage discourse discussed in the first part of the article reveals multiple problematic aspects related to dealing with the past and collective memory in Moldova in general and in Chişinău in particular. The central unresolved problem is the strong resistance to perceiving victims of different ethnic origin as a common loss, in particular the tendency to address the victims of the Stalinist repressions and of the Holocaust separately, with different audiences mourning "their own" victims. Nevertheless, in 2017–2018 three grassroots public projects that dealt with treatment of the past directly challenged this competing victimhood principle in favor of reconciliation. These projects targeted Chişinău as an urban space of continuous co-existence of citizens of diverse ethnic origin, religious affiliation, and economic position, but also a space of non-exclusive suffering (if not common, then at least in parallel) once the war broke out. These projects are designed to reach a broad audience beyond academia with the help of an online presence, social media, documentary production, public presentations, and interventions in the city's public space. It is highly important that all three projects are grassroots-based. This indicates the richness of the Chişinău public sphere and awareness of the need to "work" with the concerns of memory and heritage beyond the national.

In 2017, a social media page and a website announced the launch of a new non-governmental organization: Oral History Institute—Moldova.[34] The core activity of the institute is the collecting of testimonies about the past using oral history. The founders of the institute emphasize its non-governmental status and lack of state funding. The project seeks to engage users as potential interviewers and interviewees and provides an online platform for the data collected by oral history methods to be stored and made available for further research. Presently, the resource contains about fifty interviews with victims of deportations from the MSSR in 1949 and dozens of interviews with witnesses of atrocities against Jews in

34 See the Institute's website: https://oralhistory.md/rom/despre-institut (accessed 30 August 2018).

Bessarabia and Transnistria during World War II. Interviews on both topics are available in Romanian and Russian. The institute also targets such sensitive topics of local history as mass emigration from Moldova after 1991; the armed conflict in Transnistria in 1992; the Soviet–Afghan war; and Moldova as seen through the eyes of other ethnicities.

Since 2017, the web-portal *NewsMaker.md* has become known for its efforts to become a platform for commentary on alternative topics in regional history, including "difficult" topics. The portal recently initiated a series of online publications devoted to multiple aspects of Moldovan cultural diversity seen through historical lenses of common coexistence and common suffering. The portal published substantial articles (available in both Romanian and Russian) devoted to Jewish, Polish, and Ukrainian contributions to Moldova's past and present; the wartime Jewish ghetto; the Holocaust; the Stalinist deportations; the 1992 Transnistrian conflict, and Roma rights.[35] The same portal hosts three episodes of a recent documentary series "Mutual Language" produced by *Newsmaker.md* and the High Anthropological School with the financial support of the Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Germany and assistance from the *Moldova Institut Leipzig*.[36] The documentary presents the region's past as the story of the continuous coexistence of diverse populations, and bolsters this argument with archaeological evidence from different epochs. In summer 2018, representatives of the same team that stood behind "Mutual Language" applied the principle of "the past as coexistence" to Chişinău. Archaeological excavations took place in the "lower" part of the city and their results were summarized in a documentary, *KISCHINEFF. Depth of the City*. The documentary emphasized the presence of urban life in the city in late

35 For "long reads" in Russian, see http://newsmaker.md/rus/novosti/c:longridy; for publications in Romanian, see http://newsmaker.md/rom/noutati/c:longridy (accessed 10 September 2018).

36 "'Obshchii iazyk'. Spetsproekt NM i VASH o nepredskazuemom proshlom Moldovy," *NewsMaker.md*, http://newsmaker.md/rus/novosti/obshchiy-yazyk-spetsproekt-nm-i-vash-o-nepredskazuemom-proshlom-moldovy-35962 (accessed 1 September 2018).

medieval times, as well as the role of multiple ethnicities as active urbanites.[37]

Finally, in 2018 an initiative was launched to install in Chişinău the first *Stolpersteine* (stumbling blocks) to honor the memory of the victims of Nazism, as well as "The Last Address" memorial plaques to commemorate those who perished during the repressions in Soviet Moldova. The memorial signs commemorate victims of both regimes at the last place where they resided or worked prior to becoming victims of the repressive regimes. The initiative came from a representative of the Agency of Inspection and Restoration of Monuments, an institution subordinated to the Ministry of Culture, but known for its grass-roots initiatives. Placement of memorial signs was implemented in cooperation with other agencies and with the help of funds raised by the Agency for this occasion. Chişinău media devoted a great deal of attention to an initiative to bring to Chişinău the founders of both projects, the German artist Gunter Demnig who installed the first stumbling block in Cologne back in 1992, and representatives of the Russian NGO who launched the "Last Address" movement in Moscow in 2014. Both projects have spread beyond their national origins to become international phenomena that continue to expand. The parallel launching of these projects in Chişinău not only implements a reconciliation-focused approach towards the memory of multiple victims, but also introduces the city to international networks of new memory sites that stand for glocal approaches to difficult pasts.

## Conclusion

This article looked at heritage discourse and practice in an East-Central European borderland city deprived of its flourishing cultural diversity due to the calamities of the twentieth century. The

37 Maksim Andreev, "KISCHINEFF, kotoryi my otkopali. Kak arkheologi otchitalis' pered kishinevtsami o raskopkakh v tsentre goroda," *NewsMaker.md*, 16 August 2018, http://newsmaker.md/rus/novosti/kischineff-kotoryy-my-otkopali-kak-arheologi-otchitalis-pered-kishinevtsami-o-rask-38714 (accessed 30 August 2018).

article investigated whether there is a correspondence between what is said and what is done in the heritage sphere in Chişinău. By bringing together heritage discourse and practice in Chişinău, the article also aimed to demonstrate the dynamics in the treatment of cultural diversity in the divided society of Moldova between 2012 and 2018.

The experts interviewed in 2012 acknowledged the former cultural diversity of Chişinău as a fact of the city's history and architecture. Yet, it was the national heritage, narrowly defined, that clearly received the most attention. The respondents revealed sensitivity and a somewhat conflicted attitude towards the presence of Russian language and culture in the region, and many respondents saw "things Russian" in opposition to national (defined either as Moldovan or Bessarabian Romanian) heritage and culture. This indicates that in Moldova, as for many other countries in the post-Soviet space, the Russian cultural component does not fit unproblematically into the framework of a celebrated multicultural past. The article further discussed examples of heritage projects that related to other representatives of cultural diversity, in particular Jews and Armenians.

Different practical approaches to preservation of Jewish built heritage and commemoration of the Jewish victims of the Holocaust mirror the tendency to divide Moldovan heritage into "national rooms." An apparent discord in periodization of local history and a tendency to prioritize one collective trauma over others is also reflected in the practice of mutual non-engagement between actors in heritage preservation and collective memory activism. Even the recent successful initiative to reconstruct the Armenian Manuc Bey heritage site exemplifies this tendency. As the Armenian community was not actively involved in the palace reconstruction, the restored site did not become a point of departure for a proper engagement with this aspect of the region's cultural diversity.

In 2017 and 2018, several projects were implemented in an effort to attract public attention to the possibility to overcome the competition over victimhood and instead to discuss the victims of Stalinist deportations and the victims of the Holocaust as a common

loss. These initiatives originated from different actors with their own specific agendas, but what unites them is the grassroots character of the initiatives. All three projects reacted to a certain degree to the problem of competing victimhoods and its ongoing relevance for Moldovan public discourse. Brought together, these projects represent advocacy for a reconciliation-focused approach towards difficult aspects of the common past. The accumulation of such grassroots initiatives signals a growing awareness about the risks and dangers of societal divisions into "national rooms" when it comes to discussion of the past. It also demonstrates a certain distance between the heritage discourse of 2012 and activities of more recent years.

One of the most recent endeavors to introduce a new brand strategy for the city is the *Evening Chişinău—City of Lights* initiative. This branding strategy, announced in 2018 by the Agency of Inspection and Restoration of Monuments, is aimed at spotlighting the city's most prominent heritage objects in both the literal and figurative sense. Apart from branding benefits, the project intends to bring Chişinău closer to European and global standards of urban illumination and to improve the social environment of the city center. In February 2018 a contest identified three buildings to be illuminated: the National Concert Hall, the Museum of Ethnography and Natural History, and the National Opera. There are also eight more buildings that have been earmarked for possible illumination by 2020, including the above-mentioned synagogue named after Rabbi Tsirelson. If the latter project succeeds, then this will be a rare example of an endeavor triggered by grassroots actors, but implemented on the official level, to bring a Chişinău heritage object related to an ethnic minority in line with the sites traditionally considered as landmarks. Thus, this might be a sign of Chişinău slowly coming to an appreciation of its former cultural diversity.[38]

38 Another example of such embrace of Jewish landmarks among "traditional" sites of interest in Moldova is a recent initiative to promote a single brand of the country for an international tourism industry: "Moldova—Discover the Roots of Life." The website, launched within this branding strategy, provides information about the country's tourism attractions. It lists Jewish cemeteries in Vadul Raşcov, Orhei, Balţi, Briceni, and Chişinău as such, yet mentions not a single

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synagogue, see http://www.moldovaholiday.travel/index.php?option=com_k2&view=itemlist&layout=category&task=category&id=17&Itemid=38&lang=en&limitstart=0 (accessed 6 January 2019).

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# Myths and Monuments in the Collective Consciousness and Social Practice of Wrocław

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***Abstract:*** *The ambition of this study is to analyze how myths have unfolded in collective memory discourses, social practices, and urban space in Wrocław. The chapter draws on empirical data indicating the presence of historical myths in the social consciousness, and demonstrating the relation between these myths, on the one hand, and contemporary perceptions and evaluations of the related monuments, on the other, among different categories of inhabitants of Wrocław. The study explores the role of monuments in forging both local and national identities. Social practices relating to monuments are looked at from the perspective of the actualization of myths in the present-day cityscape. The process of constructing new meanings began in the 1990s with varying degrees of intensity in a number of locations in Wrocław as old monuments disappeared from the cityscape, and new ones appeared. These developments reflect not only changes in the values and social consciousness of the urban population but also the complicated nature of the dynamics of the collective identity, involving the simultaneous processes of converting, restoring, bringing into the limelight, rehabilitating, and excluding different elements.*

It is a well-known postulate that urban myths tend to explain social hierarchies and justify the existing state of affairs. In particular, origin myths are especially instrumental in legitimating possession of territories and uniting collectivities. Myths, in turn, need rituals to structure and enact beliefs, and monuments as symbolic nodes of the urban space have an important function in such rituals. In order to put this linkage under the magnifying glass, this paper analyzes relations between myths and monuments in the local memory culture, and the role of myth-related symbols in the collective memory of Wrocławians.

One may distinguish a range of well-known monuments referring to deep layers of social imagination and myth in Wrocław, but this article will focus on two of these, corresponding to two competing official (Polish) origin myths: the Piast myth, embodied in the monument to Bolesław Chrobry (Bolesław I the Brave) (established in 2007);[1] and the Lwów myth, reflected in the monument to Aleksander Fredro (erected in Lwów in 1879 and relocated to Wrocław in 1956).[2] The role of the official history in shaping these urban myths is difficult to overestimate. In particular, the Piast myth with such highlights as the Battle of Grunwald[3] and the Crusaders is a well-established part of historical memory in Wrocław that was reinforced by the authorities of the Polish People's Republic (henceforth PRL, from the Polish initials) as well as by official historiography and mass culture. As symbolic constructs invoking the Polish national imagery and cultural-historical legacy, both the Piast and the Lwów myths have been counterposed to a third myth: the myth of pre-war ethnic pluralism, embodied in a recent (unsuccessful) attempt to commemorate Gregor Bender, former mayor of the then German Breslau.

The ambition of this study is to analyze how these myths have unfolded in collective memory discourses, social practices, and urban space in Wrocław. The chapter draws on empirical data indicating the presence of historical myths in the social consciousness and demonstrating the relation between these myths and contemporary perceptions and evaluations of the related monuments among different categories of inhabitants of Wrocław. The question

1 The Piast Dynasty was the first ruling dynasty at the beginning of Polish statehood; Bolesław Chrobry (the Brave), son of Prince Mieszko I, was the first crowned ruler (1025). He is considered the creator of the Polish state, which was baptized in 966.

2 Count Aleksander Fredro is one of the most famous nineteenth-century Polish writers. He is connected to Lwów, which was a Polish city prior to World War II and where his memorial was erected. On the social myths and ideas attached to monuments in Polish literature, see Was 1999: 345–64; Kłopot 2012; Kłopot 2015.

3 The Battle of Grunwald was fought in 1410 between the united forces of the Polish Kingdom, the Duchy of Lithuania, and subordinate regions of Eastern Europe and the Teutonic Order. The Teutonic Knights were defeated and the Grand Master of the Order died in battle.

of the social differentiation in relation to attitudes to these monuments and myths is considered with respect to age, education, economic situation, and gender. The study explores the role of the abovementioned monuments in forging both local and national identities. Social practices relating to monuments are examined from the perspective of actualization of myths in the present-day cityscape.

I claim that neither the Piast myth nor the myth of ethnic pluralism is especially active in Wrocław nowadays, although the former is periodically boosted by the national sentiments, and the latter is promoted by the municipal authorities. Meanwhile, the Lwów myth has lost its vitality because it is no longer a part of the current socio-political life; it applies only to the elite consciousness, which has no clout in a range of important daily contexts. The Lwów myth refers to the glory of the national high culture, and since the local identity of Wrocław inhabitants is not that pronounced, their Polishness takes an upper hand over local difference. In other words, the national identity outweighs the local identity, such that a monument dedicated to King Bolesław Chrobry, a Polish ruler of the medieval Piast dynasty, draws much more attention in commemorative contexts than the Lwów-related Fredro monument that rather serves as a tourist destination and is not actualized in the collective social practice of rank-and-file Wrocławians. Meanwhile, in the marketing practice, mass events such as the Euro 2012 or European Capital of Culture (ECoC) 2017 had a great impact on the city and brought a spectacular influx of tourism and business investment.

Different stages of the research presented here relate to the most general differentiation that could be derived from field-based quantitative research. The basic social fractions that we decided to study were the general population of the city (random sample, N=547); elites (including representatives of the highest levels of the municipal administration, members of the city council, and leaders of cultural organizations, N=64); and young people (senior high school students, N=512, as well as university students, N=329). This differentiation allowed us to grasp divergent tendencies in opinions

and social beliefs. Thus, the study is valuable as it presents an attempt to go beyond a purely historical or anthropological paradigm and to investigate memory in an empirical sociological sense. However, one needs to be cautious when formulating survey questions and interpreting the results in a way that replicates theoretical frameworks from Memory Studies. It must also be stressed that the scope of this research had to be limited to a local urban case, but its design was multidimensional and consisted of several stages in which various research techniques were used. The survey whose results are discussed below was developed by a team of Wrocław sociologists for an international research project.[4] Each measurement built on deliberately chosen research techniques and a structured questionnaire typical for quantitative research.

## Monuments as a Device of Myths, History, and Memory: Theoretical Framework

The modern history of Wrocław features two major moments of historical rupture: the drastic and total change of the urban population and environment in the wake of World War II; and the less dramatic, but nevertheless profound institutional transformation after 1989. The latter was followed by a process of restoring old and constructing new meanings. This began in the 1990s with varying degrees of intensity in a number of locations across Wrocław. In each of these systemic collapses, the old monuments disappeared from the cityscape, and new ones appeared. They reflect not only changes in the values and social consciousness of the urban population but also the complicated nature of the dynamics of the collective identity of converting, restoring, bringing into the limelight,

4 This research was part of the international research project "The Memory of Vanished Population Groups in Today's East and Central European Urban Environment. Memory Treatment and Urban Planning in L'viv, Černivci, Chişinău and Wrocław," conducted in 2011–2014 under the patronage of the Center for European Study at the University of Lund, with the help of a team of sociologists from the Institute of Sociology, University of Wrocław, and a team of architects from the Faculty of Architecture at Wroclaw University of Technology. The data presented in this chapter and all accompanying graphs are based on research conducted within this project.

rehabilitating, and excluding different elements at the same time. A community seeking expression for its identity refers to different moments, versions, and interpretations of history. This inevitably results in paradox, tension, and conflict. Barry Schwartz analyzes collective memory as a cultural system, which is a model of society and for society, affecting social reality and shaping it, and *framing* our perception and comprehension of current events (Schwartz 1996). In his in-depth analysis of the Lincoln Memorial, Schwartz introduces the concept of *keying* as an interpretative and communication process that through writing, painting, or erecting a monument, connects separate realms of history. We need such symbols in order to be able to understand our social, cultural, and symbolic milieu.

During the systemic change in 1945 and 1989, Wrocław underwent two waves of not only physical, but symbolic—mythologizing—transformations of the cityscape. In the course of the dynamic and profound changes accompanied by increasing social differentiation and social conflict, symbolic structures such as founding myths have a mitigating effect on conflict-ridden collective identities. Peter Fruchter and Amy L. Harris write about the mythologizing effect of the image of Toronto as the most multicultural city in the world in the minds of its inhabitants (Fruchter and Harris 2010). In Toronto, the grassroots creation of a founding myth appears to alleviate social tensions, allowing this highly diverse city population to live as a unified whole. Wrocław's situation is different. Despite the presence of some old and new diasporas (among them German, Ukrainian, Jewish, and Turkish), it is by and large a monocultural city searching for ways to define itself with a view to building a sense of local community.

A place where differences disappear and differentiating features lose their importance, unique across Europe—this image of Wrocław, formed in the media in the late 1990s, can be interpreted as an attempt to re-create a founding myth, a symbolic formula for legitimizing not only a new image of the existing cityscape, but more broadly a new social space of the city. Taylor Stevenson claims that mythical formulas (mythological stories) are created

using symbols that have been dramatized through rituals and narrative forms; their function is to give meaning and shape to the world through the definition of what is true and good (Stevenson 1975: 4–18). It is questionable whether all symbolic actions pertinent to city monuments are of that character. Yet, when we take into account references to history, and how history is used and transformed in social practice, one can see that mythical formulas are widely applied. Urban history is repeatedly resurrected in the narrative formulas underpinning practices around monuments and memorials.

In his classic work, Mircea Eliade explains that the nature and origins of myth and mythical thinking are anthropological (Eliade 1959: 34–48). In his comparative studies, he makes a distinction between history, (historical events, historical consciousness), and mythological thinking or collective memory.[5] Myth transcends history, and it is the sanctification of the past, or the making of the *sacrum*, which people for various reasons do not want to see according to the rules of history. Eliade's concept of mythologization can fruitfully be applied to the case of Wrocław. Because of the ruptures in Wrocław's difficult history, its post-war inhabitants were faced with the task of justifying their presence in the new location. This situation implies the construction of a myth of origin, or the search for the community's origins and beginnings that are sanctified and mythologized. This mechanism applies not only to primitive communities, as in Eliade's work, but also to modern societies (Schwartz 1982: 375–76). Of course, one can debate whether the same mechanisms are at work in Wrocław. However, the case of the Piast origin myth imposed by the communist regime, and the myth of ethnic pluralism promoted by the municipal authorities after the democratic turn, both point in this direction. And the celebration of beginnings is one of the ways in which communities institutionalize obvious discontinuities in urban history and interpret the past (*ibid.*: 376).

5 History is a sequence of events that can be and is usually processed in popular consciousness into mythological formulas, in accordance with the demands and requirements of social emotions.

Myths and the awareness that accompanies them in various societies, and in particular in modern ones, acquire visible and tangible mnemonic representation in various forms of art, including monuments. Consequently, our discussion of myth needs to be supplemented by consideration of monuments. The analysis of sites of memory (*lieux de mémoire*) belongs to the mainstream of the research on collective memory in its historical and cultural dimensions. As sites of memory are involved in making history present and show how memory is relevant to the present, they shape the memory of the past among specific social groups as well as setting a stage for "acting out" collective memory. In the Anglophone literature, the concepts of monument and memorial are often used interchangeably. However, in the Polish language, there is a clear distinction between the concepts of "monument" *(zabytek)* and "memorial" *(pomnik)*. The first apprehends a broader semantic range and refers to any human product which is a reminder, or *memento* of the past. Thus, a monument can be a park, an urban complex, a work of art, and so on. On the other hand, a "memorial" is usually a work of sculptural art donated to "commemorate" a historical person or event.[6]

Klaus Neumann draws attention to a specific dimension of monuments, citing the seminal observation of Robert Musil that "monuments are conspicuously inconspicuous […] There is nothing in the world as invisible as a monument" (Neumann 2000: 4). This paradoxical nature of monuments is played out in the daily lives of the inhabitants of a city. In order to bring to our consciousness specific symbolic connotations, a specific social situation in the form of a national holiday or collective commemorative ritual has to actualize a communal experience. In this way, monuments become part of social processes involving the induction and activation of collective memory, or public memory.

6 See Yurchuk (2014: 27). In this chapter, the attention is focused on "memorials" in the strict sense, but it should be noted that in their responses to our questionnaires, Wrocław inhabitants also refer to some examples of urban monuments (buildings, bridges, and even city districts) which can also be regarded as mnemonic representations.

The case of Wrocław shows how the symbolic space of the city can be encoded and decoded through monuments. At one level, the demolition of old monuments and construction of new ones mean a denial of the symbolic continuity of space; but at the same time, these are acts of appropriation of the territory in question. The aesthetic and social connotations of the monuments are inscribed in the process of creating a collective memory and new history for an alien place, which is made possible by imposing or resurrecting founding myths. In their attempts to boost a different local identity, a part of the Wrocław elite addresses the historical memory of the non-Polish population of Breslau, while other factions prefer the Lwów myth epitomized by the Fredro monument, or the Piast myth (Kłopot 2012: 129–39). In this manner memorials become a part of complex cultural and political phenomena which can trigger the invention of traditions, or even histories, while facilitating erasure of other traditions and pasts (Yurchuk 2014: 27; Czajkowski 2015: 123–41).

Aleida Assmann, Harald Welzer, Paul Ricoeur, and Eviatar Zerubavel have addressed the problematic of forgetting, or "no-memory," in their studies. In their influential work, Harald Welzer, Sabine Moller, and Karoline Tschuggnall discuss the phenomenon of "no-memory" via the example of Germans and their difficult past, showing how forgetting—as much as remembering—is material for collective memory (Welzer, Moller, and Tschuggnall 2002). Aleida Assmann distinguishes such strategies of forgetting as compensation, externalization, disabling, silence, and misrepresentation (Assmann 2006: 169–82). With reference to her work, our analysis of monuments in Wrocław distinguished three of these: disabling, silence, and misrepresentation. When operationalized, the concepts of disabling and silence are often blurred, hence it makes sense to use them together for surveying the monuments. Misrepresentation means reinterpretation (manipulation) "under the pressure of a new framework of memory through which a memory community is coping, as in the case of silence, with inconvenient facts" (*ibid*.) In the case of Wrocław, misrepresentation applies to the fairly widespread practice of interpreting a range of different

periods of German history from the perspective of the events of World War II, such that, for example, people and events from nineteenth-century Breslau are identified with the Nazis (Czajkowski and Pabjan 2013).

## Myths and Monuments in the Symbolic Landscape of Wrocław

The drastic social change caused by World War II created a specific historical momentum that triggered processes of mythologization.[7] After the war, the Polish newcomers to Wrocław found a city that had been almost completely destroyed and abandoned. This required not only a complete reconstruction in the material dimension, but also the building of new symbolic structures. The peculiar symbolic emptiness also created a strong demand for the use of myths that would give new meaning, as well as in some cases restoring forgotten historical narratives. Thus a mythologizing process began immediately after the war, during the takeover of the city by Polish settlers. Gregor Thum cites the formulations used to describe the situation at the time: it was said that Wrocław had "returned to the bosom of Motherland" and had "again become a completely Polish city"; "On May 6, 1945, the time of German rule in Piast Wrocław came to an end forever" (Thum 2011: 240). The mythological historical tagging started almost immediately, and

7 Perhaps the most important and the most visible transformation in the sociological sense was the total exchange of the city's population. Breslau before the war in 1939 had about 630,000 inhabitants. Of the approximately 150-200 thousand inhabitants of Wrocław who stayed in the city during the siege, tens of thousands suffered death. Already immediately after the end of the war, the city authorities determined that there were 189,500 Germans in Wrocław and 16,000–17,000 Poles at the same time. Immediately the deportations of Germans began. In 1945, 30,000 were displaced, and in 1946, 140,000 were displaced, and in 1947 another 63,000. Long after mass displacement Germans were employed, often against their will in industry and mining. In 1946, Wrocław gained 12,500 new Polish residents per month. In 1947, 63,000 Poles arrived in the city, and in 1948, 47,000. In total, in the years 1945–49, 250,000 people settled in Wrocław. It was not until 1982 that Wrocław reached the state of the population as in 1939; see Thum 2005: 117–30.

the Piast myth became one of the most important ways of translating and legitimizing the complicated situation at the end of the war.

The recovery of symbolic domains during this period also took the form of re-naming, as part of the post-war re-installation and westward expansion of the Polish nation state. Polonization of the existing nomenclature, and the restoration of Polish names of streets, squares, cities, and other socio-geographical spaces after 1945, find their equivalent in processes that took place in the German Empire after 1871 (*ibid.:* 244–66). For obvious reasons, this process took place in a national key, in particular, in the case of the most important places and thoroughfares. For example, a square and a street that commemorated the Prussian general F. Bogislaw von Tauentzien were renamed in honor of Tadeusz Kościuszko, the legendary Polish general and contemporary of Tauentzien; the Kaiserbrucke and Kaiserstrasse became the Grunwaldzki bridge and Grunwaldzki Square in commemoration of the Battle of Grunwald in 1410, in which a Polish–Lithuanian army defeated the Teutonic Knights. In the case of less important peripheral places, the local key was used, such that old Slavic names were restored or German names translated: Brockau became Brochów, Mochbern—Muchobór, Bischofswalde—Biskupin, Grabschener Strasse—Grabiszyńska street. Similar processes—and even more intense due to their charged symbolic character—were pertinent to cemeteries. The largest and most important Wrocław cemeteries were gradually Polonized, and graves from the years prior to 1945 gradually removed (*ibid.:* 283–87).

Unsurprisingly, the "no-memory" mechanisms of cleansing symbolic and architectural space also targeted monuments. Such visible symbols signifying belonging of a space to a specific ethnic group in power had to be destroyed and replaced with new ones. Consequently, most monuments erected in Wrocław during the communist years served to promote the Polish national cult. By 1967, eighteen "monuments to battle and martyrdom" could be identified within the city limits. In contrast, most public monuments from the pre-war period acquired a disturbing connotation,

calling to mind the displacement and uprooting that had befallen the Germans (*ibid.:* 299–307). After the system change in 1989, Wroclaw faced the challenge of "renegotiating" and reconstructing its collective identity, giving rise to the necessity of discovering the city's history and rewriting it again, and, in turn, reconstructing the meanings inscribed in city space. For nearly the entire PRL period, it was practically impossible to form a stable local Wrocław identity. However, the changes taking place in the city in the 1990s gradually led to the formation of a local identity as a positive distinguishing mark of the city (Pluta 2006: 59–74). Meanwhile, research on Wrocław suggests that historical memory or historical consciousness in general will not necessarily be an important element influencing the shape of local identity in the city. One can thus define this type of situation as "identity without memory" or "ahistorical identity" (Thum 2011: 382–85; Czajkowski 2014: 165–81).

Despite the predictions connected with the abovementioned research, in fact, Wrocław inhabitants are increasingly exploring different parts of the city's history, including those that relate to monuments. One recurring theme in recent attempts to commemorate the history of the re-population of Wrocław, is associated with Lwów, the former Polish metropolis that was annexed by the USSR in 1939 and re-annexed in 1944, and which was the original home of many of Wrocław's new post-war inhabitants. One of Wrocław's most recognizable tourist sites, the Centennial Hall, now houses an exhibition devoted to Lwów. The exhibition includes a plastic panorama that restores the view of the city from the years 1772–75, a miniature scale model created in 1928 by the Lwów architect Janusz Witwicki (Fig. 7.1). The model is owned by the Ossolineum Library, which is part of the Ossoliński National Institute, a cultural institution that was transferred from Lviv to Wrocław after World War II. In addition to the scale model, the history of Lwów is displayed in the form of a multimedia presentation. This is not a project referring to the unknown, forgotten, or displaced non-Polish history of Wrocław; rather, it can be viewed as linked to one of the myths that gives a clue to the collective identity of the city's new inhabitants. The symbolic context of this installation seems to be symptomatic.

Indeed, it is located in one of the most recognizable buildings of the city and one of the most important tourist destinations, namely, the UNESCO-listed Centennial Hall,[8] a building which itself embodies a peculiar paradox as an object of Polish national pride and at the same time a symbol of German modernism.

**Figure 7.1.** Plastic scale model of old Lwów in Wrocław (photo by the author).

The fact that the scale model of old Lwów has been put on display in such a monumental building may indicate the high value attributed to the cultural legacy of the eastern territories lost by Poland in the wake of World War II. The decision of the city officials to place the exhibition in the Centennial Hall in 2015 could be purely arbitrary or opportunist. However, it may also expose an articulated symbolic dimension. As Lech M. Nijakowski explains, symbolic domination over territory requires the construction of material signs showing the ability of members of a social group (e.g. a

8 Centennial Hall is one of the most outstanding historical buildings in Wrocław. An example of early modernist concrete architecture, it was designed and constructed according to plans produced by the famous German architect Max Berg in 1911–13. The building itself was meant to commemorate the Prussian resistance against Napoleon. After World War II the building was adapted to serve as a venue for mass events. Centennial Hall is part of a larger park complex. Together with the surrounding Szczytnicki Park and Zoo Garden, it is nowadays one of the most visited and iconic places in the city.

nation) to dominate (Nijakowski 2006: 109). Either way, this capacity for symbolic domination has been used in a rather paradoxical way here, namely by concealing nostalgia for the eastern "paradise lost" under the umbrella of German monumentalism. The exhibition of the scale model, however, is a small part of the great complex and certainly not as noticeable and exposed as it would be in a more central location in the city. In addition, the history of the city presented within the exhibition has an obviously ethnocentric character. The Polishness of old Lwów is displayed here at the expense of its multicultural character and its Ukrainian and Jewish history. It seems that the role of the Lwów myth in today's cultural landscape and in the city's identity has been emphasized for a certain reason. In the discussion on the identity of Wrocław, the story about the supposedly Lwówian origins of the city elite has been pushed to the sidelines. There are fewer and fewer symbols that build a sense of urban community. Other existing symbols, signs, and monuments evocative of Lwów also no longer occupy a visible place in the public imagination of Wrocław inhabitants. Fredro's memorial, a monument to the murdered Lwów professors,[9] the Ossolineum,[10] the Battle of Racławice Panorama[11]—these are significant historical landmarks and even recognizable tourist attractions, but as the research presented here shows, they do not generally comprise elements of historical memory and local identity. Instead, new signs, symbols, and myths have appeared, which have a greater impact on the collective identity. Paradoxically, it is ethnocentrism, serving to construct a new myth, that strikes the viewer contemplating the scale model in the Lwów exhibition. Immediately, another question arises: can nationalism be used effectively to create a local identity?

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9 Executions of Lwów academics were carried out by the Nazis in July 1941; see the chapter by Eleonora Narvselius in this book.

10 The Ossolineum, or the National Ossoliński Institute, along with its library (the second largest in the country after the Jagiellonian Library of Kraków) was built intentionally as one of the most important national and Polish cultural institutions at a time when sovereign Poland did not exist. It first opened its doors to the public in 1827, in Lwów. After World War II it was moved to Wrocław.

11 A monumental cycloramic painting depicting the Battle of Racławice in 1794, created in Lwów and moved to Wrocław after World War II.

And how can monuments, as strong symbolic nodes, participate in and provoke specific social actions which might create a sense of common identity? The case of the Lwów scale model metaphorically shows how unexpectedly and ambivalently the postwar mythology is combined with the urban landscape and how monuments become the key to the analysis of these relations that will be discussed below. In short, the example of the Lwów myth shows that memory undergoes sacralization, promotes certain values, transmits values and meanings, and stages myths and rituals. These are illustrated in monuments and forced through monuments, which in turn are used by social groups in different ways, sometimes running contrary to the intentions of the founders. Consequently, all these elements construct a complex structure of different collective identities filling the symbolic space of the city.

In comparison to Warsaw or Kraków, Wrocław currently has few monuments.[12] For Wrocław inhabitants, too, monuments are not an optimal way of addressing the past—they are listed in sixth place among the preferred commemorative forms (Fig. 7.2).

12 One can estimate that in Warsaw there are around 210 monuments ((http://warszawa.wikia.com/wiki/Pomniki), of which 97 are well-known (http://www.pomniki.w-wa.info.pl/spis.html); in Kraków there are around 67 more eminent monuments (http://www.pomnikowo.eu/strony/p_krakow.html) and 217 in all (https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lista_krakowskich_pomnik%C3%B3w); in Wrocław there are around 30 more well-known monuments (https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kategoria:Pomniki_we_Wroc%C5%82awiu) and 48 in all (http://pomnikiwroclawia.blox.pl/html). In this way we receive the following coefficients of the number of monuments per inhabitant—for Kraków, 1 monument per 11,500 inhabitants; for Warsaw, 1 per 18,000; and for Wrocław, 1 per 21,000.

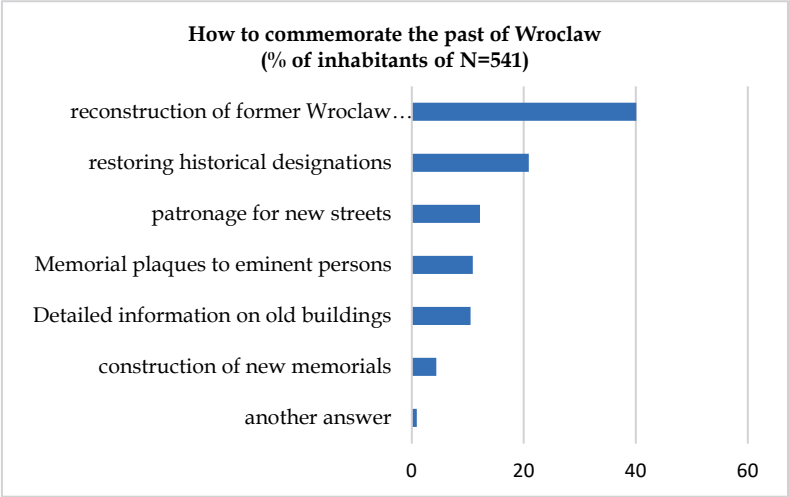


**Figure 7.2.** How to commemorate the past of Wrocław. *Source:* Based on data gathered as part of the international research project "The Memory of Vanished Population Groups in Today's East and Central European Urban Environment. Memory Treatment and Urban Planning in L'viv, Chernivci, Chişinău and Wrocław."

One can suggest a hypothesis about correlation between low preference for monuments and their small number in the public space of the city. While the old monuments were wiped out in the process of gradual appropriation of the western territories, the preconditions for filling the public space with significant landmarks alluding to Polishness were not that favorable during the post-war period. As a result, the new community continued living in a cityscape with a relatively low degree of saturation with symbolic places (because of wartime damage and the "foreignness" of the space); it can be assumed that this factor contributed to shaping the attitudes of residents towards monuments.

This disinterest and perhaps inability to form a symbolic space and fill it with significant objects such as monuments may result from a certain ambivalence present in the collective consciousness of the inhabitants of Wrocław. This is illustrated by responses to the survey questions asking about attitudes towards monument and urban heritage. When presented with the statement, "*historic buildings, monuments are the most important and current needs of the city and residents should always be subordinate to them,*" the largest section of

respondents (49% out of 547) indicated that they disagreed. In contrast, most members of the elite (41% out of 63) agreed with the statement, while most students were undecided (38% out of 124). The next statement in the questionnaire presented the opposing point of view: "*current needs of the city and residents are the most important and historic buildings, monuments should always be subordinate to them.*" For most respondents (63% out of 546) this statement was also unacceptable. Most members of the elite (46% out of 63), on the other hand, found it acceptable, and students' opinion was divided (38% out of 329 disagreed and 37% were undecided). Evidently, the historical heritage associated with buildings and monuments is not a priority for any group of Wrocław residents. The surprising repetition and symmetry of responses seems almost illogical and mutually exclusive. This may imply ambivalence regarding the symbolic space of the city, especially when it is addressed via hypothetical survey questions. The only difference in the responses of different groups is a different ratio of elites to rank-and-file residents. Ordinary residents present a negative attitude to the choice between current needs and historical buildings and monuments and respond unequivocally negatively in the first and in the second cases presented above, as it seems they do not want to choose between current needs and monuments or historic buildings. The elites display a slightly more positive attitude, as they reject statements in comparable numbers. If the elites are unable to work out a unanimous relation to such an important issue as a choice between the pragmatics of everyday life and symbolic dimension of space, it is difficult to expect that ordinary residents should be able to do so.

Popular commemorations are clearly associated not with universal values, but with markers of a dominant ethno-national community. In the case of Wrocław, the city has been slowly filled up with public monuments, starting with the monument to General von Tauenzien (1795), and the memorials to Frederick Wilhelm II (1797/1806), von Blucher (1827), Frederick the Great (1847), Frederick Wilhelm III (1861), Victory (1874), Wilhelm I (1896), Bismarck (1900), or Frederick III (1901), to name the most important ones. There are numerous other objects devoted to military formations, war victims, and other meritorious figures of the then Prussia and

Germany. After World War II, they were demolished and replaced in many places with Polish monuments. It has been estimated that eighteen public monuments were demolished in the post-war city, in the wake of establishing Polish national symbolism (aside from twenty obelisks dedicated mainly to the victims of World War I, which also no longer exist). The remaining few do not bear explicitly ideological significance (Was 1999: 345–63).

Particularly noteworthy are several monuments that epitomize the myths rooted in the consciousness of the new inhabitants of the city. Situated in the city center, all of them have substituted earlier German–Prussian landmarks, which further emphasizes the strength of significant places in the collective memory. The monument to the Prussian King Frederick Wilhelm III that used to stand on the Market Square, and the statue of the king of Prussia and German Emperor Wilhelm I[13] were later replaced with two Polish monuments created at different times and referring to different symbolic spaces. The monument to Count Aleksander Fredro[14] stands on the site of the monument to Frederick Wilhelm III at the Market Square, and the statue of king Bolesław Chrobry[15] replaced the statue of Wilhelm I, also standing in the center of Świdnicka Street, one of the city's most frequently visited monuments.

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13 For images, see: https://fotopolska.eu/Wroclaw/b9263,Pomnik_krola_Fryderyka_Wilhelma_III,48,48.html?f=806230-foto; https://wroclaw.fotopolska.eu/756538,foto.html; https://fotopolska.eu/84651,foto.html; https://wroclaw.fotopolska.eu/1105558,foto.html (accessed 5 July 2019).

14 The monument was commissioned by a well-known sculptor Leonardo Marconi at the request of the Lwów Literary and Artistic Circle in 1897, and was placed in the city in the square named after him. After the war, the monument was taken to Wilanów, where it remained until 1956, when it was brought to Wrocław on the 80th anniversary of the death of the playwright and was solemnly unveiled on the southern edge of the Market Square in the place where the monument of King of Prussia Frederick William III once stood.

15 After the statue of German Emperor Wilhelm I was removed after the war, the adjacent square remained empty and undeveloped for a long time. The equestrian statue of Chrobry was unveiled as late as 15 September 2007. The figure holds St. Maurice's spear (a symbol of imperial power) in his hand. The pediment bears a ribbon of bronze with text in Polish, German, and Czech, a map of Europe from the year 1000, and bas-reliefs including figures of Pope Sylvester II, Otto III, and St Wojciech.

Recognition and knowledge of the abovementioned monuments is the easiest way to measure their presence in the collective consciousness of the inhabitants of the city. The results (Fig. 7.3) show that when presented with photographs of different monuments, the most recognizable was the monument to Fredro, which a clear majority (90%) were able to identify. The Chrobry memorial was recognized by 65%; Frederick Wilhelm III's memorial by 40%; and Wilhelm I's by only 6%. It seems that the stability of correct periodization and recognition in space are the factors that expose the strength of the presence of memorials in a symbolic space. While Fredro's monument is recognizable for the majority of Wrocławians and is considered a well-established part of the cityscape, the Chrobry monument is less taken for granted. Several decades after the ceremonious demolition of the monument to Wilhelm I, the place was symbolically appropriated by a marker of the new community. In this case, a "scorched earth" mechanism was applied, which aimed to erase from the memory all traces of previous occupants stamped as invaders and villains. The empty space left behind the monument lost its symbolic character and even disappeared from the map of significant places. It could not, therefore, raise the question of what was there before, as in the case of the Fredro monument. In other words, the symbolic action, in this case, the destruction of the previous monument and its replacement with an imported one, led to a different functioning of this symbolic space in the city; the symbols of these monuments were brought with different degrees of force into the collective memory of the inhabitants. These two examples are associated today with a variety of social practices and various myths. The acts of elevating and destroying monuments are an expression of deeper processes of consciousness; among other things, the use of symbols is an important component in the creation of historical memory and cultural identity.

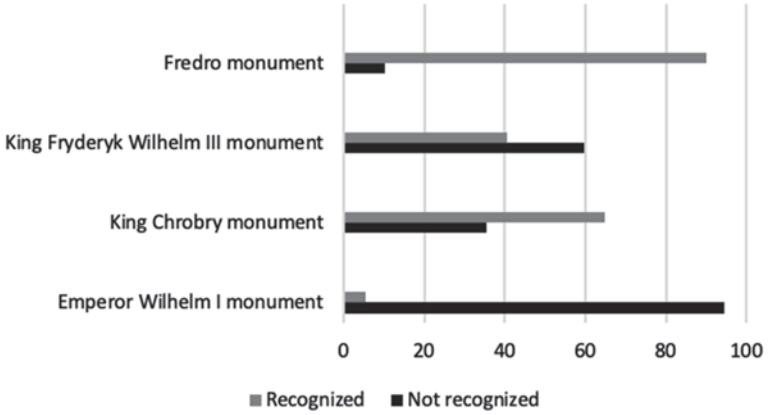


**Figure 7.3.** Recognition of monuments among the inhabitants of Wrocław, % of inhabitants of N=545. *Source:* data gathered as part of the international research project "The Memory of Vanished Population Groups in Today's East and Central European Urban Environment. Memory Treatment and Urban Planning in L'viv, Chernivci, Chişinău and Wrocław."

The most famous monument in contemporary Wrocław, the sculpture of poet Aleksander Fredro, is associated with the process of the search for a founding myth for newcomers to the city after World War II. In 1956, the sculpture was moved to Rynek (Market Square) in Wrocław. The myth of Lwów is still relatively alive among the city residents (Fig. 7.4) because 50% of respondents share the belief that repatriates from this city constituted the majority of newcomers in the post-war Wrocław. In the minds of almost 30% of respondents there is a living memory of the Lwówian origins of the post-war Wrocław elites. On the one hand, the founding myth of the origin of settlers and the elite of Wrocław from Lwów created a sense of Wrocław's identity and animated it with a feeling of cultural continuity. On the other hand, it legitimized the settlement of Wrocław after the loss of Lwów. The Fredro monument is meant to symbolize this continuity and embodies the Lwów myth in the city.

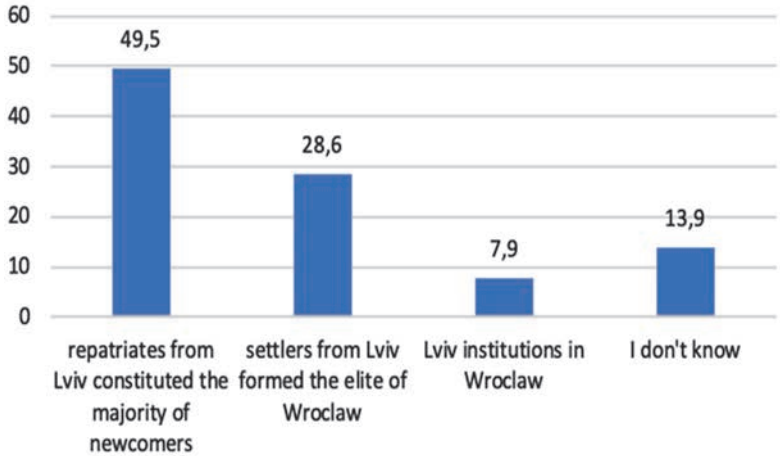


**Figure 7.4.** Lwów myth: beliefs about the Lwów origin of the Wrocław settlers, % of inhabitants of N=545. *Source:* data gathered as part of the international research project "The Memory of Vanished Population Groups in Today's East and Central European Urban Environment. Memory Treatment and Urban Planning in L'viv, Chernivci, Chişinău and Wrocław."

The memory of the city's German past is a difficult one. Negative stereotypes of Germans and Polish–German history are durable and deeply rooted in the cultural memory, although in recent years they have changed in favor of at least a partial recognition of the German legacy. Research shows that about 1/4 of respondents hold opinions indicating fear of Germany and aversion towards Germans (CBOS 2017). Such views are also reflected in attitudes to the proposed reconstruction of German or Prussian pre-war memorials. In an experimental question, respondents had to resolve a hypothetical scenario involving the reconstruction of memorials in the prestigious areas of the city.[16] One of the cases was about restoring the pedestal of Field Marshal von Blucher, a Prussian hero from the Napoleonic wars, on Solny Square, a central place next to the Market Square. In this case the response of the respondents was unambiguous, with over 80% of the total 547 respondents and over 70% of 63 elite respondents expressing their opposition to this proposal.

16 The questions in the poll were purely hypothetical and the idea of converting the monuments into old German memorials was never taken into consideration nor was it the subject of any significant disputes in the Wrocław community.

By contrast, the majority of students (over 40% out of 349) had no opinion on this issue. In the second case, the question considered the replacement of the Fredro monument with King Frederick Wilhelm III monument on the Market Square. This was a clearcut case—over 90% of all respondents, over 90% of elite respondents, and over 60% of student respondents were definitely against such an exchange. The reaction of the respondents is clear; whether we consider the general population or the elite, there is no agreement on this "experiment" with the symbolic landscape of the city center. Only students gave more varied responses with a majority undecided, which may indicate either a significant degree of disinterest and ignorance, or a certain potential for future experiments. In the case of scenarios involving the replacement of a current monument with an old one, the lack of consensus is already clear, regardless of which group of respondents one is talking about. These scenarios are less abstract, as they entail replacement of an object with high levels of recognition and probably large symbolic weight. The Fredro monument is part of the myth of Lwów, elements of which are still alive among inhabitants of the city. Opposition between Fredro and the Prussian king has a dimension beyond the pragmatics of everyday life and functionality. One can interpret this situation as opposition of the "native" myth of Lwów and anti-German stereotypes, which would be a serious violation of a taboo. And though the monument has lost its mythologizing strength, it still functions as an element of symbolic social practices.[17]

Bolesław the Brave, the first Polish king, contributed only indirectly to the development of Wrocław. There is mention of his stay in Wrocław in the year 1017, in what was then a wooden castle. Ever since the Kaiser Wilhelm memorial on Świdnicka Street was demolished in 1945, the idea of erecting a major Polish memorial in its place has long been discussed. Nevertheless, it was impossible to materialize these plans during the PRL period, even though

17 In addition to its touristic functions, the Fredro memorial also continues to play a role in the symbolic social landscape. Each year, it is a starting point for the commencement of the ritual matriculation for Wrocław high school students. The so-called proms start with the polonaise from the monument and young people dance around the market.

*horror vacui* was aroused after removal of the German memorial. Awareness that this situation could be healed only by erecting a monumental Polish national landmark, rose gradually over time (Thum 2011: 301). Very interesting and symptomatic from the point of view of the analysis of memorial symbolism is the explanation of the Foundation *Pro Wratislavia* founding the memorial, explaining the decision of choice of the place, form, and shape. It is worth quoting the following passage from the website of the *Pro Wratislavia* Foundation:

- A monument is first and foremost the embodiment of a value. The embodiment of many valuable, albeit in recent times weakened ideas like honor, patriotism, pride and a sense of beauty.
- It is an element of the construction of the identity of the inhabitants
- [...] in the face of the opening of national borders and cultural interpenetration, this monument will help inhabitants of Wrocław to feel that in the united Europe of Homelands, they occupy a significant space. [...] Chrobry's meeting with Emperor Otto III during an historic Gniezno Congress is a proof of belonging of the Polish king to the pantheon of distinguished figures of contemporary Europe. According to historical sources, Bolesław Chrobry was considered an important ally of the first idea of European unification. The thought of a thousand years by the greatest minds of his time, Pope Sylvester II and Emperor Otto III, takes on particular significance today, a figure of the first Polish king—a symbol in the time of the actual unification of the Old Continent, a symbol linking history with the present.[18]

The categories of *community of memory* (Pierre Nora) or *mnemonic community* (Eviatar Zerubavel) can be used in relation to the Foundation *Pro Wratislavia* and those groups that have begun to use the monument in a different way than originally intended. This type of community shares a picture of the Polish past (Great Poland) and of Chrobry (a leader characterized by strength and independence, as illustrated by the above-cited description of the aesthetic importance of the monument). This passage also reveals the use by this mnemonic community of one of the strategies of forgetting mentioned by Aleida Assmann, namely the strategic of

18 Website of the Fundacja *Pro Wratislavia* (established in 1998), undated, http://prowratislavia.org/dla_pomnik.htm (accessed 10 August 2016; the text on the website has subsequently been amended).

misrepresentation. Quite a special interpretation of Chrobry's action as progenitor of the idea of European unification points in this direction. These explanations, beyond their clear ideological and downright propagandistic character, can also be a good example of the new incarnation of the Piast myth that was previously used by the communist authorities to legitimize the Polish "Regained Territories." This is an amazing combination of a local identity and national identity as well as a barely formed supranational European identity with a multicultural one that shows how vital a myth can become, once it is rooted in the collective consciousness.

Social practice writes history anew, and monuments are caught up in new contexts of meaning when used in certain collective actions. According to Taylor Stevenson, symbols have the ability to evoke an infinite number of interpretations (Stevenson 1975: 4–18). Thus, monuments with a strong historical message will also be more vulnerable to symbolic processing. Such is the case of the Chrobry monument, which is a regular destination for nationalist protest marches. The ideology of the group refers to national symbols and leads to a specific version of historical memory. The Chrobry monument has become a powerful symbol for nationalist organizations. On the occasion of the national celebration on 11 November in 2011 and 2012, for example, organized marches ended just under the monument, where riots and clashes with anti-fascist organizations took place. Such events can be interpreted in accordance with the proposal of Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan as comprising the second phase of the existence and transformation of public monuments.[19] This is the period of the constitution and the institutionalization of sustainable rituals around the monument, which endows it with a specific meaning and demonstrates its symbolic vitality. This in effect decides whether the monument will become an "active" site of memory and whether the next generation of memory "users" will build its historical memory using symbolic content related to the monument. On one of the nationalist digital

19 See Winter and Sivan (2000: 22–25); Yurchuk (2014). The authors distinguish also the first creative phase, "the construction of commemorative forms" connected with a monument building and creation of ceremony.

portals, we can find comments like "*chrobry [sic] would be proud of you*" (and a brief description of the propaganda accompanying the event:

> About ten thousand people marched in the glow of flares and torches from the Wrocław market to the statue of Bolesław Chrobry: members of the national-revolutionary organizations, [football] fans and Wrocław residents who showed up in crowds at the parade. ... Chanted slogans testified to the politically current, specified and unequivocally nationalist nature of the event: in addition to the other slogans in the standard national-radical repertoire, at the initiative of Phalangists thunderous cheers swept through the streets of Wrocław: "A strong state, a great fatherland!", "National State of work!", "No war for Israel!", "Down with the Jewish occupation!", "USA, evil empire!" and "Hands off Syria and Iran!" Among the Polish national flags, and the symbols of Polish (hand with a sword) and European (Celtic cross) nationalism one could see the waving flag of the fighting Syrian Arab Republic. After the singing of the national anthem at the monument of Bolesław Chrobry, participants of the march departed to continue their daily struggle for the Great Poland.[20]

The range of references in this account is very broad, from a strong nation-state through to the Celtic cross, Middle Eastern conflicts, the "Jewish occupation," and finally protest against imperial state violence. While it reaches towards universal problems, however, its nature and thrust is inconsistent with the intentions of the founders of the monument and not necessarily consistent with the historical symbolism of Chrobry himself. What is in focus here is neither a united Europe, nor a uniting state order, but ethnocentrism, division, and the exclusive idea of a "Great Poland" envisaged by the nationalists. This is the paradox and contradiction inherent in mythologized symbols used by various memory communities living in the same city and seeking a common message for their collective identity. The myth of ethnic pluralism and European universalism inscribed in the monument is being replaced by the Piast myth in its radical ethnocentric and xenophobic version. In the case of Fredro, the process is also associated with the exploration and attempt to legitimize the settlement of the western territories as a justified and natural preservation of the Polish national specificity.

20 This comment was on the quasi-militaristic organization Phalanga (Falanga), *XPortal.pl*, 12 November 2012, http://xportal.pl/?p=6978.

After 1989, and especially in recent years, these processes have gained momentum, largely due to the nationalist and Euro-sceptic nature of government policy and the frustration of excluded groups pursuing their causes in the global context and within the supranational European Union.

The symbolism of the Piast myth can take many forms, but it is most often detectable in toponyms and other names. Wrocław is filled with these tags: Piast Brewery, Piast Beer, Piast Hotel, Piast Half-marathon, Silesian Piasts Medical University, Piastowska Street. But the Piast myth is manifested also in symbols that are directly bound to the history of the first Polish royal dynasty. Grünwald is an equally powerful symbol shaping national historical memory. In the same manner as Piast, Grünwald was employed by the communist authorities of the Polish People's Republic to strengthen the sense of national identity and to legitimize annexation of the Regained Territories. The use of Grünwald symbolism can be seen as a manifestation of the Piast myth. Grunwaldzki Bridge,[21] one of the more spectacular sights of Wrocław, is a symbolically dense object. When questioned on this, respondents representing different city communities indicated that they would not be willing to change the present-day name to the pre-war toponym of Kaiserbrucke. Ninety percent of 547 rank-and-file inhabitants, over 70% of 63 members of the elite, and 70% of 329 students were opposed to the idea of changing the name of the bridge. Evidently renaming the bridge would represent the violation of a taboo and disrespect for a national symbol of victory over the archenemy.

The vitality of the Piast myth is sometimes surprising and always has something to do with the historical consciousness of the social groups in question. It may serve as a perfect instrument for gauging the impact of the cityscape on the local collective identity. A radical group of football fans has become one of the most interesting sociological phenomena (because of its extremely conservative views, xenophobia, and misogyny masked by pro-social activity), not only in Wrocław. In the 2015 parliamentary election,

21 The bridge was built in 1908–10 and opened in the presence of German Emperor Wilhelm II, hence the object was called Emperor's Bridge (Kaiserbrucke).

football fans throughout Poland took advantage of the support of right-wing parties seeking additional votes and entered public space as a nationalist force that refers to national myths and symbols. As a city searching for an identity, Wrocław is therefore considered by them as a territory suitable for re-nationalization. For example, during the 2014 premier league, fans of Śląsk Wrocław recalled the Piast roots of the capital of Lower Silesia. Signs bearing the emblem of the Rodło, a symbol used before the war by Poles living in Germany, and the White Eagle of the Second Republic, appeared in the stands. Fans also displayed two banners: "Piast Polish Wrocław Forever" and "We Were, We Are, We Will Be."[22]

Another manifestation of the relationship between myths and monuments can be deliberate denial. On occasion, such denial can in turn lead to disputes over non-existent monuments (Czajkowski and Pabjan 2013). One such example is the 2011 initiative aimed at commemorating in urban space the figure of Georg Bender, a German mayor of Wrocław from the late 19th–early 20th century. This initiative, which was announced by the director of the Wrocław city museum, gained the support of two organizations: the Society of Friends of Wrocław and the Society for Beautifying the City of Wrocław. However, the City Council of Wrocław reacted negatively to this initiative.[23]

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22 "Rodło i Orzeł Biały na trybunach Wrocławskiego stadionu," Kresy.pl, 31 August 2014, https://kresy.pl/wydarzenia/rodlo-i-orzel-bialy-na-trybunach-wroclawskiego-stadionu-piastowski-wroclaw-zawsze-polski-przypominaja-kibice-miejscowego-slaska-video/ (accessed 11 April 2019).

23 "On 1 December 2011 the Wrocław Presidential College negatively reviewed the proposal by the Society for Beautifying the City's proposal to name the hill in the South Park. This week, Jacek Barski, director of the Department of Architecture and Development in the Town Hall, announced that, '*The President has decided not to take the initiative to name a hill Georg Bender.*' '*The college recognized that although Mr. Bender's merits for pre-war Wrocław are unquestionable, there is no particular reason to commemorate his memory in this way,*' explains Julia Wach from the President's press office. The councilors of the culture committee are also not going to support the Society's proposal this time. They explain that in March they did not realize the views of Bender, who in his book argued that Nicolaus Copernicus was German, and that the Polish had not given the world any great scholars. — The Committee on Culture and Science decided not to act on the draft resolution. '*Initially we supported the idea of the Society. Bender's merit for the city is undoubted, but his comments on Copernicus or anti-Polish statements are*

Defenders of the campaign to "celebrate Bender" cited quite "technical" arguments, including the fact that Bender was a builder who beautified Wrocław. Such utilitarian arguments were met with axiological answers that drew the discussion to a dead-end: despite his merits, Bender was known for his anti-Polish sentiments. This kind of historical memory is built within a national framework, so that even when Bender's merits are taken into consideration, they are interpreted negatively and excluded from the horizon of local memory. The survey figures show the clash of these opposing options, and indirectly we can infer the strength of entrenched myths. Answering the question "*What is your attitude to the dispute over commemorating Mayor Bender?*" the vast majority of inhabitants (almost 75% out of 547) answered "*should not be commemorated*." In contrast, over 70% of elite respondents were in favor of commemorating him, as were almost 48% of the students surveyed.

What is most visible in this data is the sharp division of opinion between social groups. The vast majority of the population is against commemoration of Bender, whereas the vast majority of the elite is in favor of commemorating him. Students again expose a greater hesitancy, but the majority are for commemoration. This situation can be interpreted as a division of collective consciousness among those guided by stereotypes and anti-German phobias, seeking signs of their identity in the national symbols, and those for whom local identity may be open to the symbols extracted from the history of the city, regardless of nationality. Perhaps it would have been a plausible interpretation referring just to the myths present in the consciousness of these groups. On the one hand, the Piast myth still forms the collective identity of the inhabitants of the city as a national, and not local, community. On the other hand, the myth of ethnic pluralism shaping the local identity of Wrocław is based on a complex historical continuity. This myth emerged among the city elites after the collapse of "real socialism" in 1989.[24]

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*controversial. The city will not lose much if one hill continues to be nameless,'* says Jerzy Skoczylas, chairman of the commission" (Józefiak 2012).

24 The myth of ethnic pluralism also has an obvious basis in the multicultural heritage of many cities of Central-Eastern Europe. Monika Murzyn mentions

It was elevated in such projects as the branding of the city's multinational history, perhaps best shown in the District of Four Denominations (Quarter of Four Temples), a place strongly symbolically marked as proof of the unique history of the city (Czajkowski 2014; Czajkowski 2015).

## In Lieu of Conclusion: Entanglements of History, Memory, and Mythical Thinking

Against the background of the low levels of historical knowledge among ordinary Wrocławians, the elite's mythologizing efforts appear to be ineffective so far. The Quarter of Four Temples is an example of an attempt at a kind of founding myth of the "new" Wrocław, a myth of ethnic pluralism or multiculturalism (Czajkowski 2014; Czajkowski, 2015). Nevertheless, the multiculturalism myth requires strong symbols either rooted in the minds of residents or arising from their experience. While the Quarter represents a kind of symbol for the city authorities, it does not seem to feature in the consciousness of respondents, who perceive it as a marketing, tourism, and entertainment creation.

History curricula and history teaching have been criticized for years in Poland, and subsequent reforms have brought little change on this front.[25] However, this specific situation can be considered a symptom of a much more profound problem, at least when viewed in its global dimension. Peter Seixas explains this process of separating everyday life from history as a historical process of subordinating history to the idea of progress (Seixas 2012: 859–72). Living everyday life, which has less and less in common with the past, we necessarily separate ourselves from the past. This also applies to history itself understood as a professional practice, at a time when

Vilnius and Bratislava, but Wrocław is also a part of the same trend (Murzyn 2008: 315–46).

25 Piotr Markiewicz, "Lekcje historii w szkole," *Gazeta.pl,* 24 February 2014, http://wiadomosci.gazeta.pl/wiadomosci/1,114871,15519555,Lekcje_historii_w_szkole___Obecnie_prowadza_do_prostackiego.html (accessed 14 September 2017); and S. Lonard, "Reforma nauczania historii oczami historyka," *Natemat.pl,* 13 April 2012, http://natemat.pl/10195,reforma-nauczania-historii-oczami-historyka-to-improwizacja (accessed 14 September 2017).

history as an objective and consistent description of the past has increasingly been questioned. As conscious agents, we demand interpretation of the past only if and when we need this for some reason. We contextualize historians' "proposals" through the interpretation of the circumstances that triggered the "proposal," and then by the individual or collective demand for addressing certain historical events.[26] Wrocław has its own special history, but it is on the basis of our specific needs that we decide how deeply and what exactly we want to see in that history. We are no longer eager to place our trust in grand narratives, the traditional forms of historical perspective. Historical consciousness is now plotted in an everyday context. Thus, one can say that the history of the city matters only to the extent that it helps to analyze, describe, and cope with everyday life.

This can be seen in the distribution of responses illustrated by Diagram 4. When we asked the residents of Wrocław: "*What should be remembered in the history of the city?*", the events mentioned most often concerned recent history, which formed part of the respondents' own experiences (such as the Great Flood in 1997, Pope John Paul II's pilgrimage in 1997, and the European Football Championships in 2012). The second most popular category comprised events from the history of the Solidarity movement. The post-World War II period came in third place. Undoubtedly, this is connected with the mechanism of "communicative memory," as defined and analyzed by Jan and Aleida Assmann, that is, the memory that is transferred in the process of direct intergenerational communication. Almost every one of these events (except the oldest ones, Festung Breslau and post-war reconstruction of the city) were submitted to some form of commemoration. The most remembered was the Great Flood of 1997, which is associated with a dramatic experience and momentous period of constructing a real consciousness of community (Sitek 1997: 110). Paradoxically, it was commemorated with a small, inconspicuous, and highly symbolic memorial on the University Bridge showing a woman saving books from the endangered University library. The events of the war and post-war do not

26 See the posts by Markiewicz *Gazeta.pl* in and Lonard in *Natemat.pl.*

have such a clear symbolic reference point in the form of either monument or memorial in the city.

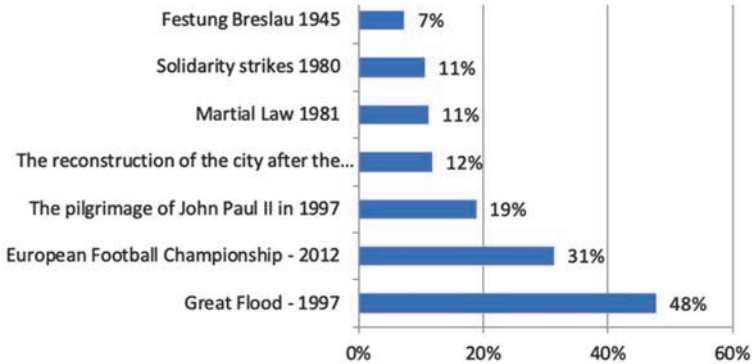


**Figure 7.5.** What should be remembered from Wrocław's history? % of inhabitants of Wrocław, N=367. *Source:* data gathered as part of the international research project "The Memory of Vanished Population Groups in Today's East and Central European Urban Environment. Memory Treatment and Urban Planning in Lviv, Chernivci, Chişinău and Wrocław."

Finally, significant and interesting results are shown in Fig. 7.5 and Fig. 7.6. When it comes to general declarations, the history of the city appears to be very important. But when inhabitants are questioned individually, the majority declares no specific interest in the history of their city.[27] This suggests that a large proportion of respondents would agree with the statement that "the history of the city is very important but I'm not interested in it." This attitude is so widespread that it probably applies to a range of different social categories, which makes these results even more significant. What might this divergence of results indicate? One may assume that the

27 It remains unclear in what sense the residents are not interested in the history of Wrocław. The question was formulated as follows: *"Are you interested in the history of Wrocław?"* It suggests a purely individual attitude. The lack of interest in the history of one's own city should not be interpreted as resistance against institutionalized ventures concerning the history of Wrocław. It can be said that the history of the city is a supra-individual story, so it is a domain of professionals. The distinction that the Assmanns draw between communicative memory (individual history and family history) and cultural memory (institutionalized, professionalized memory) is very relevant here, as is Nora's distinction between memory (spontaneous and beyond personal control) and history (institutionalized and personalized memory).

respondents' declarations very often do not correspond with their social practice. A broader interpretation may be associated with the phenomenon of the inconsistency of historical consciousness, communicative memory, and historical memory.

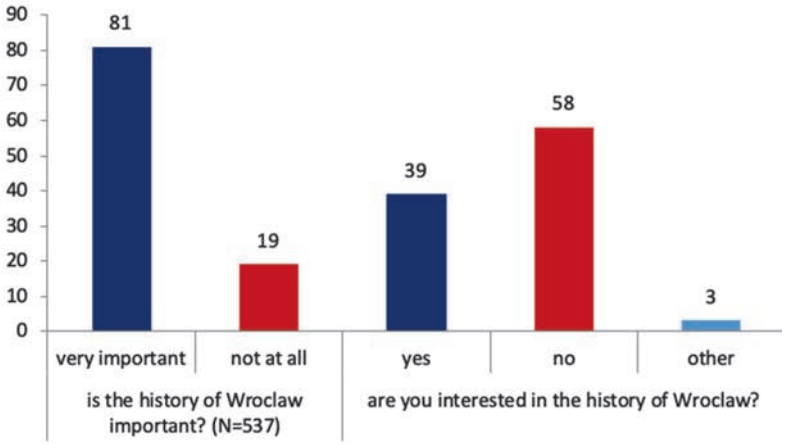


**Figure 7.6.** Attitudes toward history of Wrocław. *Source:* data gathered as part of the international research project "The Memory of Vanished Population Groups in Today's East and Central European Urban Environment. Memory Treatment and Urban Planning in L'viv, Chernivci, Chişinău and Wrocław."

Consequently, mythical thinking can determine our views and actions when we have scarce historical knowledge about the place that in some way defines our identity. Insufficient historical knowledge is also a complex phenomenon that is not only associated with educational deficiencies or inadequacies in school programs. It is also a form of confrontation with inconvenient stories, which determines national stereotypes and conflicts. The Piast myth and the myths of ethnic pluralism may be functional in the context of ignorance about the city's German history and/or of prevalence of anti-German stereotypes or a preoccupation with Polish–German conflicts. The Lwów myth, which has different dynamics and structure, can be functional for a selective reading of the history of Polish–Ukrainian relations, or nostalgia for the "lost paradise" of the eastern territories.

Moreover, respondents who are less interested in history declare that history is important but that, for various reasons, they do not want to engage with it. Does this mean that history makes no difference for the citizens? Not necessarily. Social practices related to, for example, national celebrations show that national myths are more rooted in the social consciousness and more obviously predetermine conflict lines and links to history. The city history is thus only a ritual point of reference.

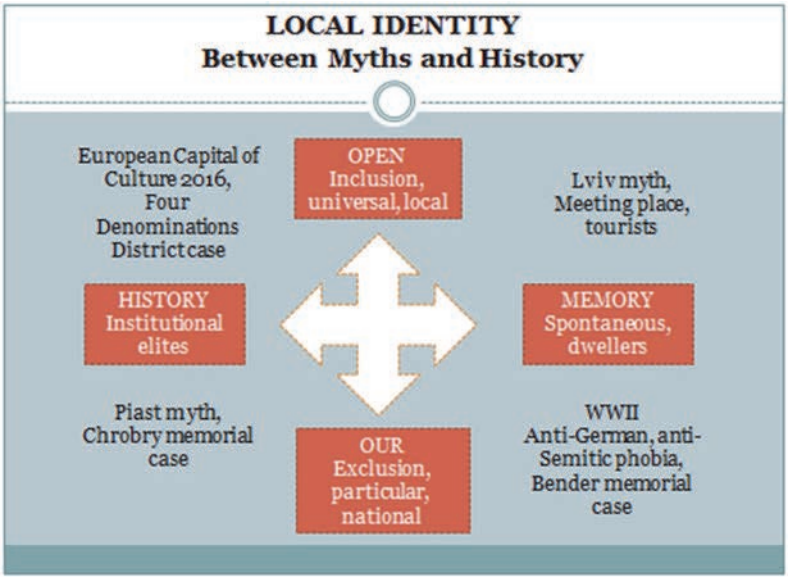


**Figure 7.7.** Local identity between myth and history.

To sum up the analysis, I would like to propose a more formalized diagram (Fig. 7.7) showing distribution of the main concepts and ideas that determine the field of interpretation for specific events and their social mechanisms. The vertical axis of the diagram is determined by the extreme trends and forms of functioning of almost every social community. Openness to others, acceptance of differences, and reference to universal values can be and often are conditioned by the so-called locality. Emphasizing the strength and values of the local community sometimes collides with the strength of ethnic or national identity. The second pole is determined by the

closing of the community, an escape from "alien" patterns and values. This is related to the exclusion of "others" due to narrowly understood ethnic, religious, and national criteria. It is often conditioned by social frustration, xenophobia, nostalgia, and idealization of a mythical past. Wrocław appears to be influenced by both of these two contradictory tendencies. The horizontal axis of the diagram is determined by the theoretical distinctions between memory and history fully expressed by Pierre Nora, but also presented by other theorists. On the one hand, "memory" is understood as a spontaneous and exuberant social process. It refers to the practice of everyday life, and unfixed, sometimes hidden patterns of social action, something that Max Weber describes as the chaos of elusive social reality. On the other hand, "history" designates institutionalized and patterned social schemes. In different ways, the domain of social organizations and institutions supports forms of the social order, of which they are beneficiaries.

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# A Tragedy of the Galician Diversity
## Commemoration of Polish Professors Killed in Lviv during World War II

*Eleonora Narvselius*

***Abstract:*** *In popular imagery, the former Habsburg province of Galicia and its capital city Lemberg/Lwów/Lviv have been acclaimed for their unique mixture of religions, cultures and nationalities. However, there are also darker sides to this Galician diversity, as became evident during the wars and crises of the first half of the twentieth century. It is instructive to explore how the entanglements between collective and individual choices, cultural genealogies, and political aspirations looked in practice in this part of Europe, and how historical events of the twentieth century have reflected this complexity. This chapter explores one such event: the murder of a group of eminent Polish academics during the Nazi occupation of Lviv/Lwów. After the war, this tragic episode was commemorated quite independently in the two parts of Galicia now divided by the redrawn Polish–(Soviet)Ukrainian border. The episode remains controversial due to the contradictory interpretative frameworks and agenda-setting of various actors involved into the memorialization. The author draws on Michael Rothberg's concept of* multidirectional memory *to highlight how reverberations of Galician diversity can be approached from an anthropological perspective, focusing on meaning-making and agency.*

## Introduction

As a multicultural border area, Galicia is hardly unique in Europe. It has been pointed out that

> Austrian Galicia was not unique in terms of its cultural diversity. Other European regions such as Alsace, Bohemia, and Silesia were equally diverse, and the Vojvodina, Transylvania, and Macedonia were even more so. In all of these places, the interaction between varying peoples and cultures produced rivalry and competition that had both a positive as well as negative impact on the political, economic, and in particular, cultural status of each group (Magocsi 2005: 10).

However, what is interesting from a cultural anthropological perspective is not only that several nationalities co-existed in the region for a long time until the historical diversity was wiped out in the middle of the 20th century. Of even greater significance is to examine what the complex interplay between linguistic and cultural choices, ideological orientations, and political aspirations looked like in practice, exactly how different historical phenomena reflected this complexity, and the possible consequences that conflicting interpretations of fateful historical events might have for subsequent memory cultures. This anthropological case study, which is based on fieldwork, archive material, and secondary sources, will put a focus on complex aspects of such an event and how it is remembered. The purpose is to demonstrate how contradictory interpretations, rumors, and actions were initiated in connection with the murder and commemoration of a group of Polish academics who were executed in a Nazi-occupied Galician metropolis, and how they re-established dividing lines and rivalries with their roots in local patterns of coexistence. Michael Rothberg's theory of "multidirectional memory" is used to expand the state of knowledge about the aftershocks of historical Galician diversity.

## Galician Diversity: A Balancing Act between Interaction and Zero-Sum Game

Lviv, a city also known as Leopolis, Lemberg, Lwów, and Lvov, depending on the age and the ethnocultural affiliation of the ruling elite, is now an attractive tourist destination that offers a glimpse of the glory from its time as capital of the Habsburg province of Galicia, as well as a cultural metropolis in inter-war Poland. Contemporary accounts of Lviv/Lwów that are conveyed in popular culture, political and also academic contexts emphasize the city's and the province's unique mix of religions, cultures, and nationalities. This multicultural profile is often celebrated, portrayed as a collection of pieces in the "Galician mosaic," or as individual stories with links to different nationalities—Polish, Ukrainian, Jewish, Armenian, Austrian, and others. All in all, this has helped to create an idyllic image of *Galicia Felix*, a Galician diversity that has been presented

in the form of parallel accounts of individual peoples who, despite their differences, lived in peaceful coexistence over many centuries and created a unique regional culture.[1] In this context, however, one might wonder how much of this multicultural image that is conveyed actually reflects the true conditions in the Habsburg Empire, and to what extent this is an idealized reconstruction.

Another aspect that deserves a deeper consideration is which of the cultural hierarchies and customs that had developed in the fairly stable context of the Habsburg *fin de siècle* continued to apply even in changed political circumstances. During the 20th century, Galicia lived through three wars (World War I, the Polish–Ukrainian conflict over Galicia shortly thereafter, and World War II) as well as several fateful events that radically changed the demographic structure of the region. As a consequence of this, Galician diversity in its Habsburg variant was consigned to the past, while national singularity instead became a norm. It is therefore important to know how relations between ethnic neighbors—which always had their dark sides, as treachery and immoral alliances left their mark both on major political games and on a personal level—developed over time.

In multicultural border areas such as Galicia, dividing lines between different categories and identities have been more blurred, more negotiable, and more "porous" than in more central regions (Czaplicka 2002; Bialasiewicz 2003; Hann and Magocsi 2005; Wolff 2010; Bartov and Weitz 2013; Linkiewicz 2018; Narvselius 2019). This resulted in the emergence of various hybrid identities, such as those known as *latynnyky*, Ukrainian-speaking Roman Catholics (Pavlyshyn 2014), but it also opened up opportunities for individuals to make independent cultural choices. As evidence of this considerable freedom of choice, especially in cities, one can point to statistics on conversions (Wnęk, Zyblikiewicz, and Callahan 2006: 93–108), but also to many family histories, perhaps the most famous of which concerns the aristocratic Fredro-Szeptycki family. The

1 Such stories were presented in the exhibition *Mytos Galizien/Myt Galicji* which was hold in Vienna and Krakow in 2014–2015 and received positive reviews in media.

classical Polish author Aleksander Fredro, the patriotic Polish General Stanisław Szeptycki and Andrey Sheptytskyi, the Greek Catholic Metropolitan and spiritual leader of the Ukrainian community in Galicia, all descended from the same family. Yet such flexibility was limited by a number of provisions such as those that determined which denomination children in mixed families should belong to. Also, although the assimilation of the Jewish population into the Polish language and high culture gained momentum towards the end of the Habsburg period, marriage with non-Jews was still rare.[2] What might on the surface could look like strictly individual choices were, in reality, the results of games played according to both written and unwritten rules, where what was permitted was measured against what was practical, what was conceivable against what was desirable, and so on.

Clear cracks were already appearing in this well-developed, yet fragile cultural base in the early 20th century (Hann 2005: 221). As may be seen in a study of denouncement and character assassination in inter-war Galicia,[3] the brutalization of interpersonal relationships in the wake of World War I and the Polish victory in the war over Galicia from 1918–19 triggered discursive mechanisms of an ethnic zero-sum game. Terrible effects of the spreading of rumors, slander, and innuendo directed at "the others" in one's vicinity became fully visible during Soviet and German occupation during World War II (Wendland 2005). Yet even after the war had ended, similar discursive strategies to point the finger of suspicion at one's former neighbors continued to be deployed on both sides of the political border that now divided Galicia between Poland and Soviet Ukraine (see Zashkilniak 2008; Wnuk 2013; Khakhula 2016; Szabłowski 2016), although the official rhetoric continued to echo clichés about internationalism and fraternal relationships.

One useful theoretical framework that focuses on how collective conceptions, rhetorical arguments and representations linked

2 They made up only around 1% of all mixed marriages in the region (Spickard 1989: 167).

3 Which, since the takeover of the re-emerging Polish state, was called Małopolska Wschodnia, that is, Eastern Lesser Poland.

to the tragic past continue to operate under different guises in contemporary contexts is Michael Rothberg's multidirectional memory. Rothberg points out that different memories and cultural narratives can seemingly disappear from the public domain, to be transformed and continue to exist in different—sometimes surprising—forms. Memories of tragic events are not only manipulated, forgotten or silenced, but also shifted by various social, psychological, and political forces to different contexts. There they interact with other cultural representations that happened not only simultaneously with the recalled episodes, but also before and after them (Rothberg 2013: 13–16). In the following text I will link this theoretical reasoning to a discussion of the aftermath of Galician diversity.

## The Historical Context of the Murder on the Wuleckie Hills: Complicated Interactions, Tangled Stories

In "dense" environments pervaded by so many complex constellations and power games between individuals, ethnic groups, and institutions, historical events are usually obscure and multi-dimensioned. Conflicts tend to be protracted and difficult to conclude, precisely because of this "tangled" coexistence, where triggers and responses come from different directions and not always in a predictable form. The possibility of compromise and a united front in support of common interests is often negligible because of various special interests and numerous memories of previous mutual injustices. The wars, radical and rapid regime changes, political exterminations, expulsions and expropriations that the twentieth century brought about allowed both groups and individuals to become each other's victims as well as perpetrators. It is precisely this disastrous development that we see in Galicia in connection with the two world wars and their extreme violence and brutality (see Barkan, Cole, and Struve 2007; Mick 2015; Liber 2016). Moreover, these entanglements created a perfect substrate for various intermediate positions from which perpetuation of mutual injustices became

possible both directly and indirectly—in Rothberg's terminology, positions of implicated subjects (Rothberg 2019).

A complex series of events in the history of Lviv, around which many questions, rumors, and speculations arose, is the mass violence that was triggered at the beginning of the Nazi occupation of the city. For a history that is written with a strictly national perspective, which does not take into account a local reality of coexistence, unequal conditions, and rivalry between ethnocultural environments, political groups, and individual loyalties, these episodes are almost incomprehensible. Particularly enlightening in this regard is the tragic event that took place from 3 to 4 July 1941, namely the murder of a group of Polish academics and the post-war attempts to honor their memory, which was, however, blocked or questioned from several quarters. The story describing how this event became "tangled" in the local context, and how its ambivalence and unanswered questions contributed to subsequent problems surrounding the commemoration of the murder of the professors, is quite complicated. Let us begin, however, with a brief account of what preceded this tragedy in Lviv.

In September 1939, Poland was attacked and divided between Germany and the Soviet Union in accordance with the secret supplementary protocol to the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact. After the Polish surrender on 23 September 1939, Lviv was incorporated into the Soviet Republic of Ukraine. According to the pact, around 60,000 Galician Germans were allowed to leave Soviet-annexed areas (Müller 2012), while the new regime immediately began to purge Lviv and Eastern Galicia of "hostile elements." According to the 1931 census, the city's population consisted of 50.44% Poles, 31.9% Jews, 15.61% Ukrainians and about 2% other groups (Makarchuk 2007: 447),[4] but this picture changed radically after 1939.

4 However, the crux is that the census did not contain a question about national affiliation. It is thus more correct to say that these oft-quoted figures reflect not nationality, but religious denomination of the respondents (Roman Catholics, Israelites, Greek Catholics and others respectively). Distribution of the population according to primary language gave different figures, namely 63.5% declared they spoke Polish, 24.1% Yiddish and Hebrew, 7.8% Ukrainian, 3.5% Ruthenian, and 0.3% spoke other languages (Bonusiak 2000: 195).

During the brief first period of Soviet rule at the beginning of World War II (September 1939–June 1941), hundreds of thousands of people of different nationalities were imprisoned and deported, albeit with a clear over-representation of ethnic Poles.[5] The "first Soviets" appeared to privilege the ethnically Ukrainian population, while the Poles, who in Soviet discourse were branded "overlords" and "exploiters," were forced to adapt to the elevation of their ethnic rivals.

It should be mentioned that the incorporation of Eastern Galicia into Poland after the short, but intense Polish–Ukrainian war of 1918–19 was followed by a period when higher education in the region was characterized by serious conflicts. The Polish authorities either ignored or even encouraged the discrimination and persecution of Jewish students, resulting in fatal disturbances within university campuses.[6] Moreover, the Poles broke the promise that a special Ukrainian university would be established in Lviv (Redzik 2017: 157–97). Patriotic Ukrainian young people who wanted to pursue higher education chose to continue their studies abroad (Zavorotna 2020). However, one of the most famous—but also infamous—leaders of the Ukrainian nationalist organization OUN,[7] Stepan Bandera, was not allowed to study in the Czech town of

5 According to estimates by the Polish historian Grzegorz Hryciuk (mentioned in Makarchuk 2007: 447), during the short period of Soviet rule, in eastern Galicia the Polish population decreased by 110,000 people (7.5%), of whom 20,000 vanished from Lviv. Losses among the Ukrainian population during the same period amounted to 50,000 people (1.7%) and among the Jews to 15,000 people (8.5%).

6 On *numerus clausus* and the "ghetto benches" at interwar Polish universities see Mendelsohn (1983: 73); Kulczykowski (2004). On Ukrainian–Polish strife in Lwów academia, see Draus (2007: 63–70) and Bukowska-Marczak (2019: 120–90).

7 The Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) was a radical political movement fighting for the establishment of an independent state of Ukraine. It practiced revolutionary terrorism and directed its main efforts primarily against the Soviets and Poles. After its split in 1940, its two factions became known as the OUN(b), "Banderites," and the OUN(m), "Mel'nykites," after their leaders Stepan Bandera and Andrii Mel'nyk. The role of the OUN remains contested in the historiography, especially in regards to collaboration with Nazi Germany, participation in the extermination of Jews, and the mass murders of Poles in Volhynia and Galicia in 1943. Nevertheless, the OUN and its structures did not figure as an accused party in the Nuremberg trial, and neither were they charged for the murder of the Lviv academics; see Schenk (2011: 129–32) and Bolianovs'kyi (2011: 138–39).

Poděbrady in 1927. He later went to Lwów Polytechnic University, where he spent several years studying Agronomy. Another political activist who was high up in the OUN hierarchy and who studied at the same university was Roman Shukhevych.

Following the introduction of Soviet rule in Lviv and Eastern Galicia, the situation of the Ukrainians improved, as did that of the Jews, in at least one important respect: the new rules applying for admission to universities resulted in a substantial increase in the number of students from both population groups (Volchuk 2011: 74). As far as university staff were concerned, the Soviets preferred to retain most of the specialists who remained in Lviv, at least initially. Although the Lviv academia did not have any Nobel Laureates in its ranks, it enjoyed high international prestige thanks to its medical research (Rudolf Weigl and others), its renowned mathematical environment (including Hugo Steinhaus and Stefan Banach) and its famous Lwów-Warsaw School of Philosophy (with staff including Kazimierz Twardowski and Jan Łukasiewicz). At the beginning of the Soviet period, about 40% of academic staff consisted of ethnic Poles, although at the professorial level Poles were in a clear majority (52 people), compared to Ukrainians (22) and Jews (8). At the polytechnic, medical, and veterinary institutes[8] most of the professors were Poles (Hryciuk 2000: 130). In the local academia, the pre-war ethnocultural hierarchies were thus replicated, which meant that old antagonisms continued to simmer beneath the surface, even in the changed political circumstances.

The conflicts fueled by two years of Soviet rule at the beginning of World War II triggered a wave of brutality and repression as the political regime changed. Anti-Jewish violence erupted after the discovery of tens of thousands of prisoners that had been killed, their corpses left behind by the Soviets in several western Ukrainian cities.[9] When the local population opened the prisons after the Red

8 During the "first Soviets," Lwów Polytechnic University as well as the Veterinary Academy and the Faculty of Medicine at Jan Kazimierz University were transformed into institutes.

9 The number of prisoners murdered during the Soviet retreat is estimated at between 20,000 and 40,000. Among them, two thirds were Ukrainians, one fifth

Army's retreat, the macabre sight of piles of bodies came as a shock, even to those who at the time were well aware of the brutality of the Soviet security services. Desperation and a thirst for revenge were quickly linked to the myth of Jewish Bolshevism and cleverly manipulated by the Nazis, the new rulers who soon entered Lviv. Anti-Jewish street violence, which claimed more than 4,000 lives, began shortly before the Germans' arrival and continued for several weeks (Mick 2016: 289–95).

The first military unit that marched into the city on 29 June 1941 was the Nachtigall (Nightingale) Battalion, which consisted of the Germans' Ukrainian allies, adherents of Bandera's faction of OUN. Ukrainian nationalists had hopes of a sovereign Ukrainian state under German protection, and the Nachtigall Battalion's presence in Lviv was of the utmost strategic importance to them. The unit took over, among other things, the city's radio station, from which OUN proclaimed Ukrainian independence on 30 June 1941. Even though the organization's ideology repeated Nazi doctrines in several respects, and presented Hitler's Germany as its primary role model, its main purpose and agenda were of a different nature. OUN's ideological base can best be described as integral nationalism, an ultra-conservative world view with strong elements of xenophobia, yet without direct racial doctrines, portraying the sovereign Ukrainian state as its prime objective (Zaitsev 2013; Zaitsev 2015, Shkandrij 2015). During the critical early days of the regime change, members of the Nachtigall Battalion were involved in proclaiming the Ukrainian state. At the same time, there is evidence that Ukrainians in the service of the Germans participated in the pogrom that erupted in Lviv after the discovery of the NKVD's victims, one of whom was Yurii Shukhevych, a brother of the Nachtigall Battalion's Commander Roman Shukhevych (Himka 2011: 226).

The Nachtigall Battalion's controversial history was a short one. When senior German leaders became aware that OUN had declared a Ukrainian state without their permission, the battalion was

Poles and the rest people of different nationalities, including Jews, Czechs, Germans, Belarusians, and Russians (Kiebuzinski and Motyl 2017: 40).

given the order to leave Lviv on 7 June. The unit was disbanded in August, with its members being sent as a part of Schutzmannschaft Battalion 201 to Belarus (Kal'ba 2008; Rudling 2020). In early 1943, this group was disarmed and its officers were arrested. Roman Shukhevych, however, managed to escape and join the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA). As its supreme commander, he bears much of the responsibility for the bloody ethnic cleansing of the Polish population that took place in Volhynia and Galicia in 1943–44.

## Execution of a Group of Polish Professors in Lviv: Riddles and Ambivalence surrounding a Wartime Murder

In the chain reaction of cause and effect, with ever-shifting constellations of German, Soviet, Jewish, and Ukrainian power and powerlessness, the Polish component took on a special role. Once they had occupied Lviv, the Nazis directed their extermination policy against the city's Jewish population, and following the proclamation of the Ukrainian state, they took strong action against Ukrainian nationalists. Among the population of Polish nationality who were in Lviv, the academic intelligentsia became the first victims of Nazi violence. In Polish memory culture, where much attention is devoted to the efforts of the national intelligentsia (see Smoczyński and Zarycki 2017), an attack on this particular group of Polish residents assumed a special status. One contributory reason for this has been the many unanswered questions around this heinous act, which have created a perfect breeding ground for rumor and speculation.[10]

It has been established beyond any doubt that on the night of 3–4 July 1941, an Einsatzkommando led by SS-Brigadeführer Eberhard Schöngarth shot to death a group of prominent academics on

10 No written arrest warrant or order about the execution has ever been found, see Bolianovs'kyi (2011: 23). Moreover, no perpetrators have been sentenced or imprisoned for this particular crime. The case was heard at the International Tribunal in Nuremberg in 1946 and then reopened in Germany and Poland, but it became practically impossible to sentence the perpetrators; see Schenk (2011: 9–18, 307–72); Albert (1989: 130–31); Bolianovs'kyi (2011: 63); and Hnatiuk (2015: 50).

the Wulecki Hills (in Polish, Wzgórza Wuleckie), close to the city center of Lviv/Lwów. The massacre was observed by terrified dwellers of several houses in the vicinity. The oft-cited number of victims is forty-five (Draus 2007; Bolianovs'kyi 2011; Schenk 2011; Krętosz 2012: 17–18).[11] Among the executed were five women. Among the males were twenty-three professors, many of them figures of international renown affiliated with the Lviv Medical Institute, the University, the Polytechnics, the Zoo-Veterinary Institute, and the city hospital. Professors of medicine and physicians were the largest group, followed by scientists from the Polytechnics. Among the victims was also one priest, a doctor of theology. A week later, on July 11, more than one hundred students of the high schools were detained and executed in Lviv (Hryciuk 2008: 97–98).

The execution was a continuation of the large-scale extermination campaign targeting the Polish intelligentsia. Two years earlier, in November 1939, 183 employees of the Jagiellonian University were arrested and transported to the Sachsenhausen concentration camp in the aftermath of *Sonderaktion Krakau*.[12] Compared to Kraków, however, a significantly smaller group of academics was singled out during the first days of the Nazi occupation of Lviv. The question why exactly these individuals were selected for the massacre looms large both in the historical quest and in commemorative contexts. Historical studies suggest several possible explanations that add more details to the portrait of the perpetrators and shed more light on identities of the victims. A crucial reason for distinguishing this small group might be their alleged co-operation with the Soviet authorities.[13] The former prime minister of Poland,

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11 On losses of the Lwów academy from the Nazi and Soviet repressions, see the mentioned book by Draus, and also Skarzyński (1995: 137–77); Redzik (2017: 984–89, 1032–52); and Krętosz (2012: 13–14).

12 The survivors were released after international protests. However, the course of action was different in Lviv, as Governor-General Hans Frank made it clear that he did not want to repeat the "mistake" made in Kraków (Redzik 2017: 1032). Aside from the murder on the Wulecki Hills and extermination of Jewish academics by the fall of 1943, the Lwów academia was decimated in other ways. All in all, Lviv lost 91% professors of medicine, 36.4% of natural sciences, 33.3% of law, 24% of humanities, and 64% of theology (Bonusiak 1989: 112).

13 During the first Soviet period (1939–41) all of them stayed in Lviv, and some even became deputies of the Lviv City Council (Albert 1989: 126–27;

Prof. Kazimierz Bartel, as well as several other Polish academics who were called to Moscow shortly before the German occupation, may have been a given target. Only eight of the eighteen delegation members, however, were arrested despite the fact that German authorities knew all their names (Bonusiak 1989: 39). This and many other contradictions provoke further questions about the circumstances of the assault on the Lviv academic elite as an episode in the chain of unprecedented brutalities accompanying the end of the Soviet and the beginning of the Nazi occupation in summer 1941.[14] These details may also provide a clue about the complexity of motives and interests behind the massacre. Selectivity of the executions can be reasonably explained both by the reliance of the Nazis on inaccurate lists, and by the tactic of random terror (Schenk 2011: 174; Volchuk 2011: 6–7; Hnatiuk 2015: 47–48). Purely mercantile motives could also have played a role in targeting at least several professors, as immediately after their deaths the Dutch art dealer and SS man Pieter Menten quickly appropriated their valuable possessions.[15]

Although this particular crime might have been triggered by an array of possible motives, for the Nazis the victims' elite status and Polish nationality was sufficient reason for their extermination.[16] That the majority of those executed on the Wulecki Hills were doctors and scientists—a well-connected, influential, and especially respected stratum of Polish nationals—prompts this conclusion. The group was quite homogenous in terms of ethnicity owing to the prevalence of ethnic Poles among the university professors before the German occupation of Lviv. Nevertheless, the fact that the group included two Jews (Dr Stanisław Ruff and his son), one part-Ukrainian (Prof. Adam Sołowij), and one person of Austrian origin (Prof. Franciszek Gröer, released but then captured anew in 1942)

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Bolianovs'kyi 2011: 15; Schenk 2011). The alleged collaboration with the Soviets was an argument against commemoration of the professors raised by a former mayor of post-Soviet Lviv, Vasyl' Shpitser (Pol's'ki vcheni 2011).

14 See their detailed overview in Plichko (2017).

15 On the postwar Menten trials see Knoop (1979).

16 Altogether, during World War II, Poland lost 45% of its physicians and dentists, 40% of university professors, over 15% of teachers, 57% of lawyers and over 18% of its clergy (Dear and Foot 1995: 894).

indicates that the "race" and ethnicity of the victims was less important in this context than their social status.

Yet this does not mean in any way that ethnicity was a factor of minor importance in Nazi-occupied Lviv. On the contrary, in countless contexts it became a matter of life or death. One eyewitness described the general numbness and indifference to the fate of others, the only exceptions being well-established personal relationships and affection:

> Each group felt the pain of those who were close to them, but they were not interested in the humiliation or oppression of members of other groups. The fate of the Ukrainians was of no concern to the Poles or the Jews, and the Ukrainians were in turn uninterested in theirs. Individuals from different groups contacted [each other] only because of long personal friendships or family connections. (Pankivs'kyi 1965: 62–63).

The brutality of the German regime fueled local ethnic conflicts, especially the old Ukrainian–Polish rivalry, which had worsened as a result of the first Soviet occupation. The Polish–Ukrainian conflict escalated with the implementation of the "final solution" to the Jews between 1942 and 1943, culminating in inter-ethnic violence in Volhynia and Galicia. Even though cities were not affected by these massacres to the same extent as rural areas, ethnically motivated attacks became part of the day-to-day reality of Nazi-occupied Lviv. The academia had been transformed into an arena of bitter national and political-ideological conflict long before the German occupation, but the Nazi regime's unprecedented violence and manipulation poured oil on the flames. Speculation began immediately that the murder of the Polish professors could not have happened without the involvement of the Ukrainians. It was said that OUN supporters had previously helped the Germans compile proscription lists with the names of "particularly interesting" Polish academics in Lviv.[17] A rumor also spread that Ukrainians had taken part in the actual execution. In view of the fact that the Nachtigall

17 As an anonymous correspondent wrote in the wartime Polish newspaper *Nurt* in May 1943: "Almost all the names of the medical department were stroke out once and for all by the German crime and Ukrainian prompts"; quoted in Trznadel (1998: 13). This rumor was not groundless; see Volchuk (2011: 6-7); Albert (1989: 115); Bonusiak (1989: 72–85); and Schenk (2011: 174).

Battalion had been in Lviv during the first days of July, Polish historians also concluded that the unit shared responsibility for the murder of the professors. Tadeusz Piotrowski's argument is fairly typical:

> […] it is beyond dispute that thousands of Jews and Poles lost their lives in Lwów in those first days of July, that most of the professors died […] on July 4, 1941, and that Nachtigall was not withdrawn from that city until July 7. Those who deny Nachtigall's participation in these atrocities must tell us what exactly the regiment did there during that time. In any case, since no one has ever stated that the Ukrainian, pro-Nazi Nachtigall opposed these atrocities or in any way tried to prevent them, its members are guilty at least of the sin of omission. (Piotrowski 1998: 210–11).[18]

As the old conflict between the Galician Poles and Ukrainians had been fueled in Nazi-occupied Lviv, the involvement of Ukrainian co-conspirators from Nachtigall was gradually established in postwar Polish and Soviet[19] historiography as a credible explanation of the murder of the Polish professors. However, several interesting details should be pointed out in this context, which focuses on interpersonal relationships and personal contacts, and lends nuances to the story of the professors' murder. These details do of course need to be interpreted in a broader context, but it is clear that they tend to call into question the story of vengeful Ukrainians who deliberately became the executors of this Nazi crime.

In Roman Shukhevych's museum in Bilohorshcha, a suburb of Lviv, visitors can see an interesting document with information about exams that Shukhevych had taken at Lwów Polytechnic University during the academic year 1926/1927. The examining teachers include professors Kazimierz Bartel and Antoni Łomnicki. Roman Shukhevych, the Commander of the Ukrainian unit identified as jointly responsible for the murder of the professors, was thus personally familiar with at least two of the executed academics. They were his university teachers and clearly appreciated him as a diligent student, as evidenced by the grades they awarded him: pass

18 However, such interpretation of events is questioned in Schenk (2011: 9–18; 307–72, 347) and Motyka (2015: 95–96).

19 Primarily due to efforts of Soviet propagandist and writer Aleksandr Beliaev (Beviaev 1978: 29 ff.).

with distinction (Bartel) and pass with credit (Łomnicki). Was it possible, on a purely human level, for Shukhevych to harbor grudges against his mentors, many of whom were also his neighbors (Chaikivs'kyi 2019: 235), and deliberately send his men to participate in their murder? This question remains a rhetorical one, but is thought-provoking nonetheless. Another professor who examined Shukhevych, and whose name is also mentioned in the document, was mathematician Stefan Banach. Unlike Bartel and Łomnicki, he was not arrested in early July 1941. As a member of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine during "first Soviets" years and as a possible "Soviet collaborator," he should also have met death on the Wuleckie Hills. Yet he remained in the city and survived in difficult circumstances, namely as a feeder of lice in Professor Rudolf Weigl's famous bacteriological laboratory.

Another thought-provoking detail is to be found in Kost' Pankivs'kyi's previously cited memoirs. He was a Ukrainian lawyer who, during the Nazi occupation, was chairman of the National Council (*Natsional'na rada*), a civil Ukrainian organization that engaged, under German supervision, in charity, schooling, culture, and health in the District of Galicia. Pankivs'kyi mentions cooperation between different national groups aimed at improving the situation of the civilian population. Maria Bartel, the wife of the murdered former Prime Minister, Professor Kazimierz Bartel, became Pankivs'kyi's vice-chairman of the committee that took care of work with prisoners (Pankivs'kyi 1965: 76). Did she not believe the rumors that Ukrainians had participated in the execution of her husband's colleagues (Bartel was murdered a little later, and not on the Wuleckie Hills), or did she choose nevertheless to cooperate with Ukrainian activists for the sake of their common cause? These details certainly say something important about the circumstances of wartime multi-ethnic Lviv, where personal lifestyles, interests, and loyalties intersected and changed in ways that were extremely difficult to predict.

## Commemoration of the Murdered Professors in Poland before 1989

Immediately after the capture of Lviv in July 1944, Soviet authorities confirmed the information about the professors' deaths, which had previously been circulated by the Polish government in London. Since that time and until the early 1990s, their commemoration evolved autonomously in Poland and the USSR. This happened against the background of postwar (geo)political divisions and Soviet ideological dictates, but the situation was cemented by more subtle lines of conflict. With the re-annexation of the eastern Polish territories by the USSR in 1944, Soviet and Polish authorities organised extensive "repatriations" and population exchanges across the Polish–Soviet border, wiping out the remaining Polish academic environment in Lviv. Although the heirs of the Lwów academia were welcome in Kraków, it is important to note that many were sent to the former German territories awarded to Poland in 1945, mainly Breslau/Wrocław, in order to establish higher education and reinforce Polish identity there. It was not in the interests of the Communist authorities, either in Poland or in Soviet Ukraine, to encourage the preservation of a particular identity of the Lviv academics or their regular contacts with the lost Polish border areas of the east. At the same time, everything in Lviv relating to the historical presence and cultural merits of the Poles became increasingly sensitive, as Sovietization in Ukrainian style resumed after the war.

As a consequence of this, the memory of the high status and martyrdom of murdered Polish academics was shifted westwards, mainly to the "regained territories," where it was primarily managed by the university elite, who gradually strengthened their positions vis-à-vis the authorities. Wrocław and Kraków initially positioned themselves as natural heirs to the traditions of the Lwów academia and to the executed professors. Especially in Wrocław, whose population in the post-war period included between 5% and 9% who had been displaced from Lviv (Goćkowski and Jałowiecki 2009: 67–96; Kulak 1997: 278), the memory of the professors was embedded not only in academic circles, but also in the broader cultural context.

By contrast, developments were different on the other side of Poland's revised eastern border, in Ukrainian-Soviet Lviv. Here the story of the professors became fragmented, and the different elements came to form part of several historical narratives. Western Ukrainian academic circles were aware of the achievements of the Lwów academia, but were not encouraged to maintain non-Soviet traditions and recognize continuity with inter-war Polish science. Yet the murder on the Wuleckie Hills was incorporated into the account of the Great Patriotic War: the executed professors could be presented as both Soviet victims of, and fighting against, "German fascism."

In socialist Poland, the story of the Lwów professors became part of the traditional narrative of the martyrdom and resurrection of the Polish nation. Essentially, the story oscillated between two headlines. On the one hand, it condemned Nazism and honored all murdered Polish intellectuals in a politically accepted formula. Academics and other members of the intelligentsia were thus labeled as a special category of Nazi victims. This narrative was convenient for the Polish Communist authorities, as it circumvented the challenge that the mention of Lwów and the lost Polish territories of the east (the so-called *kresy*) might pose in the prevailing political situation. On the other hand, the alternative narrative of the martyrdom of the Lwów professors, as well as constant reminders of their special importance to Poland's annexed western territories, became more pronounced towards the end of the socialist period.

Deliberations about the monument to the Lwów professors that was built in Wrocław illustrate how the two differently angled narratives coexisted and competed with each other. After World War II, the German academic heritage was deliberately disregarded, while the new Polish institutes of higher education in the annexed western territories traced their institutional lineage to the Lwów academia, giving the city a strong emotional and symbolic dimension in Polish academic circles. A monument to the professors had been discussed in Wrocław since 1949, but a proposal was not submitted until 1956 in connection with the fifteenth anniversary of the murder. That time the initiative was blocked, partly by

a lack of funding and partly by the absence of support from the Polish authorities. Within the university, however, they continued to fight for the cause and organised a fundraising. A memorial, officially named "Monument to Polish scholars, victims of Hitlerism," was finally unveiled on 3 September 1964 on the campus of Wrocław University of Science and Technology. When local newspapers announced the planned inauguration, they applied the politically correct formulation "martyrdom of *all* [italics added] Polish scientists murdered by barbaric fascism during World War II" (Mierzecki 2007: 1–2). During the unveiling ceremony, secular heroism was emphasized, as the public celebration included a military guard, a military salute, and a march of Wrocław academics around the new monument.

The design of the memorial was somewhat abstract. Its central feature consisted of two stylized human figures, one falling and the other standing, in the face of a hail of bullets (Fig. 8.1). In his official inaugural speech, Professor Stanisław Kulczyński, former Rector of Jan Kazimierz University, used the politically approved rhetoric of the martyrdom of all Polish scientists. Nevertheless, he also mentioned a special "vision of the scene that took place on 4 July 1941, under the wall of death in the sand pit of Wólka in Lwów" *(ibid.)*. His speech sent out a signal that Wrocław's academics were determined to follow their own narrative line, despite political pressure.

**Figure 8.1.** Monument to the Lwów professors in Wrocław. Sculptor Borys Michałowski. Photo by Eleonora Narvselius.

In 1966, shortly after the inauguration of the monument in Wrocław, the professors were honored in Kraków. A plaque placed in the Franciscan church for the first time revealed their names in a public space. In 1981, with the rise of Solidarity movement, the monument in Wrocław was also complemented with plaques containing the names of the Wuleckie Hills victims. Instead of being

dedicated to all the fallen Polish scientists of World War II, it became a site explicitly commemorating those who perished in Lwów. Notably, the plaques were unveiled not by politicians or academic functionaries, but by the widow of one of the victims, Dr Maria Witkiewicz. From being an arena of confrontation between an academia keen on forging its institutional heritage and regional ancestry, on the one hand, and the authorities imposing an idea of an all-national heroic pantheon, on the other, the monument gradually became a site of grief, prayer, and mourning.

## Failed Attempts to Commemorate the Murder of the Professors in Soviet Lviv

The memory of the murder of the professors followed a different direction in post-war Ukraine. Throughout the Soviet period, the murder of the professors in Lviv was regarded as a local episode of no great significance in terms of Soviet-Ukrainian history or identity. In 1946, however, Abrachamowicz Street next to the Wuleckie Hills was renamed after the murdered Professor Tadeusz Boy-Żeleński, who was a member of the Soviet writers' association. There were plans to erect a monument at the site of the murder to mark the fifteenth anniversary of the crime, in 1956, but these were put on hold because of the tense political situation following the death of Stalin. As mentioned above, the plans of the Wrocław academics for a corresponding memorial also failed at about the same time.

While the plan to honor the professors with a monument was finally implemented in Wrocław during the 1960s, this decade passed in Lviv without any similar initiative. The historic event itself did, however, receive some attention. In the changed political climate, Soviet authorities launched a massive campaign against "Ukrainian bourgeois nationalism." In an attempt to discredit the Ukrainian underground resistance movement, the story of the Ukrainian nationalists' association with the Nazis was revived. Even though the Nachtigall Battalion was not held responsible for the murder of the professors immediately after the war, Soviet propaganda began to popularize this particular narrative in the

1960s. It was rumored that the new Soviet monument to the executed academics would feature the inscription "To the men of science shot by the Hitlerites and the Ukrainian bourgeois nationalists" (Hanitkevych 2011). How this phantom monument, which had been discussed repeatedly by the local authorities, was almost completed, but was then dismantled overnight, is a remarkable story.

The few photos that exist of the largely completed project show that the Lviv sculptor Emmanuil Mys'ko created his work in conceptual resonance with the Wrocław monument (Mys'ko 1999: 17). Both monuments were anthropomorphic and stylized, although Mys'ko, who was famous for his sculpture portraits, emphasized the facial features of many of the figures. This particular detail could have had devastating consequences. It was rumored that the monument was dismantled in 1976 (in 1980 according to a different version) after a statement asserting that one of the figures resembled a Lviv dissident. According to another version, this happened because one official disliked the monument portraying the "unreliable" Kazimierz Bartel, who until the outbreak of World War II was the "bourgeois" Prime Minister of Poland.

It does, however, seem more likely that the expensive monument, which could serve to discredit the nationalist movement in western Ukraine, was hastily dismantled not because of a banal comment, but rather because of an unfavorable combination of political circumstances, just as in the 1950s. Soviet–Polish relations became tense following the riots that broke out in 1976 due to a shock increase in food prices in Poland and the subsequent growth of the Solidarity movement. Another reason for the dismantling of Mysko's monument may have been the difficulty of placing the murder of the professors in the official cult of the Great Patriotic War that had been developed in the Soviet Union since 1964. A letter from the head of Lviv's regional cultural department, Yaroslav Vitoshyns'kyi, dated 8 July 1968, suggests that local authorities initiated discussions about the monument primarily in response to pressure from Polish party dignitaries. The fact that unnamed Polish persons of rank went to the Soviet Union's Minister of Culture, Yekaterina Furtseva, in this case can be seen as proof that the

commemoration of the murder of the professors in Lviv was of particular importance in the Polish context. Yet the letter also gives the impression that the officials responsible in Lviv had difficulty formulating a consistent and politically correct justification for this memory project based on the Soviet-Ukrainian perspective.[20]

According to the emerging canon of the Great Patriotic War, memorials should primarily apply to larger groups, especially heroic soldiers and an unspecified "peaceful population," and it was therefore not clear how a small group of Polish academics from the Soviet-annexed territories could fit into this picture. Instead, on the wave of monumentalization that took place in Soviet Ukraine between 1966 and 1980, a different monument was erected next to the main building of the Lviv Polytechnic National University (Fig. 8.2). The monument was inaugurated in 1976 in order to honor, as stated on its plinth, "staff and students of the Polytechnic who fell in the fight against fascism during the Great Patriotic War." A little earlier, a sculpture had been erected at the Lviv Medical University to acknowledge the collective heroism of Soviet doctors. Although most of those executed on the Wuleckie Hills were well-known Polish doctors, this fact was overlooked and instead tribute was paid to the self-sacrificing struggle of all Soviet doctors during the war. Throughout the Soviet period, Lviv thus publicly honored unnamed heroic scientists and other members of the intelligentsia in accordance with the official formula that was abandoned in Poland after 1981.

20 Derzhavnyi arkhiv L'vivs'koi oblasti (DALO—State Archive of Lviv Oblast), Proekt pam'iatnyka, fond P-1338, op. 1, od. zberihannia 1068, ark. 22–23.

**Figure 8.2.** The restored Soviet monument with a changed dedication that now reads: "To researchers from the Lviv Polytechnic Institute who fell during World War II". Photo by Eleonora Narvselius.

While it is tempting to explain the lack of a memorial to the professors through the ideological directives of the central Communist powers alone, the local context in which Polishness continued to be a sensitive and controversial subject should not be forgotten. In all likelihood, there was an unspoken resistance to the establishment

of the Polish martyrdom narrative in post-war Ukrainian Lviv, and in particular to the Ukrainian nationalist forces being burdened with shared responsibility for the massacre of the professors. A secret report addressed to the Ukrainian Communist Party's most senior dignitary Volodymyr Shcherbyts'kyi at the end of 1980 names just over twenty thousand former supporters of OUN who were living in Lviv Oblast as a main source of "unhealthy, and sometimes hostile talk."[21] As Rothberg has pointed out, "the emergence of memories into the public often takes place through triggers that may at first seem irrelevant or even unseemly" (Rothberg 2009: 17). By all accounts, the local multidimensional memory continued to develop at its own pace during the Soviet period, and one can conclude that the continued reluctance to honor Polish victims of Nazi occupation was well established at the local level.

## "A monument with no inscription": The Memorial to the Lviv Professors after the Fall of the Soviet System

With the collapse of the Socialist Bloc, the idea of honoring the executed professors with a monument in Lviv began to circulate once more. Polish–Ukrainian political relations were good, and interest in Galician multiethnicity increased sharply during the 1990s. Thus, it was now also possible for educational institutions in Lviv to reconnect with their pre-Soviet history and position themselves as stewards of the professors' memory. Previous contacts and friendly relations, in particular between Yurii Rudavs'kyi, Rector of Lviv Polytechnic National University, and his counterpart in Wrocław, Andrzej Wiszniewski, played an important role in this process. Nevertheless, plans for a monument on the Wuleckie Hills were once more put on hold this time. This was partly due to economic difficulties, but it was also once again a consequence of the changed political climate, in which talk of national pride and suffering started to become increasingly pronounced on both the Polish and

21 DALO, Pervomu sekretariu TsK Kompartii Ukrainy tovarishchu Shcherbitskomu Vladimiru Vasil'ievichu. O politicheskoi obstanovke vo L'vovskoi oblasti, fond P-3, op. 4, sprava 85, od. zberihannia 364, ark. 33.

the Ukrainian sides. Despite this, the first public event was organized in 1994 to acknowledge the shared academic heritage of Lviv and Wrocław. An exhibition with a title that was sensational in this context, "Forefathers and Fathers. Contributions of Polish Members of the Faculty of Architecture at Lviv Polytechnic National University," was shown in both cities. A year later, a memorial plaque was unveiled on the building where geodesy researcher Professor Kaspar Weigel, one of the victims from the Wuleckie Hills, lived until his death.

In Ukraine, these initiatives paved the way for public recognition of Polish academic heritage, particularly at Lviv Polytechnic National University, where a corridor in the main building now displays portraits of all its rectors, most of whom were Poles. The University museum now contains several artefacts referring to the executed professors—albeit as part of the overall story of the fate of the university under the two totalitarian regimes, with a particular focus on Soviet oppression. This logic resulted in portraits of the executed professors and OUN(b) leaders Stepan Bandera and Roman Shukhevych being placed side by side in the museum hall. The location of these nationalist activists, who were killed by the Soviet security service in the 1950s, among the academic martyrs can be explained on the grounds that they both studied at the Polytechnic University before the war and both fell victim to repressive political regimes. According to the same principle, the Ivan Franko National University's museum displays Zygmunt Albert's book about the murder of the professors alongside publications about post-war Ukrainian dissidents. On the other hand, the permanent exhibition in the Lviv National Medical University's museum makes no mention at all of the fact that its prominent colleagues fell victim to the Nazi regime. Professors Franciszek Gröer, Jan Grek, and Antoni Cieszyński are mentioned in their capacity as world-famous representatives of the academia. At the same time, the exhibition focuses on doctors who were part of the Ukrainian national movement.

For various reasons, after Ukraine's independence in 1991, the murder of the Polish professors in Lviv was relegated to the fringes of commemoration policy. There was, however, a change in 2008,

when the mayors of Lviv and Wrocław announced a design competition for a new memorial on the Wuleckie Hills. It is interesting to note that interviews with the officials and academics involved show that what was crucial to the ultimate success of the initiative was personal engagement and friendly relations between several influential actors in both cities, in particular between mayors Sadovyi and Dutkiewicz. The monument unveiled on 3 July 2011, on the 70th anniversary of the professors' execution, became the second memorial in post-Soviet Lviv dedicated to non-Ukrainians. The first was the Holocaust Monument.

Conceptually, the memorial on the Wuleckie Hills alludes to the Bible and emphasizes the sanctity of human life. The central part of the monument is an arch consisting of ten stones, symbolizing the Ten Commandments of God. The fifth stone, alluding to the Commandment "Thou shalt not kill," protrudes from the structure (Fig. 8.3).[22] Thereby, the intention was to underscore the shared religious values, and so avoid a controversy that could be easily stirred up if the site had referred to iconic representations of Polishness alone.

22 Emphasis on the uniting power of religious ethics played a crucial role in the orchestration of another Polish–Ukrainian commemorative event that drew international attention, namely the unveiling of the restored Cemetery of the Lwów Eaglets (Polish teens who fell during the Polish–Ukrainian struggles for the city in 1918) in 2005, on which see Khakhula (2016: 178–207). The intended emphasis on the religious component following the eventual success of the commemorations at the Cemetery of the Lwów Eaglets was also confirmed by Yaroslav Hrytsak, the head of the Polish–Ukrainian jury that selected the winning project for the professors' monument.

**Figure 8.3.** The new monument on the Wuleckie Hills unveiled in 2011. At the background is the memorial with a cross that was installed in the 1990s on the initiative of local Polish activists. Photo by Eleonora Narvselius.

The monument has no trace of national symbolism, nor does it have any text—an issue which prompted critical comments in the Polish media.[23] The monument includes a bronze detail that resembles a folded sheet of paper, but it is blank. It has been said that the original plan included an order (never found) to execute the professors to be engraved on the bronze sheet. Other sources stated that no such inscription had been planned. According to another

23 See, for example, "Lwowski pomnik polskich profesorów bez napisu," *TVP Info*, 3 July 2011, www.tvp.info/4814195/lwowski-pomnik-polskich-profesorow-bez-napisu (accessed 13 July 2017).

commentator, the monument was left without inscriptions because the Polish and Ukrainian parties could not agree on the use of the adjective "Polish." Wording approved by the local authorities of Lviv and Wrocław used the term "professors of Lviv," but this was rejected by the Polish state institution Council for the Protection of Struggle and Martyrdom Sites (*Rada Ochrony Pamięci Walk i Męczeństwa*) which instead insisted on "The Polish professors." In 2012, however, a granite stone was erected on the road leading to the monument with a dedication in three languages to "professors from Lviv [in Polish, *professorów Lwowskich]* who were murdered by the Nazis in 1941."

As a result of these controversies, the joint commemorative initiative was challenged both by a group of radical politicians from Lviv and by the Polish side. In an article published shortly before the official opening ceremony, historian Piotr Łysakowski, affiliated with the Polish Institute of National Remembrance (IPN), claimed that Ukrainians participated in the murder of the professors (Łysakowski 2011). The former mayor of Lviv, Vasyl' Shpitser, countered with the assertion that the executed professors were in fact Soviet collaborators and Ukrainophobes (Pol's'ki vcheni 2011).

Nevertheless, by and large, the installation of the monument on the Wuleckie Hills was a successful initiative, which finally acknowledged this important, but for political and ideological reasons controversial, group of victims of World War II. As a next step in the popularization of their memory, a special exhibition was planned on the campus of Lviv Polytechnic National University. But in 2011 this project was not implemented, due to serious differences of opinion between the Polish and Ukrainian parties as to its form and content. It was put on hold after 2014, with the war in Ukraine used as an excuse.

In 2016, the 75th anniversary of the murder of the professors coincided with a resolution by the Polish Sejm that defined wartime massacres of Poles in Volhynia and Galicia as genocide committed by OUN and its military force, UPA. This year, the tribute ceremony at the monument was colored by a sense of resentment. Although both Ukrainian and Polish delegations consisted of senior officials

and the ceremony received a lot of media attention, the official speeches were clichéd and the atmosphere was somewhat tense. The monument had now evidently become linked to the Polish–Ukrainian dispute over historical memory, which has become increasingly polarized since the early 2000s. It is still important and significant for both Ukrainian and Polish commemorative actors that the murdered professors be honored. Nor has the fundamental notion that "in the face of science, as before God, everyone is equal" lost its importance to Polish and Ukrainian academic elites. Yet this did not prevent the monument from being vandalized on 10 March 2017. This officially inaugurated monument, which according to the sceptics only symbolizes a forced consensus, was suddenly transformed into a new front line in the Polish–Ukrainian war over historical memory.

As is often the case with memory events, "[i]t is often difficult to tell whether a given act of memory is more likely to produce competition or mutual understanding—sometimes both seem to happen simultaneously" (Rothberg 2009: 11). Disagreements over the memory of and the memorial to the murdered professors show once again that Galician diversity has its aftermath in the form of enduring political-cultural divisions and conflicts about the past. At the same time, however, it is evident that there are opportunities for different parties, despite the contradictions, to agree on common values, especially when the processes are based on existing good personal relationships, friendships, and loyalties. In retrospect, however, it must be pointed out that the attention paid to victims of a certain prominent group downplays the complexity of the war situation in Lviv, where several groups, the biggest of which was the Jews, were exterminated at the same time.

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# A Tangle of Memory
## The *Eternitate* Memorial Complex in Chişinău and History Politics in Moldova

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***Abstract:*** *This chapter explores the role played by the Eternitate memorial complex, the central site for World War II commemoration in Chişinău, as a tool and site of history politics in the Republic of Moldova. It analyzes different facets of the history of the memorial complex, focusing in particular on the years after its renovation in 2006. The chapter traces the evolution of the site from a Soviet military glory complex to a more multi-layered and diverse commemorative space, which even includes monuments not related to World War II. It demonstrates how commemorations at the complex interact with the complexities of history politics in independent Moldova, as well as with the culturally diverse history of Chişinău and the site itself.*

## Introduction

In the second half of March 2020, during the raging coronavirus epidemic, renovations began at Moldova's World War II main memorial, the *Eternitate* memorial complex in Chişinau. Even after a state of emergency had been declared, the authorities began preparing the *Eternitate* complex for 9 May celebrations to mark the 75th anniversary of the war's end.[1] Media reports in early April about the commencement and ongoing repairs of the complex provoked a critical reaction from opponents of President Igor Dodon and the ruling coalition, despite the general preoccupation with news about the pandemic. Some commentators questioned the decision to spend crucial resources on memory politics in the face of an evolving epidemic, poor preparedness and resource shortages in the

1 The renovations contract was registered on 13 March 2020, with repairs due to start on 18 March. On 17 March, a state of emergency was introduced for two months.

medical system, and a difficult economic situation. A corruption component was also not excluded.[2] In his comments at the beginning of April, Dodon justified the ongoing renovation: "repairs at the memorial complex began long before the crisis, as far as I know. And we need to see if it can be stopped at the current stage, and whether the termination of the repairs will not cost more than if it was completed." At that time, however, the president left open the issue of celebrating Victory Day on 9 May.[3] The Great Patriotic War narrative and Victory Day with accompanying actions "Immortal Regiment" and St. George's ribbon, as well as ostentatious pro-Russian discourse plays a key role in history politics of Dodon and his Party of the Socialists of the Republic of Moldova. Therefore, it is not surprising that he insisted on repairing the memorial complex for the important anniversary of the end of the war, despite the critical epidemiological situation.

This episode highlighted once again the importance of the *Eternitate* memorial complex in the political use of the past in the Republic of Moldova. The complex is located in the center of the Moldovan capital of Chişinău. It is the main memorial dedicated to World War II in Moldova. Originally inaugurated in 1975 as a Great Patriotic War memorial, it was renovated in 2006 by the Communist government in power at the time. In the post-Soviet years and especially after the 2006 renovation, the memorial has incorporated other historical narratives, outside of the Great Patriotic War myth. The latter, however, also had a localized version. Thus, for instance, the memorial complex has monuments and plaques related to the 1992 Transnistrian conflict, and to non-Soviet participants and victims of World War II. Different, sometimes hardly compatible,

2 "2,3 milioane de lei din bugetul de stat. Sau cum pandemia și starea de urgență nu au oprit visul președintelui de a repara Complexul Memorial 'Eternitate'," *Ziarul de gardă,* 2 April 2020, https://www.zdg.md/investigatii/ancheta/23-milioane-de-lei-din-bugetul-de-stat-sau-cum-pandemia-si-starea-de-urgenta-nu-au-oprit-visul-presedintelui-de-a-repara-complexul-memorial-eternitate/ (accessed 10 April 2021).

3 "'Prekrashchenie rabot mozhet oboitis' dorozhe.' Dodon o remonte memoriala 'Vechnost'," *Newsmaker.md,* 3 April 2020, https://newsmaker.md/rus/novosti/prekraschenie-rabot-mozhet-oboytis-dorozhe-dodon-o-remonte-memorial a-vechnost/ (accessed 10 April 2021).

memory narratives and cultures coexist at the site. The change of power in 2009, with the "pro-European" coalition assuming power and the Party of Communists becoming the main opposition, re-actualized the importance of the complex as a nexus of symbolic power.

This chapter explores the role played by the *Eternitate* memorial complex as a tool and site of history politics in the Republic of Moldova. It analyzes different facets of the story of the memorial complex, focusing in particular on the years after its reconstruction in 2006. While different Moldovan political governments and actors tried to use the memorial complex to promote their own agendas, they faced a number of obstacles. These included the legacies of preceding commemorations and memory politics at the site; the personal memories among the wider population, which do not always fit the official line; and the shadows of the tumultuous histories of Moldova, Chişinău, and the site of the memorial complex itself, including the cultural diversity of the region, partially lost or transfigured at various points in the 20th century. In one way or another, every commemorative event and every change in the composition of the memorial complex intertwined and interacted with this memorial web, a tangle of memory, their message and agenda sometimes getting distorted by it. In addition, this tangle of memory to some extent trapped the political actors into taking certain positions in the political and commemorative actions at the memorial complex, even if sometimes their initial agenda was different. I use the metaphor of a "tangle of memory" to highlight these complexities of history politics in Moldova and Chişinău, and of the history and structure of the memorial site itself.

The chapter consists of four parts. The first section gives a brief overview of history politics in Moldova and the complexities of the role played by World War II within this politics. The second part deals with the fate of the *Eternitate* memorial complex under the Communist government in 2001–2009, focusing in particular on the reconstruction of the site and the creation of new elements, monuments, and memorial plaques. The third section focuses on the period after 2009 when the "pro-European" coalition came to power

and the *Eternitate* memorial complex ended up at the center of the clashes between the new government and the Party of Communists, now in opposition, over memory politics and the commemoration of World War II. The final section discusses one particular new post-Soviet element of the *Eternitate* memorial complex: the monument dedicated to the 1992 Transnistrian military conflict, and the ambiguities it brings to the site.

The chapter's periodization largely follows the changes in the political leadership in Moldova and the ensuing shifts in history politics. The first period coincides with the PCRM's (Party of Communists of the Republic of Moldova) years in power (2001–2009) and its involvement in the active use and rebuilding of the memorial complex. The second phase covers the years of the acute political struggle (2009–2014) between the new "pro-European" coalition and the PCRM, one of the sites of which was the symbolic field of history politics. The final period (2015–2020), is characterized by a partial cooling down of the political tensions at the memorial complex with the consolidation of power in the government and the gradual collapse of the PCRM.

## World War II and History Politics in Moldova

The main fault line in the memory politics of independent Moldova runs between pan-Romanianists and Moldovanists.[4] These positions stem from different views on the identity of the local population. Pan-Romanianists consider the local Romance-speaking population to be ethnic Romanians. Within this framework, Pan-Romanianists view Moldovan identity and language as a Soviet "Stalinist" invention and imposition, artificial in contrast to the "natural" Romanian ones. Pan-Romanianists take a positive view on Romania and the interwar period when Bessarabia was part of Greater Romania. They often also hold anti-Soviet and anti-Russian views, with Soviets/Russians featuring as a central "other" in the historical narrative. The pan-Romanianist narrative treats the outcome of

4 For more detail and nuances, see Cusco and Voronovici (2016); and on pan-Romanianism in the Moldovan context, see King (1994).

World War II as a Soviet "occupation." Another key issue, for pan-Romanianist memory politics is the Soviet mass deportations and repressions in 1940–51. In contrast, the Romanian side in World War II and even the Nazi-allied Antonescu regime (1940–44) are treated much more positively. Often, this also presupposes keeping silent about or sometimes even denying the participation of the Romanian authorities and local population in the Holocaust.

Moldovanists, on the other hand, consider Moldovans a separate nationality which is related to but different from Romanian language and culture. The Moldovanist narrative emphasizes that Moldovans had their own historical trajectory. Moldovanists often point out that the name "Moldova" appeared earlier than "Romania." The Moldovanist narrative views the Russian and Soviet role in Moldovan history in a mostly positive light. They also generally have a more inclusive perception of the role played by national minorities in Moldova's past and present. Yet, Romanians often feature as the "other" in Moldovanist historical narratives. Moldovanists view the outcome of World War II as the "liberation" of Moldova from Nazi and Romanian "occupation."

It should be noted that the pan-Romanianist and Moldovanist positions described here should be treated as ideal types.[5] There are positions which do not necessarily fit this binary framework, and indeed the history of the *Eternitate* memorial demonstrates some cases when political actors attempted to implement history politics that did not fit neatly with either one of these two positions. Nevertheless, on the level of official memory politics in Moldova most of the actions, decisions, and discourses, particularly in relation to the interpretation and memorialization of the events of World War II are viewed and enacted within this basic dichotomy.[6] This, in turn, creates problems when any major political actor attempts to go beyond the Moldovanist–pan-Romanianist dichotomy. Even in these cases the perception and interpretation of such actions is

5 On the interpretations of World War II in the Moldovan historiography, see Suveica (2017); and on Moldovan museums, see Coadă (2012).

6 On the personal experience of a historian studying the controversial issue of the Holocaust in Moldova, see Dumitru (2012).

governed and shaped by the dichotomy. The interplay of the memory politics, their perception, and existing memory cultures and personal memories creates a complex tangle of overlapping memorial strands and layers. The existence of different views on the identity of the titular group in Moldova and numerous minorities adds additional dimensions to the memorial landscape.

The contested nature of the memorial landscape in part reflects the complexities of the region's World War II history. In the interwar period, Bessarabia, the territory between the rivers Prut and Dniester, belonged to Romania, while Transnistria was part of the Moldovan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (established 1924). In 1940, the Soviet Union annexed Bessarabia after issuing an ultimatum to the Romanian government. A wave of deportations and repressions followed (Caşu 2013). Nevertheless, in a year both Bessarabia and Transnistria were conquered after a joint Romanian–Nazi offensive. The local population participated in the Holocaust, though in Transnistria the involvement was less widespread and active (Dumitru 2016). These territories would return under Soviet control in 1944, as the Moldovan Soviet Socialist Republic. Importantly, due to the transfer of the control over Bessarabia and Transnistria in the wartime years back and forth between Romania and the Soviet Union, the local population enlisted in both the Romanian and the Red Armies. As a result, in Moldova, there were veterans of both belligerent forces. Some of them are still alive. Of course, they and their descendants often have very different memories of World War II.[7] The presence and legacy of veterans of both belligerent forces creates a permanent tension in the commemoration of World War II in Moldova. The issue of how to handle these diverging memories—whether to elevate one group of veterans at the expense of the other, or to somehow reconcile both groups through a shared commemorative narrative—poses a recurring challenge to the Moldovan authorities and other political actors.

The history of Chişinău to some extent reflects the tumultuous history of the region, especially during the 20th century, when the

7 In addition, during the post-war years there was an influx of population from other Soviet republics with their own memories of World War II.

city belonged to several different states. A part of the Russian empire from 1812, Chişinău joined Romania in 1918 in the context of the chaos in the region which followed World War I, the February and October revolutions in Russia, and the ongoing military clashes in Eastern Europe. Like Bessarabia as a whole, Chişinău first became part of the Soviet Union at the beginning of World War II and then again, closer to the war's end, as the result of the Soviet counter-offensive. Chişinău was the capital of Soviet Moldova and then the independent Republic of Moldova.

The complicated history of Chişinău had its impact on the demographic structure of the city. By the end of the 19th century, Chişinău was a multiethnic and multiconfessional settlement. There were about fifty thousand Jews, and they formed almost half of the city's population. By the early 21st century, only about 10 thousand Jews were living in Chişinău, comprising less than 1.6% of the city's population. The Holocaust and emigration to Israel and other countries throughout the 20th century resulted in an almost complete loss of Chişinău's Jewish population. With other major cultural groups, judging from the demographic data, the situation may seem not so dramatic in terms of the absolute losses in numbers of the population.[8] Nevertheless, what the figures and categories hide was the changes in the outlook of these groups, the incoming and outgoing migration, and the dynamics of the contested identities, particularly of Moldovans–Romanians, but also, for instance, of Russian-speaking minorities and Russians. Thus, for instance, the long-term figures hide the fact that the Romanian- and Russian-speaking population in Chişinău after the war to some extent consisted of different people than before, as many perished in the war, fled, or were deported or executed. People coming to Chişinău from the villages or from other Soviet republics after the war substituted the groups lost during World War II.

8 For more details on demographic changes in Chişinău in the 20th century, see Anastasia Felcher's article in this volume.

## The *Eternitate* Memorial Complex: From Military Glory to National Commemoration

The Military Glory complex, as the *Eternitate* complex was called in the Soviet years, was unveiled in 1975, on the 30th anniversary of the "Victory over Fascism." It became the central site of World War II commemoration and glorification of the Soviet Army in Chişinău and Moldova. In the 1990s, the complex remained a key memorial site, though its position now became more ambiguous in comparison with the Soviet years. The complexities of the memory cultures in Moldova and the new political situation which now made it possible to openly voice different interpretations of World War II contributed to the controversial character of the memorial complex during the early independence years.

Even the location of the memorial complex underscores its contested and ambiguous character. It is situated on Pan Halippa Street—formerly Malinovsky Street, named after Rodion Malinovsky, a famous Soviet military leader. The street itself was built after World War II, partially on top of a former German Lutheran cemetery. The street was renamed after Moldova achieved independence. Pan Halippa was one of the leaders of the Sfatul Țării (National Council), the administrative body which in 1918 voted for the unification of Bessarabia with Romania. In the Soviet historiography and today among those Moldovans who are sympathetic to the Soviet narrative, the leaders of the Sfatul Țării, including Halippa, are seen as traitors.

Other particularities of the memorial site and its surroundings have also contributed to the complexities of the memorialization at this space. The memorial was built next to the burial site of Soviet soldiers killed during the Soviet reconquest of Chişinău in 1944. Yet, the whole surrounding area was largely a cemetery. The central prestigious so-called "Armenian" cemetery[9] contains graves dating from the 19th century onwards, including numerous graves of

9 The name "Armenian" does not refer to the ethnic belonging of the cemetery. It comes from the adjacent Armenian Street, which previously formed the backbone of Chişinău's Armenian district.

representatives of the local elite. The Armenian cemetery, where the representatives of many different religions and ethnicities are buried, is a testament to the historical cultural diversity of Chişinău. During the 20th and early 21st centuries, part of this diversity was lost, as some sections of the cemetery were built over and old graves were removed to create space for new ones. In addition, an old Lutheran cemetery was also located at the site. In the 1950s, this cemetery was destroyed to create the space for a cinema. The Lutheran cemetery reportedly contained the graves of major historical figures in Chişinău's history, most notably of the famous Chişinău mayor Karl Schmidt and the architect Alexander Bernardazzi, the author of some of the city's main architectural sites.[10] Some recollections and findings suggest that there were also other smaller cemeteries in the environs. For instance, the outdoor exposition of Soviet military hardware next to the memorial was most likely located on the territory of the former Old Believer cemetery.[11] Thus, the area is loaded with diverse memorial layers. While some of them, such as the Armenian cemetery, have survived, many other testaments to Chişinău's cultural diversity were destroyed during the 20th century. The history of the surrounding area adds further dimensions to the tangle of memory at the site with which any commemoration at the memorial gets into an interaction.

The 2001 accession of the Party of Communists of the Republic of Moldova (PCRM) to power re-actualized the political importance of the *Eternitate* Memorial. The PCRM leadership made memory politics an important part of their agenda. Their electoral campaign relied on anti-Romanianist rhetoric, a pro-Russian geopolitical orientation, and support for the rights of national minorities. Their opponents perceived the PCRM's victory as heralding a strong commitment to the pro-Russian geopolitical orientation and Moldovanist cultural and memory policies. Indeed, some of the predictions came true. The PCRM government quickly attempted to

10 "Obzor ischeznuvshikh kladbishch Kishineva," *Moi gorod Kishinev* website, http://oldchisinau.com/kladbishha-cerkvi-sinagogi/kladbishha-kishinyova/ischeznuvshie-kladbishha-kishinyova/obzor-ischeznuvshikh-kladbishh-kishinyova/ (accessed 22 December 2018).

11 *Ibid.*

substitute the subject "History of the Romanians" in the school curriculum with the "History of Moldova."[12] The government also attempted to introduce compulsory Russian language instruction into the school curriculum. In 2002, these and other decisions of the PCRM government spurred mass protests in Chişinău, organized by the PCRM opponents, especially from pan-Romanianist political parties and groups. Eventually, faced with the strong opposition on the streets and with the recommendations of the European institutions, the government gave up on the plans to introduce "History of Moldova," instead opting for a more general subject titled "Integrated History."[13] Their pan-Romanianist opponents still portrayed the move in negative colors, but the PCRM government legitimized their decision in part by referring to European tendencies and institutions.[14] In terms of geopolitical orientation, the PCRM government initially demonstrated openness to closer cooperation with Russia. But a significant breakdown in Moldovan–Russian relations took place in 2003 after the failure to sign the Kozak Memorandum, a document which aimed to resolve the Transnistrian conflict and

12 "History of the Romanians" was introduced as a subject in Moldova in the early 1990s at the height of the pan-Romanianist tendencies in Moldovan politics. The pan-Romanianist narrative formed the core of the approved history curriculum and textbooks. On the controversies about history education in Moldova, see Ihrig (2008); and Musteață (2010).

13 While the new textbooks and curriculum represented a clear attempt to introduce a non-Romanianist narrative in history education, the quality of the new textbooks, like the previous ones, was quite poor.

14 Hotărârea Guvernului Republicii Moldova (nr. 217) "Cu privire la unele măsuri de îmbunătățire a studierii istoriei", 22 February 2002, *Monitorul Oficial al Republicii Moldova, 16 March 2002, no. 39*; "Prezident Respubliki Moldova Vladimir Voronin vstretilsia s g-zhoi Allison Cardell – rukovoditelem gruppy ekspertov Soveta Evropy, rabotaiushchikh nad razrabotkoi i vnedreniem kursa vseobshchei istorii Moldovy," *Ofitsial'naia stranitsa Prezidenta Respubliki Moldova* website, 18 February 2003, http://89.32.231.202:8080/press.php?p=1&s=902&lang=rus (accessed 24 February 2019); "Prezident Respubliki Moldova Vladimir Voronin i General'nyi sekretar' Soveta Evropy Walter Schwimmer priniali uchastie v torzhestvennom otkrytii Tsentra obrazovatel'nykh innovatsii, sozdannogo pri podderzhke SE," *Ofitsial'naia stranitsa Prezidenta Respubliki Moldova* website, 5 November 2003, http://89.32.231.202:8080/press.php?p=1&s=1409&lang=rus (accessed 24 February 2019); see also Voronovici (2018: 176-177).

to reintegrate the separatist region into Moldova.[15] After that, the PCRM decisively switched to the pro-European path.[16]

Despite the European turn, the myth of the Great Patriotic War remained an important part of the PCRM's memory politics. It fitted well with the PCRM's anti-Romanianist stance, and it had broad appeal for the PCRM electorate. The PCRM's supporters have a largely positive view of the Soviet period which partly explains their propensity to vote for a party with "communist" in the title.[17] It should also be noted that the PCRM's years in government coincided with the increasing presence and use of the Great Patriotic War and, more specifically, of Victory Day (9 May) in history politics in Russia.[18] As the Russian media has a strong presence in Moldova and the PCRM electorate was largely open and sympathetic to the Russian perspective, the World War II theme became topical and actualized. In the framework of the PCRM's focus on Moldova's national minorities, it is important that the Soviet internationalist narrative of the Great Patriotic War was also conveniently and neatly tied in with the message of multiethnicity and multiculturalism.

In the years of the PCRM governments, the commemoration of World War II, particularly Victory Day and the "Day of the Liberation of Moldova from the Fascist Occupation" (24 August 1944), became a much more prominent part of the official calendar and the political repertoire. Ceremonial visits by the highest state officials

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15 The memorandum was elaborated with the participation of Vladimir Putin's special representative, Dmitrii Kozak. The Moldovan President Voronin and the Transnistrian President Igor Smirnov were expected to sign it. Eventually, Voronin changed his mind, which led to the last-minute cancellation of Putin's visit to Moldova to participate in the signing ceremony.

16 It is important to mention that contrary to the expectations of its opponents, after the accession to power the PCRM started to actively cooperate with the European structures while maintaining close relations with Russia. The failure to sign the Kozak Memorandum did not introduce the pro-European agenda in the PCRM's policies for the first time, but rather led to its definitive consolidation.

17 In this context, it is important to recall the role that the Great Patriotic War played in the postwar Soviet Union, among others as a key myth for the forging of the Soviet people; see further Weiner (2001).

18 On the growing significance of the political uses of the Great Patriotic War in Russia in the 2000s, see Wood (2011); and Malinova (2017).

to the *Eternitate* memorial on 9 May became an increasingly lavish and choreographed annual exercise (Cojocari 2007: 95-103). During the first several years in power, the PCRM government also decided to renovate a number of Soviet World War II memorials,[19] including the *Eternitate* memorial complex (see Figure 9.1). Importantly, the renovated memorial was inaugurated not on Victory Day, which still remains the main occasion for the commemoration of World War II in Moldova. Instead, the PCRM government decided to open the memorial on 24 August 2006, the 62nd anniversary of the "liberation of Moldova from the fascist occupation." In the Great Patriotic War narrative, 24 August 1944 is considered to be the date of the "liberation" of Moldova and Chişinău by the Soviet Army in the course of the Jassy-Kishinev offensive. The decision to inaugurate the renovated memorial not on 9 May but on 24 August may be interpreted as an attempt to highlight the Moldovan story in the Great Patriotic War myth, localizing and nationalizing it. Thus, while referring to and exploiting the general Soviet Great Patriotic War myth, the PCRM government also emphasized a separate national chapter.[20] The Moldovan connection was also explicit in the timing of the inauguration to coincide with the 15th anniversary of the independence of the Republic of Moldova, on 27 August 2006. The timing of the opening of the rebuilt memorial thus directly connected and created symbolic continuity between the results of World War II, the "liberation of Moldova," and the later independence of the Republic of Moldova.

19 The Şerpeni beachhead was the object of another notable reconstruction of the PCRM years.

20 Importantly, for the PCRM, nationalizing did not mean ethnicizing. The emphasis was on the multiethnicity of the Moldovan population, not only on ethnic Moldovans.

**Figure 9.1.** *Eternitate* memorial complex, view from the main entrance. Photo courtesy of Kateřina Fuksová.

Interestingly, in 2006 the Moldovan government also changed the memorial's status, transferring it from the city municipality to the state and putting it under the administration of the Ministry of Defense.[21] This move can be read as an attempt by the Communist government to ensure continued control over the development of the complex in the event that the opposition came to power in Chişinău. That is exactly what happened a year later, in 2007, when the pan-Romanianist Liberal Party candidate won the city's mayoral elections. This pre-emptive transfer of the administration over the *Eternitate* memorial complex highlights its importance for the PCRM history politics.

The renovated memorial that was unveiled in 2006 had been changed in several important ways.[22] The fence previously

21 "Guvernul. Hotărîre Nr. 1169 din 11.10.2006 cu privire la transmiterea Complexului Memorial "Eternitate", Registrul de Stat website, http://lex.justice.md/index.php?action=view&view=doc&lang=1&id=317668 (accessed 22 December 2018).

22 On the changes during the reconstruction, see Popa (2011: 165–77).

separating the memorial from the adjacent Armenian cemetery was removed. Thus, the "heroes" commemorated and in some cases buried at the Soviet military cemetery at the memorial, were now spatially joined with the representatives of the local elite, interred at the Armenian civil cemetery, and also with the World War I, soldiers buried in the small military section of the Armenian cemetery. While the two sections were still separated by a line of trees and bushes, the removal of the fence symbolically integrated the former Soviet commemorative site more fully into the local historical context. At the same time an external fence was constructed, which added the sense of entering a special place. The removal of the outdoor exposition of the Soviet military hardware from the vicinity of the memorial to the Military Museum[23] was another important change. Previously, the weaponry exposition, while not immediately adjacent to the memorial and separated by a small hill, had essentially been part of the same Military Glory complex. The relocation served to downplay the military character of the complex.

There were some other additions to the revamped memorial. The five-gun central installation and five large panels were repainted in a much brighter red (see Fig. 9.2). At the bottom of the guns black granite plates appeared with inscriptions in Russian and Romanian. The memorial also acquired a new section with red boards celebrating the Heroes of the Soviet Union and the recipients of the Order of Glory originating from the Moldovan Soviet Socialist Republic (now referred to as "compatriots") (see Fig. 9.3). The plates surround a central stele with the dates 1941 and 1945. The choice of dates clearly points to the Great Patriotic War periodization, excluding the events preceding Nazi Germany's attack on the Soviet Union. The inclusion of the Moldovan Heroes of the Soviet Union again emphasized the national Moldovan version of the Great Patriotic War myth, celebrating and commemorating the Moldovan input into the Soviet victory. It should be noted, however, that a focus on republican, regional, and local contributions to the war effort was characteristic of the Soviet commemorations as

23 The Military Museum in Chişinău belongs to the Moldovan Ministry of Defense and is part of the Center of Military Culture and History.

well. In the Soviet years, the names of the Moldovan Heroes of the Soviet Union were inscribed on plaques on the "Arch of Victory" on the central square in Chişinău. They were removed after the collapse of the Soviet Union. In this context the re-appearance of their names at the *Eternitate* complex in 2006 had an additional symbolic meaning, returning them to the Chişinău public space and thereby enacting and performing a kind of historical justice for the Moldovan "heroes."

**Figure 9.2.** One of sculptures at the memorial complex, displaying different stages of the Soviet war effort. Photo courtesy of Kateřina Fuksová.

**Figure 9.3.** Section celebrating the "compatriots" awarded the title "Hero of the Soviet Union" or the "Order of Glory," originating from the territories of the future Republic of Moldova. Photo courtesy of Kateřina Fuksová.

The rebuilt memorial had also acquired a large bell and a black cross. Visitors ring the bell to commemorate those fallen during the war. The cross was erected with the support of the Catholic church. The inscription on the cross ("Eternal peace on the Moldovan land") does not point to any specific group. Yet, it is in three languages: not only Russian and Romanian, but also German. Representatives

of the Catholic church claimed that the cross was installed to commemorate the former German Lutheran cemetery at the site (Popa 2011: 171). That interpretation hinted at the commemoration of the German and Lutheran population of Bessarabia and Chişinău, which was largely lost in the 20th century (Schmidt 2006). Nevertheless, due to the associations of the memorial complex with World War II, connections specifically with the wartime period were inevitable. In a predominantly Orthodox country the Catholic cross may be interpreted as a commemoration also of those soldiers who came with the Nazi army and their allies.[24] Coupled with the monument devoted to those fallen in the 1992 Transnistrian conflict, which will be discussed in more detail later, the cross suggests another element of the memorial which goes beyond the narrative of the Great Patriotic War.

Overall, the new composition of the *Eternitate* memorial complex, unveiled in 2006, introduced important changes in its message. A stronger explicit emphasis on the Moldovan story of the Great Patriotic War became prominent. This did not necessarily contradict the general Great Patriotic War narrative. Yet, it adjusted it to foster national loyalty, making it somewhat less Soviet- or Russian-oriented. The renovated site also downplayed the previously dominant military dimension of the complex, and placed greater emphasis on commemoration of the victims of war. The relocation of the Soviet hardware was an important manifestation of this new emphasis. The memorial complex now carried a more ambiguous message, mixing the celebration of the victory in the war and the commemoration of its victims in new ways. The commemoration of new groups of (non-Soviet) victims was another trend reflected in the renovations. While the predominant emphasis remained on the Soviet side, some venues for the commemoration of other victims had also now emerged.

Opening the way for a more inclusive commemoration, the 2006 renovation of the memorial complex was an attempt to create a site for national mourning and celebration. Nevertheless, there

24 There is also a German military cemetery, located on the outskirts of Chişinău, next to the largest civil cemetery in the city.

was one group crucial for the Moldovan context which remained largely excluded from the public commemoration at the memorial. The Romanian soldiers, and more importantly local inhabitants enlisted into the Romanian army during the war, did not receive the honors at the memorial reserved for their Soviet counterparts. Thus, while being more inclusive in some respects, the memorial still treated Romanians and the Romanian army as the "other," together with the "fascists" and "Germano-fascists" and the invading and occupying force (Iglesias 2013: 791–96). This is despite the fact that in 2004, the Communist government granted equal legal status to Soviet and Romanian World War II soldiers as war veterans.[25] Clearly, while the PCRM was prepared to recognize the Moldovan citizens enlisted in the Romanian army as war veterans, it was not willing to celebrate them, as it did the Soviet ones. In this way, the PCRM presented the Soviet veterans as welcome victors and "liberators," unlike the Romanian ones. The latter only received the rather ambiguous status of (possibly unwilling) participants of the war.

## The *Eternitate* Complex as Site of Political Protest

The contested character of the *Eternitate* memorial complex was further accentuated after the change of government in 2009 when the PCRM was removed from power after public protests over the parliamentary election results, failure to elect a new president, and repeat elections. The new government proclaimed a Western geopolitical orientation and the European integration of Moldova as its primary goal (a goal which had also, it should be noted, been the stated aim of the preceding Communist government). The new governing coalition was rather diverse when it came to its members' positions on identity and memory politics. Some of its members had no explicit agenda and took rather an ambiguous and

25 "Guvernul. Hotărîre Nr. 1281 din 19.11.2004 pentru aprobarea Regulamentului cu privire la modul de atribuire a statutului şi de eliberare a legitimaţiilor de veteran de război," Registrul de Stat website, http://lex.justice.md/viewdoc.php?action=view&view=doc&id=298587&lang=1 (accessed 22 December 2018).

situational approach. Yet, some of the most active members of the "pro-European" coalition promoted a pan-Romanian agenda, sometimes veiling it under a European cloth. The head of the Liberal Party, a member of the "pro-European" coalition and a party that is openly and strongly pan-Romanianist and Unionist (promoting unification with Romania), Mihai Ghimpu became the Chairman of the Parliament and, for sixteen months (September 2009–December 2010), interim President of the Republic of Moldova. The mayor of Chişinău at that time also belonged to the Liberal Party. As interim President, Ghimpu launched an anti-Communist campaign, creating in January 2010 the Commission for the Study and Assessment of the Communist Totalitarian Regime in the Republic of Moldova. Already in June 2010, the Commission eventually produced its final report whose recommendations included banning the term "Communist" in the names of political parties and civil organizations and the public use of the "hammer and sickle" symbol and proclaiming several new commemorative dates, dedicated to the "victims of the totalitarian Communist regime."[26] On 24 June 2010, Ghimpu declared 28 June the "Day of Soviet Occupation," in a presidential decree which also led to the installment of a massive memorial stone in front of the Moldovan government building on the central square of Chişinău.[27] The so-called "Ghimpu stone" bore the inscription: "At this site a monument commemorating the victims of the Soviet occupation and of the Communist totalitarian regime will be installed." The Constitutional Court would later proclaim the Ghimpu decree unconstitutional,[28] but the stone remained in place, becoming part of the memorial topography of

26 "Raportul Comisiei pentru studierea şi aprecierea regimului comunist totalitar din Republica Moldova," Timpul, 2 July 2010, https://www.timpul.md/articol/raportul-comisiei-pentru-studierea-i-aprecierea-regimului-comunist-totalitar-din-republica-moldova-12814.html (accessed 22 December 2018).

27 "Preşedintele Republicii Moldova. Decret Prezidenţial Nr. 376 din 24.06.2010 privind declararea zilei de 28 iunie 1940 Zi a ocupaţiei sovietice," Registrul de Stat, http://lex.justice.md/index.php?action=view&view=doc&lang=1&id=335006 (accessed 22 December 2018).

28 "Curtea Constituţională. Hotărîre Nr. 17 din 12.07.2010 pentru controlul constituţionalităţii Decretului nr. 376-V din 24 iunie 2010 privind declararea zilei de 28 iunie 1940 Zi a ocupaţiei sovietice," Registrul de Stat, http://lex.justice.md/md/335354/ (accessed 22 December 2018).

Chişinău and contrasting to the narrative of the *Eternitate* memorial complex. In his anti-Communist campaign, Ghimpu's political and ideological convictions intertwined with political necessity. The Party of Communists became the main opposition force for several years. Benefiting from the poor performance of the governing "pro-European" coalition and recurring corruption scandals, according to polls the Party of Communists benefited from popular support comparable to or sometimes even surpassing all the governing parties put together.[29]

In the new political conjuncture, the *Eternitate* memorial complex became an important political and memorial battlefield, with Victory Day (9 May) serving as a flashpoint for memorial clashes. The pan-Romanian and anti-Communist dimensions of the memory politics of some of the governing coalition's most vocal members put them sharply at odds with the former Soviet military memorial, as well as with the political views and historical memories of some parts of the Moldovan and Chişinău population. At the same time, Victory Day was too popular and prominent in public space to simply ignore it, leaving it to other political actors, especially the opposition, to instrumentalize.

The new governing coalition celebrated Victory Day, but attempted to give its own interpretation of the holiday. In 2010, the leaders of the coalition, headed by the interim President Ghimpu, gave their official speeches at the *Eternitate* complex in front of the veterans of both Soviet and Romanian armies. The invitation of the Romanian veterans was a novelty, as the complex mostly displayed the Soviet side of the World War II story.[30] In this context, the Romanian veterans had previously been mostly excluded from the celebrations at the memorial, and the Romanian army was cast in the role of the "others" or "occupiers" in the narrative promoted by the

29 For the polls on the party support, see "Public Opinion Barometer. Republic of Moldova," Public Opinion Barometer website, http://bop.ipp.md/en (accessed 22 December 2018).

30 In Chişinău, the Romanian veterans are usually celebrated by the pan-Romanianist activists at the site of the former Romanian military cemetery, which currently has only the remnants of the entry columns left. There are, though, other places in Moldova where Romanian military cemeteries were restored; see Popa (2013: 84-88).

PCRM. While the leaders of the governing alliance attempted to present the invitation of veterans from both belligerent sides as a step towards national reconciliation,[31] the politicized character of 9 May and the memorial complex, and the reputation of the leaders themselves, paved the way for other interpretations. The PCRM opposition countered by denouncing this act as an attempt to redeem the Nazi-allied Romanian army and their war aims, and to question the "liberation" narrative of the Great Patriotic War and Victory Day, as well as role of the Moldovan population as victors in the war.[32]

The state leaders performed the commemoration at the *Eternitate* complex in the morning. Soon afterwards, a large organized column of people arrived at the site with the intention of marking Victory Day. The leaders of the PCRM headed the column. Tens of thousands of people gathered in the city center and marched through the city towards the memorial, chanting "Glory!" and "Victory!" wearing St. George's ribbons,[33] and waving flags. The flags included the red-and-blue horizontal bicolor, and flags with the red star, similar to the European Left flag, as well as red flags.[34]

For the PCRM, the Victory March was part of a broader campaign entitled Social Marches, comprising a series of protest actions against the new government. The Victory March was a special event which allowed the PCRM to mix their celebration of the Victory Day with the political protest. In that sense it could also be viewed as an attempt to extend the party's outreach beyond the hardcore PCRM electorate and to attract those who saw Victory Day as an important commemorative date, but were not necessarily strong supporters of the PCRM. It was also convenient that the

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31 "9 mai - ziua reconcilierii la Chişinău," *Timpul*, 9 May 2010, https://www.timpul.md/articol/9-mai---ziua-reconcilierii-la-chisinau-10431.html (accessed 25 March 2019).

32 "Den' Pobedy v Kishineve otmetili s privkusom gorechi i obidy," *Partiia kommunistov Respubliki Moldova* website, 10 May 2010, http://www.pcrm.md/main/index.php?action=news&id=4102 (accessed 22 December 2018).

33 On the invented tradition of the St. George's ribbon, Miller (2012).

34 "Marsh Pobedy v Moldove v 2010 godu nabral bolee 30 tys. uchastnikov," *Moldova Photo Gallery* website, http://www.photo.md/news_info.php?news_id=2286&lang=rus (accessed 22 December 2018).

PCRM media often portrayed the governing coalition as Romanian-oriented (ignoring the fact that not all of its members fit this profile), nationalistic, and with aims alien to those of the Moldovan population.[35] For the supporters of the Great Patriotic War mythology the historical parallels were clear. The "pro-European" government in this symbolic framework were becoming followers of the Romanian World War II "occupiers" of Moldova. In this context, the decision to invite the veterans of the Romanian army to attend the ceremony was seen as an encroachment on the "sacred memory" and the imposition of an alien historical narrative. The protest sparked by these memory-related issues fueled, merged, and overlapped with the political protest against the new government.

It was in this overheated context that the red-and-blue bicolor was promoted by the PCRM as an alternative to the official Moldovan flag, the Romanian-like tricolor that had been introduced at the height of pan-Romanian sentiments among Moldovan elites during the collapse of the Soviet Union. At least for some of the advocates of the tricolor, this flag implied that Moldova was another Romanian state which ideally should unite with Romania. The PCRM-promoted bicolor took the red and blue colors which featured frequently on the flags of the Moldovan principality before the creation of Romania. Featuring the bicolor flag at the marches, the PCRM attempted to claim the role of defenders of the Moldovan interests and even statehood in the face of the governing coalition, whom the PCRM media often portrayed as pro-Romanian, exaggerating the role of the pan-Romanian wing.[36] In the Victory March,

35 See for instance, the PCRM news on the celebration of Victory Day, which emphasizes the indignation of the population over the commemorative actions of the governing coalition; "Den' Pobedy v Kishineve otmetili s privkusom gorechi i obidy."

36 See, for instance, the PCRM declaration on the March of the Unification, which took place in Chişinău on 1 December 2010. The March attracted pan-Romanian groups from Moldova and Romania and celebrated the Greater Romania, which included Bessarabia as well. The PCRM presented the permission to hold it in Chişinău as another manifestation of the determination of the governing "pro-European" coalition to "destroy the fundamental basis of the Moldovan traditions and culture," and to play into the hands of the pan-Romanian aspirations in the Romanian government, and as another step towards the "liquidation of the Moldovan statehood"; "Declarația Partidul Comuniştilor din Republica

the use of the red-and-blue bicolor acquired additional symbolic and historical connotations, related to the assessment of the outcomes of World War II and the role of Romania in the war.

As a result, the *Eternitate* memorial complex itself became a site of mass symbolic and political protest. The participants of the Victory March came to the memorial not only to celebrate and commemorate, but also to protest. In the context of the Moldovan society where sharply conflicting narratives of World War II as well as other historical periods exist, the decision on whether and how to commemorate World War II always had a certain protest potential. The decision not to go to the *Eternitate* memorial on Victory Day could be a protest against the Great Patriotic War narrative and the political actors in Moldova who exploited it. Similarly, the commitment to celebrate 9 May as Victory Day, including by visiting the memorial, could be read as a remonstration of those political figures and groups who adhered to a different interpretation of the outcome of World War II. In the Victory Marches organized by the oppositional PCRM in the early 2010s, the implicit protest became an explicit and organized protest in Chişinău (as well as in other Moldovan localities, though on a much smaller scale) and at the *Eternitate* memorial in particular.

We can look at the Victory Marches also from another point of view, suggested by recent performative approaches to the study of commemorations. Scholars have emphasized the role that historical re-enactment has acquired in the public commemorations of various historical events and figures (Dwyer and Alderman 2008; Tilmans, van Vree, and Winter 2010; Arkhipova, Doronin, Kirziuk, Radchenko, Sokolova, Titkov, and Iugai 2017). While the Victory Marches in Moldova were a mix of protest, celebration, and commemoration, they also had a performative dimension. The military connotations of this form of protest should not be ignored. The act of marching through the city can be read as a symbolic conquest of the streets of Chişinău. Some spectators greeted the column as it

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Moldova în legătură cu marşul legionarilor în capitala Moldovei," *Partidul Comuniştilor din Republica Moldova* website, 1 December 2010, http://www.pcrm.md/main/index_md.php?action=news&id=5835 (accessed 26 March 2019).

passed. Finally, the column performed a kind of symbolic "liberation" of the "sacred space" of the *Eternitate* memorial, chasing away the "Romanian occupiers," the representatives of the governing coalition. While this was not framed explicitly as re-enactment, there were clear parallels and resonances here with the narrative of the Red Army's wartime "liberation" mission.

The tradition of the annual PCRM-led Victory Marches continued for several years. Over time, however, the protest dimension became less explicit. The PCRM gradually lost its political capital and support. Due to internal disagreements on the electoral and protest strategies some of the most active and visible PCRM leaders were excluded from or forced to leave the party. At the same time, other self-proclaimed leftist parties attempted to occupy the vacant space left by the disintegrating PCRM. The Party of the Socialists of the Republic of Moldova (PSRM), headed by one of the former leading PCRM figures, Igor Dodon was most successful in consolidating the former electorate of the PCRM, in part by addressing and exploiting identity issues. Unlike the more nuanced PCRM take, the PSRM approach relied on a conservative, pro-Russian Moldovanist discourse with religious elements. Yet, even after the election of Dodon as the President of the Republic of Moldova in 2016, the PSRM, for all its tough and radical discourse, produced little actual protest against their declared "pro-European" opponents in the government.

In any case, beginning with 2015 the PSRM gradually took over the leading role in the Victory Day celebrations. The annual Victory Marches also continued. Yet, they were gradually mixed together with the marches of the "Immortal Regiment," a new Victory Day commemorative ritual that originated in Russia, but with a strong transnational dimension.[37] The two processions were led simultaneously by the same organizers. The disintegration of the PCRM and the commemorative emphasis of the "Immortal Regiment" movement consolidated the new less protest-oriented trend in the celebration of the Victory Day. In some respects it also

37 The "Immortal Regiment" was undoubtedly a transfer from Russia. For more on the "Immortal Regiment," see Fedor (2017); and Gabowitsch (2018).

highlights that the PSRM was more cautious in its opposition and resistance to the "pro-European" government than the PCRM was. As a result, the importance of the *Eternitate* memorial complex for Moldovan memory politics diminished in comparison with both the period of PCRM government (2001–2009) and its time in opposition (2009–2014). The marches still ended at the *Eternitate* memorial,[38] but the main memorial clashes moved to other Chişinău public spaces. The central Great National Assembly Square became the main contested territory, as different political parties and actors struggle for the right to hold (or prevent) Victory Day celebratory concerts there. The struggle over the meaning of the Victory Day remains a major issue of public debates. Politicians and public intellectuals argue over the main date for the official commemoration of the end of World War II: whether it should be on 8 May, as it is in Europe, or 9 May as the Soviet and Russian tradition presupposes. Related to that is the discussion on the name of the official holiday: Victory Day or Europe Day (or some sort of a mix of both). Finally, political actors argue about the main tone of the commemoration: should it be a celebration of the victory and the end of World War II, or mainly a commemoration of war victims?[39] The debates intertwine with the clashes over the geopolitical orientation in Moldovan politics. The celebration of Victory Day on 9 May has

38 In 2018, President Dodon stated that the memorial complex was in bad shape. The poor condition of the memorial complex may also highlight that the importance of the *Eternitate* memorial complex in the most recent memory politics, after the gradual weakening of the PCRM, has reduced; "Preşedintele Igor Dodon a efectuat o vizită la Complexul Memorial 'Eternitate' din Chişinău," *Preşedinţia Republicii Moldova* website, 6 April 2018, http://www.president.md/rom/presa/presedintele-igor-dodon-a-efectuat-o-vizita-la-complexul-memorial-eternitate-din-chisinau (accessed 22 December 2018).

39 "Raznyi den' kalendaria. Chto prazdnuet Moldova 9 maia 2017 goda," *Newsmaker.md*, 8 May 2017, http://newsmaker.md/rus/novosti/raznyy-den-kalendarya-chto-prazdnuet-moldova-9-maya-2017-goda-31250 (accessed 22 December 2018); "Ploshchadiu khodi. Chto i kak otprazdnuiut sotsialisty 9 maia," *Newsmaker.md*, 7 May 2018, http://newsmaker.md/rus/novosti/ploshchadyu-hodi-chto-i-kak-otprazdnuyut-sotsialisty-i-demokraty-9-maya-37267 (accessed 22 December 2018). The issues of the date (8 or 9 May) and the name of the day ("Victory Day" or "Europe Day") are common to other East European countries as well. In particular, interesting comparative parallels with Ukraine can be drawn here.

become a manifestation of the pro-Russian orientation. The marking of Europe Day on 8 May, in turn, signifies the following of the European tradition of the commemoration.

In recent years, the intensity of the memorial clashes at the *Eternitate* complex has subsided. The repair works during the pandemic did return it for a while to the center of history politics. Nevertheless, the instrumentalization of the *Eternitate* complex by Moldovan and international actors continues. In 2015, the Hungarian Minister of Defense and his Moldovan counterpart unveiled a new monument at the complex, commemorating the Hungarian POWs and civilian victims who died in Soviet captivity on the territory of the present-day Republic of Moldova in 1945–48 (see Fig. 9.4). The monument's Hungarian and Romanian inscriptions differ in striking ways. The Hungarian inscription specifies the period and uses the term "Soviet captivity;" both these formulations are absent from the Romanian version. While the ceremony's main focus was on reconciliation, the Hungarian Minister also conveyed an ambiguous message, commemorating the "heroes who died far away from their Fatherland."[40] This mention of the Hungarian "heroes," who actually fought against the Soviet Army, added another dimension to the commemoration which conflicted with the Great Patriotic War narrative.

40 "Un monument al eroilor maghiari a fost inaugurat la Chişinău," *Ministerul Apararii* website, 3 July 2015, http://www.army.md/?lng=2&action=show&cat=122&obj=3419#.WyY7VSC-k2w (accessed 22 December 2018); "La Chişinău a fost inaugurat un monument în memoria ostaşilor maghiari," *Allmoldova* website, 3 July 2015, http://www.allmoldova.com/ru/news/romana-la-Chişinău-a-fost-inaugurat-un-monument-in-memoria-ostasilor-maghiari (accessed 22 December 2018).

**Figure 9.4.** Monument commemorating the Hungarian POWs who died in Soviet captivity on the territory of present-day Republic of Moldova in 1945–48 (erected 2015). Photo courtesy of Kateřina Fuksová.

Some new plaques also appeared at the complex in the 2010s. For instance, in 2015 the Kazakhstan Consulate planted an avenue of Kazakh apple trees and erected a memorial plaque commemorating those who "perished in the Great Patriotic War" without specifying the victims' nationality (see Fig. 9.5). Earlier, in 2013, the state of Israel installed a black plaque at the complex with an inscription

commemorating the anniversary of the "Great Victory over Fascism (1941–1945)." The plaque clearly subscribes to the dominant narrative of the *Eternitate* complex, with its focus on the "Victory" and adherence to the Great Patriotic War timeline. Interestingly, the plaque makes no mention of the Holocaust and its victims, though undoubtedly it is the main agenda for Israel in commemoration of the "Victory" and, with the new focus of the *Eternitate* complex, one could expect a more open approach in comparison with the Soviet years. At the same time, in Chişinău there are other memorials commemorating the Holocaust and its victims.

**Figure 9.5.** Plaque reading: "An alley of Kazakh apple trees, planted by the General Consulate of the Republic of Kazakhstan in Chişinău with the support of civil organizations of the Republic of Moldova in the memory of those who died in the Great Patriotic War. 24.04.2015" (erected 2015). Photo courtesy of Kateřina Fuksová.

Another interesting case of exploitation of the *Eternitate* memorial complex was the 2015 issuing of the commemorative medal "70 Years since the Victory over Fascism in the Second World War."[41]

41 "Parlamentul. Lege Nr. 49 din 03.04.2015 privind instituirea medaliei comemorative '70 de ani de la victoria asupra fascismului în cel de al Doilea Război

The reverse of the medal bore the image of the central composition of the *Eternitate* complex, the pyramid of five guns, and the dates "1939" and "1945." In this medal, the "pro-European" government produced a mixture of two narratives. The pyramid from the complex represented the Great Patriotic War narrative, while the dates clearly questioned it and suggested a different timeline of World War II. The medal is indicative of the ambiguities of narratives of World War II which coexist and are sometimes mixed together in Moldovan society and memory politics. It highlights the complexities and the intertwined character of various strands, layers, and narratives of memory in Moldova. The *Eternitate* complex represents many facets of these interactions. The 1992 Transnistrian conflict monument, located at the territory of the complex, further complicates this tangle of memory.

## The Memory of the Transnistrian Conflict at the *Eternitate* Complex: Heroic Continuity or Counter-Narrative?

In 1998, the inclusion of the monument dedicated to the 1992 Transnistrian war added an important and especially ambiguous memorial layer to the complex (see Fig. 9.6).[42] The monument, called the "Grieving Mother," consists of the central sculpture of a sorrowful mother, leaning over and embracing the head of her son, and a background framing composition with a cross and plaques, listing those fallen in the Transnistrian conflict. One of the central plaques mentions that the monument is dedicated to those fallen in the struggle for the "independence and territorial integrity of the Fatherland." The location of the Soviet Great Patriotic War and the Transnistrian war memorials within the same space brings to the

Mondial,'" Registrul de Stat website, http://lex.justice.md/index.php?action=view&view=doc&lang=1&id=358091 (accessed 22 December 2018).

42 The erection of the monument appears to have been an initiative of veterans' organizations and the Ministry of Defense, but I have been unable to confirm this definitively.

fore the highly contested nature of the historical narratives clashing and competing in Moldovan public space.

**Figure 9.6.** Section of the memorial complex dedicated to those "fallen" in the 1992 Transnistrian conflict (erected in 1998). Photo courtesy of Kateřina Fuksová.

There is no clear consensus in Moldovan society on the topic and the nature of the 1992 Transnistrian military conflict; there is not even agreement on the basic question of how to define or describe the parties to the conflict. This conflict took place at a time when pan-Romanian nationalist tendencies were strong in the Moldovan government, and the Transnistrian separatist leaders used this in order to mobilize support on the left-bank of the Dniester. In March–July 1992 the conflict between the central government and separatist authorities entered the military phase. It claimed over one thousand casualties, both military and civilian. A controversial role was played by the 14th Russian army, stationed in Transnistria, which helped Transnistrian forces to defend the Transnistrian separatist regime and eventually the de facto division of the country. While the 14th Russian army maintained a position of neutrality and non-involvement, many of its soldiers and officers defected to the

Transnistrian side, which also used the 14th army's military supplies on the left-bank of the Dniester.[43] In July, the 14th army briefly entered the conflict on the Transnistrian side with an artillery strike, which became the final act of the military conflict. The threats of further full-fledged involvement of the Russian army contributed to the termination of the military phase of the conflict and possibly prevented further casualties. For Moldovans with anti-Romanian views and pro-Russian and/or pro-Soviet orientation, the main villain in the conflict is not evident. Many question the aims and necessity of the military operation and the civil war in Moldova.

An important feature of this monument is its focus on those who fought on the side of the Chişinău authorities. The lists of the fallen in the conflict on the plaques at the bottom of the monument do not include those who participated on the Transnistrian side. Nor is there any mention of the Transnistrian civilians who suffered as a result of the conflict. The plaque reads: "Glory to those fallen for the independence and integrity of the Fatherland!" The inscription leaves unaddressed the question of the source of the threat to the country's independence and integrity; but any Moldovan visitor to the site would understand that the two obvious suspects are the Transnistrian side and the Russian Federation. Thus, the monument offers little space for the integration of the Transnistrian population into this narrative, displaying a discriminatory thrust towards it. It casts the Transnistrians in the role of an (albeit unnamed) "other," if not of the "enemy." In this sense the monument in fact plays into the hands of the Transnistrian separatist leaders. The Transnistrian authorities eagerly and consistently exploit the military conflict with Chişinău in their memory politics in order to legitimize their separatism and to foster a distinct regional identity (Troebst 2003: 456-59).

43 At the same time, the military supplies of the 14th army on the right-bank of the Dniester were transferred by the leadership of the CIS armed forces to the Moldovan army. The latter had actively used the obtained supplies in the Transnistrian military conflict as well.

The "Grieving Mother" monument provides a sort of counter-narrative to the site's main Great Patriotic War memorial.[44] While the latter underscores the Russian mission as liberators[45] of Moldova, the former implicitly casts the Russians in the role of aggressors. At the same time the rhetoric and wording used to commemorate those fallen for the "independence and territorial integrity of the Fatherland" is quite reminiscent of the Great Patriotic War narrative of struggle against an external aggressor for the "independence" and "liberty" of Moldova. The "heroes" who fell in the Transnistrian conflict join those who died for Moldova during World War II, highlighting the continuity in the heroic struggle for the country. The Great Patriotic War and its symbolism becomes a metaphor for other military conflicts (Oushakine 2009). In certain key respects, the monument uses the same underlying structures and categories as the Great Patriotic War narrative.

The PCRM government largely avoided engaging directly with the "Grieving Mother" monument in their commemorations. There are several possible reasons for this position. First, they were surely conscious that a significant part of the electorate would not embrace the monument's message. Second, resolution of the Transnistrian issue was one of the government's declared priorities. Associating themselves with this monument, which keeps silent about the left-bank victims and rather implicitly casts the Transnistrian side as posing a threat to the "territorial integrity" of Moldova, would have clashed with these aspirations. The Transnistrian leaders could also have used any such commemoration to portray the PCRM government as insincere in their attempts to integrate Transnistria on an equal and voluntary basis. Personal motives may also have played a role, as President Vladimir Voronin was himself born (in 1941) in a Transnistrian village, and, for him, this may have been more than just a political issue.

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44 This may well go unnoticed by many visitors to the *Eternitate* complex, who may be unaware of the presence of the Transnistrian monument at the site.

45 Technically, of the Soviet Union and the Red Army, but, no matter the interpretation of the outcomes of World War II, the role of Russians within the Soviet army is central.

After the change of government in 2009, the commemoration of the Transnistrian conflict became a more prominent part of memory politics. In 2010, the Parliament voted to declare 2 March the Day of Memory (Day of the Commemoration of Those Fallen in the Armed Conflict in 1992, Defending the Integrity and Independence of the Republic of Moldova and of the Victims of this Conflict).[46] As of 2010, leading governing officials, accompanied by the veterans of the Transnistrian conflict, soldiers, and policemen, have performed an annual commemorative march on this day. Similarly to the route taken on Independence Day (27 August), the march starts at the monument of Stephen the Great and ends at the *Eternitate* complex. Yet, unlike Independence Day, 2 March is a much more controversial holiday.

## Concluding Remarks

The complexities of the memory politics in Moldova and Chişinău turned the former Soviet Great Patriotic War memorial into a memorial site with multiple strands of intertwined and sometimes conflicting narratives. Political actors and institutions used the memorial complex to promote the narratives which suited their goals, trying to outmaneuver their opponents. At the same time, the intentions and agendas of the political actors also interplayed and knotted with the memorial layers of the site itself, as well as with the "ghosts" of Moldovan and Chişinău history. Contemporary commemorations and the history of the site were braided together, adding new coils to the tangle of memory.

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46 "Parlamentul. Hotărîre Nr. 17 din 26.02.2010 pentru completarea Hotărîrii Parlamentului nr.433-XII din 26 decembrie 1990 cu privire la zilele de sărbătoare şi la zilele de odihnă în Republica Moldova," Registrul de Stat website, http://lex.justice.md/md/333881/ (accessed 22 December 2018). The official name of the commemorative day was the outcome of the pressure of the opposition, in the PCRM. The PCRM insisted on including the "victims" and leaving out the title of "heroes"; see "Cum a fost legiferata Ziua Memoriei," *Timpul*, 1 March 2010, https://www.timpul.md/articol/cum-a-fost-legiferata-ziua-memoriei-6998.html (accessed 22 December 2018). Unofficially, the day is usually called "The Day of the Commemoration of the Fallen Heroes...".

The tumultuous history of the borderland region in the 20th century created a number of complex and contested issues, which still divide the population. Some are less pronounced and explosive, like the fate of the Bessarabian German population. Others, like the issue of the Holocaust or the Soviet deportations, on the contrary, are hot topics. They also frequently come to the fore when political actors attempt to use the *Eternitate* memorial complex in their politics. The ambiguities of current Moldovan memory politics and the complex diverse history of Moldova and Chişinău is explicitly and implicitly on display here. Potentially a site of reconciliation, the *Eternitate* complex remains a space of division and conflict.

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# **Patterns of Collective Memory**
# Socio-Cultural Diversity in Wrocław Urban Memory

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***Abstract:*** *This chapter analyzes socio-cultural differences in the interpretation of the past depending on approaches to time and space. Using empirical data on collective memory in the city of Wrocław, we show how socio-cultural factors differentiate perception of time and space and influence the interpretation of a difficult past. The data indicate that in respect to time, conservatism increases the importance of the past, while "modern" or "progressive" views decrease it; in respect to perception of space, conservatism increases sensitivity to historical symbolism, while a modern orientation and higher level of education increase sensitivity to aesthetic values. The importance of the past increases with age and social status, including educational level. In the analysis we use quantitative and qualitative data, on the basis of which we propose a model explaining the relationship between the approach to time and space and the persistence of past conflicts in collective memory. Depending on how people use time and space to connect the past with the present, they apply different cognitive strategies: continuation, partial continuation, and discontinuation of past conflicts.*

## Introduction

This chapter addresses the problem of socio-cultural diversity of interpretation of the past (collective memory), focusing on two dimensions of beliefs about the past: time and space. In order to investigate the spatial and temporal dimensions of collective memory, we examine how socio-cultural context determines the interpretation of the past, and we reconstruct cognitive schemes based on how people talk about the past and sites of memory. The study is based on empirical data from the city of Wrocław. Drawing on data, we propose models explaining the relationship between

conflict persistence and approaches to time and space in beliefs about the past. Depending on how people use time and space, linking the past with the present, there are various cognitive strategies: we term these continuation, partial continuation, and discontinuation (the models are summarized in Table 10.1 below). These three models explain different attitudes towards a difficult past: continuing or ending a bygone conflict. Discontinuation refers to a strategy whereby people manipulate time and space; they invent a cultural identity for a place; and they use non-linear, circular time to talk about history. The strategy of discontinuation serves to break the links with the difficult past. Continuation of the past in the present is typical for those who accept the former identity of a place and try to find links between the past and the present, mainly through the cultural and urban heritage, and making reference to the aesthetic values of architecture. In fact, they refer to universal values that allow for the building of bridges over the past conflicts. In the continuation strategy, time is treated as linear. The third strategy, partial continuation, is related to attempts to restore an alternative identity and to accept the past while also redefining it. In this strategy time is approached in a linear fashion, while space is reconstructed by inventing alternative past identities.

Empirical examples are taken from research on the population of a specific city (Wrocław), but in the analyses we treat these examples as a case study representing a universal ideal type that has the following constitutive features:

1. a city whose population underwent total exchange;
2. a city that was re-settled by uprooted newcomers;
3. a city whose identity underwent massive transformation entangled in inter-ethnic and political conflict; and
4. a city with a multicultural past but a monocultural present.

Wrocław has changed its political and state affiliation several times throughout its history.[1] As far as the recent history is concerned, as

1 The city of Wrocław has a multicultural history and has been inhabited by various ethnic groups. The specificity of this city is that in over a thousand years of its history it has changed its political and national affiliation, and thus its cultural identity, many times. Until 1335, it belonged to the Kingdom of Poland;

a consequence of World War II the identity of the city was transformed and there was an almost complete exchange of population from German to Polish. Polish settlers came to the city, which was culturally alien to them. Therefore, contemporary interpretations of the city's history face the problem of how to determine the identity of this place. The so-called "difficult past" of Wrocław concerns conflictual relations and post-war disputes over the identity of the city because Wrocław was a German city and became a Polish city politically, but the Polish cultural identity of the city was not obvious and had to be created.

In the collective memory of Poles, Polish–German relations are narrated primarily in terms of conflict, starting from the epic conflict with the Teutonic Order and the battle of Grunwald in 1410, through the partitioning of Poland by the Prussian state in the 18th century to World War II, to mention only the most characteristic themes. In the communist period (1945–89), the Polish official historical policy served to reinforce this narrative (Thum 2011). At

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subsequently it was part of the Kingdom of Bohemia (1335–1526); under the rule of the Habsburgs (1526–1742); part of the Kingdom of Prussia (1741–1871); the German Reich (1871–1918); and the German state (until 1945). Since World War II, the city has been Polish. As a result of decades under Prussian rule (1741–1871) and later German rule (1871–1945), a significant part of Wrocław's past and city space is German. After the war it was incorporated as part of Poland under the Potsdam Treaty. The entire German population was displaced and Polish citizens from various parts of the Polish state settled there, including from the so-called *Kresy*, i.e. lands that belonged to Poland before World War II and were subsequently taken over by the Soviet Union. For many decades, the new borders in the west and the settlement of the Polish population in Wrocław were considered uncertain and temporary, which perpetuated the fear that the Germans might return and reclaim the city. In addition, the state of uncertainty inhibited the development of the local community and the identity of the city. Thus, Wrocław is a city where mass migration has occurred, and at the same time the population has settled a culturally-alien area. In his extensive work analyzing the process of the colonization of Wrocław, Gregor Thum described the community of Wrocław as an *uprooted community (*Thum 2011*).* This term reflects well the characteristics of a community that experiences various problems resulting from migration. Until recently, Wrocław was inhabited mainly by Poles. Labor migration has intensified in the last decade, especially after 2016; it is estimated that between 80,000 and 100,000 foreigners may live in Wrocław (10–12% of the population), with the largest group being Ukrainians. The increased level of migration appeared after our research and was not reflected in the data.

present some politicians (like the leader of the conservative party Jarosław Kaczyński) still pursue this policy. These successive policies have marked collective memory and we see their consequences in the form of "anti-German memory clichés" coined by the communist rhetoric of memory and still in use today.

The chapter is divided into three sections. In the first introductory part we very briefly discuss the proposed model and the theoretical approach, focusing on explaining the temporal and spatial cognitive structures in the collective memory. We also discuss methodological issues, including the connections between the quantitative and the qualitative investigations.

In the second part we present the temporal dimension of memory by analyzing linear and circular interpretations of the past and the socio-cultural diversity of approaches to time. In the third part we analyze the spatial dimension of memory, examining the influence of socio-cultural factors on the perception of space as a carrier of memory, and addressing the perception, meaning, and identity of space. Throughout the discussion, special emphasis is put on explaining the relationship between cognitive structures underlying the interpretation of the past and the acceptance or rejection of a difficult past as well as the dis/continuation of past conflicts.

## Theoretical Approach

Social cognition in memory studies has been analyzed by d'Andrade (1995), E. Zerubavel (1996, 2004), Olick and Robbins (1998), Cerulo (2002), Schwartz and Kim (2002, 2010), Rydgren (2007) Beim (2007), Erll, Nünning and Young (2008), Olick (2008), Boyer and Wertsch (2009), and many others. Much of the latest research has been of a theoretical nature. There have not been sufficient empirical studies in cognitive sociology, and a neglected area of research on collective memory is how ordinary people think about the past (Schwartz and Kim 2002). Work needs to be done to narrow the gap between theoretical analysis and empirical research, especially by combining qualitative and quantitative data. This chapter offers an analysis of empirical data (both qualitative and quantitative) in

order to verify and reflect on the concepts proposed by cognitive sociology.

Socio-cultural theories of cognition explain how collective knowledge works on a societal level. Cognitive sociology deals with culturally-laden patterns of cognition and cognitive mechanisms of semantic interpretation (Cicourel 1973; Cerulo, 1998, 2002; Eyerman and Jamison, 1991; DiMaggio, 1997, 2002; Lizardo 2004, Rydgren 2007, E. Zerubavel 1996, 2004). The units of social cognition are inter-subjective conceptual schemes: schemata, categories, typologies, models, etc. In fact, they constitute culture "conceived as a very large and heterogeneous collection of models … Cultural models are empirical analogues of culture understood as knowledge" (Shore 1998: 44). Individuals rely on a cognitive framework, which is socially mediated by language and coined in the process of social interaction (Schudson 1995). This paper deals with those concepts which bind culture and knowledge stored as memory (Cicourel 2015). Another theoretical perspective to which we refer here is the concept of culture as a toolkit, as proposed by Swidler (1986), and DiMaggio (1997). This concept is useful because empirical data make it difficult to defend the concept of culture as an orderly axiological model. According to DiMaggio, culture is fragmented and rather incoherent (DiMaggio 1997: 268). It activates a cognitive framework, depending on the situational context and social relations or interactions.

Time and space are meta-dimensions of the interpretation of social reality and therefore one may not be aware of the importance of time and space in the organization of cognitive structures (Hall 1966, 1983). Time creates the structures of social cognition (Elman 1990, E. Zerubavel 2004). When exploring the issue of time in collective memory, the motif of the influence of the past on the present seems to recur repeatedly. "Attachment to the past is inescapable" (Lowenthal 2015: 86). It is often claimed that the past is part of the present, and constitutive of the present (E. Zerubavel 2004, Liu and Hilton 2005, Edy 1999, Gronbeck 1998, Knapp 1989, Thelen 1989, Schwartz 1982, Lowenthal 2015), which means that, for instance, current interests determine the interpretation of history. A more in-

depth analysis requires a look at different ways of interpreting time in different culture. For instance, Edward Hall (1966, 1983) distinguishes monochronic and polychronic approaches to time. Eviatar Zerubavel, who deals with time structure in his work, proposes a very complex typology of temporal patterns: "linear versus circular, straight versus zigzag, legato versus staccato, unilinear versus multilinear." In our opinion, the typology of time can be reduced only to two main structures: linear and circular (non-linear). First, this is simpler and more useful for data analysis as it is easier to distinguish between complex time structures at the theoretical level than, in practice, to apply them to the analysis of empirical data. The linear and circular (non-linear) are key structures and the array of other structures, being essentially only variants, can be narrowed down to these two. Second, this typology of time structures is more universal and serves as the criterion for the typology of cultures in anthropological studies.

To analyze how time and space shape cognitive structure it is necessary to know how they are present in historical narratives (E. Zerubavel 2004), how time and space are viewed in a given culture and how they form the meta-concept of cognition, which is also present in the language (Hall 1966). There is a relationship between the temporal structure and the interpretation of the past: either linear or nonlinear time structures appear depending on how the past is interpreted in the collective memory. For instance, a linear concept of time can be observed when there is a cause-and-effect interpretation and rational explanation (e.g. in academic history). A nonlinear concept of time appears in interpretations relying on a mythology of history, threshold events, and traumas in which chronology is irrelevant due to the importance of the events and accompanying emotions, when the interpretation of the past is subordinated to cultural narratives associated with strong emotions, and especially with a sense of danger. With regard to time, it is noteworthy that depending on whether the past is interpreted according to a linear or non-linear structure, there is a resulting concept of continuity or discontinuity in the narratives about history.

The spatial dimension is another fundamental meta-concept of cognition and culture. Quite often it is related to the territoriality of human collectives. The way people approach space is a criterion for distinguishing types of culture (Hall 1966) and is especially important when it comes to urban memory (Connerton 2013). The relationship between memory and identity, and spatial identity in particular, is well-documented in the literature (Fentress and Wickham 1992, Gillis 1994, Assmann 1995, Maier 1988, Wanner 1998, Fortier 2000, Schwartz 2000, Osborne 2001, Sheldrake 2001, Eyerman 2004, Hobsbawm Ranger 1983, Forest, Johnson and Till 2004, Chang 2005, Tilley 2006, Lewicka 2008, and others). Sites of memory are the embodiment of collective symbols, which link together the past and the present. It is obvious that the history of the city can be presented as the history of space—the territory of a specific community. In this work we want to examine how the identity of the place is presented; we do this by analyzing the cognitive structures of collective memory in terms of how the city's inhabitants perceive the identity of the city. We also analyze the meanings that the inhabitants give to the space representing the past.

To sum up, based on these theoretical perspectives we intend to explain socio-cultural differences and determinants of cognitive schemes. If we assume that cognitive patterns are culturally dependent but fragmented, the empirical investigations can help to discover how socio-cultural context shape cognitive patterns (culturally embedded narratives and semantic interpretations). Taking a perspective of cultural theories of shaping knowledge, the analysis of data in this work is based on the following explanatory scheme: culture shapes patterns of memory through the historical experiences of the national community at the macro level, while at the micro level, the social environment shapes the cognitive patterns of individuals. We want to investigate how cognitive patterns of interpretation of the past are conditioned by socio-cultural factors.

## Methodological Note

This work combines the analysis of quantitative and qualitative data. These two types of data corroborate each other. The combination of quantitative and qualitative data in the analysis makes it possible to explain a wider spectrum of phenomena. Quantitative data reveal the distribution of patterns of beliefs about the past, and thus enable identification of dominant patterns. They also explain collective beliefs by social influence[2] and make it possible to examine the strength of the relationship between a given interpretation and social factors. Quantitative data allow cognitive models to be reconstructed indirectly from differences between various categories of people. Qualitative data, on the other hand, directly present models of thinking and enable us to analyze distinct types of historical argumentation, reasoning, and explanation.[3] In this study, we used qualitative data to build a model of cognitive strategies based on different approaches to the dimensions of time (linear and circular) and space (dis/continuation). Qualitative and quantitative data complemented each other. The former reveals the broader meaning of belief patterns reconstructed from the latter.

The qualitative data were collected from discussions on several online news portals. The discussions were triggered by media articles describing events in the life of the city—a 2006 campaign to change the name of the People's Hall, restoring the name used during the city's German period, Centennial Hall; and a campaign launched in 2009 to commemorate Georg Bender, a German mayor from the turn of the 19th century[4]—as well as various articles on the commemoration of other figures and events in Wrocław's German

2 For example, position in the class structure, education level, or age.

3 It is possible to reconstruct cognitive patterns resulting from the "logic" of respondents' statements, e.g. by analyzing an appropriate line of argumentation justifying their position. On the basis of quantitative data it is possible to search for complex patterns of relations between axiological orientation, relation to the past, or the degree of approval for different forms of commemoration and various features of the social environment.

4 This was an initiative of the Society for the Beautification of the City of Wrocław. Eventually, in 2016, a memorial hill named after Bender was created in the city's South Park.

history. The qualitative empirical material which has been analyzed includes over 1000 comments by internet users.

Although a minority of the population, an estimated 10–15%, takes part in online discussions,[5] a significant number of these people have strong and expressive opinions, which are an indicator of strong axiological orientations, and many of them show interest in public affairs. The advantage of web portals is that the responses on these portals are spontaneous and provoked by the natural course of events, and not "artificially" triggered by the interview situation. Many surveys indicate that people do not have opinions on more difficult topics (Sułek 2001), and knowledge about the history of a city is one such issue; therefore, spontaneous statements provide better data about the position of opinion leaders in the local community. The quantitative data were collected in face-to-face interviews with a representative sample of the city's population (random route sampling) and targeted samples of the city's elite and students.

5 Research on a representative sample of the Polish society shows that the percentage of people posting on forums, discussion groups, and social networking sites increased from 5% in 2005 to 20% in 2018. At the time of our surveys, it was 14% (*CBOS* 2018).

| Link between past and present | Spatial dimension of cognitive patterns | Temporal dimension of cognitive patterns | Effect: possibility of conflict *vs* reconciliation | Cognitive features |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **continuity** | ✓ accepting former identity of a place<br>✓ accepting heritage<br>✓ searching for specific local identity | ✓ linear time<br>✓ chronology<br>✓ strategy: accepting the difficult past<br>✓ orientation to future | ✓ reconciliation | ✓ deliberative<br>✓ reflexive<br>✓ rational |
| **partial continuity** | ✓ restoring an alternative identity of a place<br>✓ (partial) accepting former identity through re-definition (Silesian)<br>✓ redefining/renaming space that allows to accept the past | ✓ linear time<br>✓ chronology<br>✓ strategy acceptance of the redefined past | ✓ avoiding conflict | ✓ critical<br>✓ emotional |
| **discontinuity** | ✓ rejecting former city identity<br>✓ searching for new local identity or referring to national identity<br>✓ creating/inventing a new place identity | ✓ non-linear time<br>✓ recurrent negative themes (history repeats itself)<br>✓ strategy: rejecting the difficult past<br>✓ mythical time | ✓ conflict | ✓ non-reflexive<br>✓ emotional |

**Figure 10.1.** A model of three strategies for interpreting the city's past in its temporal and spatial dimensions.

## Data Analysis: Temporal Dimension

Studying the transformation of time and space in collective memory indicates how interpretations of history are socially constructed. In this study we want to investigate how collective memory is constructed in terms of categories of time and space, how people treat time, and how the past is connected with the present: is there continuity or discontinuity? How is space approached as a sign of the past? Is there continuity or discontinuity in the identity of the place, and why? First, we will deal with the temporal dimension of cognitive patterns in the interpretations of the past: we begin with analysis of the significance of the past, before addressing periodization and the linear and non-linear, circular structures of time.

### *The Meaning of the Past*

The link between the past, the present, and the future is one of the main themes in the scholarship on collective memory. The linear model of time in cognitive structures allows the interpretation of present situations as the result of past events. The past, the present, and the future for that matter are linked by cause and effect relationships. The circular model of time, by contrast, is the foundation of recurrence narratives, in which the past and the present permeate one another and the passage of time disappears. The case of Wrocław with its German past offers rich material for studying attitudes towards difficult pasts and (dis)continuity in urban history.

How important is history, including the history of Wrocław itself, to the city's inhabitants? There are cultures oriented towards the past, present, or future, depending on the importance attributed to different time dimensions in a given culture. With regard to the general attitude to different dimensions of time, our data shows that Wrocław's inhabitants are characterized by a culture oriented towards the future and the present, with the past holding moderate significance. Almost all respondents (95%) gave the highest scores for the present and the future on the scale measuring the

significance of different dimensions of time (the mean value was M=0.94,[6] (SD=0.24), while fewer respondents (70%) attributed such importance to the past (the mean value was M=0.69, (SD=0.46)). To examine the patterns of perception of history and its meaning we devised an Index of Knowledge of the Past (IKP**)** which included several questions about important historical events, characters, and monuments in the city. The average score in the sample was only M=0.31 points (Median=0.20, SD=0.18). This low level of historical knowledge is not unique; many researchers have observed that this is a phenomenon that is typical in many societies, or even universal. Elite complaints about society's lack of interest in history can be found in literature from many different periods (Lipsitz 1990: 22-24). In general, in our data on contemporary Wrocław, better-educated people declared greater interest in history and had a greater knowledge of history, which is obviously not surprising. For example, more than half of respondents with a university degree (52%) declared an interest in the city's history, in comparison to 31% of respondents without a degree; the city's past was discussed twice as often among people with higher education than among those with lower levels of education.

The level of historical knowledge alone is not enough to ascertain the significance of history, especially given that it is so obviously related to the level of education. Therefore, in order to examine the socio-cultural conditions of attitudes towards history, a deeper analysis of the diversity of attitudes towards the past is necessary. It can be assumed that the importance of history influences how the relationship between the past and the future is perceived. People who believe that history is important are more interested in it and more often see the influence of history on the present time. In addition, if trauma is the main theme in the interpretation of the past, then negative references to history will be more firmly established. Conversely, for those who consider past times to be less

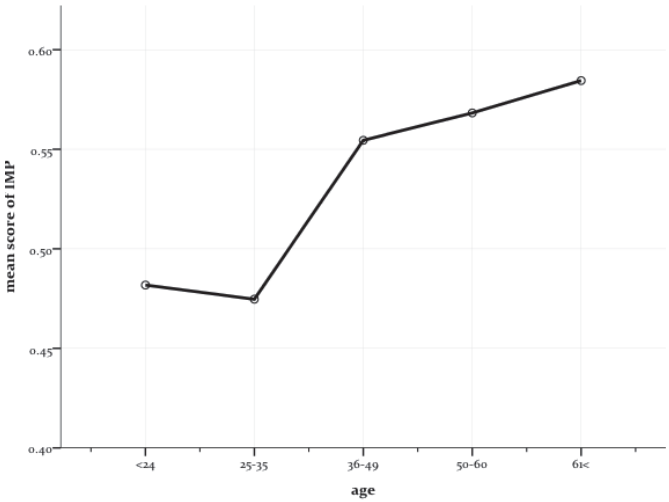
6 We used a standardized scale where the minimum was 0 and the maximum was 1. The same applies to all analyses.

important, the relationships between the past and the present are loose or broken. To examine how the meanings of the past are differentiated by socio-cultural factors we devised an Index of Meaning of the Past (IMP). This consisted of five items: 1) the declared significance of the past in general; and of 2) the past of the city; 3) the frequency of everyday conversations about the city's past; 4) the level of interest in history; and in 5) the city's history.

In contemporary Wrocław, the overall level of importance of history (IMP) is moderate, and so to explain how the socio-cultural context influences the significance of the past, we checked what factors determine its importance. A number of socio-cultural traits significantly change the meaning attributed to the past and its relation to history: age, education, occupation, and value orientation (conservative vs modern). In order to explain the socio-cultural differences in attitudes to the past, analyses of variance were carried out, which showed statistically significant differences in the following variables: age; social status (education and income) (see Fig. 10.2 and Fig. 10.3); relative deprivation (satisfaction with the material situation); and the level of traditionalism and conservatism measured by religiosity and party voting patterns, as well as the level and type of education of mothers.[7] High IMP occurred in the following groups: older people; those with higher status, particularly those with a university degree; those with a conservative-traditional orientation, i.e. very religious and supporters of the conservative party (PiS), who assessed their material situation very well, but were on lower incomes. High IMP also occurred among those whose mothers had primary, general secondary, and university degrees. Conversely, in the group of people whose mothers received a technical education, both at a secondary and tertiary engineering

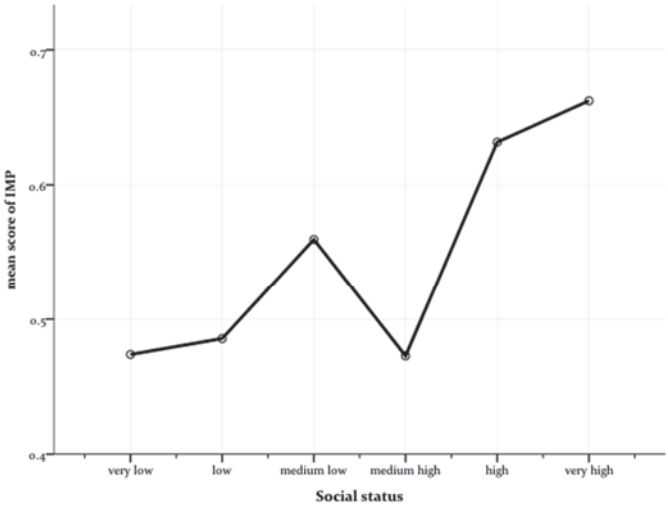
7 One-way Anova analysis of variance showed statistically significant differences for the variable age: ($F(4,542)=5.382$ $p=0.001$, $\eta^2=0.053$); education ($F(2,544)=3.679$ $p=0.026$, $\eta^2=0.013$); income ($F(3,447)=3.185$ $p=0.024$, $\eta^2=0.021$); frequency of religious practices ($F(3,540)=2.811$ $p=0.039$ , $\eta^2=0.015$); declared level of faith in god ($F(4,536)=8.187$ $p=0.001$, $\eta^2=0.058$); political party affiliation ($F(4,542)=3.473$ $p=0.008$, $\eta^2=0.052$); and mother's education ($F(5,536)=2.443$ $p=0.033$, $\eta^2=0.022$).

level, a lower average index was recorded, as well as in the categories of young people, those with lower educational qualifications, non-religious people, those voting for the liberal party, and those on average incomes. It was also noted that the index scores were higher for skilled manual workers, senior and middle-rank office workers, and professionals, but lower for middle-rank technical and service workers.




The results of Anova: F(4,542)=5.382, p=0.001; scale 0-1: The lower values of the Index indicate that the past is of little importance and the high values indicate that the past is of great importance.

**Figure 10.2.** Importance of the past for different age groups in Wrocław; a representative population sample, N=547.




The results of Anova: F(5.445)=9.035, p=0.001; scale 0-1: the lower values of the Index indicate that the past is of little importance and the high values indicate that the past is of great importance.

**Figure 10.3.** Importance of the past in Wrocław, differentiation by social status (education and income); a representative population sample, N=547.

To sum up, we can see the importance of two types of socio-cultural determinants associated with the status factors related to the position in the structure and with the cultural factors. The latter refer to axiological orientations formed in divergent social milieus, which directly shape the framework for the interpretation of the past: conservative-traditional orientation supports historical orientation, while a "modern" one reduces interest in the past. On the other hand, a worse placing in the social structure reduces the meaning of the past whereas a better placing increases it. One can also find culture-forming functions of social status variables. Not only a high or low position in the social hierarchy is important, but also the specificity of a given position, for instance a position related to occupation. As we noted earlier the index scores were higher for skilled manual workers but lower for service workers. With higher levels of mobility and weaker social ties, service occupations are less communitarian in comparison to the occupations of skilled workers, especially in the case of "classical" industrial workers who more often belong to labor unions. Working conditions may create

a climate for creating not only a work-related community, exemplified by labor unions, but also a community of the past. The attitude towards history is not only an orientation towards a certain temporal dimension, but also an indicator of a sense of community built on common history.

Another important factor is family socialization. A cultural model shaped by family-life practices (intergenerational transmission), as well as the cultural capital of parents may redefine the meaning of the past. As we have seen in the preceding section, the technical education of parents, especially mothers, negatively affects the focus on the past. Drawing on these data, a hypothesis can be put forward that the technical educational environment is in opposition to the humanities: the former increases and the latter decreases the interest in history.

### *Periodization: Linear versus Non-linear Time Structure*

We now turn to the question of organizing time in cognitive patterns. Eviatar Zerubavel (2004) writes about periodization as a conventional way of organizing time in collective memory. It is a socially constructed way of interpreting the past: "we come to remember some historical periods much more intensely than others. A powerful social projector thus highlights certain parts of the past while basically leaving others in total darkness" (2004: 26-27). First, time is interpreted in a certain way by dividing it into periods, and second, people give different meanings to different periods. This research, too, used periodization of history based on the changing cultural and political affiliation of the city. We looked into how inhabitants of Wrocław treat time from the perspective of how distant is the past that is the subject of their attention. Since periodization coincides with the cultural identity of the city, our research shows the attitude to the temporal and spatial dimension at the same time.

The results of research on the reception of periodization reveal some regularities regarding which epochs are remembered and which forgotten. First, the results of these studies confirm the well-known pattern that the most recent times are remembered best, simply as part of one's own biography. We found that there was

significant recency effect in the collective memory of Wrocławians: the three most often mention events all happened in the last fifteen years.[8]

Second, the Prussian-German period was the second most popular period. For example, in the general sample of Wrocław inhabitants only 6.4% of the respondents declared that they were interested in this period, compared to 25% in the sample of the elite, and 20% in the sample of students. Despite the fact that the medieval period of Wrocław is interpreted as the beginning of the city's Polish history it does not arouse particular interest among Wrocław residents. Among elites and students the German times arouse even more interest than medieval history: in the general population 6% of respondents, in the sample of the elite 14%, and among students 11% declared an interest in the medieval period. Thus, our findings confirmed a tendency to focus on the most recent times, but they did not confirm the thesis put forward by some researchers that origins occupy a special place in the collective consciousness (Eliade 1963, E. Zerubavel 1981, Y. Zerubavel 1995, Schwartz 1982).[9] Greater interest in the German period can be explained by a linear continuation: the modern city is treated as the "direct heir" of the German city. This interpretation is evidenced by other results: when we asked which of the ethnic groups had the greatest impact on the appearance of Wrocław, more than half of respondents (57%) pointed to the Germans, and the answer, "different ethnic groups equally" was chosen by twice fewer people (25%). Other data indirectly confirm Wrocławians' greater concentration on the German–Prussian period in the city's history. When we checked the period with which the respondents associate different historic buildings in the city, it turned out that respondents tended to date historic buildings to the German period in the city's past, although we presented them with pictures of buildings from different periods. In other words, by mistakenly identifying the dating of, for example, a

8 The floods of 1997: 47.7%; the European Football championships in 2012: 31.3%; and the visit of John Paul II in 1997: 18.8%.

9 In his research on American society, Barry Schwartz also failed to obtain unambiguous confirmation that "the Beginning" occupies a special place in collective memory (Schwartz 1982: 380).

university building, the respondents indicated that they perceive Wrocław from the perspective of the German reign.

Third, the Czech–Habsburg period is a forgotten period. Respondents not only did not declare any interest in this period, but also did not identify the monuments in the city with this period. It is a forgotten epoch regardless of gender, education, and generation. The forgetting of the Habsburg period can be explained by the perspective of temporal distance; it is such an early epoch that in collective memory it has lost its connection with the present. Second, we can explain this as an effect of contrast. In comparison with negative associations with the Prussian–German period, the period of Habsburg reign is perceived as neutral. The German period is important because there is a substantial link between history and present political debate about the nature of Polish–German relations. For instance, the past conflict is used as a point of reference for present affairs (e.g. the debate on war reparations or Germany's current dominant position in the EU[10]). Thus, the data confirm the thesis that remembering or forgetting the past reflects the present issues. The recent history is perceived as being more closely linked to the present, hence events from recent history are interpreted as the *causes* of contemporary events; moreover, greater knowledge allows the construction of cause–effect narratives. The more distant the past is, the less factual information people have and the more the past is perceived in the form of myths that represent historical events and figures.

### *Non-Linear Time: Historical Analogies and Recurrent Mnemonic Clichés*

The structure of time is regarded as the key feature of culture and consequently cultural cognitive patterns. Nisbett argued that linear thinking is more typical of Western cultures and non-linear, circular thinking for Eastern cultures (Nisbett, Peng, Choi, and Norenzayan 2001; Ji, Peng, and Nisbett 2000). The analysis of collective memory

10 Demanding war reparations from Germany is a political issue not only in Poland; see example of Greece.

patterns shows that within a given culture (in this case, Polish) diverse modes of capturing time co-occur.

A characteristic feature of common collective memory is the presence of symbols, which are an important element of popular historical interpretation. Thus, narratives about the history of Poland draw upon a canon of events, figures, and symbols. In other words, history is told through a collection of mnemonic clichés, creating the image of the country and a catalogue of heroes who support historical national stereotypes. These clichés are used in analogical thinking as a pre-existing cultural framework for the interpretation of the past.

Analogical thinking is a cognitive mechanism, which appears when there is a tendency to link the past and present by looking for a repetition of history. The perception of recurrent events in history is nothing more than the perception of analogies in time. Analogical reasoning results from the basic principle of cognitive energy saving. Therefore, historical analogies, "unreasoning from analogies" (Neustadt, May 1986) are widely used cognitive schemes in popular memory (May 1973, Neustadt, May 1986, Khong 1992, Holyoak and Thagard 1995, Y. Zerubavel 1994). The belief that history repeats itself (Lowenthal 2015) exemplifies this scheme best. Such a model has a non-linear time structure. For example, recurring patterns of historical interpretation indicate a circular understanding of time (E. Zerubavel 2004: 25). Different historical facts are interpreted according to the same scheme and repetitiveness somehow suspends the linear understanding of time, creating a sense of timelessness. It is noteworthy that popular memory contains unambiguous interpretations of causal relationships between historical events, which are debatable on the basis of scientific historical knowledge. A very characteristic phenomenon for popular collective memory is the manipulation of time sequences in the narratives about the past. Consider for example the case of Wrocławians' reactions to the proposed commemoration of German mayor Georg Bender. Their responses show that the interpretation of the city's history is placed within a non-linear and discontinuous structure of time where analogical thinking appears. Qualitative data allow us to reconstruct

various sources and contexts for these negative attitudes. These include the Polish–German conflict during World War II; a general aversion to former aggressors against Poland—the Germans and the Russians; and an attitude of pragmatism. Qualitative data on this topic often take the form of extensive statements revealing strong emotional reactions to the issue:

> **German murderers** cannot have streets named after them!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Someone is crazy here [original emphasis] (**pol**, *Gazeta Wrocławska* portal, 10 November 2010).

In turn, quantitative data show the reaction pattern to the idea of commemorating Mayor Bender: 20.4% were in favor of the commemoration and 79.6% against. The analysis of quantitative data allowed us to explain the dominant pattern by socio-cultural determinants. The analysis of variance showed which factors most strongly influenced the opinions on this subject. The level of support was most varied by age and axiological orientation: conservative-traditional people (supporting PiS party and more religious) and respondents from the youngest and oldest generation were more opposed, while middle-aged and "modern" people were more supportive of commemorating the German mayor. Moreover, in the justifications of their opinions, the most frequent argument was that Bender was German and anti-Polish. In general, quantitative data analyses show that a negative attitude to German cultural heritage commemoration dominates in Wrocław: the average score in the index measuring the relation to various forms of commemoration of German historical figures (which consisted of 7 items) was very low: M=0.30, SD=0.12.[11]

Qualitative data threw more light on belief patterns and showed how supporting or not supporting this commemoration is justified in the context of interpreting the history of Polish–German relations. In the statements of respondents who did not support Mayor Bender's commemoration there are circular patterns and a "reversal" of the course of time. In this case, efforts to commemorate a German historical figure from Wrocław refer to a figure from

11 On a scale from 0 to 1.

the period before the Third Reich (Mayor Bender lived at the turn of the 20th century). Despite this, such initiatives are interpreted in the light of World War II; thus, we are dealing here with a "non-metrical approach to chronology" (E. Zerubavel 2004: 28). The time sequence is not the crucial framework for interpreting the city's history; it is rather the significance of particular historical figures and events which serves as the point of reference. A traumatic event, in this case World War II, imposes meaning on other historical facts and figures, including those from earlier periods.

> First of all, we are Poles, Bender didn't do it for us, but only for **the Germans, the same ones who apparently attacked Poland**. Bender did his work well, but I emphasize once again: for the Germans! [original emphasis] (**wesoly_emigrant,** *Gazeta Wyborcza* portal, 10 February 2011).

> Why should we, Poles in a Polish city, honor the traditions of the most hostile country towards our nation and country that ever existed? (....) Maybe we should also rebuild the monument of Frederick Wilhelm on the market? After all, it was there historically! (**pingwiniarz,** *Gazeta Wyborcza* portal, 10 February 2011).

Strong emotions change the structure of time in social cognition. This applies to cases such as turning points or traumatic events. The emotional historical narratives manipulate the sequence of time. Past wars against the Prussian state and the Third Reich are seen through the same lens. The word *Prussian* is often used as a negative label, on account of the partition of Poland in the 18th century, in which the Prussian state participated. Wrocławians commenting on local commemorative issues online use the Nazi label freely, independent of the historical period, sometimes using it to refer to the Prussian state or to Germans in general. Historical facts are misrepresented in non-linear time structures.

Perceptions of the history of the University of Wrocław offer another example. The University was founded at a time when the city was under the jurisdiction of the Habsburg empire, but data from the survey demonstrated that in the minds of one-third of Wrocławians it is a Prussian University.[12] Both the actual time when

12 Around 30% of respondents believed the University was built by the Germans, and one-third indicated that they did not know who built it.

a building was created and its cultural origin are ignored. A belief in false information is an important indicator of how a collective memory is created, because it reveals the underlying cognitive model, in this case the frame of interpretation that the city has a German past and that reflecting on this poses a threat for present interests. Consider, for example, this comment on the topic of the proposed renaming of the People's Hall:

> Are we to celebrate the Prussian ANNIVERSARY in Wrocław? The Hall was named the Centennial Hall to commemorate the Battle of Leipzig in 1813, where Napoleon was beaten. He was the hope Poles had for independence. **It's the same for the 200th anniversary of the Prussian University.** What do we care about the founding of a Prussian University? [original emphasis] (**AdFX,** *Gazeta Wrocławska* portal, 2 December 2011).

This example illustrates the assumptions of the cultural theory of cognition, according to which the dominant patterns of cognition are culturally determined (Circourel 2015, Cerulo 2002, Di Maggio 1997). Manipulation of temporal structures can be explained by cultural theories that assume that social interpretations of reality are imprinted in cognitive structures in the process of socialization. Cultural interpretations of the past are made on the strength of events defined as important, and time is subordinate to the meaning of a given historical fact. Turning points are treated as a structural framework for the interpretation of time; they support the system of periodization (E. Zerubavel 2004: 19-20). Zerubavel further explains: "We need to be mnemonically socialized to regard certain historical events as significant 'turning points'" (2004: 96). The best candidates for turning points are traumatic, significant experiences. Loss of independence is a traumatic experience. Trauma as a negative type of emotion reduces the tendency to a rational interpretation of historical facts and increases predispositions to an emotional understanding of history. The experience of trauma influences the interpretation of history in such a way that history, i.e. collective historical narratives, becomes a tool for coping with negative experiences. Historical time is subordinated to moral message and moral message becomes the main goal of the interpretation of the past. In other words, it is not the sequence of time that is important

here, but the moral mythologization of historical interpretations. Time is also subordinated to emotions: fear, threat. The occurrence of non-linear structures of time in cognition can be explained by the historical experiences of a given community. Cultural patterns of cognition were shaped by the historical circumstances Poland found itself in, that is, the long period without an independent national state. The main aim of the Polish nation was to fight for independence. For the same reason, the glorification of Polish uprisings in history is a highly salient feature of Polish collective memory and one that is also expressed in history, art, and literature. This attitude is grounded in the symbolic values of freedom and independence. Environmental theories explain how people react to threat, i.e. traumatic experiences, in history, whereas cultural ones explain what meanings and emotions, e.g. pride or shame, are attributed to and associated with historical events.

The data contain many elements of cognitive structures showing non-linear time structures. Take for example the following citation:

> It was during Bender's times that the racist and murderous idea of the superiority of the Prussian race was germinating and developing in Wrocław, and **this was to be proven by building bridges.**..... and it resulted in building Auschwitz and Katyń [original emphasis] (**hANS**, *Gazeta Wrocławska* portal, 10 November 2010).

Here, we observe that all dimensions of reality are beginning to be seen from the angle of inter-ethnic conflict. In the cited examples we can see how various traumatic events from different historical periods are grouped together to form a context for argumentation against the commemoration of the Germans in Wrocław: the building of the concentration camp in Auschwitz, the murder of Polish officers by the Russians at Katyn, the partitioning of Poland by the Prussian state in the eighteenth century.[13] This quotation shows

13 References to the dominance of the Prussian state are associated with the partitioning of Poland by the Prussian state in the eighteenth century. It is noteworthy that two other states, Austria and Russia, also took part in that process, which eventually led to the Polish state's disappearance from the map of Europe.

that building bridges is interpreted not as "architectonic work," but as a manifestation of the Germans' domination over Poles. These different events are mnemonic clichés and they are united through a common denominator: they are interpreted as a manifestation of the martyrdom of the Polish nation. Many themes in Polish history are seen from the angle of national threat. "Social memory is one of the processes that people go to war about and memories of the violence can keep the enmity going" (Brewer 2006). In the post-war politics of history, the German–Polish conflict was strongly emphasized and presented as "Poland's old and constant problem," not only in contemporary history and during World War II but throughout history ("Drang nach Osten") (Thum 2011, Davies 2005). Even today, the consequences and effectiveness of these politics are visible, as demonstrated in our data. Local history is seen through the lens of national trauma.

The historical narrative of martyrdom contains another recurrent scheme of remembrance: Poles are the victims while the Germans and the Russians are the oppressors. The circular nature of time is entangled in modes of interpreting history, in which permanent patterns of interpretation return. In Polish–German relations the victim–oppressor binary is one such recurrent paradigm, for example:

> I recall that the name the "People's Hall" was changed by the Poles who came to Lower Silesia through the fault of German actions. **Poles were murdered and beaten, expelled from the Eastern borderlands and other Polish regions of the Second Polish Republic and transported by the Germans to do forced labor** (…….) **through the fault of the Germans**. This name should be respected and preserved. We do not have any obligation to the Germans [original emphasis] (**rozalian@op.pl**, *Gazeta Wrocławska* portal, 14 December 2011).

There is ample empirical evidence indicating that Polish–German relations are viewed by Poles in terms of a victim–oppressor paradigm. This is a classic framework widely seen in Polish historiography, the arts, and public opinion, and it has become part of the Polish collective identity. The role of the victim has a special emotional profile. It demands respect expressed as compassion, regret, and special treatment, including making amends and extending

privileges. It creates a position of moral superiority, which can fully be taken advantage of. This may explain why this scheme is so long lasting, and why Polish history focuses on unfortunate events, like the loss of independence or failed uprisings. These are the conditions under which the role of the victim can be solidified and maintained as a stereotype. As the following examples show, the Russians also feature alongside the Germans as significant oppressors of Poles:

> It's not for this that my family and others' families died at the hands of the Germans and their communist friends.[14] Now those fond of Germans and Jews glorify the founders and supporters of Nazism and communism.... they have a short memory, and no knowledge of history (**hANS**, *Gazeta Wrocławska* portal, 10 November 2010).

> You're commemorating the **Germans**????? Nice! Let's add the **Russians** and we'll have a kaleidoscope of **the main destroyers and invaders of Poland** [original emphasis] (**Mandaryn**, *Gazeta Wrocławska* portal, 20 October 2012). On one side we have Germans, on the other Russians. The world has never changed, only the weapons have changed **(Ja**, *Gazeta Wrocławska* portal, 10 October 2014).

We interpret these repeated references to Russians as oppressors alongside the Germans in this debate as an indicator of the recurring thread of threat. It is an example of how the trauma factor shapes circular patterns of interpretation of history.

How does the temporal cognitive mechanism work in the victim–oppressor model? Identifying with the victim triggers off a desire for revenge and demands for compensation. This creates a contradiction, because the memory of the oppressors must be maintained as negative. In this kind of psychological environment it is not possible to begin any process of forgetting past wrongs. Conversely, the habits of recurrent blaming and accusations are sustained. The mechanism of this schema is such that the victim role in collective memory solidifies and perpetuates conflict. This represents a clear example of circular time construction in the interpretation of the past. Under this scheme, the transfer of pre-war German

14 The author of this comment refers here to the postwar period of communism and Soviet dominance in Poland.

territory to Poland is seen as justifiable compensation from the enemy and invader. Examples of statements on this topic reveal, additionally, an outpouring of strong emotion, as in this comment:

> Someone is crazy here.... I have the impression that the Polish period of Wrocław is a wart on the great history of Deutsche Breslau! Do you realize **how much the wounds of the Poles who were persecuted and murdered by Germans are still bleeding?** ... It's scandalous! [original emphasis] (**Krzywousty**, *Gazeta Wrocławska* portal, 9 November 2010).

Another recurring theme is the sense of a threat of German revisionism, i.e. claims concerning land lost by Germany to the Polish state after World War II. The threat activates time loops in cognitive structures in the perception of past events. In the following examples the threat of German revisionism also fuels the victim–perpetrator model:

> But it was the Deutsches Reich before and it can be again. So, why commemorate those people? (**dryppl**, *Gazeta Wrocławska* portal, 20 October 2010).

> And when it becomes Breslau again, then let's think about the border, it will be somewhere past Syców or maybe past Kępno or even near Częstochowa?[15] (**Andy**, *Gazeta Wrocławska* portal, 11 November 2010).

In these discussions, remembrance of Wrocław's German past is sometimes viewed as part and parcel of covert German plans to reclaim the lost territory and change the western borders of Poland again. This theme in the local collective memory is a clear obstacle to the memorialization of Wrocław's German past. Political and economic interests create a barrier to commemoration of "the enemy," preventing victims from forgetting past wrongs and thus preventing reconciliation. Examples in this vein illustrate again the circular visions of time operating here, whereby a memory cliché from the post-war period, the concept of German revisionism, is cited as an argument against the commemoration of the late-nineteenth-century German mayor:

15 Mentioning these towns suggests fear that the present Polish–German border may be shifted east again.

> I wonder whether the descendants of Mayor Bender and other members of the German establishment of Wrocław support the Federation of Expellees [Bund der Vertriebenen] and close cooperation with Russia, so Germans and Russians can cooperate at the expense of Poland? (**Brons**, *Gazeta Wyborcza* portal, 10 February 2011).

Thus, fears of losing the city back to Germany have not ceased to exist in the local community. The attitudes reconstructed from qualitative data also confirm the quantitative studies and additionally show the scale of this phenomenon, proving that it is not a marginal occurrence. About one-third of the respondents believe that "commemorating Germans provides new arguments for German expellees" (that is, when it comes to questioning the current Polish–German border).

These examples show the circular pattern of the interpretation of Poland's history as a continuous struggle for independence. In any situation with a connection to the German issue, whether it relates to changing a place name or erecting a monument, an anti-German mnemonic cliché is applied.

In contrast, the linear understanding of time appears in positive attitudes towards commemorating Germans. The characteristic feature of this approach is the "closure" of the past: conflicts are part of the past and not of the present. These attitudes represent an attempt to break the link with the past or to forget. They focus on the future. Breaking ties with the past is linked to the non-circular time structure. In such attitudes, the relationship with the past is not always a simple continuation of the past, but rather a turn towards the future based on inventing turning points. Leaving a conflict behind is understood as a return to normalcy:

> Do you think that if you always focus on the past it will improve your mood??? There are already three post-war generations living on both sides of the Oder, and I'm sure that the majority of both societies want to live normally without the thorn of history and musing over "what if," maybe except for a small group of people both in Poland and Germany (**Hans-Jürgen,** *Gazeta Wyborcza* portal, 28 March 2009).

Summing up the reflections on time structures, let us emphasize the theoretical context, which in our opinion explains the cognitive processes shaping memory. Cultural theorists have conducted many

studies of the role of collective trauma in the interpretation of history (see Elliott 1997, Neal 1998, Alexander *et al.* 2004, Nytagodien and Neal 2004, Dawson 2005, Bell 2006, Eyerman 2011, Antze and Lambek 2016). Strong emotions facilitate the activation of an irrational, symbolic cognitive framework. Taking the role of a victim provides rhetorical strength. But cultural theories do not fully explain the persistence of negative cognitive patterns and why they are so strongly inscribed in cultural models. Naturalistic theories provide a better explanation of this phenomenon (Richerson and Boyd 2005, Rydgren 2007). Numerous psychological or neurophysiologic studies on emotional memory enhancement have established the impact of traumatic events and natural disasters on memory, thus strengthening our knowledge of how environmental conditions (threats) stimulate evolutionary adaptation at the level of knowledge (Anderson and Milson 1989, Bjork 1989, Anderson and Schooler 2000, Krystal, Southwick, and Charney 1995, Taylor 1983). Evolutionary theories explain how a sense of threat affects the temporal structure in the interpretation of history (Anderson and Schooler 2000).

Traumatic events distort the perception of time: there is an inversion of time in the interpretation of history, and recent traumatic events (such as World War II) become a frame of interpretation for the earlier events. From an evolutionary perspective, the interpretation of reality mainly aims at survival. Therefore, if a community has experienced threats in the past, it tends to overestimate the emergence of a threat. A strategy of risk reduction manifests itself as a cognitive predisposition to be more sensitive in the perception of threat. Such a cognitive strategy strengthens the orientation to conflict and supports the recurrence of traumatic events in collective memory.

Cultural theories explain the meaning that people attach to specific events or turning points in history, and models of the interpretation of the past. Time is "only" a frame for important stories about the collective past. Recurring patterns of interpretation, mnemonic clichés, as in the case of the victim–oppressor scheme, often appear in Polish historical narratives and provide a sense of value

and moral superiority. Recurrence transforms time. History is seen as a collection of turning points often traumas), which appears repetitively in historical narratives. In time loops, time becomes stagnant, so that conflicts from the past persist in the present. In linear structures, the passage of time transfers conflicts into the past and introduces a distance between the present and the past. Depending on the assessments, different references to time appear. People's attitudes towards the Germans affect the way they see the past and how in their interpretations the past is connected with the present and the future. In other words, it is the evaluation of history that determines how the structures of time in social cognition are formed.

## Spatial Dimension

Sites of memory combine time and space in collective memory, as the place becomes a symbol of the past. Historical buildings represent past times and are a spatial (material) link between the present and the past (Lowenthal 2015, E. Zerubavel 2004). In this work we deal with the issue of the approach to space in the discourse about the city's past. Space, as a carrier of memory, can be analyzed with regard to, at least, three aspects: the perception of space; the meaning of space; and the identity (continuity) of space.

We turn now to analyze narratives of place-identity as a cognitive form used to interpret the history of the city. Identity narratives are similar to myths because, like myths of origin, they are fundamental stories about origins and beginnings. Wrocław's identity was an important topic of the discussion about commemoration and the city's past on Internet forums. The identity of a place ensures its continuity. As Zerubavel writes, "constancy of place is a formidable basis for establishing a strong sense of sameness" (2004: 41), and: "place plays a major role in identity rhetoric" (2004: 42). The name of a place defines its identity, and so we examined how respondents referred to the meaning of the names of places in the city.

As in the case of the temporal dimension, there is continuity *versus* discontinuity in the approach to space. The continuity of the

city is based on reference to old identities, be it the former Silesian identity or German identity. Conversely, building a new Polish identity is based on breaking continuity and inventing new traditions. Drawing on our data, various cognitive strategies of place identity formation can be distinguished; they are reconstructed from the ways people express their sense of the local identity:

S1) discontinuation: breaking the link with German identity and invented continuation: Wrocław as a Polish city that took over Lviv's heritage[16]; or the Polish medieval beginnings of the city as representing discontinuity with the German past and the search for the old identity of a new place.

S2) continuation: Wrocław as an "old" city, continuing the German heritage and previous German identity, mainly through aesthetic references to architecture;

S3) partial continuation: Wrocław as the center of Silesia where Silesian identity is an alternative identity; continuity with the past is sought through redefining of the previous identity: Silesian instead of German.

All these strategies can be observed in the discussion about commemorating the German past of Wrocław.

### *Discontinuation of Space (S1)*

As the quantitative data indicate, respondents were generally critical of the idea of restoring original place names in the city. We measured the level of acceptance for restoring the former names of Grunwaldzki Bridge (previously Imperial Bridge—Kaiserbrucke); Partisans' Hill (formerly Liebisch Hill); and the Phoenix department store (formerly the Barasch Brothers' Department Store). The mean acceptance was very low,[17] thus in all cases, be it a symbolic name commemorating the battle of Grunwald, or the name of a utilitarian building such as a store, people were against name changes.

16 Lviv was a former Polish city. There is a belief that Poland lost Lviv to the USSR and in return gained Wrocław from Germany.

17 The mean level of acceptance was M=0.18 (SD=0.26) for the bridge; for the hill: M= 0.11 (SD=0.19); and for the store: M=0.18 (SD=0.26); scale: 0–1.

Respondents' opinions are suggestive in their references to national identity when talking about local identity, and national identity dominates over local identity (S3); take for example these responses to an open-ended question in the quantitative survey:

> "German names should not be restored!"
>
> "There must be Polish names in Poland!"
>
> "No German names!"
>
> "Because we're Polish and we live in Poland, the names should be Polish!"
>
> "In a Polish city in Poland shops should have Polish names!"
>
> "Because the Germans killed us and destroyed Poland."

Qualitative data show the sources of the negative attitudes: a change of name is a change of identity and the name of a place or building is a sign of Polish or German nationality; that is why for some residents German associations with the city are still seen as a threat. A new local identity is built in opposition to the German identity. The proponents of this type of local identity break the continuity of place and time with the German pre-war city. Since the name is the crucial element of identity, changing a Polish name back to the former German name is perceived as a loss of Polish identity. Here is an example of national identity in a local setting:

> (S1) I fully support the words of outrage at the attempts to **re-germanize Lower Silesia**. There is no reason whatsoever to commemorate the victory of the Prussians over Napoleon through commemorative names. In Wrocław there used to be many names in memory of Prussian kings and German generals who captured and oppressed our ancestors. As a result of the Second World War unleashed by Germany and the decisions of the great powers, Lower Silesia came under Polish rule [original emphasis] (**Paweł Z.**, *Gazeta Wrocławska* portal, 10 June 2007).

> (S1) To get rid of the Polish name the "Hall of the People," and replace it with the name "Centennial Hall" is an [act of] extreme spitefulness (who did this?). It is an even greater insult for Wrocław officials to use this name… **This is Poland and you should use Polish names,** as our fathers did 66 years ago. There is no need for anyone to have to reach an agreement or make concessions [original emphasis] (**rozalian@op.pl,** *Gazeta Wrocławska* portal, 14 December 2011).

*Continuation of Space (S2)*[18]

The aesthetic and material value of post-German architecture is one of the main criteria shaping the positive relation to the Germanness of the city. The following examples show how the meaning of space is shaped by the way it is perceived. This strategy has a selective view of history and refers to the valuable urban heritage. This strategy, of course, promotes a cognitive openness to the German heritage, both to the outstanding figures like architects and scientists, and increasingly to the city's material and cultural heritage. There were several comments received for this study, in which German heritage and history were incorporated into the current identity of the Polish city:

> (S2) **Bricks and concrete (…) have no nationality, and a monument always remains a** monument [original emphasis] (**ludendorf**, *Gazeta Wyborcza* portal, 10 February 2009).

> (S2) **Wrocław was under the influence of the cultures of the German speaking nations.** This is something you can't wipe out. **We should appreciate this, because it is the soul of Wrocław. I associate Wrocław with the old buildings and not the concrete housing estates.** I think that anyone who aspires to be a member of the **Wrocław community should be proud of its history, no matter who the former governor was** [original emphasis] (**hansjurgen,** *Gazeta Wyborcza* portal, 28 March 2009).

> (S2) Haven't you noticed that the system has changed and you live in **the real Wrocław, which is not ashamed of its German history? (…) Let's feel the spirit of the true residents of Wrocław and the successive history of our city, not only this (Polish) part of history** (…) psychologically people from **Wrocław will always be between Poland and Germany** [original emphasis] (**Wrocławianin**, *Gazeta Wyborcza* portal, 28 March 2009).

> (S2) **The Grunwald bridge should be called the Imperial bridge and be renovated to its pre-war condition**. Being a citizen of Wrocław requires **respect for the multiculturalism of the city**. The forced Polish colonization led to the destruction of many monuments in the city. There's a new border now, and Wrocław is Polish, **but if we neglect the past, the city will lose its identity. Don't think of the Germans before the war, think about the pre-war people of Wrocław who were as proud of their local homeland as we**

18 In the previous section we presented many quotations illustrating the negative attitude towards the commemoration of the Germans in Wrocław, so in this part we will devote more space to illustration and analysis of positive attitudes.

> **are now** (…) [original emphasis] **(Ttt**, *Gazeta Wrocławska* portal, 2 December 2011).

These quotations show how the negative context of earlier Polish–German conflicts can be avoided by building up the city's continuity through its aesthetic value. This, in turn, introduces to the analysis the issues of the meaning of space and the way it is perceived. The above examples show an attitude which is based on the incorporation and acceptance of the German heritage of the city and thus the German identity of the place. The local identity comes from the continuity of residence or ownership and the urban and cultural heritage of the city. In the debates about commemoration, the meanings and values attributed to the city space are discussed. The aesthetic and material value of German architecture is one of the main criteria shaping a positive attitude towards Germanness of the city. Such attitudes are an example of how the meaning of space (aesthetic) and its perception are interrelated. It is a continuation of local German identity. In the discussion about changing the name of Centennial Hall, those in favor of the new name try to defend their position and rationalize it by referring to the architectural value of the German structures in the city, for example:

> (S2) … Wrocław was called Breslau until 1945 and it was a totally German city, and no one will ever be able to deny it. When the borders were changed after World War II it became Polish territory. Actually, **we should be glad that we got such a wonderful heritage. The architects who had been building this city for so many years were not politicians nor party members, but artists, often in the forefront of European architecture, the precursors of modernism. We should be grateful for the wonderful architecture which is located in our country today** [original emphasis] (**style,** *Gazeta Wyborcza* portal, 20 October 2016).

> (S2) **Centennial Hall is the largest self-supporting dome in the world**. The Germans built it, it is a fact (designer Max Berg), but no matter what (…) **you could never build anything like it**. (…) **The Nazis used the Centennial Hall. So what?** [original emphasis] (**Stefan,** *Gazeta Wyborcza* portal, 27 January 2009).

Technical criteria refer to universal architectural and aesthetic values of the urban space, not to the so-called fundamental disputes about national values. Thus, the discourse around identity is held on various levels. It is a dispute about different values and meanings embodied in the space of the city: **artistic, national, utilitarian.**

Among the inhabitants there is a dispute over the identity of the city, in which one group stands for the representatives of nationalist orientation and the other for the supporters of aesthetic and pragmatic orientation.

Quantitative data analysis shows which social factors significantly differentiate the level of support for name changes. The following factors increased the level of support for restoring former names: a university degree; pursuing high status occupations (professionals, senior managers); high income; and low conservatism. Conversely, individuals with low levels of qualifications, low income, unskilled workers, and people holding conservative values, were against it (see Fig. 10.4). Neither age, nor gender were significant.[19]

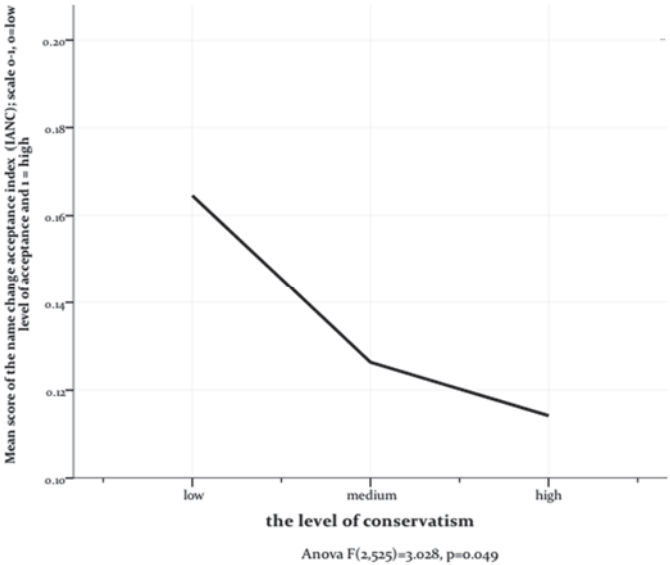



**Figure 10.4.** The index of acceptance of a name change in Wrocław, differentiation by level of conservatism; a representative population sample, N=547.

19 For the purpose of the analysis, an Index of Acceptance of a name change was created, which included a total of three items. The results of one-way ANOVA for education were F(2,539)=2.661, p=0.071; and the mean for primary education was M=0.11, SD=0.14, for secondary M=0.13 SD=0.16, and tertiary M=0.16, SD=0.18; for occupation: F(9,305)=2.997, p=0.002; professionals: M=0.22, SD=0.23; manual workers: M=0.07, SD=0.09; for income: F(2,449)=5.249, p=0.006, low M=0.10, SD=0.14 medium M=0.11, SD=0.15, high M=0.19.

### *Partial Continuation of Space (S3)*

Another cognitive strategy (S3) is to forge an alternative local identity: a Silesian or regional identity. Identifying oneself as a Silesian makes it possible to take an outsider's position in the Polish–German conflict. Here is an example of expressing an alternative identity as a Silesian:

> (S3) I'm not a fan of the Germans, though I have nothing against them. I'm a fan of Silesia and Wrocław! **For me, a German, a Czech, a Jew, or a Pole who is living and was born in Silesia is first and foremost a Silesian.** And I appreciate and respect each of them for their love of Silesia and for the fact that they will do anything to make Silesia beautiful and rich. You probably wouldn't understand this [original emphasis] (**villa Breslauer**, *Gazeta Wyborcza* portal, 28 March 2009).

> (S3) Speaking about Germanization is awkward in Wrocław. The people with these banners who protested against putting the names of German architects on the streets [in the WuWAII district][20] are a foreign element in Wrocław and Lower Silesia. If anyone thinks like this, they don't understand Wrocław or our region, they don't know it, and they are the foreigners here. **National identity has changed here in Silesia many times. It does not matter if someone is German, Polish, Czech, etc., this is of secondary importance, because they are here and more than anything else they should be Silesians** [original emphasis] (**Wrocław**, *Radio Wrocław* portal, 20 October 2016).

Focusing on the Silesian identity shifts the discussion from the question of how to regard the German past of Wrocław by making a connection to another regional tradition that is old and well-established. Referring to an existing and former identity gives greater legitimacy to settling into a given place and dwelling in it. Thus, for some people it is more convenient to identify with Silesia as was done in the past than to invent a new, post-war, local Wrocław tradition (e.g. the new identity of Wrocław as multicultural city). Another reason for this is the negative interpretation of the communist

20 "WuWAII" refers to the Wrocław district "WuWA," from the German: *Wohnungs- und Werkraumausstellung* (Workplace and House), the title of an architectural exhibition held in the district in 1929, organized by the committee of the *Deutsche Werkbund* (German Association of Craftsmen). New proposals for redevelopment of the district are titled "WuWAII." In 2009 a protest was held against proposals to rename local streets after German architects.

period. The post-war identity of Wrocław originated with the communist regime and this is not an acceptable identity for those who critically regard the communist period. The criticism of the communist period is another theme which appears in public discourse. It is noteworthy that the interpretation of the communist period in Poland is an important subject of recent public discourse on historical memory. Right-conservative politicians promote a negative stereotypical image of that period. Thus, identifying oneself with the Silesian past is a way to avoid the national Polish–German conflict and refer to an identity which opposes both the German and Polish–communist identities of the city's space.

### *Perception and Meaning of Space*

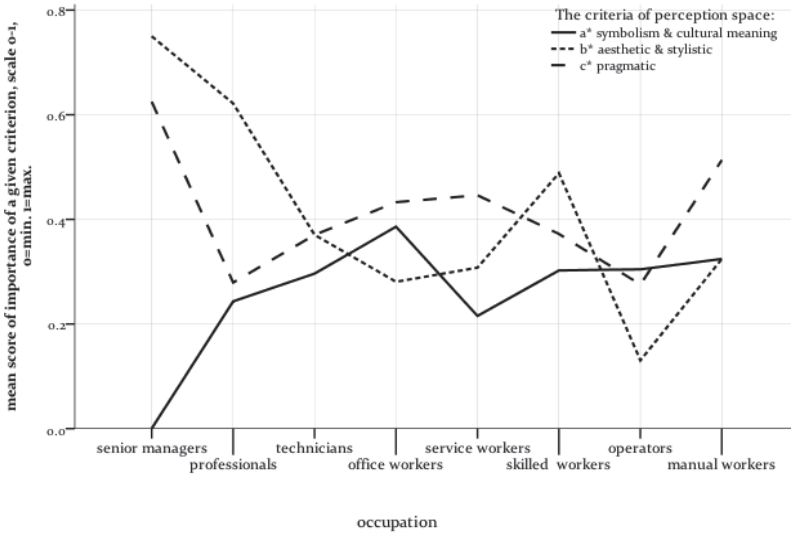
We now turn to the patterns of perception of space. In order to interpret a given space as a site of memory a pre-existing framework is necessary, and collective memory can be understood as the reservoir of such culturally laden and ready-to-use meanings. First, we studied how people perceived space as a symbol of the past. The most common way of interpreting architectural landmarks was to treat them as iconic characters, that is, to perceive places as lacking in any hidden significance, or to seek a simple analogy to assign meaning. For example, the University building and Ossolineum library were viewed as symbols of science and learning. Other frameworks of interpretation which occasionally appeared in the responses were related to the spatial location or associations with the site of a particular building, or the function of a building. Finally, places were seen from the perspective of the respondents' personal experiences related to those places. In this way, urban space becomes a sign of the past when it is inscribed in the biography of the inhabitants.

The meanings of space hidden in the symbols and aesthetics of architecture require knowledge of cultural conventions, which are acquired in the process of socialization. The symbolic meaning of historical sites is learned through "mnemonic socialisation" (E. Zerubavel 2004), the functioning of which is socially diverse. Quantitative data show that social and cultural capital (formal education

and occupational position) more strongly stimulates the perception of aesthetics than the symbolism of space (see Fig. 10.5 and Fig. 10.6): together with education and professional status, the tendency to perceive space in terms of aesthetic value increased and these differences were statistically significant. On the other hand, the symbolic meaning of space was significantly diversified due to conservatism (measured by religious traditionalism and party affiliation): in the group of respondents with a high degree of conservatism, the symbolism of historical space was a more important criterion of perception than aesthetic value (see Fig. 10.7 and Fig. 10.8).[21] Qualitative and quantitative data complement each other and make it possible to explain how people from different social backgrounds think about space.

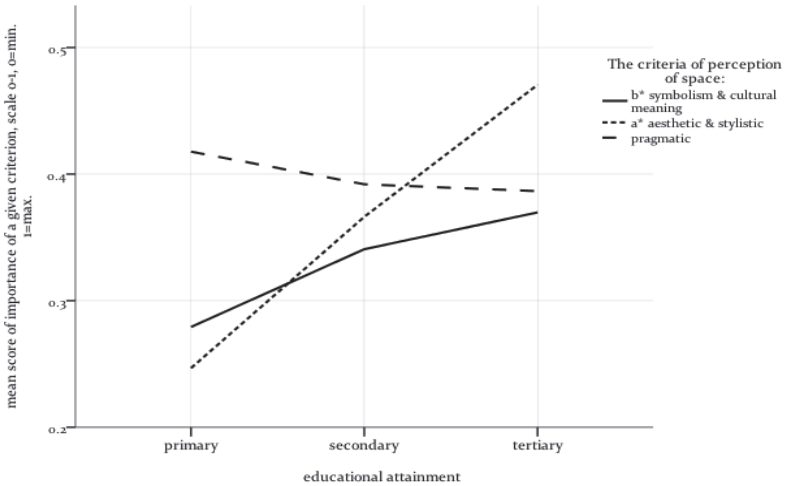
21 The level of religious conservatism was measured by the frequency of religious practices and the intensity of believing in God; the attitude to symbolism in the city space was more differentiated by faith in God than by religious practices.

1) For aesthetic and stylistic criteria of perception the results of one-way ANOVA are the following: for education $F(4,541)=7.654$, $p=0.001$ where primary education $M=0.28$ $SD=0.45$, secondary $M=0.34$ $SD=0.47$, tertiary $M=0.37$ $SD=0.49$; occupation $F(9,306)=3.438$, $p=0.001$, $\eta 2=0.092$; senior managers $M=0.75$, $SD=0.46$; professionals $M=0.62$, $SD=0.49$; manual workers $M=0.32$ $SD=0.46$; service workers $M=0.31$ , $SD=47$.
2) For symbolic perception the results of one-way ANOVA are the following: religiosity $F(4,535)=2.411$, $p=0.048$ $\eta 2=0.018$, and people who believe $M=0.40$, $SD=0.49$; those who do not $M=0.31$, $SD=0.47$.



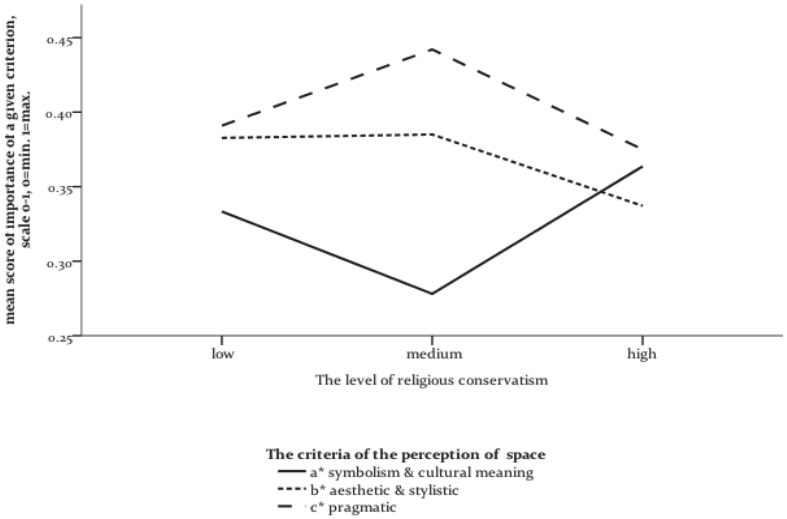

The results of Anova: a* F(7,298)=1.184, p=0.311 b* F(7,289)=4.043, p=0.001; c* F(7,289)=2.339, p=0.021. Scale 0-1: the lower value of the index indicates little importance and the high value indicates great importance.

**Figure 10.5.** The criteria of the perception of historical urban space in Wrocław, differentiation by occupation; a representative population sample, N=547.



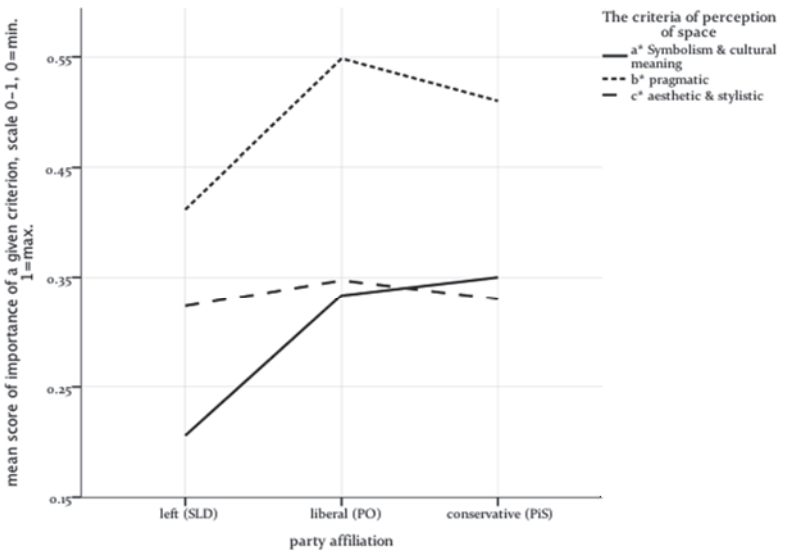

The results of Anova: a* F(2,543)=7.654, p=0.001; b* F(2,543)=1.393, p=0.249; scale 0-1: the lower value of the index indicates little importance and the high value indicates great importance.

**Figure 10.6.** The criteria of the perception of historical urban space in Wrocław, differentiation by educational attainment; a representative population sample, N=547.




a*F(2,529)=1.822, p=0.163, b*F(2,529)=0.641, p=0.527, c*F(2,529)=2.048, p=0.130,

**Figure 10.7.** The criteria of the perception of historical urban space in Wrocław, differentiation by level of religious conservatism; a representative population sample, N=547.




Anova a*F(2,275)= 1.264, p=0.284, b* F(2,275)= 1.048, p=0.352, c* F(2,275)= 0.057, p=0.945

**Figure 10.8.** The criteria of the perception of historical urban space in Wrocław, differentiation by party affiliation; a representative population sample, N=547.

The results confirm that space is subjected to cognitive manipulation, and the best example of this is the invented identity of space. It is created in the process of mythologization of the city's past, as in the case of the notion of Lviv as the place of origin of Wrocław's inhabitants, and of Wrocław as a continuation of Lviv (around 50% of respondents still believed in this myth, while in fact at most one-third of the post-war settlers came to Wrocław from the Borderlands, including Lviv). Another example of an invented place identity is the concept of Wrocław as a multicultural city advertised literally as "a meeting place." The interpretation of the identity of historical buildings does not reflect "historical facts." Another example of cognitive manipulation is the misrepresentation of the identity of a place. The inhabitants create their own "true identity" for the historical buildings. For instance, the Centennial Hall was mentioned as an example of Nazi heritage in 50% of open answers. Interestingly, this belief was shared by 50% of people with low levels of qualifications and 60% of people holding a university degree. In general, the residents often perceived German identity in old buildings in Wrocław. Thus, history becomes a reservoir for various interpretations of the past depending on stereotypes, prejudices, fears, or trauma. The meanings assigned to historical events in collective memory imply a framework for interpreting the places, facts, and historical dates brought up in discussions.

## Conclusions

In this chapter we have studied socio-cultural differences in the interpretation of the past depending on the approach to time and space. The manners in which time is manipulated and space is interpreted reveal the influence of the social environment and cultural patterns on the interpretations of the past. The analysis is based on quantitative and qualitative data that complement each other. Quantitative data indicate the socio-cultural determinants of memory patterns, and qualitative data show the way people interpret the past using different time and space structures. The data provided the basis for constructing a model of three strategies for interpreting the city's past in its temporal and spatial dimensions.

The empirical data indicate two groups of cultural and social factors shaping memory patterns: micro-social and macro-social. The significant micro-social factors are the transmission of collective memory in a family, which increases the value of history, and the belonging to a generational community, which marks the meaning of specific biographical events and determines a significant time.

Macro-social factors, in turn, are connected with a broader social, cultural, and historical context. In Wrocław, the conflictual history of the two neighboring countries of Poland and Germany has become a framework for the interpretation of the present city's identity. Its influence can be seen in cultural motifs such as memory clichés of Poles as victims and the recurring scheme of viewing the Germans as Nazis. The traumatic past and the role of the victim left their mark on the cognitive patterns, increasing the emotional and "irrational" factor in the perception of time and space. This resulted in a tendency to transform time sequence in the narratives about the past; and, as far as perception of space is concerned, in developing a greater sensitivity to the symbolism of the place and identity emblems (such as place names).

Macro-social and cultural factors such as axiological orientation and position in the social structure also shape cognitive patterns of perceiving time and space. In our analysis we have shown the influence of political orientation on the interpretation of history. People with a modern orientation are more oriented towards the future and aesthetic values in the perception of space. Conversely, people with a conservative orientation are more past-oriented and focus more on the symbolism of space. These differences in axiological orientation are consistent with the cognitive strategies included in the proposed model: the strategy of discontinuation is related to conservative orientation, whereas a modern orientation is related to a strategy of continuation. When the content of memory is a difficult history, the strategy of breaking continuity with the "foreign" past of the city appears in the case of the conservatives, while the strategy of building the continuity of the city on the basis of aesthetic values appears in the case of modern-oriented people. Furthermore, the strategies reconstructed from the qualitative data can

be explained by quantitative data through indicating their social determinants. Spatial discontinuation as a cognitive strategy is typical for people with a lower social status and a lower level of education, and often for those who are more conservative. A continuation strategy that makes reference to the importance of post-German architecture is preferred by those with a higher social status and a higher level of education, and who are more often modern in orientation.

The socio-cultural diversity of cognitive patterns which we analyzed in this work has not only a theoretical but also a practical dimension. In the former case, it allows us to explore the classical problem of the sociology of knowledge, whose social variables determine the forms of knowledge; in the latter case, it serves to indicate the links between the persistence of social conflicts and cognitive patterns. In this work we defended the thesis that ethnic conflicts are maintained in collective memory by means of specific cognitive patterns. This phenomenon is of particular importance for the dynamics of a conflict, when the conflict moves from the sphere of action to the sphere of cultural discourse. The conflict revolving around the past of the city functions mainly in the sphere of beliefs about history, and its permanence is based on the structure of cognitive patterns used by the people participating in this symbolic–cultural dispute. Our study shows that time and space are not objective dimensions of reality but categories of cultural interpretation (in this case, the perception of the course of time and the organization of space).

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# Identificational and Attitudinal Trends in the Ukrainian–Romanian Borderland of Bukovina

*Nadiia Bureiko and Teodor Lucian Moga*

***Abstract**: This chapter explores from a bottom-up perspective the societal perceptions, attitudes, and attachments existing in the Ukrainian–Romanian borderland of Bukovina at the level of the two most significant minority groups: those who self-identify as Romanians, live in the northern part of Bukovina, and are citizens of Ukraine; and those who self-identify as Ukrainians, live in the southern part of Bukovina, and are citizens of Romania. The chapter argues that these two communities share a mixture of multifaceted identities and attachments which could be explained by the strong ethnic and cultural diversity of the region and by its complex historical evolution.*

## Introduction

After the dissolution of the communist bloc, in a complex quest to crystallize their nationhood and national identity, the newly reconfigured states of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) have evolved within a framework "of multiple cultural and national loyalties on the one hand and of mutually-exclusive identities on the other" (Magosci 1989: 51-52). No longer bound by the communist system to affirm the continuity of the nation, most of the CEE countries attempted to connect to the pre-communist period (Elster 1991: 476). Concurrently, their political leaderships focused on the development of updated narratives for their ethno-national state policies, a process which was particularly complex given that in most of the CEE countries there is no congruence between ethnicity and nation-state frontiers (Kuzio 1997: 36; Sanford 1997: 45; King and Melvin 1999). This could be a challenging issue when inappropriate conduct vis-à-vis minorities residing in one state and kin-linked to a

neighboring state occurs, if their ethnic and national identity role is not properly expressed and/or perceived (Veres 2015: 88).

Moreover, in CEE identificational practices and perceptions "on the ground" play a noticeable role in the development of bilateral relations between states which hold a majority population that shares the same ethnicity, language, and cultural and historical links with a minority from a neighboring state (King and Melvin 1999; Waterbury 2010; 2014; 2017; Veres 2015). This issue is gaining even more importance today given that some of the restored states of the ex-communist bloc have provided easy access to citizenship for their diasporas and trans-border kin-minorities (Liebich 2009: 21-24; Pogonyi 2017: 2; Agarin and Karolewski 2015).

Furthermore, while long regarded as a domestic issue, the position of minority groups is today considered an integral component of the international agenda with the increasing involvement of international institutions. After minority rights protection was included in the 1993 Copenhagen EU accession criteria, it became one of the key benchmarks against which the efficiency of the Europeanization process is measured. According to the European standards, respect for minority rights is an essential prerequisite for bringing about democratic transformation, solid institutions, rule of law, and long-term peace and stability. Thus, the beginning of the twenty-first century has seen an increasingly high interest on the part of the CEE governments in providing minority rights and balancing between cultural diversity and identity preservation alongside harmonization of interethnic relations and ensuring the peaceful co-existence of different layers of self-identification at the level of minority groups.

The ethnically diverse composition of the population residing in one state and ethnically linked to a neighboring state in the immediate vicinity, alongside a complex history of shifting borderlines, have made the Ukrainian–Romanian borderland of Bukovina an interesting case to explore. Whereas most scholarship studying Bukovina has so far focused on the political implications of the regional/national policies towards minorities, using a top-down approach, or on historical developments in this region (Bruja 2016;

Cioculescu 2015; Kosiek 2015; Kruglashov 2013; Yuriychuk 2013; Frunchak 2011; Osachuk 2002; Horuk 2005; Strutynsky and Horuk 2002; Livezeanu, 2000), this paper takes a different angle, exploring from a bottom-up perspective the current identificational and attitudinal trends at the level of the minority groups themselves. Specifically, the study adopts a comparative perspective on the societal perceptions, attitudes, and attachments of two groups: those who self-identify as Romanians, live in the northern part of Bukovina, and are citizens of Ukraine; and those who self-identify as Ukrainians, live in the southern part of Bukovina, and are citizens of Romania. Arguably, the two communities share a mixture of multifaceted and multilayered identities and attachments which could be explained by the strong ethnic and cultural diversity of the region and its complex historical background.

The following analysis is structured in three main sections. The first section presents a brief account of the complexity of borderlands, looks into the factors which contribute to the development of a sense of belonging to a community, and sets out the methodological approach. The second section investigates the existing socio-cultural dynamics within the Ukrainian–Romanian borderland region and offers a historical account of the political and territorial transformations in Bukovina. The third section scrutinizes the data from a questionnaire-based survey, the first of its kind to have been simultaneously conducted on both sides of the Ukrainian–Romanian border, and presents empirical evidence on the societal perceptions and attitudinal trends present in the region of Bukovina at the level of Ukrainian and Romanian minorities. The concluding part summarizes and discusses the main findings.

## Borderlands and Belonging: A Brief Theoretical Account

Throughout history, nation-state borders have undergone continuous historical, political, economic, social, and cultural fluctuations which have naturally determined variations across relationships, attachments, and identity discourses, as well as influencing the practices and experiences of those who live in the borderlands

(Yuval-Davis 2013: 15; Brambilla 2015: 19). In recent years, the interdisciplinary field of border studies has come into being, drawing upon the expertise from a range of disciplines, including political science, anthropology, sociology, and human and cultural geography (Brambilla 2015: 15; Newman and Paasi 1998: 186-207).

In the contemporary scholarship, borderland regions no longer determine a specific place, but rather combine "different socio-cultural, political, economic as well as legal and historical settings" with a space of negotiating actors, practices, and discourses (Brambilla 2015: 22). Borders are, thus, demarcated not only by territorial spaces or political entities, but also by historical and cultural lines which all together form the so-called "identity politics," essential to the construction of a sense of belonging to a certain community and/or place (Yuval-Davis 2011: 12-15; Brambilla 2015: 20, 23; Rajaram and Grundy-Warr 2007: xxiv). Creating a feeling of belonging or identity can be viewed from different perspectives: either as a political project or as an individual one, entirely unplanned, often unconsciously operated and performed (Amante 2010: 103). For the purpose of the present study we focus on the latter dimension.

In Pfaff-Czarnecka's view (2011), belonging is an "emotionally-charged social location" that combines "1) perceptions and performance of commonality; (2) a sense of mutuality and more or less formalized modalities of collective allegiance, and (3) material and immaterial attachments." Whilst incorporating an emotional attachment, the feeling of "belonging," of being "at home," is chiefly linked to the degree of commonality and connectedness with a particular group and entity (Yuval-Davis 2012: 20). In addition to the perception of commonality and emotional attachment that contribute to the feeling of "belonging," other factors are also important, "such as particular events, their encoding in compelling public narratives, prevailing discursive frames, and so on" (Brubaker 2004: 47). Thus, borderlands which often "contain the alluring promise of diversity" alongside "proximity and familiarity" (Komska 2017: 3), can be regarded as "home" and constitute a melting pot of attachments for different communities whose perception of the same space could be intertwined. Whereas borderland regions, state and

ethnic boundaries may be negotiated and reshaped through the course of history (Donnan and Wilson 1999; Amilhat-Szary 2012; Perera 2007), perceptions, identities, and experiences can also be contested given that previous frontiers may still hold sway over the formation of multilayered attitudinal and identity trends present across certain borderlands (Lugo 1997: 53; Grandits *et al.* 2015). After a border regime disappears along with its corresponding political, administrative, and social rules, the remaining memories and practices can still have a lasting cultural or social effect on the borderland where population, memory, space, and time become mixed and entangled (Hurd, Donnan, Leutloff-Grandits 2017: 3; Hastrup 1996; Komska 2017: 14).

Collectively negotiated and performed, the sense of belonging through commonality derives from the perception of sharing particular attributes—e.g. language, religion, customs, values, beliefs, memories, different practices (Pfaff-Czarnecka 2011; Anthias 2016: 176). The way people feel and see themselves in relation to their "self" and "the other," how they position themselves and what attachments they share can be traced when analyzing their "lived experience" (Joseph and Auyero 2007). As such, their self-identification is not a fixed category—a way of "being" prescribed by outsiders—but rather a set of practices of "doing and knowing" (Fishman 1996: 63-64). Through everyday practices people develop their attachments to the community and the place to which they belong, both physically and symbolically.

### *Methodology*

For exploring the present-day multifaceted and multilayered identifications and attachments in the region of Bukovina, we built our analysis upon the data obtained from a question-based survey, conducted in Bukovina in 2016, on both sides of the Ukrainian–Romanian border simultaneously.[1] A quantitative approach allows us to

1 The survey is the result of the research project "Bukovina as a Contact Zone" jointly coordinated by the NGO "Quadrivium" (Ukraine), the Centre for European Studies at Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iasi (Romania), and the Center for Governance and Culture in Europe of the University of St. Gallen (Switzerland). The project is part of the "Transcultural Contact Zones in Ukraine"

better capture a broader perspective on identificational and attitudinal trends, since survey as a method is arguably more suitable when a large pool of respondents is desired and when a general perspective on the phenomena at hand is needed (Gideon 2012).

The survey was based on a representative quota sample built upon the latest official available data.[2] It considered the age, gender, and regional distribution of population and included the two most relevant minority communities in the borderland, both at the rural and urban levels:

1. the Romanian community, living in the northern part of Bukovina (today part of Chernivtsi region of Ukraine), who are citizens of Ukraine (N=403);
2. the Ukrainian community, living in the southern part of Bukovina (today part of Suceava or Botoşani county in Romania), who are citizens of Romania (N=363).

Based on the theoretical input, we devised 45 questions related to different self-identificational and attitudinal strands, including different interpretations of collective memory and of images of "self" and "other." Taking into account the specificity of the sample, two filter questions were applied at the beginning of the survey. The respondents defined themselves and their allegiance to the group when answering the first two questions of the questionnaire which asked how they position themselves identity-wise and what their citizenship is.[3] Therefore, belonging to one of the two

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research initiative, financially supported by the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation SERI, Swiss National Science Foundation, and the Wolodymyr George Danyliw Foundation. For more detail, see: http://www.uaregio.org/en/about/stage-2/.

2 Namely, the 2001 census in Ukraine and the 2002 census in Romania.

3 The sample is limited to those who clearly self-position as citizens of Ukraine or Romania and to those who clearly self-identify as Romanians or Ukrainians. The present paper does not consider the mixed self-identification of both Ukrainians and Romanians. However, the categorization of different levels of self-identification as Strong Ukrainian and Strong Romanian, Strong Romanian and Medium/Low Ukrainian, Strong Ukrainian and Medium/Low Romanian, Medium Ukrainian and Romanian, Low Ukrainian and Romanian among both groups of respondents can be found in: Bureiko, Moga, Gheorghiu, and Ibănescu (2021).

corresponding groups was not prescribed to the respondents by the research team and/or operators. In this way, we sought to avoid the research bias which could emerge when "grouping" respondents based on generalization and standardization; conversely, we approached our respondents "not as objects, but as agents" (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow 2012: 46). This approach was designed to allow us to undertake the analysis of perceptions, attachments, and attitudes as they are expressed in "everyday contexts by everyday actors" (Blee and Currier 2007: 158) and from the perspective of "what actors are thinking and doing" (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007: 237). This bottom-up approach can also help us to better understand the individual perspective and to analyze the preferences of the actors whose impact on the construction of political and social discourses in the borderlands has been so far underexplored in the existing scholarship.

## Historical Background

Dispersed ethnic entities residing within the borders of a nation-state different from the state of their ethnic origin are typically a direct consequence of the border fluctuation and territorial changes that have occurred over history. The present Ukrainian–Romanian borderland of Bukovina is very much marked by these historical alterations, since it has often experienced shifting borderlines and acquired complicated historical narratives. During medieval times, the region was part of the Principality of Moldavia. In 1774 the region became an integral part of the multiethnic Habsburg Empire. One year later the Habsburg authorities first denominated the region as "Bukovina."[4] During the nineteenth century, as part of the Habsburg political and economic modernization project, the region received a special status—first, as the Duchy of Bukovina in 1849–67 and then as a Cisleithanian "crown land" in 1867–1918—and became a dynamic model of cultural diversity and tolerant multiethnic co-existence. According to the Habsburg census of 1900, the largest communities of Bukovina were constituted by Ukrainians

4 In the Slavic language family the word means "land of the beech trees."

(40.8%) and Romanians (31.4%), while the region was also home to Germans, Jews, Poles, and Armenians (27.8%) (Bureiko, Moga, Gheorghiu, and Ibănescu, 2021).

Historically located at the crossroads of Europe's empires, the borderland of Bukovina has always been associated with a mixture of different ethnic, cultural, and religious identities. Ukrainians, Romanians, Germans, Jews, Poles, and Armenians with various religious affiliations peacefully and harmoniously co-inhabited the region and displayed almost no trace of ethnically driven violence. Instead, they all contributed to the intercultural regional mosaic, embodying what Narvselius and Bernsand (2014: 72–73) have called "Bukovinian tolerance." The two authors note that this denomination has been a discursive benchmark ever since the Habsburg era, when the region was regarded as a symbolic hub of multiculturalism. "Bukovinian tolerance" has been used as a "catchphrase in both intellectual and everyday contexts, signifying the relatively relaxed inter-ethnic relations between the traditional local communities" *(ibid.)*.

After World War I and the crumbling of the dynastic empires ruling the region—the Habsburg, Ottoman, and Russian empires—new states were established. Again, these historical and socio-political transformations resulted in shifting borders and alterations to the region's demographic composition. After the dissolution of the Habsburg Empire, Bukovina became part of the Kingdom of Romania, which resulted in a general process of Romanization of the region (Hausleitner 2001). This, in turn, altered its ethnic composition. In 1930, the demographic configuration in Bukovina comprised 44.5% Romanians, 29.1% Ukrainians and 26.4% others (Bureiko, Moga, Gheorghiu, and Ibănescu, 2021).

During World War II large political changes triggered a new ethnic reconfiguration of the population in Bukovina. In accordance with the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact, the northern part of Bukovina was incorporated into the Soviet Union, whereas the southern part of Bukovina remained part of the Kingdom of Romania in 1940–41. In the summer of 1941, the Romanian Army, as part of the Axis forces, retook control over the whole region, including the northern

part of Bukovina, for the next three years. However, in 1944 the region was divided again between the Soviet Union and Romania, a division which was formalized in 1947 by the Paris Peace Treaties.

The Soviet nationality policy sought to overcome the ethnic diversity of the region by merging "all the nationalities in a common Soviet and socialist identity" (Coppieters 1998: 18). The terms "nationality" and "ethnicity" were regarded as synonymous. "Ethnic nationality" *(national'nost')* was not only a *statistical category*, a fundamental unit of social accounting and of other social surveys, but also "an obligatory and mainly ascriptive *legal category*, a key element of an individual's legal status" (Brubaker 1994: 53). According to Fisher and Röger (2018: 178), "subsequent developments included the 'repatriation' of the region's remaining national minorities to their respective 'homelands' and the Sovietization of the northern half of Bukovina, including the former regional capital, German *Czernowitz*, Romanian *Cernăuți*, Russian *Chernovtsy*, and Ukrainian *Chernivtsi*." The ethnopolitical-administrative experiments carried out by the Soviet Union in the northern part of Bukovina entailed both the redrawing of borders and the displacement of parts of the population. Many Poles and Germans had left the region, while those Jews who survived the horrors of Holocaust had emigrated westwards or moved to Israel. In general, all ethnic groups in the region experienced massive change during the Soviet times, involving mass deportations, killings, and resettlement; "the region [was] divided, the spaces re-appropriated, and the history distorted" (Fisher 2018: 208)—all of which contributed to yet another transformation of the ethno-demographic landscape of Bukovina. Consequently, as Rumer (2017) argued, the Soviet policy resulted in a "country with borders that would be challenged as soon as the imperial bonds fell off, and a divided population whose component parts were eager to preserve ties to their historical homeland."

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the northern part of Bukovina became part of the independent state of Ukraine, within the Chernivtsi administrative unit (oblast'). In Romania, the southern

part of Bukovina administratively belongs largely to Suceava county and to a lesser extent to Botoşani county.

In today's Bukovina, shared by Ukraine and Romania, the fact that the histories of these two countries are so deeply intertwined in this region has often sparked different historical interpretations at the level of the Ukrainian and Romanian communities (Fisher and Röger 2018). As Narvselius and Bernsand (2014: 62) have pointed out, "populations and societies affected by the same historical processes, political regimes and global trends may accumulate essentially different memories." Yet, Bukovina has so far managed to avoid any "memory wars" or "bloodshed" (Komska 2017: 3; Bartov and Weitz 2013). Instead, the region has maintained its intercultural ethos, marked by tolerance, ethnic diversity, and peaceful coexistence which in turn has contributed, according to our findings, to the formation of multilayered identities and shared attachments.

With respect to the demographic composition, the region now has predominantly Ukrainians as a majority and Romanians as the main minority group in the northern part of Bukovina, while Romanians are the majority and Ukrainians the main minority group in the southern part of Bukovina. According to the 2001 Ukrainian census, 75% of the population from Chernivtsi region identified as ethnic Ukrainians; 12.5% as Romanians; 7.3% as Moldovans; 4.1% as Russians; and 1.1% as belonging to other groups. According to the 2002 Romanian census, only 1.2% of the population of Suceava county identified as ethnic Ukrainians. However, in some small rural settlements, this percentage reached 67%.

The two main cities of the northern and southern parts of Bukovina—Chernivtsi and Suceava respectively—present a different picture when it comes to the demographic configuration of the Ukrainian–Romanian/Romanian–Ukrainian majority–minority dyad. According to the 2001 census, the population of Suceava was ethnically homogeneous, with 98% Romanian, while the share of the other ethnic groups did not reach 0.5% each. By contrast, the population of Chernivtsi included 65 ethnic groups with 79.8% Ukrainians, 11.3% Russians, 4.4% Romanians, 1.6% Moldovans, 1.4% Poles, 1.2% Jews, and others. Thus, considering the multi-

ethnicity of the city, in Chernivtsi the narratives of ethnic tolerance and cultural diversity are widely integrated in the strategy of municipal city branding to which all local actors (the city authorities, cultural societies, NGOs, etc.) have agreed to actively contribute. The vibrant cultural and ethnic ethos of the city has been developed via the activities of five so-called National Houses—Ukrainian, Romanian, Polish, German, and Jewish—built in Austrian times, later abolished during the Soviet period, and since the early 1990s returned to the communities. Moreover, local organizations of ethnic communities and cultural societies together participate in commemorative initiatives, contribute to the urban multicultural life, and are involved in the decision-making process at the municipal and regional levels. For instance, members of the Ukrainian, Austrian, Armenian, Jewish, Polish, and Romanian cultural societies were included in the Regional Council on Ethno-National Policy established in 2017 within the Chernivtsi Regional State Administration. In the Council, the Romanian community is represented by delegates from the Eminescu Regional Society of Romanian Culture, the regional branch of the "Ukraine–Romania" Society, the Bukovinian Artistic Center for the Renaissance and Promotion of Development of the Romanian Traditional Culture, the Romanian Cultural Center "Eudoxiu Hurmuzachi," and the "Holhofa" Society.

In both Chernivtsi and Suceava the notion of Bukovina as a distinct region is present in the framing and content of numerous urban landscape and regional development projects. For instance, an annual regionally known folklore festival entitled "Bukovinian Meetings" has become a symbol of multiculturalism and interethnic tolerance. Both Chernivtsi and Suceava have city hotels called "Bukovina." In 1992, a regional branch of the Romanian Academy of Sciences known as Institutul Bucovina was opened in Rădăuți, a small town north of Suceava, aimed at studying Bukovina. Since 1994, this institution has published a journal, *Analele Bucovinei* ("The Annals of Bukovina") and organized regular

conferences with a focus on the region. Similarly, in 1992 in Chernivtsi a Center for Bukovinian Studies was established at the University.[5]

## Data Analysis

### *Self-Identification, Belonging, and Attachment*

The self-identification of respondents[6] was measured using statements such as: *I feel Ukrainian, I feel Romanian, I feel European, I feel like resident of my city (town or village), I feel a resident of Bukovina region and I feel a resident of my country*. The data showed different and multiple layers of self-identification (Fig. 11.1).

According to the survey, 47.9% of respondents from the northern part of Bukovina and 58.2% from the southern part of Bukovina feel Ukrainian. Concurrently, 79.7% of respondents from the northern part of Bukovina and 76.6% from the southern part of Bukovina feel Romanian. The feeling of being European is not very salient in either of the two parts and constitutes 19.4% and 40.5%, respectively.

At the same time, 89.6% of respondents from the northern and 92.8% of respondents from the southern part of Bukovina expressed a strong sense of being residents of their locality (city, town, or village). Similarly, 88.8% of respondents from the northern and 90.9% of respondents from the southern part of Bukovina manifested strong feelings as residents of the region of Bukovina. Solid feelings as residents of their own country were also displayed at the level of both communities: 82.8% of respondents from the Romanian

5 Today entitled the Yurii Fedkovych Chernivtsi National University. The Center for Bukovinian Studies—the so-called "Bukovina-Institute"—was not always actively functioning. It was dissolved in 2011, and only reopened in 2017.

6 Henceforth, while referring to the respondents from the northern part of Bukovina we have in mind those respondents from the Ukrainian part of the borderland who self-identify as Romanians. Similarly, whilst referring to the respondents from the southern part of Bukovina we have in mind those respondents from the Romanian part of the borderland who self-identify as Ukrainians. When analyzing the self-identification of the respondents, we take into account those answers expressed at the level of "a lot" and "the most."

community inhabiting the northern part, and 90.6% of respondents from the Ukrainian community in the southern part.

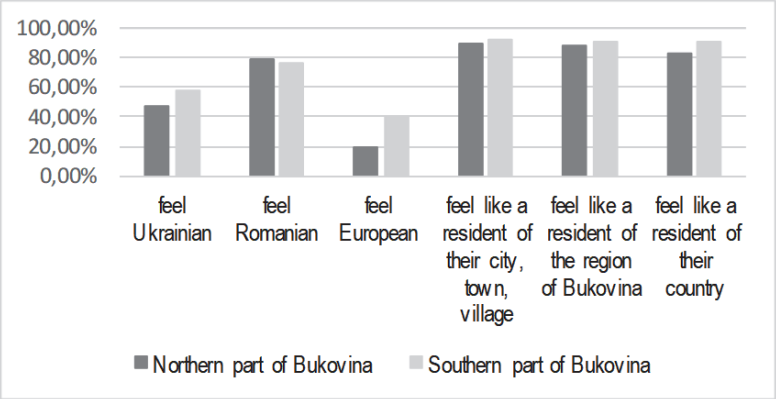


**Figure 11.1.** Different layers of self-identification in the Region of Bukovina.
*Source:* based on data obtained from the 2016 survey "Bukovina as a Contact Zone."

The answers revealed multilayered self-identification among the respondents across the entire region of Bukovina, with local and regional identities clearly prevailing over national/European ones. Interestingly, the answers obtained from the two groups of respondents from both sides of the border did not significantly vary. The only noticeable variation concerns the "European" variable that is more salient in the southern part of Bukovina compared to the northern part of Bukovina. Such variation can be explained by the different level of impact the European integration process has had on Romania, compared to Ukraine, a non-EU member.[7]

Strong identification with region and locality was also displayed by the variables generated to assess the level of our respondents' attachment to place. For instance, according to the data, 82.6% of respondents from the northern and 87.9% from the southern part of Bukovina love the place where they live and cannot imagine living elsewhere. Furthermore, 72.2% from the northern and 88.1%

7 Romania has been subject of the EU enlargement process and, later on, from 2007, itself a EU member, whereas Ukraine has been so far excluded from enlargement process and offered instead an associate status. The Association Agreement between Ukraine and the EU was signed in 2014.

from the southern part of Bukovina feel strongly attached to the place where they were born and consider this place the most appropriate to spend their lives. In addition, 82.1% from the northern and 84.8% from the southern part of Bukovina love the place they live and try to have a better life there. Overall, the level of agreement with the aforementioned statements was very high. Remarkably, when questioned as to whether they envisaged or would like to leave the region in the foreseeable future, respondents from both parts of the borderland largely answered in the negative, even when their kin-state was indicated as a possible destination (Fig. 11.2).

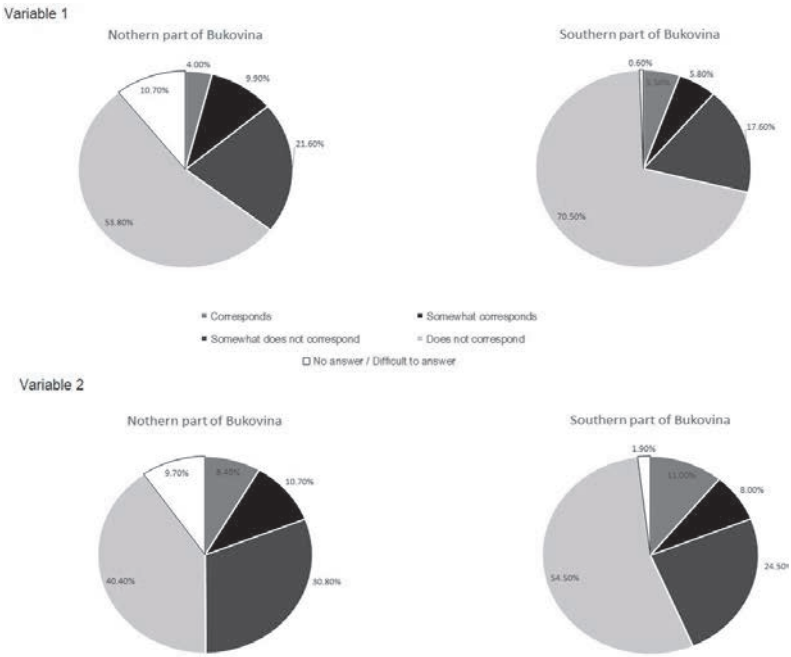


**Figure 11.2.** (Un)willingness to move away from the region/locality: Results for variable 1 "I will do my best to move away from here," and variable 2 "Given the chance, I would gladly move to Romania/Ukraine."[8] *Source:* based on data obtained from the 2016 survey "Bukovina as a Contact Zone."

8 The respondents from the northern part of Bukovina (Ukraine) were asked about their willingness to move to Romania. Conversely, the respondents from

As far as attachment to the kin-state is concerned, 54.9% from the northern part of Bukovina feel part of the Romanian nation even if they live in Ukraine and are citizens of Ukraine. This percentage is significantly higher among the respondents in the southern part of Bukovina, where 74.4% feel part of the Ukrainian nation even if they live in Romania and are citizens of Romania.

Furthermore, respondents from both sides of the borderland share positive attitudes vis-à-vis the country where they live. However, they also expressed the desire to obtain the passport of the neighboring country as a symbolic attachment to their kin-state. For instance, 69.5% of respondents from the northern part of Bukovina love Ukraine but would like to have a Romanian passport, compared to 77.1% from the southern part of Bukovina who love Romania but would like to also obtain a Ukrainian passport. Unlike the Romanian law, the Constitution of Ukraine currently does not recognize dual citizenship. However, 76.5% of respondents from the northern and 89.5% of respondents from the southern part of Bukovina entertain the idea of dual citizenship for Ukraine. 76.4% of respondents from the northern and 87.9% of respondents from the southern part of Bukovina support or rather support it.

*Language*

Taking into account that "the link between language and ethnicity in modern Eastern Europe perpetuates a poignant sense of identity widely recognized by ethnic collectivities" and due to the link among the past and present generations fostered by language (Fishman 1996: 65–66), one of our survey questions aimed at understanding the respondents' self-identification and self-perceptions vis-à-vis language and everyday communication practices. When asked "What is your native language?" 88.8% of respondents from the northern part of Bukovina indicated Romanian. Concurrently, 75.5% of respondents from the southern part of Bukovina indicated Ukrainian as their native language. The level of Ukrainian and Romanian bilingualism as native is modest and represents 4.7% in the

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the southern part of Bukovina (Romania) were asked about their willingness to move to Ukraine.

northern part of Bukovina and 16.3% in the southern part of Bukovina. In addition, in the northern part of Bukovina, 1.2% of respondents indicated Russian and Romanian bilingualism as native, while 0.5% declared Russian language as native (Fig. 11.3).

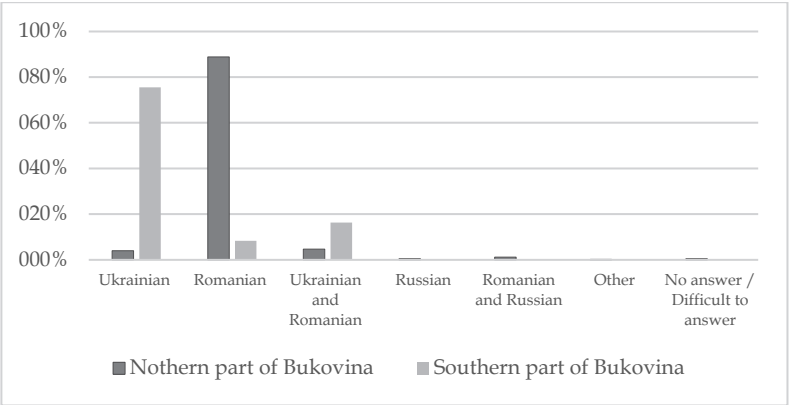


**Figure 11.3.** Native language in Bukovina. *Source:* data obtained from the 2016 survey "Bukovina as a Contact Zone."

We also sought to investigate everyday language practices (Fig. 11.4). The responses showed that in the northern part of Bukovina the majority of respondents opt to use their native language, Romanian, in everyday communication. Thus, 77.9% speak Romanian with their parents, and 80.1% with grandparents. Likewise, in communication with children (63%), close friends (59.6%), colleagues (49.6%) and shop assistants (48.6%) the usage of Romanian is predominant. Meanwhile, Romanian–Ukrainian bilingualism prevails in communication with officials (35.5%). According to our findings, Ukrainian has not overtaken Romanian/Romanian–Ukrainian bilingualism in any category of the communication practices. Ukrainian usage is highest (18.1%) during random encounters with unknown people. This is higher than the frequency with which Romanian is used in the same situation (14.9%), but still lower than the usage of Ukrainian–Romanian bilingualism (33.5%). Despite the fact that Russian language as native is almost non-existent for this group of respondents, it is occasionally used in communication practices along with Romanian. Thus, the usage of both Russian

and Romanian is present, for instance, in communication practices with strangers (16.4%), officials (13.4%), colleagues (10.4%), and friends (10.2%).

The frequencies of responses obtained from the southern part of Bukovina showed different patterns. The language indicated as native—Ukrainian—prevails only in everyday communication with parents (57.9%) and grandparents (60.3%). Unlike the majority of respondents from the northern part of Bukovina, the respondents from the southern part of Bukovina do not opt to use their native Ukrainian language when communicating with children, close friends, or colleagues. Thus, usage of Ukrainian with these groups is rather low, representing 20.7%, 25.1%, and 17.4%, respectively. Instead, respondents from the southern part of Bukovina often opt for Romanian or Ukrainian–Romanian bilingualism. The usage of native Ukrainian is low in the public sphere, where Romanian language is predominant. For instance, Romanian is intensively used in communication with shop assistants (50.7%, compared to 12.4% who use Ukrainian), public servants (75.5%, compared to 5.2% who use Ukrainian) and strangers (74.9%, compared to 2.8% only who use Ukrainian). The level of Ukrainian–Romanian bilingualism is also rather high (Fig. 11.4).

| | Parents | | Grand-parents | | Children | | Closest friends | | Colleagues | | Officials | | Shop assistants | | Strangers | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Northern part of Bukovina | Southern part of Bukovina | Northern part of Bukovina | Southern part of Bukovina | Northern part of Bukovina | Southern part of Bukovina | Northern part of Bukovina | Southern part of Bukovina | Northern part of Bukovina | Southern part of Bukovina | Northern part of Bukovina | Southern part of Bukovina | Northern part of Bukovina | Southern part of Bukovina | Northern part of Bukovina | Southern part of Bukovina |
| Ukrainian | 3 | 57.9 | 2 | 60.3 | 4.5 | 20.7 | 4 | 25.1 | 7.7 | 17.4 | 16.6 | 5.2 | 9.4 | 12.4 | 18.1 | 2.8 |
| Romanian | 77.9 | 15.4 | 80.1 | 9.1 | 63 | 33.1 | 59.6 | 27.0 | 49.6 | 37.5 | 26.3 | 75.5 | 48.6 | 50.7 | 14.9 | 74.9 |
| Both Ukrainian and Romanian | 8.2 | 22.6 | 4.2 | 17.6 | 17.6 | 32.0 | 22.8 | 47.4 | 24.6 | 43.5 | 35.5 | 18.7 | 26.6 | 35.8 | 33.5 | 19.8 |
| Russian | 0.5 | | 0.2 | | 0.7 | | 1 | | 1 | | 1.2 | | 0.7 | | 2.5 | |
| Ukrainian and Russian | 0.5 | | 1 | | 1 | | 1.5 | | 2 | | 3.7 | | 2.0 | | 5 | |
| Romanian and Russian | 2.7 | | 2.5 | | 6.7 | | 10.2 | | 10.4 | | 13.4 | | 9.7 | 0.3 | 16.4 | |
| Other | | | | | 0.2 | | | 0.3 | | | | | | | | 0.6 |
| Difficult to answer | 7.2 | 4.1 | 9.9 | 12.9 | 6.2 | 14.3 | 1 | 0.3 | 4.7 | 1.7 | 3.2 | 0.6 | 3 | 0.8 | 9.7 | 1.9 |

**Figure 11.4.** Everyday language practices in the northern and southern parts of Bukovina: Language spoken with… (%). *Source:* data obtained from the 2016 survey "Bukovina as a Contact Zone."

We also chose to investigate whether there is a strong link between the spoken language and the local customs and traditions followed by our respondents. One of the survey questions inquired what songs the respondents would be most likely to sing during family celebrations. Interestingly, whereas 63% of respondents from the northern part of Bukovina recalled singing songs in their native Romanian language,[9] only 25.3% of respondents from the southern part of Bukovina sing in their native Ukrainian language.[10] However, 40.8% of respondents from the southern and only 13.9% from the northern part of Bukovina prefer to sing both in Ukrainian and Romanian languages.

The survey results also signaled that the respondents from both parts of Bukovina would prefer their children to be bilingual and to speak both Ukrainian and Romanian. Such preferences were expressed by 63.5% of respondents in the northern and 74.1% of respondents in the southern part of Bukovina. Furthermore, 77.2% of respondents in the northern and 95% of respondents in the

9 The data present the recorded responses "Romanian" and "rather Romanian."
10 The data present the recorded responses "Ukrainian" and "rather Ukrainian."

southern part of Bukovina considered that all languages are equally respected in their country of residence.

Moreover, the majority of respondents on both sides of the borderland positively assessed the state policies facilitating learning of the native language of the minority group (63.8% in the northern and 92.3% in the southern part of Bukovina). The respondents also valued the possibility to use their native language in the public sphere (66.8% in the northern and 73.5% in the southern part of Bukovina). Therefore, language preferences and choices in communication practices are not limited by the state they live in but are rather related to individual everyday practices and experiences.

### *Perceptions of History and Culture*

It is interesting to note that respondents in both parts of the borderland have positive perceptions of the history and culture of both their country of residence and their kin-state. Thus, 81.4% of respondents from the northern and 96.4% of respondents from the southern part of Bukovina considered that Ukraine had reason to be proud of its history and culture. With a slight difference, but similarly positive, respondents agreed that Romania had cause to be proud of its history and culture—76.1% from the northern and 97.3% from the southern part of Bukovina.

In spite of the complex historical background of Bukovina, territorial alterations, and shifting borders, respondents from both sides of the borderland believe that the historical past should be evaluated solely by historians, while politically-driven interpretations ought to be avoided. Thus, 73.4% of respondents from the northern part and 62.5% from the southern part of the borderland considered that Bukovina should remain within the current existing borders, namely the northern part in Ukraine and the southern part in Romania. In addition, 65.3% of respondents from the northern and 64.2% from the southern part of Bukovina believed that historical bygones should be let bygones.

## Conclusions

The purpose of our analysis has been to show the multifaceted identificational trends existing in the Ukrainian–Romanian borderland region of Bukovina, which are the result of a combination of historical and other factors including rapid changes within the population structure, migration, geopolitical shifts, and different state policies displaying various degrees of tolerance and understanding of ethnic diversity and of the minority groups living in the region.

Examining the identity perceptions at the level of the two most relevant minority groups living on the two sides of the Ukrainian–Romanian borderland, we observed that Bukovina is still strongly ethnically and culturally diverse and multilayered at the level of self-identification, language practices, and personal attachments. We found that identification is more about "doing" than "being." For instance, there is an obvious language paradox, since use of the native language is not compulsory in everyday communication practices in the region.

Furthermore, we observed that identity perceptions and personal attachments are also about choice. Although people are aware of their identity (Romanian in Ukraine and Ukrainian in Romania), express strong feelings towards their Romanian/Ukrainian identity, and manifest a strong sense of belonging to their community, nevertheless, they do not entertain the possibility of moving to their kin-state. In this case, attachment to the region/locality where people reside is particularly relevant, outweighing the allegiance to the national state (either the state of residence or the kin-state). Our findings also indicate a strong "Bukovinian" regional attachment and point to the symbolic continuity of Bukovina as a distinct region, although the borderland is now shared by two different countries.

Our data indicate that Romanian language is used much more often by Ukrainians in Romania than Ukrainian language is used by Romanians in Ukraine, while Romanian identity is stronger than Ukrainian on both sides of the border. This could be explained by, first, the size and the different geographic distribution of the minority groups—whereas in Ukraine in the northern part of Bukovina

the Romanian minority is roughly 115,000 people strong and compact, in Romania in the southern part of Bukovina the Ukrainian community is much smaller (approx. 6,500) and geographically dispersed—and, second, by the different state integration policies. Therefore, we believe there is a need for closer scrutiny of the relationship between the minority population and state of residence, since the diversity of the region has not only been determined by ethnicity or culture, but also by different state policies and institutional configurations put in place over the years.

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