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REORGANISATION OF THE 'POLISH' SPACE OF LVIV AS A COMPONENT OF THE PROCESS OF CITY SPACE IDENTITY RECONSTRUCTION AFTER 1991

Abstract

The article describes the process of the reconstruction and protection of the Polish minority and Polish heritage in Lviv after 1991. This process is presented in the context of Polish-Ukrainian relations. The author indicates the most important actors in this process, focusing on presenting this phenomenon in spatial terms. Next, he describes achievements and possibilities for further development, in addition to the causes and effects of the phenomenon.

Keywords: Lwów/Lviv, Poles, heritage, society, post-communism

I INTRODUCTION

This article discusses the reorganisation of the 'Polish' space in Lviv after 1991.¹ The city is known for its multicultural heritage, which, in the twentieth century, repeatedly experienced various attempts to implement ideologies by political powers, from extreme nationalism to communism. This was often the result of changes in the city's state affiliation as, over time, it was ruled by Germans, Poles, Soviets, and Ukrainians. Furthermore, it should be emphasised that although the city escaped the destruction of the Second World War (unlike many European cities, such as Warsaw), in the 1940s and 1950s, its

¹ Today (2022) Lviv is a Ukrainian city, located in the Lviv district [*oblast*] on the Poltava River. It is the largest city in East Galicia, with an area of approximately 148.95 square kilometres and a population of 717,803, making it the seventh most populous city in Ukraine.

national composition was drastically and forcibly changed.² Poles, who were once the majority, now constitute a relatively small minority that tries to foster the development of all aspects of Polish culture and to be noticed in the urban space. These activities are meant to prevent complete cultural assimilation with the Ukrainians and to continue the heritage of the past generations of Polish residents of Lviv. It is also important to maintain Polish cultural continuity in the city, where the modern culture of the entire Polish nation was formed during the partitions of Poland.

'Polish' space is understood here in a literal and metaphorical sense. The first meaning concerns the distribution and condition of Polish cultural elements, both those that survived in the city despite the depolonisation throughout the Soviet period and the new ones created after 1991. The second meaning concerns 'Polish' space as a specific urban microcosm, where Lviv's Poles organised their cultural and social life. This reorganisation is a component of the larger process of reconstructing the city's identity in the realities of the independent Ukrainian state. The problem of memory and historical perspective, including Lviv's traditions and identity, is very apparent in the historiographical dispute between Poles and Ukrainians, which has lasted for over a hundred years. It requires searching for points of contact in favour of reconciliation. The behaviour of the Ukrainians, who create the space of contemporary Lviv at their own discretion, can be referred to the principle *cuius regio eius historia*, which is a paraphrase of the principle of the Peace of Augsburg *cuius regio eius religio*.³ Therefore, they can shape the city's identity basing on their policies,

² Until 1939, according to various estimates, Poles were 50 to 63 per cent of the population, Jews, 25 to 32 per cent and Ukrainians, 9 to 16 per cent. During the Second World War, the Jews were exterminated by the Germans (between 1941 and 1944). After 1945 (until the end of the 1950s), the Soviets forcibly resettled almost all Polish Leopolitans to the new Polish borders, and the few local Poles who managed to stay in the city were often victims of repression and discrimination by the Soviet state. At the same time, a significant number of Ukrainian Leopolitans were displaced to other regions of the USSR. Their place was taken by Ukrainians from outside of Galicia, and also by Russians. Today, according to the official census, Ukrainians make up 88 per cent of the population, Russians 9 per cent and Poles about 1 per cent.

³ Yaroslav Hrytsak and Viktor Susak, 'Constructing a national city. The case of Lviv', in John Czaplicka and Blair A. Ruble (eds), *Composing Urban History and the Constitution of Civic Identities* (Washington–Baltimore–London, 2003), 151.

including the policy of remembrance or the treatment of national minorities. It should be mentioned that there is a certain analogy between the heterotopian path followed by Poles in the interwar years, and the one currently followed by some Ukrainian political circles.⁴ Two contradictory identity-building policies – nationalistic and multicultural – are confronted. Today, in the fragment of former Polish eastern territory, which is now part of Ukraine, Eurosceptic nationalist parties, as well as pro-European liberal parties have the highest public support.⁵ This reflects a certain identity gap in the composition of regional councils and city authorities. However, the politics and society of interwar Poland have increasingly succumbed to nationalism/chauvinism, while in contemporary Ukraine it has less and less influence on politics.⁶ The discussion on the question of the city's identity is therefore very important because of the need to build agreements between Poles and Ukrainians.

This text aims to contribute to the discourse on breaking down Polish-Ukrainian stereotypes. The collapse of the Soviet Union made it possible to renew research and clarify propaganda distortions, both from the 'Polish' interwar period and the Soviet period after the Second World War. Today, in the postmodern reality and after the collapse of the totalitarian USSR, it is theoretically much easier to discuss multicultural heritage.⁷ The last thirty years have seen a rapid increase in studies on former Polish territories, especially in the interwar period. In terms of scholarly diversity, research on the identity of Lviv has been done mainly by Polish and Ukrainian historians, including Stanisław Sławomir Nicieja, Yaroslav Hrytsak and Tarik Cyril Amar.⁸

⁴ Heterotopia is a concept created by Michel Foucault that tells about the existence of an internally contradictory cultural space. See Michel Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces' in the Polish translation: 'Inne przestrzenie', *Teksty Drugie*, 6 (2005), 117–25.

⁵ Tadeusz Olszański, *Kresy Zachodnie. Miejsce Galicji Wschodniej i Wołynia w państwie ukraińskim* (Warszawa, 2013).

⁶ In the Second Polish Republic, in turn, despite the fact that Lviv and Galicia were much more ethnically diverse than today, a large part of Polish society, especially students, succumbed to nationalist influences, simultaneous to the gradual radicalisation of the Ukrainian minority. Polish laws, e.g. on the autonomy of the Ukrainian university, or language policies, were not enforced, despite being passed.

⁷ Микола Генік, 'Проблема Львова в процесі польсько-українського примирення', *Сучасна українська політика. Політики і політологи про неї*, 17 (2009), 294–304.

⁸ Stanisław Sławomir Nicieja was one of the first (after 1989) Polish scholars to analyse the multicultural past of the eastern territories lost by Poland after

This growth is a reaction to a taboo instituted by the communist authorities against writing about lands lost by Poland after the Second World War. It should be emphasised that in the academic forum, it needs to update knowledge about the recent history of these territories, i.e. the period from the collapse of the USSR to the present day. This history, including the identity, not only of Lviv but of all Ukrainian cities, is evolving rapidly and is linked to the country's dynamic political and social situation. The stock of Polish elements in the space of these cities is changing no less dynamically, as is the shape of these 'Polish' microcosms. By identifying this parallel, the author discusses how reorganising the 'Polish' city space is part of the process of reconstructing Lviv's identity.⁹

The article is primarily based on the identification and inventory of events, people, organisations and places that influence the city space. Subsequently, research was conducted on the changes' causes and effects. Examples of Polish reorganisations of space are divided thematically – at the beginning, the issue of Polish monuments and street patrons in the city is brought up. It also points to other elements (relics) of Polish culture visible in space, which fortunately survived the Soviet period and depolonisation. After that, the author describes the situation of Polish organisations in Lviv – official public institutions and non-governmental cultural organisations. The author wishes to point out that due to the limited space of the article, greater detail is dedicated to only the most critical elements of the reorganisation.

1945. In his publications, he tries to look for a Polish-Ukrainian understanding and is not afraid to criticise Polish and Ukrainian nationalisms. In turn, Yaroslav Hrytsak, one of the leading Ukrainian historians, shows the Ukrainian perspective of the past of Lviv and Galicia, as well as on key historical events. It is worth mentioning, however, that he also points to the need to understand the 'other side' and often collaborates with Polish publishing houses.

⁹ Софія Дяк, "Творення образу Львова як регіонального центру Західної України: радянський проект та його урбаністичне втілення", *Схід-Захід: Історико-культурологічний збірник*, 9–10 (2008), 75–86.

II MEMORIAL PRACTICES AND SPATIAL RELICS OF POLISH CULTURE

Of the many different topics to begin exploring the 'Polish' space of Lwów/Lviv, the location of Polish memorials (monuments, plaques, or names of objects and streets) was chosen because it is one of the most controversial issues in the reorganisation of Polish space. About memorials, it must be emphasised that before 1939, there were about twenty Polish monuments and many busts and plaques in the city, with a significant number of these objects commemorating events of the Polish-Ukrainian and Polish-Soviet wars.¹⁰ As a result of the Second World War and the incorporation of Lviv into the Soviet Union, most of Lviv's monuments were destroyed, and some were moved to Poland (e.g. Gdańsk, Szczecin and Wrocław).¹¹

However, the Soviet authorities decided to leave some Polish memorials. Four Polish monuments have survived to this day, depicting: Adam Mickiewicz (writer), Jan Kiliński (soldier fighting against Russia in 1794), Bartosz Głowacki (rebel fighting against Russia in 1794) and one jointly commemorating Teofil Wiśniowski and Józef Kapuściński (rebels fighting against Austria in 1846).¹² The monument to Bartosz Głowacki, having escaped significant destruction during the Soviet period, was destroyed by vandals in the 1990s. In 2016, it was renovated, and additionally, a plaque with an inscription in Polish and Ukrainian was restored. The monument to Jan Kiliński in Stryisky Park underwent a similar renovation. The memorial to Teofil Wiśniowski and Józef Kapuściński was devastated by the Soviets. After conservation work by a Polish-Ukrainian team, the statue of the eagle and the removed medallion were restored in 2015.

An equally important place of remembrance is the tombstones of Poles at the Lychakiv or Janivskij cemeteries, including, among others, Maria Konopnicka (writer), Gabriela Zapolska (writer), Konstanty

¹⁰ The creation of memorials in Lviv in the interwar period omitted many Ukrainian or Jewish cultural elements. Polish historical memory was created this way by bringing the false narrative of the city's exclusively Polish origin to the fore.

¹¹ Among others, the monuments of Jan III Sobieski (Gdańsk), Kornel Ujejski (Szczecin) and Aleksander Fredro (Wrocław) have been moved.

¹² Teofil Wiśniowski and Józef Kapuściński were sentenced to death by the Austrians in 1847 for their participation in the so-called Cracow Uprising.

Ordon (officer) and Stefan Banach (scientist and professor). An important element common to all monuments to Poles preserved in the city is that the restoration work is carried out exclusively with funds from the Polish state and individual Poles, not Ukrainians.¹³

The bas-reliefs on an apartment house in Cathedral Square are also interesting vestiges of the Polish cultural presence. They depict prominent Polish writers (Jan Kochanowski, Adam Mickiewicz, Adam Asnyk, Zygmunt Krasiński, Józef Kraszewski and Juliusz Słowacki), and on the Rutowski Street, profiles of Nicolaus Copernicus and Jan Długosz, among others. In addition, plaques and busts commemorating Poles, primarily clergymen, have been preserved in many churches. Of all the places in Lviv, it is in religious buildings that the largest number of such elements can be found. Busts of Poles are also in secular buildings, including the Lviv Polytechnic (of the architect Julian Zachariewicz). One unique example, which survived the Soviet period unscathed, is a plaque on the facade of the building at 6 Heroi'v Mai'danu Street, commemorating Józef Piłsudski, who often resided in this house. However, new plaques commemorating prominent representatives of Polish culture do not always present the ethnicity of the person concerned. While such information was included on the occasion of Zbigniew Herbert's commemoration, it was omitted for Stanisław Lem. The Mayor of Lviv, Andriy Sadovyi, commented on this issue as follows: "Just as the French have Julius Verne, the English have Conan Doyle, so we, Lviv citizens, have Lem".¹⁴

In contrast, other cases indicate an evolution in the approach of the Ukrainian authorities. A relevant example is, for the first time after 1991, the possibility of erecting monuments in the city that do not only commemorate Ukrainians. The first examples from 2007 are a small sculpture and monument on Wirmenska Street, which pay tribute to the Polish inventors of oil refining – Ignacy Łukasiewicz and Jan Zeh. The second example is a monument which pays tribute to those murdered on the Wuleckie Hills (in Students Park). It pays homage to all the scholars from Lviv's universities who the Germans

¹³ 'Pomnik Wojciecha Bartosza Głowackiego we Lwowie odrestaurowany', <http://www.mkidn.gov.pl/pages/posts/pomnik-wojciecha-bartosza-glowackiego-we-lwowie-odrestaurowany-6889.php> [Accessed: 7 Dec. 2022].

¹⁴ Though logically correct, the conclusion should either refer to Lem's ethnicity or to the towns inhabited by the other writers mentioned by the Mayor.

murdered after they seized Lviv in 1941.¹⁵ It was erected in 2011 on the initiative of the Wrocław Mayor Rafał Dutkiewicz and the Lviv Mayor Andriy Sadovyi, next to the reconstruction of the original cross with a plaque. The monument was built next to a symbolic grave that has existed since 1991 and represents a gate arranged from stone blocks, divided into ten parts. The block carved with a 'V' (the symbol of the commandment "Thou shalt not kill") is protruding – its removal would mean the collapse of the structure. A handwritten German inscription 'Execute' plaque was attached to the gate. Next is information in Polish, Ukrainian, German and English (including the monument's name: 'Monument to Lviv Professors Murdered by the Nazis in 1941'). The cities of Wrocław and Lviv, the Lviv Polytechnic, and donations financed the investment.

However, the most important memorial to Lviv Poles is the Cemetery of the Defenders of 'Lwów' [*Cmentarz Obrońców Lwowa*]. It is the burial place of Polish soldiers and juvenile fighters, the so-called 'Eaglets' [*Orlęta Lwowskie*], killed in battles for the city during the Polish-Ukrainian War (1918–19) and the Polish-Soviet War (1919–20).¹⁶ Apart from Poles, volunteers from France and the United States who fought on the Polish side were also buried here. It is the most important example of the construction of the memory of the 'Polish' Lviv from the interwar period, full of symbolism and references. In the 1970s, it was devastated by the Soviets, after which it deteriorated for more than a decade. Taking advantage of the political thaw in the USSR, the director of 'Energopol Szczecin' Józef Bobrowski and his employees obtained permission to enter the cemetery in 1989. It voluntarily began to clean up the devastated area. Soon, local Poles, mobilised by 'Energopol Szczecin' attitude, began to join in.¹⁷ Around 300 graves were cleaned up within three months, and tons of rubble and debris were removed.¹⁸ In the meantime, a Polish-Ukrainian committee was formed to examine the possibilities for developing the cemetery. However,

¹⁵ The scholars were in large part Polish.

¹⁶ Defenders from a Polish perspective. The Ukrainians call this area the Memorial to the Fallen Polish Soldiers.

¹⁷ 'Energopol Szczecin' was a company that carried out orders related to the construction of road and port infrastructure.

¹⁸ jb, *Cmentarz Orłąt Lwowskich. Symbol walki o niepodległość*, <https://www.polskieradio.pl/39/156/Artykul/2794583,Cmentarz-Orlat-Lwowskich-Symbol-walki-o-niepodleglosc> [Accessed: 7 Dec. 2022].

the Ukrainian state's independence brought a break in the clean-up work, as the new authorities and local inhabitants were suspicious of the activities undertaken by 'Energopol Szczecin'. Nonetheless, an international agreement was reached in 1998, and 'Energopol Szczecin', having won the tender, started the reconstruction of the cemetery. The projects were prepared collectively by architects and conservators from Poland and Ukraine.¹⁹

However, the question of how far the reconstruction should go became a problem. Disputes arose between the Polish and Ukrainian sides, particularly over the restoration of the site's former symbolism in the form of inscriptions, colonnades and cemetery lions. The Poles abandoned the restoration of the colonnade, the so-called 'Arch of Glory'. Much attention was also paid to the inscription on the Grave Five of Persenkovka, another important place in the cemetery. The original inscription read: 'To the Unknown Heroes Fallen in Defense of 'Lwów' and Southeastern Territories' [*Nieznany Bohaterom Bohatersko Poległym w Obronie Lwowa i Ziemi Południowo-Wschodnich*]. In 1998, the city council declared it to be incompatible with the Ukrainian historical line, as it clearly reflected the Polish point of view (the defence of Lviv by the Poles and the designation of Galicia as the Southeastern territory).

Anticipating such a development, the Poles sent successive diplomatic proposals, which, although often accepted by the government in Kiev, were rejected by Lviv's city councillors.²⁰ After many years of negotiations, in June 2005, a copy of the inscription from the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Warsaw (transferred in 1925 from the Cemetery of the Defenders of Lviv) was finally approved – 'Here lies a Polish soldier fallen for the Homeland' [*Tutaj leży żołnierz polski poległy za Ojczyznę*]. Besides this, the possibility of restoring the image of the only surviving Polish royal regalia – the 'Szczerbiec' sword – on the Tomb of the Grave Five from Persenkovka was rejected. It is because it was considered a symbol of 'Polish militarism', due to the legend about the chipping on the weapon made during the

¹⁹ Renata Radzka, 'Polsko-ukraiński spór o otwarcie Cmentarza Orłąt Lwowskich w relacji prasy polskiej po 1989 roku', *Media – Kultura – Komunikacja Społeczna*, 2 (2006), 37–46.

²⁰ The Poles proposed inscriptions stating that the fallen died 'heroically fighting for Poland'. Lviv councillors, on the other hand, lobbied for emphasising the fact that the fallen died 'fighting in the Polish-Ukrainian war'.

expedition of Boleslaus I the Brave to Kiev in the eleventh century. That same year, councillors also agreed to the return of monuments honouring volunteers from France and the United States. In the meantime, in the vicinity of the reconstructed Polish cemetery, the cemetery of the Ukrainian Sich Sharpshooters – the military unit which fought the Poles for control of this city in 1918–19 – was being built. In the same month, the works were completed, and the cemetery was opened jointly by the presidents of Poland (Aleksander Kwaśniewski) and Ukraine (Viktor Yushchenko).

For years, an unresolved issue was the restoration to the public view of the stone lions at the Monument to Glory, which were covered with boards. The lions, removed in the 1970s, were not placed back in the cemetery until December 2015, ten years after its reopening. Despite protests, they were supposed to undergo restoration the following year. Still, a month after their reinstallation, the Lviv District Council initiated proceedings on the 'anti-Ukrainian character' of the sculptures due to the inscriptions on the shields held by the lions.²¹ It is worth emphasising that the plates have been torn down three times – in July and December 2018 through the arbitrary actions by Polish tourists, and in 2019 by a gale that passed through the city.²² A kind of motivator and, at the same time, a brake on supporting the Polish community and heritage in the city is the growing tourist traffic from Poland. However, its future is now in question (due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the Russian attack).

In 2018, Lviv was visited by 2.2 million people, 43 per cent of whom were domestic tourists and almost 17 per cent of whom were Poles from Poland.²³ This is a driving force because it increases

²¹ One of the Lions held a plaque with the inscription 'Always Faithful' [*Zawsze Wierny*], while the other held 'To You Poland' [*Tobie Polsko*], which was meant to symbolise the city's connection with Poland, persisting despite the wars and partitions. The Poles had no plans to change the inscriptions.

²² JMK, MNIE, 'Natura odsłoniła rzeźby lwów na Cmentarzu Orłąt. Wcześniej Ukraińcy zasłonili je płytami', <https://www.tvp.info/41697325/natura-odslonila-rzezby-lwow-na-cmentarzu-orlat-wczesniej-ukraincy-zaslonili-je-plytami> [Accessed: 7 Dec. 2022].

²³ *The Number of Lviv Tourists Increased 50% Compared to the Previous Corona Year. Infographics*, transl. into English by Vitalii Holich, https://tvoemisto.tv/news/the_number_of_lviv_tourists_increased_50_compared_to_the_previous_corona_year_infographics_124967.html [Accessed: 7 Dec. 2022].

the interest in the issues of the Polish minority, the state of preservation of elements of Polish heritage and develops contacts between Lviv Poles and Poles from Poland. On the other hand, it may be a hindrance, due to the attitude of some Polish tourists, with their overzealous sentimentality towards the historic Polish borderlands, leading them often to think that they are coming 'to their own', which intensifies the adverse reaction to the Polish presence in the city.²⁴ Many elements of the Polish past are disappearing and are being replaced by new, contemporary Ukrainian achievements.²⁵ However, the reluctance of the city authorities towards Poland and Polish heritage has been steadily weakening, especially since Andriy Sadovyi was elected mayor of the city.²⁶ A pivotal moment for positive changes may be the Polish-Ukrainian rapprochement, unique in history, related to Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022. As a result of warming relations, Mayor Sadovyi decided to unveil the cemetery lions, stressing that every local lion is a symbol of the city and all that are in the city, regardless of mutual historical animosities, should symbolically cooperate and defend the city.²⁷

Other significant remnants of Polish culture are the namesakes of Lviv's streets. In the Soviet period, the streets were very clearly saturated with names associated with communism. After 1945, 85 per cent of the streets were renamed. A few Polish names remained, including Mikołaj Kopernik, Adam Mickiewicz, Tadeusz Kościuszko, and Juliusz Słowacki. Later, professors of Lviv University were also honoured, namely Tadeusz Boy-Żeleński and Stefan Banach. This implies that there were few streets with Polish names in Lviv at the time of Ukrainian independence. Since the 1990s, there has been an ongoing process of street name Ukrainianisation and decommunisation. Theoretically, one of the seven renaming principles was to return historical names.

²⁴ Nataliia Godis and Jan Henrik Nilsson, 'Memory Tourism in a Contested Landscape: Exploring Identity Discourses in Lviv, Ukraine', *Current Issues in Tourism*, xxi, 15 (2018), 1–20.

²⁵ Jarosław Hrycak, *Nowa Ukraina i nowe interpretacje* (Wrocław, 2009).

²⁶ Леонід Зашкільняк, 'Теоретичні проблеми сучасної історичної політики в Україні', *Res Historica*, 46 (2018), 365–81.

²⁷ 'Dzisiaj wszystkie lwy razem walczą o niepodległość Ukrainy i Polski', an interview by Artur Żak with the Lviv Mayor Andriy Sadovyi, <https://kuriergalicyjski.com/dzisiaj-wszystkie-lwy-razem-walczą-o-niepodległość-ukrainy-i-polski/> [Accessed: 7 Dec. 2022]

It should be noted that in the event of their restoration, it would be necessary to consider what historical period, worthy of reconstruction, the city authorities were referring to. Ukrainians, in modern times, have never been the ethnic majority in Lviv and thus have never had the largest share of street names. Now (2022), when names associated with Ukrainian identity account for 36 per cent of the total, the city authorities have opened an utterly unprecedented chapter in this aspect of the creation of a memory policy in the city.²⁸ It was also assumed, in line with the nationalist course of history and memory policy, that restored and new names could not be anti-Ukrainian, that any changes should take into account Lviv's Ukrainian character, and that non-Ukrainian names must be connected with the city's history.²⁹ Because of this, there could be no question of a return to the situation before September 1939, when around 40 per cent of the names were connected with Polishness.

Nevertheless, the number of streets of Polish heritage has almost doubled from 9 in 1986 to 17 in 1997 and continues to grow slowly, totalling about 30 streets today.³⁰ In the meantime, streets commemorating, among others, John Paul II or Aleksander Czołowski (one of the most important Lviv historians) have appeared. One of the parks south of the city was also named after the Polish Pope. However, no Polish military figures or politicians are on this list – writers, researchers and musicians dominate.³¹ One of the most recent changes is renaming the square in front of the Polish consulate to commemorate Jacek Kuroń (oppositionist during the communist period, then minister in the 1990s, a supporter of Polish-Ukrainian reconciliation, born in Lviv).³² The city council has a recurring

²⁸ This number will vary slightly depending on the methodology and classification of persons who may be counted in two ethnicities (e.g. Polish/Jewish, Polish/Armenian etc.).

²⁹ Орися Віра, 'Зміни в сприйнятті простору на основі назв вулиць у Львові', *Простір в історичних дослідженнях*, 2 (2021), 100–3.

³⁰ Ewa Kaltenberg-Kwiatkowska, 'O oznaczaniu i naznaczeniu przestrzeni miasta', *Przegląd Socjologiczny*, lx, 2–3 (2011), 135–65.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² Anna Gordijewska and Eugeniusz Sało, 'We Lwowie odsłonięto tablicę Jacka Kuronia na placu nazwanym na jego cześć', <https://arch.kuriergalicyjski.com/aktualnosci/6905-we-lwowie-odslonieto-tablice-jacka-kuronia-na-placu-nazwanym-na-jego-czesc> [Accessed: 7 Dec. 2022].

discussion about the necessity of giving the streets of Lviv the names of prominent Polish and Lviv writers, especially Stanisław Lem and Zbigniew Herbert.

A very interesting case is the remembrance of other proofs of the Polish presence (or even domination), mainly various elements of decoration and infrastructure with inscriptions in Polish or graphics associated with Polish culture. These include plaques on buildings with old street names (e.g. Grodzickich, Ormiańska, Sykstuska, Rutowskiego, Cłowa) and wall signs (Kryva Lypa Passage – the former Hausmann’s Passage, Andreolli Passage, Tomaszewski Street, Kurbas Street, Doroshenka Street). The most prominent Polish wall sign, restored in 2017, is the one on top of the current Museum of Ethnography and Artistic Industry, indicating that the Galician Savings Bank [*Galicyjska Kasa Oszczędności*] was formerly located there. Apart from the above elements, on the facades of at least a dozen buildings, one may come across fragments of renovated polychromies indicating the former location of service and commercial premises (e.g. on Ruska Street, Kotlarska Street). On the other hand, some inscriptions were destroyed, such as during the renovation of the former ‘Zniesienczanka’ laundry in 2018. More broadly, this phenomenon of exposing relics of Polishness began to become visible in the second decade of the twenty-first century, when a question was posed in the Lviv public debate on the shape of urban space by Ukrainian journalist Volodymyr Pavliv: “How can ‘Polish’ Lviv be saved?”.³³ Ukrainians intentionally restored most of the relics that survived the Soviet period to continue and highlight the thread of Lviv’s multiculturalism.

Other remnants are elements of water and sewage infrastructure (manhole covers, hydrants, sewage grates). The main reason why these relics of the Polish past survived was the limited investment possibilities of the Soviets to rebuild various spatial elements, therefore they had to rely on the infrastructure dating from the Polish times. Nowadays, more and more elements of the old infrastructure are being replaced by the city magistrate for new ones, mainly due to the need to maintain its quality at the highest possible level.

³³ Piotr Kościński, ‘Ukraińcy uratują polski Lwów?’, <https://www.rp.pl/swiat/art6263121-ukraincy-uratuja-polski-lwow> [Accessed: 7 Dec. 2022].

III (RE)CONSTRUCTION OF THE POLISH MICROCOSM IN THE SPACE OF LVIV

The key Polish post in Lviv, established while the Soviet period was still in progress, was the Consular Agency of the Polish People's Republic. This happened in July 1987, as part of the political thaw in the USSR, and it was the second Polish diplomatic institution in the Ukrainian SSR after the consulate in Kiev. The successful establishment of the Agency was very important, as it was the first time since 1939 that a Polish office was established in the city to provide legal protection for all Poles in the western part of Ukraine. This happened after many years of effort, during which the Poles met with resistance from the Soviet side and nationalist Ukrainian circles. In 1993, the institution was transformed into the General Consulate of the Republic of Poland. In the following years, the consulate's area of operation was reduced as more consulates were established in other regional cities.

It is the second most important international Polish post in Ukraine, right after the embassy in Kiev. It has been instrumental in initiating Polish-Ukrainian dialogue, e.g. on the reconstruction of the Cemetery of the Defenders of Lviv and the activity of Polish social and civic institutions. Initially, it was located in the Batowski-Kaczor villa at 110 Ivan Franko Street. In 2006–11, thanks to grants from the Polish state budget, an additional building was built on the neighbouring building plot (108 Ivan Franko Street).³⁴ Today, it is the main point of communication between the Poles of Lviv and the Republic of Poland.

Nevertheless, the consular post did not meet the needs of local Poles, who reported a desire for an institution specifically for them – a Polish House, which would be the central place for the integration of Lviv's Poles. To this end, in 2013, it was possible to acquire a plot of land at 3a Shevchenko Street with an area of 1,500 square meters for 50 years, which the Ukrainian Army transferred with the city council's permission. The project includes constructing a four-storey building with a usable area of several thousand square meters, which will be a Polish landmark in the city. The construction, costing

³⁴ Marcin Zieniewicz (ed.), *Polska placówka dyplomatyczna we Lwowie 1987–2012* (Łódź, 2012).

tens of millions of Polish zlotys, was supposed to be completed this year (2022), but the work, which has been going on since 2015, is still ongoing.³⁵

In the inventory of Polish institutions in Lviv, it is necessary to mention the Polish People's Theatre, which presented plays in Polish. It was founded in Soviet times, during the second phase of displacement to the Polish People's Republic (1957–8).³⁶ It was one of the last refuges of Polishness, fulfilling the role of integrating the Polish minority. In the 1980s, the institution experienced a huge wave of repression from the local communist authorities, resulting in, among other things, the removal of the word 'Polish' from the theatre name and pressure to change the performance language. After the situation stabilised at the end of the USSR and requests were made to the Lviv City Council in the realities of independent Ukraine, the theatre managed to return to its original name in 1993. Today, the Polish People's Theatre is a very active cultural institution, organising many events in the city, in Ukraine and in Central Europe. A characteristic element of the theatre's activity is its cordial cooperation with other theatres in Lviv and their actors.³⁷

The consular post activity in Lviv stimulated the Poles' desire to expand their non-governmental activity. Some organisations were established in 1988 (Society of Polish Culture in the Lviv Region [Pol. *Towarzystwo Kultury Polskiej Ziemi Lwowskiej*]), but increased numbers were observed after 1991. According to the data of the Polish public authorities, currently (2022), there are more than 30 registered Polish non-governmental institutions in Lviv, dealing with many aspects of the cultural life of the city's and region's inhabitants (Fig. 1). In addition to strictly patriotic organisations and those caring for Polish memorial sites, there are also business associations, churches,

³⁵ 'Dom polski we Lwowie', <http://nowa.wspolnotapolska.org.pl/lwow/index.php> [Accessed: 7 Dec. 2022].

³⁶ The mentioned resettlement, which communist propaganda called 'repatriation', were in fact forced displacement/expulsion. The inhabitants of Lviv and all of Eastern Galicia were thrown out of their homes by the Soviets and forced to migrate to the West into new Polish borders. Similar events from that period (after 1945) concerned the displacement of Germans from today's western Poland and Ukrainians from south-eastern Poland (also within today's borders).

³⁷ Polski Teatr Ludowy, Lwów, 'Historia Teatru', http://www.teatr.pl.ua/historia_teatru.html [Accessed: 7 Dec. 2022].

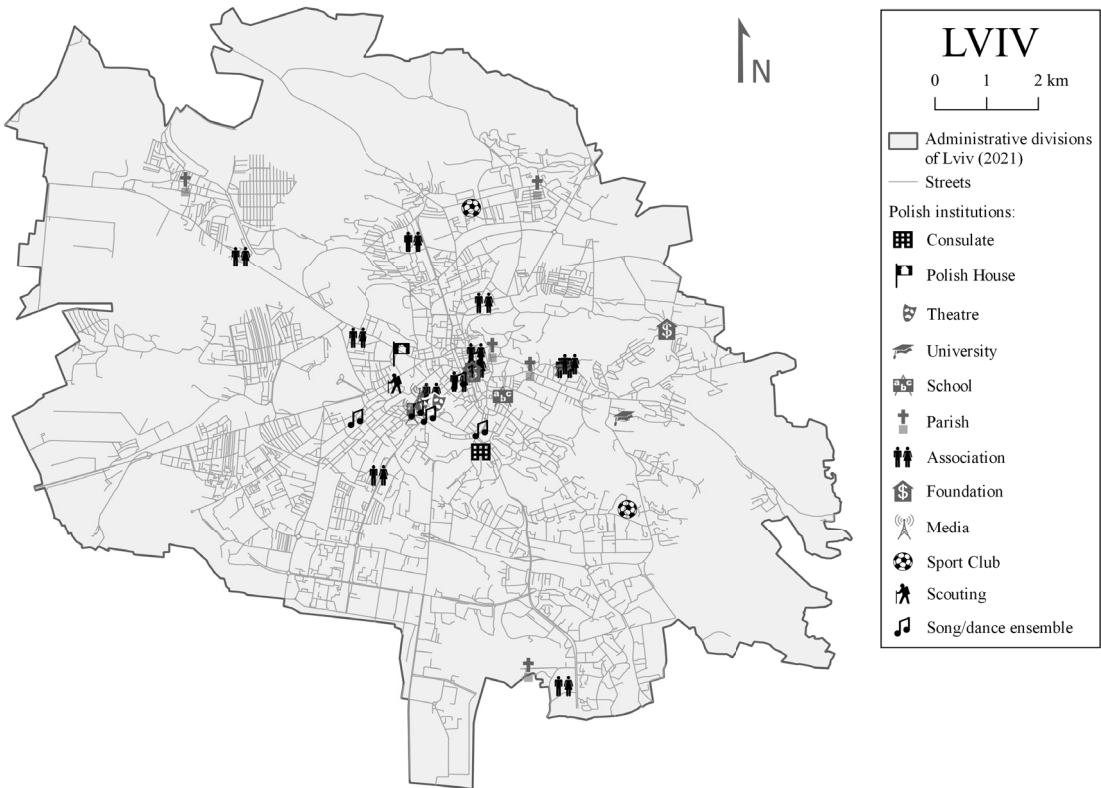


Fig. 1. Polish institutions in Lviv in 2022; the author's own work

schools, kindergartens, sports clubs and the media (e.g. radio, television, websites).³⁸ Almost all of them operate *pro bono*, which means they cannot support themselves. Their functioning depends on grants awarded by the Polish authorities and the support of private donors. Some of them are attempts to restore organisations that existed before 1939; an example is an association/foundation called the Lviv Sports Club ‘Pogoń Lwów’ Social Organisation [*Organizacja Społeczna Lwowski Klub Sportowy ‘Pogoń Lwów’*]. It was founded in 2007 by local Poles as a reactivation of the former Lviv Sports Club ‘Pogoń Lwów’ (functioning from 1904 to 1939), which had won the national championship in various disciplines many times during the Second Polish Republic. The cycling and football sections were re-established out of more than a dozen sports sections. The club also has schools for children and young people. Today, male ‘Pogoń Lwów’ football players play in the 4th Ukrainian league, while cyclists organise bicycle rallies. The football and cycling teams are composed of Poles and Ukrainians. It is currently the only Polish sports club in the city, subsidised mainly by money from the public and private sponsors from Poland.³⁹

Another level of the reorganisation of the ‘Polish’ space of Lviv is a religious activity. One of the elements identifying Polishness in Eastern Galicia was Roman Catholicism.⁴⁰ In 1939 there were thirty-eight Roman Catholic churches in Lviv, grouped under seventeen parishes. These properties were confiscated due to depolonisation, and atheisation carried out by the USSR after the Second World War.⁴¹ The situation changed with the dissolution of the Soviet Union. The restitution of church property was then an open question. Due to the differences in the city’s ethnic structure in 1939 and now, the Greek Catholics had by far the greatest need for sanctuaries. Apart from ethical motives, the return of all former Roman Catholic buildings to the Catholics was unjustifiable and would have caused a great disproportion.

³⁸ Polonia. Organizacje Polonijne, <https://www.gov.pl/web/polonia/organizacje-polonijne2?fbclid=IwAR1544JwTPWWWSJpR0ZsaxtNayO2w7hBgLDzhDXmGloEN0i51yxPF5g42OQ> [Accessed: 7 Dec. 2022].

³⁹ LKS Pogoń Lwów. Oficjalna strona klubu, Historia klubu, <http://pogon.lwow.net/historia-klubu/> [Accessed: 7 Dec. 2022].

⁴⁰ The Galician Ukrainians most often belong to the Greek Catholic Church.

⁴¹ Churches were used as warehouses, shops or museums.

Despite this, and in a way wishing to act as a *fait accompli*, Poles were still carrying out renovations as part of their social work during the decline of the USSR. These grassroots initiatives partially focused on the city's largest Catholic churches. As with the restoration of the Cemetery of the Defenders of Lviv, the work was carried out in their spare time by workers from the 'Energopol Szczecin' company. The building materials were financed with money from Lviv's Polish associations, as well as donations sent from Poland. It was hoped that thanks to this, the Poles would be recognised as the owners of the sanctuaries, having cared for their past cultural heritage. However, all the churches became the city's property in 1991, and only a few buildings were returned to Roman Catholics, i.e. to the Poles. This seemed justified in light of the ethnic composition.⁴² Although not all churches were returned to the Poles, some masses in Polish in the Roman Catholic rite are also held in the churches controlled by Greek Catholics or the city authorities. Today, people can go to a Roman Catholic Mass in Polish in seven places – the Archcathedral of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the churches of St Anthony, St Mary Magdalene, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, St Michael the Archangel, Our Lady of the Blessed Thunder Candle and the Church of the Divine Mercy.⁴³

Roman Catholics were given back the ownership of the Archcathedral, the Church of St Anthony and the Church of the Divine Mercy. It should be mentioned that the Roman Catholic authorities in Lviv are composed exclusively of Poles. Sometimes, however, there was a conflict of interest in which both Poles and Ukrainians had a substantively justified position. An interesting example is the Church of St Mary Magdalene, which has belonged to the city since 1991. The building was leased to the House of Organ and Chamber Music, an institution responsible for the city's second-largest number of concerts after the Lviv Opera. Services returned in 1998 as a compromise while the above institution continued to operate. Since then, there have been legal disputes between parishioners, who want the church as their exclusive property, and city hall, which in 2010 leased the building to the House for another twenty years.

⁴² Unlike in the rest of Ukraine, in Lviv most Roman Catholics (especially the clergy) are Poles.

⁴³ See the official website of the Ukrainian Roman-Catholic Church in Lviv, <http://www.rkc.lviv.ua/localities.php?lang=3#top> [Accessed: 7 Dec. 2022].

On the other hand, various kinds of reconstruction works are systematically being carried out on the church building by a team of Polish-Ukrainian architects.⁴⁴ However, handing over the church to the Catholics would mean the loss of one of the most important facilities in which numerous public spectacles took place. This is important, mainly because this building has no replacement facility, especially in the city centre, that could host artists and guests. However, there are no bureaucratic problems for Poles to build entirely new sites for worship. At this point, it is worth outlining the common practice of land and building acquisition by religious denominations, including Roman Catholics. One such example is the Higher Theological Seminary of the Lviv Archdiocese, whose buildings (which had been its property before 1945) were not returned to the institution. To reactivate the seminary, it was decided to purchase the ruined buildings in Briukhovychi near Lviv and renovate them thoroughly. In addition, new churches were built on the Sbojischtscha and Sykhiv estates. New churches were also constructed in Vynnyky and Sokilnyky, near Lviv.

Another crucial cultural factor is education. In Lviv, after the second wave of the expulsion of Poles in the late 1950s, the Soviet authorities allowed three more schools with Polish as the language of instruction to function. As the number of students dwindled, this was reduced to two secondary schools, which continue to operate today – the Mary Magdalene School no. 10 (in existence since 1816) and the Maria Konopnicka School no. 24 (working since the 1960s). Not until the independent Ukrainian state period did it become possible to reference Polish traditions, especially in the case of School no. 24. By having named the school after Maria Konopnicka, the 150th birthday of the Polish writer could be celebrated. Until 1999, it was the only school in the city where it was possible to take the secondary school final exam [*matura*] in Polish,⁴⁵ recognised by the Ukrainian authorities. In 2000, the school was given a new anthem, ‘Rota’, a poem by Konopnicka. Today, the schools have about 600 students and about 70 teachers, some graduates of both schools and some from Poland. They also have very good relations with schools in Poland

⁴⁴ See the website of St Mary Magdalene Church in Lviv: <https://mariamagdalena.lviv.ua/historia.html> [Accessed: 7 Dec. 2022].

⁴⁵ See the website of Maria Konopnicka School no. 24 in Lviv, <https://school24.ucoz.com/> [Accessed: 7 Dec. 2022].

and Ukrainian schools. It is worth mentioning that due to the high level of teaching and activities connected with the history and culture of the region, not only Polish but also Russian and even Ukrainian children apply to these schools.

Another integrating factor is Polish media, which was almost non-existent in the Soviet period. An exception is the socio-cultural monthly *Lwowskie Spotkania* [Lviv Encounters]. After 1991, the establishment of other periodicals, including the re-establishment of the previous one, in Lviv and the rest of Ukraine, often took place thanks to the commitment of individuals or small groups of people. Their dedication and time attracted the attention of larger entities, such as local authorities or the wider public. Concerning the type of information posted, the Polish media in Lviv plays an informational role and, simultaneously, integrates the Polish minority. Much space is devoted to Polish history and traditions, stripped of the nationalist mantle. An example of a newspaper that fits into this context was *Gazeta Lwowska* [Lviv Newspaper], reactivated in 1990 (initially published in 1811–1939), which was renamed the *Kurier Galicyjski* [Galician Courier] in 2007. Today it is the most widely read Polish periodical in Ukraine, published in print, online and radio versions. Since 2020, in cooperation with TVP Polonia,⁴⁶ it has been organising the programme 'Studio Lwów', the recordings of which are regularly published on YouTube. On the newspaper's website, the authors declare: "We draw the spirit from this 'Jagiellonian mosaic', just as our ancestors did in the former Republic. That is why we will support an understanding between the Polish and Ukrainian peoples based on truth".⁴⁷ Other media are also active in the city. These include the Polish radio station, Radio Lwów, which has been operating since 1992.

In addition, according to the information published on its website, the station is meant to serve as a bridge between Poles and Ukrainians. The station is broadcast on the frequency of the Ukrainian-language station *Nezalezhnist*, every Saturday morning and Sunday evening, for a total of six hours, although recently, the length of the broadcasts has been reduced to three hours. The station's coverage area

⁴⁶ TVP Polonia is a Polish television channel broadcasting cultural, historical and entertainment material, mainly dedicated to the Polish minority abroad.

⁴⁷ 'Kim jesteśmy?', *Kurier Galicyjski*, <https://kuriergalicyjski.com//kim-jestesmy/> [Accessed: 7 Dec. 2022].

allows it to broadcast content into most of the Lviv region. However, there is no publicly available data on the actual number of radio viewers.⁴⁸ There was also a web TV channel, TV 'POLwowski', founded by young Polish Leopolitans, which had a channel on YouTube. It functioned from 2012 to 2019, after which the project was suspended.⁴⁹ In addition to materials intended to point out historical elements, especially reminiscences, the Polish media in Lviv are a vehicle for current events in the city. The information presented concerns not only what is happening among the Polish minority but also, among other things, political or cultural events in the context of the entire city and even of both countries (Ukraine and Poland). The non-commercial character of the magazines increases the audience of readers, listeners and viewers. Still, it makes the existence of most Polish media dependent on subsidies (mainly from Poland) and donations.⁵⁰ In the context of the location of the institutions mentioned above in the city space, it should be added that it is unrelated to the traditions before 1939, and due to the growing spatial needs for running the business, their headquarters often change.

IV CONCLUSIONS

The 'Polish' space of Lviv is one of a whole range of components making up the contemporary identity of Lviv. Despite financial, personnel and bureaucratic difficulties, the Poles have managed to achieve reasonably substantial success by restoring part of the Polish heritage of the city, strengthening organisational structures and creating entirely new institutions and memorials. Poles from the contemporary borders of Poland should therefore know that their compatriots are still living and functioning in this one-time 'Piedmont' of Polish culture. According to research carried out by Polish academics, including those linked to the Centre for Eastern Studies at the University of Warsaw, the existence of Polish heritage in Ukraine is still under threat. Much depends on Polish-Ukrainian relations and the direction

⁴⁸ Radio Lwów, <https://radiolwow.org/> [Accessed: 7 Dec. 2022].

⁴⁹ TV 'POLwowski', <https://www.youtube.com/user/TVPOLwowski/videos> [Accessed: 7 Dec. 2022].

⁵⁰ Wiesława Szymczuk, *Prasa mniejszości polskiej na Ukrainie* (Toruń, 2012).

in which Ukrainian historical policy will develop. The number of funds available and the interest of the Polish and Ukrainian public is also important.⁵¹ Based on these considerations, one can also say that the successes of the Polish minority in Lviv are, above all, due to the courageous initiatives of the pioneers of change and their subsequent ability to compromise, both Poles and Ukrainians. However one looks at it, the Ukrainians, as the current hosts, could have banned the Poles from any attempt to organise institutions, property or heritage, considering them anti-Ukrainian, and yet they did not do so.

On the other hand, the local Poles may have taken a clearly anti-Ukrainian stance.⁵² Therefore, it is a matter of ongoing publicity to emphasise the city's multicultural history and how much all of its inhabitants can benefit from the compromise. Today, Lviv Poles are loyal citizens of Ukraine, who are also connected with contemporary Poland – not based on separatism but playing a role of a possible interethnic bridge. In their public activity, they repeatedly refer to the idea of the heritage of Jagiellonian identity.⁵³ Today's Lviv is a place that can be a field of Polish-Ukrainian understanding in building a common memory and a common future. This is not easy and requires many sacrifices in terms of historical policy. Considering the tragedies of the last 150 years of Polish-Ukrainian relations and the guilt of both sides, a compromise would be not only pragmatic but also ethically advisable.

proofreading Nicholas Siekierski

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⁵¹ Wojciech Konończuk and Piotr Kosiewski, *Zagrożone dziedzictwo polskie. Dobra kultura na Ukrainie i Białorusi* (Warszawa, 2020).

⁵² Ярослав Грицак, 'Конструювання національного міста: випадок Львова', *Дух і літера*, 17–18 (2007), 157–81.

⁵³ The Union between Poland and Lithuania in the Jagiellonian period (1386–1572) was a time when their cultures and religions intertwined, relying on tolerance and proto-democracy.

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