

## REMEMBERING PERISHED URBAN DIVERSITY OF EAST-CENTRAL EUROPEAN BORDERLAND CITIES: A TENTATIVE APPROACH

### Abstract

*This article sketches the main lines of argumentation presented in the introduction to the planned edited volume “Revisiting Cultural Diversity in East-Central European Borderland Cities: Memories, People and Historical Cityscapes in Lviv, Wrocław, Chernivtsi and Chisinau”. This publication will address the multilayered urban environments where twentieth-century pasts, tainted by legacies Nazism, Marxist-Leninism and violent ethno-nationalism, are reinvented to incorporate the present-day values of democratic open societies. While much has been written about history of Lviv, Wrocław, Chernivtsi and Chisinau, not much is known about how the present-day urbanites address contentious pasts of their cities still bearing traces of “dismembered multiethnicity”. The text suggests a tentative approach to the analysis of engagements with the perished cultural diversity of these cities. In particular, it tests a possibility of combining theoretical frameworks formulated within Memory Studies with a broader conceptualization of borderlands, cosmopolitanism and hybridity.*

**Keywords:** East-Central European cities, borderlands, cultural diversity, perished populations, hybridity, memories

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### 1. Voids, ghosts and spirits of contemporary East-Central European cityscapes

In the 2000s, an interesting trend emerged in several cities formerly being behind the Iron Curtain. Suddenly, unpretentious anthropomorphic forms - small figurines, statues, portraits as well as objects hinting human presence—popped up in the streets and squares. In Wrocław, one comes across ubiquitous bronze dwarfs whose number has exceeded one hundred since the installation of the first “Papa Dwarf” in 2001. What looks like an extravagant branding gimmick at first, 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 side of Poland’s eastern border, in Lviv, tourists take pictures of funny *batiaryky*. These bronze figurines popping up in the vicinity of several well-attended downtown restaurants allude to the prewar subculture of *batiary*, the pranksters immortalized in the local urban folklore. In the “post-transitional” landscape of the western Ukrainian city, *batiary* evoke the myth of Polish Lwów, exciting and perilous in one and the same time. In Chernivtsi, yet another western Ukrainian city with a complicated history, several objects that break against the conventional understanding of public monumental art were placed in the city center. One of them is the bronze horse carriage alluding to the *fin de siècle*, metropolitan elegance and European fashion. Another one is an age-old bicycle with a huge front wheel, as if causally left by its owner at a plaza with the evocative name Turkish Well. These

two installations evoke a mixed feeling of amusement and melancholy which usually accompanies abandoned objects of status that have no utility in the present-day life. In the capital of Moldova, one may see another interesting “urban hieroglyph”. 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 Chisinau that was then a part of Russian empire.

Despite obvious differences in meaning, shape and significance, the observer sensitized to the historical vicissitudes of these post-socialist cities may probably detect a common spirit. Wrocław, Chernivtsi, Lviv and Chisinau – the cities that this volume focuses on – have historically been hubs of borderland regions, emerging at the crossroads of cultures, religions, trade routes, flows of peoples, political ideologies and artistic styles. They have been proverbial for their motley populations and cultural-religious patchworks, which, in turn implied that from being sites of seemingly harmonious co-existence, co-operation, and creative competition they periodically turned into arenas of interethnic conflicts and brutal violence. The contemporary urge to “re-populate” the urban nooks might be interpreted in more general terms as an effort of re-scaling and de-monumentalization of the cityscapes still bearing traces of socialist/Soviet grand mythologies. At the same time, this is also a remarkable act of civic magic correlating with post-1989 political transformations. On the one hand, one marks a perceived absence of some human beings, and, on the other hand, a presence of friendly, domesticated and desirable “others” is emulated. It seems that in the cities profoundly shaped by expulsions, ethnic violence and the Holocaust, there is a need to “camouflage the wounds of failed diversity”<sup>1</sup> or even mourn them, in the meaning that Alexander Etkind<sup>2</sup> reserves for the mechanisms of encountering tragic Eastern-European experiences of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. One may continue this deliberation using the apt metaphor of “ghosts” and “spirits” of memory suggested by Aleida Assmann.<sup>3</sup> In places of existential and political insecurity people summon benevolent “spirits”, or positively colored presentations of the bygone times, to withstand scary “ghosts” of an “unburied past”. Under such circumstances, amusing figures and images serve as public amulets conveying the aura of alleged innocence and comfort.

Oftentimes, the metaphor of palimpsest is being evoked to describe fragmentary and multilayered quality of the cityscapes that experienced drastic socio-political changes and the accompanying loss of the previous populations. As any trope, however, it has its conceptual limitations,<sup>4</sup> especially in the cases where the whole demographic structure and economic organization were obliterated while materiality of extant buildings remained practically intact. Under such circumstances, it makes sense to talk about voids – symbolic, epistemological, emotional – which are still quite perceivable and which the present-day population of these cities tries to patch up. Paradoxically, instead of filling the gaps, the practice of ornamenting the public spaces with fairy-tale entities, legendary figures and melancholic artifacts oftentimes make these voids even more obvious.

The ambition of the planned volume<sup>5</sup> is to revisit multilayered urban environments where twentieth-century pasts tainted by legacies Nazism, Marxist-Leninism and violent ethno-nationalism are to be reinvented to reflect the values of democratization, openness and Europeanization.<sup>6</sup> These borderline cities served as hubs of European and global trade, transcultural exchange and transnational ideologies for centuries and are by no means “just” peripheries and historical outskirts allegedly populated with people professing blurred identities and ambiguous loyalties. While much is known about the histories of the cities, what remains underinvestigated is the engagements with the local contentious pasts present in these urban milieus. How and, most important, why does the present-day populations evoke the past diversity and make it a closed or an open-ended resource? What has been changed since the previous socialist/Soviet epoch and earlier historical periods? And, after all, what do the present-day transformations of cityscapes tinted by the presence of historical “others” say about the contemporary socio-political climates of their respective societies?

## **2. Contexts of engagement with diversity and multiple inscriptions of locality in the 20<sup>th</sup> century: the cases of Wrocław, Lviv, Chernivtsi, Chisinau**

## **2.1. Cultural-historical diversity of the four cities viewed from a common European perspective**

In East-Central Europe, the re-tailoring of the political map in the aftermath of wars, expulsions and ethnic conflicts of the 20<sup>th</sup> century brought about drastic changes of motley urban demographics. After 1989, the historical urban diversity proved to be an important identity resource, political asset and sellable good for the present-day ethnically and culturally heterogeneous urban populations. As urban milieus provide a great check on the past and stimulate certain types of collective remembrance, we decided to look closer at four cities - Lviv, Chernivtsi, Chisinau and Wrocław. Why were they singled out as comparative cases, and why is it possible to suggest generalizations on present-day treatment of historical diversity basing on this selection?

It should be noted that despite uniqueness of each city's history, demographic patterns and present-day urban processes, these four cities bear imprints of similar political-historical tendencies and transnational ideational trends. Also, their present built environments, which expose various "European", distinctly local and international styles, are comparable in many respects.<sup>7</sup> The narratives being transmitted within and through the four cityscapes point to the pendulum movement between diversity and homogeneity, between various types of acknowledgement and denial of ethno-cultural and religious alterity throughout the course of history. From this perspective, (dis)similarity of the selected cities may be inscribed into certain analytical frameworks that transgress national configurations. One of such frameworks is Leggewie's "seven circles of pan-European memory"<sup>8</sup> which brings to the fore violence as a quintessential part of shared European experiences.<sup>9</sup> This model assigns crucial significance to the events of modern history that destroyed pre-existing patterns of ethno-cultural diversity, such as the Holocaust, GULAG, ethnic cleansings, wars and colonial misdeeds. Nevertheless, processes with more ambiguous effects on the diversity, such as migration and the European integration, are also a part of the model. It makes sense to look at the urban histories of "failed diversity" through the prism of "seven circles of pan-European memory, as since 1989 the themes distinguished by Leggewie have indeed structured public debates and affected commemorative practices in the four cities selected for the analysis.

### **2.1. Leopold/Lwów/Lemberg/Lvov/ Lviv: always faithful, always volatile**

Founded by Ruthenian rulers, this city of many names was a contested territory at a geopolitical, religious, civilizational and ethno-cultural crossroads for centuries. It became famous as a Polish bulwark against the Islamic world, and thus called "semper fidelis", i.e. always faithful. Due to its coming under the Magdeburg Law in 1352, it attracted immigrants of various origins. In different epochs, this middle-sized city was a home for several ethno-religious communities, with Poles, Jews, Germans, Ukrainians, Armenians, and Russians as chief among them. Under the periods of peace and relative political stability, ethnic intermarriages and cooperation of different city communities were a common practice. Nevertheless, this ethnic and religious diversity seldom resulted in situations of multicultural mixture as in different periods the city communities mostly lived side by side, but not together with each other, when cultivating their own, quite exclusive, daily spaces and distinct religious identities.

In the modern historiography of Lviv, the Habsburg rule (1772–1918) is often regarded as a blessed period not burdened with escalating ethno-national conflicts. Nevertheless, during WWI, Lviv became a stage of brutal Jewish pogroms, and then an arena of struggle for dominance between Poles and Ukrainians claiming the city as a part of their respective national states. The Ukrainian-Polish rivalry exploded in a brutal interethnic conflict in the Nazi-occupied Galicia and Volhynia in 1943–44. According to different estimates, immediately after WWII the native urban population of Lviv counted between 10 to 20 per cent of its pre-war number.<sup>10</sup> Of 160,000 Jews registered in Lviv before the Wehrmacht occupation, only about 2000 managed to survive the Holocaust.<sup>11</sup> Most Poles, who made up more than a half of the Lwów population in 1939, disappeared from the city in the wake of post-war expulsions organized by the Soviet authorities.

Even though the post-war Ukrainian city did not become homogenized in ethnic terms, the pre-war multicultural and polyethnic Lemberg/Lwów was irrevocably gone. With new urbanites, Lviv quickly became a Soviet city. Nevertheless, since the end of 1980s, Lviv openly took a lead as a centre of the national consolidation and anti-Soviet resistance. Against the background of general

interest in the complex local pasts, several commemorative projects linking to the urban multiculturalism have been realized. The city is presently regarded as one of the bastions of Europeanness in Ukraine, and its official slogan “Lviv – Open to the World” is well in line with its projected European ambitions. Meanwhile, effects of emigration of a significant proportion of Jewish population since the end of 1990s, gender-specific work migration stemming from western Ukraine and the recent problematics of the internally displaced persons puts the declared openness to the test. Continuing contestation between Ukrainian and Polish communities of memory have become increasingly evident over the recent years. As Lviv was the first Ukrainian city that dismantled the Lenin statue on the eve of the independence and quickly got rid of other Soviet symbols, the recent wave of de-communisation (and, to great extent, de-Russification) of the public space did not affect the city that much. By and large, the public discourses on the recent past continue to elevate the Soviet authoritarianism and the aggressive Russian Federation as the greatest evil. Also, the emotional post-colonial rhetoric coining all periods of non-Ukrainian rule as occupation and colonization is evident in the public space.

## **2.2. Czernowitz/Chernauti/Chernivtsi: the Habsburg Arcadia in a Soviet “singing land”**

Post-Soviet symbolic transformations in the cityscape of Chernivtsi mainly correspond to those in neighboring Lviv. In both cities, presentations of the local history focused on victimization and heroism pertinent to the nation-centered anti-communist narratives. Meanwhile, compared with Lviv, the medieval period has been treated more cursorily in Chernivtsi, mainly because of its association with the Romanian/Moldovan control of the territory. The vocal Romanian minority of the region presently regards these centuries and the shorter spans of time in the 20<sup>th</sup> century as formative for its sense of local identity. A major point of consensus among practically all the urban communities is positive estimation of the Habsburgs period (1775-1918). While Lviv became notorious for the rivalry between Poles and Ukrainians that also affected the large Jewish community, in Czernowitz the situation was different. Here the size and influence of the main population groups were comparable, which facilitated formulation of the discourse on a special “Bukovinian tolerance” as a remarkable product of the Habsburg period. While in Lviv the German language lost its dominance by the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, in Chernivtsi it strengthened its position as lingua franca. The last decades of the Habsburg rule became the pinnacle of the local German-speaking literature whose significance is internationally acclaimed by this day.

The post-1991 public narrative points out successes and achievements of the post-Habsburg history of the region, among them the well-known image of Bukovina as a “singing land” and a hub for folklore-inspired handicraft production. However, by and large this period has been viewed in a sharp contrast to the benevolent empire. Brutality of the Russian troops ruling the region during WWI, excesses of harsh nationality politics of the interim Romanian regime, daily horrors of WWII and legacy of two periods of the Soviet occupation became much-discussed topics. Compared to the neighboring Galicia that was ruled by Germans as a part of *Generalgouvernement*, the Holocaust and Porajmos took quite different cause and proportions under the Romanian administration whose “Jewish policy” was independent of Germany.<sup>12</sup> Due to efforts of such local actors who were, like the wartime mayor of Chernauti Trajan Popovici, fostered in the spirit of “Bukovinian tolerance”, almost 15,000, or a third of the urban Jewish population managed to survive. This is much more than in Lviv, Chisinau or Wroclaw. Nevertheless, public marking of the wartime genocide poses a challenge for the present-day urbanites, especially for the Romanian community.

Unlike Lviv, where struggle for Ukrainian national liberation from the “colonial regimes” was consequently emphasized in the public space, in Chernivtsi this line of narration is scaled differently.<sup>13</sup> To resume, although the local approach to the perished urban diversity springs from different preconditions, the logic of engaging with it for the sake of boosting European co-operation, dialogue with the local minorities and openness to the foreign investments by and large repeats the pattern of Lviv.

## **2.3. Chisinau/Kishinyov: the swings of East European multicultural writ small**

Urban history and trans-border patterns of cultural development in Chernivtsi lend themselves to comparison with Chisinau. Both cities were founded in late Middle Ages, but became prominent regional centers first at the modern times. Their history is associated with Moldovan principality, a regional power whose defining cultural features may be described as dominance of dialects of Romanian language and prominent position of the Orthodox church. Important trade routes connecting Moldovan cities with Hansa and the Balkans went through Lviv where the rich merchant community of Moldovans and Wallachians sponsored construction of churches and supported Orthodox education. As a region strategically important for both migration, trade and warfare, Moldova was an incessantly contested territory where multiple cultural identities interweaved, religions competed, and political interests of Hungary, Habsburgs, Poland-Lithuania, Russian empire and Ottoman Empire clashed in the course of history. By and large, “the problems of Moldovan history are the problems of East European history writ small”.<sup>14</sup> Much like its neighbors Hungary, Poland and Ukraine, ethnically diverse Moldova at times was a strong political player, at times it went through periods of colonial oppression and marginalization, but most of time political dependence did not preclude notable cultural achievements. Much like Chernivtsi that rapidly became a burgeoning regional metropole under the Habsburg rule, the one-store town of Chisinau was expanded and beautified following its elevation to the capital of the Russian Governorate of Bessarabia in 1818.

Inhabited by Rumanians/Moldovans, Germans, Jews, Ukrainians, Armenians, Russians, Roma, Poles, Bulgarians, Greeks and Gagauz, during its heydays Chisinau was as motley and mosaic-like in ethnic terms as Chernivtsi. Meanwhile, there were reasons why no special discourse of tolerance emerged in Chisinau and Bessarabia. As a result of the Russian empire’s regulatory demographic policies and linguistic Russification, the share of Russian and Ukrainian newcomers constantly grew, while Moldavian population became marginalized. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Moldovians became an urban minority in Chisinau, while Jews emerged as the new urban majority.<sup>15</sup> In 1903 and 1905 anti-Semitic violence of pre-revolutionary tsarist Russia shook the city. In their turn, anti-Jewish policies of the Rumanian authorities that took over Bessarabia in 1918, continued in the wartime genocide. In its aftermath, practically all the Jewish community, i.e. around 53,000 individuals, perished from Chisinau.<sup>16</sup>

After the war, the re-populated capital of the Soviet Moldavian Republic was targeted for a comprehensive re-structuring. The task was never completed, but several districts of the old downtown still bearing traces of the local multiculturalism were levelled to give place to new Soviet-style architecture.<sup>17</sup> In this respect Chisinau differs from Chernivtsi and Lviv where similar Soviet mega-projects were also discussed, but for various reasons never implemented. Although nowadays these cities face similar problems stemming from their historical legacies, peripheral position, perished ethno-cultural diversity and still present Soviet legacies, the crucial difference stems from their (geo)political preferences. After more than two decades of independence the vector of political sympathies in Chisinau and Moldova points to Russia despite the initiatives to bring the country closer to the EU. This, in turn, affects such aspects of the memory politics as addressing the Holocaust and the prewar urban multiculturalism.

#### **2.4. Vratislavia/Breslau/Wroclaw: from a “bastion of the German east” to the “European meeting place”**

Much like Lviv, Chernivtsi and Chisinau, Wroclaw fits the pattern of an incessant borderland city. Founded as a stronghold of Bohemian rulers in the 10<sup>th</sup> century, it grew into the capital of the dynamic region of Lower Silesia. As a Hansa city and an important regional academic center, over centuries Wroclaw retained strong links with Lviv, Chernivtsi and Chisinau. Alongside with the recent architecture associated with “real socialism”, the built environment of contemporary Wroclaw bears references to the Czech, Polish, Austrian and Prussian historical periods. Its present-day “voids” are primarily a result of war-time destruction, voluntary and forced migrations, natural disasters, changes of political regimes and economic (mis)fortunes of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Nowadays Wroclaw is widely perceived as a showcase of the post-socialist urban revitalization facilitated by the access of Poland to the EU. Moreover, with the end of the communist period, the municipal authorities did their best to brand the city as a hub of multicultural dialogue, religious tolerance and European co-operation. This determination is even more striking considering the preceding history of Wroclaw that is full of episodes of persecution and violent contestation of ethno-religious difference. On the one hand, since the 16<sup>th</sup> century the city has been known for its fruitful

dialogue between Protestantism and Catholicism. From the 1850<sup>th</sup> to the 1930<sup>th</sup> it was the only place in East-Central Europe accommodating an academic institution with a special focus on Judaic theology. On the other hand, the city had a long tradition of intimidating Jews both by means of mob violence and legal restrictions, among them the infamous *Privilegium de non tolerandis Judaeis* from 1455. Also, the Polish minority of the city used to be targeted in times of growing German jingoism. The Nazi rule culminated with murder of practically all of 9200 Jews who by 1941 failed to leave the “bastion of the German east”.<sup>18</sup> While in this respect Wrocław comes close to Lviv, Chernivtsi and Chisinau stripped of their prewar Jewish inhabitants, the city stands out regarding its postwar fate.

Much like another German city, Königsberg, Breslau was proclaimed a Nazi fortress and suffered severe atrocities and material damage during the siege. The society that incorporated the city after the war mostly regarded it as a former territory of the archenemy populated by hostile denizens. As a result, around 190,000 Germans were forced to leave the city in 1945-1947.<sup>19</sup> Meanwhile, anti-Jewish violence did not stop with the war, as in 1945-1946 several bloody pogroms took place in Lower Silesia. Even though Polish Wrocław still contained tiny Jewish and German communities throughout the all postwar period, “[b]ehind the renewed facades a completely new life begun in 1945-1948”.<sup>20</sup> Although the popular opinion contends that the new population consisted mostly of expellees from the distant Eastern Kresy, the biggest postwar migration to the city was from the nearby Polish lands. Such a “lapse of memory” has its explanation, as the new order in the “regained lands” was firmly founded on the myth of “double Polishness” referring to the medieval kingdom of the Piasts and the postwar “replanting” of Polish traditions from the Kresy, especially from Lwów/Lviv.

In the Polish People’s Republic, painstaking avoidance of references to the Prussian period was also codified through the choice of renovation objects.<sup>21</sup> In contrast, since the 1990s, the focus was shifted to the Protestant-Prussian and modernist German architecture, as well as Jewish sites. Around that time, the so-called Four Denominations district comprising a synagogue, an Evangelical church, a Roman Catholic temple and an Orthodox church became an important component of the strategically elevated image of the city as a “meeting place”. This branding of Wrocław as yet another European city of intercultural dialogue proved to be instrumental in winning the bid for the title of European Capital of Culture in 2016.

### **3. Problematic of borderlands and “problematic borderlands”**

Over several centuries, the cities that the volume deals with have been metropolises of historical and cultural regions proverbial for their ethnic diversity: Galicia (Lviv), Bukovina (Chernivtsi), Bessarabia (Chisinau), Lower Silesia (Wrocław). Specificity and at the same time comparability of the selected cities stem from their position as frontiers of imperial expansion and stakes of great power rivalries. This problematic can be aptly addressed with the help of such notion as borderlands. As particular types of regions, European borderlands have been formed by discourses elevating in different proportions their special anthropogeographic conditions, cultural-historical distinctiveness and (geo)political designs.<sup>22</sup> The concept of borderlands conveys the idea that far from being just anomalies belonging to the past, cultural fragmentation and *mélange* 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”.<sup>23</sup> The term has also connoted problematic places where co-existence of various ethnicities, religions and other symbolic orders have been accompanied by competition, uncertainty and violence.<sup>24</sup> Hence, what is crucial to understanding of borderlands is not only their material topography, but also specific modalities of power pertaining to accommodation, production and contestation of diversity.<sup>25</sup>

Borderlands may be regarded as peripheries or margins of certain bonded spaces that due to their dynamic relation with ‘otherness’ and rich texture of constrains and opportunities often assume centrality in matters of symbolic politics. This is especially true in the post-1989 East-Central Europe where borderlands become an apt 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 to serve neoliberal agenda of the peripheral elites who exploit

local cultural capital to enhance competitiveness of their regions.<sup>26</sup> Nevertheless, such instrumental “whipping up” is not a completely new phenomenon. As pockets of social and political instability and spaces of non-compliance with centrally imposed regulations, borderland regions often lend themselves to large-scale social experiments and political projects combining transformations of material environments with fostering a new type of political subjects.<sup>27</sup>

Political projects of uniformization notwithstanding, in borderlands, and especially in their urban milieus, some specific facets of cultural diversity pertained throughout the calamities of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. One of them is a constant exposure to the gaze of the “other”, whether literally or metaphorically, i.e. through daily (and mostly unreflective) contact with material remnants, borrowed words, pieces of folklore and family stories that hint the disturbing presence of a foreign *spiritus loci* within a familiar cultural landscape. Another is a ‘banal’ cosmopolitanism as a condition of daily urban coexistence, often through small-scale activities linked to specific places, “from market squares to basement taverns to elegant clubs: places that had indeed often been built to enable... cosmopolitan sociality”.<sup>28</sup>

### **Engagements with urban diversity in focus: multicultural heritage and hybridity**

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 to local languages (Polish *wielokulturowosc*, 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 a token of growing multicultural orientation. What is denoted is rather a situational pluralism resulting from liberalization of memory politics East-Central Europe after 1989.<sup>29</sup> This approach mostly dispenses with reflective critical interpretations and regards the multiple local pasts rather as a patchwork of monological presentations. In this context, multiculturalism’s main corollary concept 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 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,<sup>30</sup> but simultaneously poses a challenge to presentations of the cities as organic parts of uninterrupted narratives of the national Polish, Ukrainian and Moldavian distinction.

Cultural diversity and multicultural heritage may be conceptualized as a field of representations organized along the axes ethnic/non-ethnic diversity of the urban populations and material/immaterial diversity of the urban milieus. This conceptual grid embraces a huge variety of urban forms, events, performances and discourses. As a mode of “being, doing and knowing” that helps to sustain group identities in the times of rapid changes and crises<sup>31</sup>, ethnicity remains and will supposedly remain the most significant conceptual devise for studying cultural divisions. Much has been written on the topic of German, Jewish, Polish, Ukrainian, Armenian, Romanian, Roma and Russian populations with long historical presence in the selected cities. To this one should add the present-day snapshot of cultures, languages, religions and, increasingly, races in the wake of economic migration, transnationalization of higher education, expanding tourist industries and escalating military conflicts. However, in the course of history, ethnic lines of divisions have been incessantly amalgamated, blurred, articulated or neutralized by non-ethnic diversity. Some cities, like for example Lviv, used to be homes of legendary urban subcultures (e.g., *batiary*) that were ethnically mixed and thereafter claimed by different national historiographies. In the planned volume, activities of academic elites, “tourist hordes”, diaspora communities, and also artistic imageries, protest movements and NGOs developing over lines of ethnic and national division have been given a closer consideration as loci of transformative impact.

In absence of an established definition and shared understanding of what constitutes cultural diversity, one may argue that all cities are multicultural to some extent<sup>32</sup> or, on the contrary, that no city ticks all

the aspects of cultural diversity. In a way, impressions of whether some cities are more “culturally diverse” than others depend on the material cityscapes, especially on the built environment. Obviously, in the borderland cities like Lviv, Chernivtsi and Wrocław where sections of the prewar urban architecture were placed on the UNESCO World heritage list, one may get an impression of a “greater cultural diversity”. Nevertheless, when examining immaterial (intangible, symbolic) aspects of present-day life of the selected cities, it becomes clear that the prewar diversity left only sporadic and ambiguous 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 the confrontational nationalist frameworks is quite limited. Although marking symbolic presence of the perished urban groups with monuments, toponyms and even thematic restaurants became a common post-1989 practice, a tendency of 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, expulsions, political repressions) that might imply complicity of those who repopulated the cities, or, alternatively, skip mentioning a prominent role and achievements of other ethnic groups (especially Poles, Jews, Germans, Romanians, Austrians) in some contexts. Conceptualization of urban cultural diversity in the four cities suffers from many limitations caused by concrete policies and political discourses, and in many cases also underpinned by ubiquitous daily patterns of sociability. It may be aptly concluded 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”.<sup>33</sup>

“Irrelevance” of material tokens of the perished populations in the post-1989 East-Central Europe is nevertheless relative. It has been a commonplace to envision the post-socialist transformations as “rapid and simultaneous”<sup>34</sup> and present them in terms of a gap, hiatus or cleavage. Nevertheless, this imagery of a sudden, drastic and unanticipated break is actually a groove simplification. Certain continuity of “background culture” (popular imagery, limited but viable contacts with abroad, daily practices of sociability, tastes, city folklore, family stories) combined with sporadic official references of “otherness” in the Soviet/socialist urban landscapes paved the way to post-1989 “return to diversity”. However, the backside of this relative continuity is not that unproblematic. Although 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, like it was the case of the old Jewish cemetery in Wrocław. Adapting De Certeau’s concepts, such non-linear development may be interpreted as enduring legacy of predominance of tactics over strategies. In historical cities, strategies of powerful actors carving “readable spaces” in line with some disciplined visions are constantly undermined by tactics of those who elude the discipline of urban planning.<sup>35</sup> Present-day inconsistency between the centralized legislation, top-down politics of memory, expert restoration plans and the local policies, priorities and ambitions is a well-known phenomenon observable in the post-socialist Europe.<sup>36</sup> 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-European borderlands.

Next to cosmopolitanism, another concept that can be applied in the borderland context is hybridity<sup>37</sup>. 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 dominating populations (post-colonial studies, migration studies) or for labelling a prescribed dialogical space of diversity (political studies, studies of multiculturalism). Several chapters in this volume explore emergence of spontaneous rather than cultivated spaces of dialogue and site-specific engagement with otherness, which in a hindsight may be labelled as hybrid ones. These spaces are unstable and limited, and their practical outcomes are oftentimes difficult to estimate. Moreover, “the concept of hybridity does not denote any specifics of identity that can be represented”<sup>38</sup>. 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<sup>39</sup> 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”<sup>40</sup>, or as a liminal “culture’s in-between”<sup>41</sup> 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”.<sup>42</sup> In this context of this volume, the emphasis is laid on memory work as important pre-condition for crafting hybrid spaces, engagement with “dismembered multiethnicity”<sup>43</sup> and disturbing “wounds of failed diversity”.<sup>44</sup> This volume also explores whether these hybrid places of alternative/alterity already exist in the selected cities, and what are preconditions of their emergence – or decay.

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<sup>1</sup> Czaplicka, John, Blair Ruble and Crabtree, Lauren (red.) (2003). *Composing Urban History and the Constitution of Civic Identities*. Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press: 17.

<sup>2</sup> Etkind, Aleksander. *Warped Mourning: Stories of the Undead in the Land of the Unburied*. Stanford, 2013.

<sup>3</sup> Assmann, Aleida. "Ghosts of the Past." *East-European Memory Studies* 8 (2011), p. 1–5.

<sup>4</sup> Huyssen, Andreas. *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory*. Stanford, 2003, p. 7.

<sup>5</sup> It builds on findings of a recent international project “*Memory of Vanished Population Groups and Societies in Today’s East- and Central European Urban Environments. Memory Treatment and Urban Planning in Lviv, Chernivci, Chisinau and Wrocław*” was by the Swedish research foundation Riksbankens Jubileumsfond, project co-ordinator Dr. Bo Larsson, 2011-2014.

<sup>6</sup> Czaplicka, John, Ruble, Blair & Crabtree, Lauren, 2003; Murzyn, Monika. ‘Heritage Transformation in Central and Eastern Europe,’ in: Brian Graham and Peter Howard (eds.) *The Ashgate Research Companion to Heritage and Identity*, Aldershot, 2008, p. 332-333.

<sup>7</sup> Larsson, Bo. *Periferin i Europas mitt: kulturarv, minnen och stadsmiljö i Västukraina och Moldavien*. Lund, 2011.

<sup>8</sup> Leggewie, Claus. *Der Kampf um die europäische Erinnerung: Ein Schlachtfeld wird besichtigt*. Munich, 2011.

<sup>9</sup> Robert Gerwarth and Stephan Malinowski. Europeanization through Violence? War Experiences and the Making of Modern Europe, in: M. Conway and K. Patel (eds.) *Europeanization in the Twentieth Century. Historical Approaches*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, p. 190.

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<sup>11</sup> Ther, Phillip. ‘War versus Peace: Interethnic Relations in: L’viv during the First Half of the Twentieth Century’, in J. Czaplicka (ed.), *L’viv: A City in the Crosscurrents of Culture*. Cambridge, MA, 2005, p. 268.

<sup>12</sup> Deletant, Dennis. ‘The Holocaust in Transnistria: An Overview in the Light of Recent Research’, in: Haynes, Rebecca (ed.). *Occasional Papers in Romanian Studies*. No. 3. *Moldova, Bessarabia, Transnistria*, 2003, p.143.

<sup>13</sup> Narvselius, Eleonora and Niklas Bernsand. ‘Lviv and Chernivtsi: Two Memory Cultures at the Western Ukrainian Borderland,’ *East/West: Journal of Ukrainian Studies*, 1 (1), 2014, p. 59-84.

<sup>14</sup> Haynes, Rebecca. ‘Historical Introduction’, in: Haynes, Rebecca (ed.). *Occasional Papers in Romanian Studies*. No.3. *Moldova, Bessarabia, Transnistria*. London, 2003, p. 3.

<sup>15</sup> Haynes 2003, p.103.

<sup>16</sup> Larsson 2011, p.232.

<sup>17</sup> Larsson 2011, p.233-249.

<sup>18</sup> Mühle, Eduard. *Historia Wrocławia*. Przel. Johanna Janicka. Warszawa, 2016, p. 226-227.

<sup>19</sup> Kaszuba, E. *Między propagandą a rzeczywistością. Polska ludność Wrocławia w latach 1945-1947*, Warszawa–Wrocław, 1997, s. 38.

<sup>20</sup> Mühle 2016, p. 242.

<sup>21</sup> Mühle 2016, p. 122.

<sup>22</sup> Mishkova, Diana and Balazs Trencsenyi. *European Regions and Boundaries. A Conceptual History*. New York and Oxford, 2017, p. 8.

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