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Visual symbols of new identity in cities of modern Ukraine during the interwar period

Svitlana Linda[1], Olga Mykhaylyshyn[2]

[1] Department of Design and Architecture Basics,
National University "Lviv Polytechnic", Lviv, Ukraine,
e-mail: svitlanalinda@gmail.com
[2] Department of Architecture and Environmental Design,
National University of Water and Environmental Engineering, Rivne, Ukraine,
e-mail: o.l.mykhaylyshyn@nuwm.edu.ua

Abstract: In the interwar period western and eastern parts of the modern-day Ukraine were included into two countries – the Second Polish Republic and the Soviet Union. The development of cities of modern-day Ukraine during 1920-30th took place according to various ideological and cultural models. Changes in "cultural models" and ideological guidelines, as well as the departure from forms of traditional society during that period can be viewed as associated but semantically inconsistent targets; those carried out in each region in different sociopolitical conditions and with different directions of socio-cultural transformations; those that can be seen most clearly in the spatial planning of the cities. Approaches to the planning of Western Ukrainian cities, based on the synthesis of historically formed traditional environment, identified urban environment as European integral element of globalization process and were interpreted as an idea, alternative to socialistic internationalism that was consistently implemented in the Soviet Ukraine at that time. The process of formation of national and collective identity was visualized by "blending" and modernization of architectural environment layers, entry or expulsion of architectural sites of different ages, which symbolized the socio-cultural changes, both were part of the interaction of social and cultural systems.

Keywords: architecture, identity, Second Polish Republic, Soviet Ukraine, Lviv, Kyiv, Kharkiv, interwar period.

1. Introduction

After the First World War and formation of the Soviet Union, according to the Riga Peace Treaty of 1921, the territory of modern Ukraine was divided between the Second Polish Republic, Romania, Czechoslovakia and Soviet Ukraine. In the complex sociopolitical conditions of the early 1920s each state sought a quick integration of new territories and societies, demonstrating the success of implementation of its own ideological and value paradigms. This process was different in each country, because they had different experience of being states, political and geopolitical objectives and codex. Architecture, which was deeply engaged in these processes, had to facilitate the state-building period.

The use of architectural and city-planning means for the implementation of state-building ideas in the interwar period was most clearly demonstrated in the largest cities of each region of Ukraine – Lviv, Kyiv, and Kharkiv.

The former Eastern Galicia became part of Poland, which was formed from 1919 to 1923. In 1920 the region was divided into three provinces with administrative centres in

Lviv, Ternopil and Stanislav (now Ivano-Frankivsk). Lviv was the most important city in Eastern Galicia.

Bolshevik Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR) was established on the territory, which belonged to the Russian Empire until 1917 (except Volyn). In 1922 the USSR became part of the Soviet Union. Till 1934 Kharkiv was the capital of the republic, then it was transferred to Kyiv.

The problem of the importance of architecture in the visualization of ideological references and identities is the subject of many studies. In particular, B. Cherkes, E. Cherkasova, J.Bohdanova devoted their works to this topic. However, the problem of visualizing the identities of the cities of modern Ukraine, which belonged to different states in the interwar period, has not yet become the subject of a separate research.

The purpose of the research is to specify through comparative analysis the visualization means of the urban environment identity in the Second Polish Republic and Soviet Ukraine, which was formed in different socio-political conditions.

Objectives:

1. Compare the political objectives of both states and analyze the socio-economic conditions of their development.
2. Compare general trends of urban development and formation of a new buildings and structures typology;
3. Compare stylistic aspects of architectural development as a means of visualizing the state identity.
4. Compare spatial codification methods (renaming streets and squares, demolition of the old and construction of new monuments, organization of mass celebrations and meetings).

According to the plans of the Second Polish Republic and the Soviet Ukraine, the public spaces of Lviv, Kiev, and Kharkiv due to their social and administrative significance should have become, respectively, centers for the revival of historical memory and the formation of a new collective memory, as well as centers for ideological and political actions. And their architecture should have been turned into symbols that embodied the national (traditional) or Soviet identity. Therefore, the method of comparative analysis is the main method for determining the similarities and the differences in the trends of architectural and urban development of the environment and, in the end, achieving the goal of the research.

2. Development of cities of modern Ukraine during 1920-30th: differences and particularities

Grounds and objectives of state-building in both countries – Poland and Soviet Ukraine – were different.

The Second Polish Republic underwent a process of restoring the lost state. Historical memory of the First Rzecz Pospolita and the desire to restore historical justice as well as to continue the historical process were main political ideas of Poland in 1920-30s. Hence the main political goal appears: the formation of a national state that would preach and support traditional values at all levels (state, order, family).

In Soviet Ukraine, as in the Soviet Union in general, a fundamentally new state was built, which opposed to external "bourgeois" environment. Soviet ideology tore all connections with the previous historical periods and offered a model of an international state (table 1).

Table 1. Comparison of prerequisites for state building in the Second Polish Republic and Soviet Ukraine

	Second Polish Republic	Soviet Ukraine
State-building stage	Statehood revival	Building of a fundamentally new state
State-building basis	National state	International state
History links	Continuation of a broken historical process	Clear break with the past, «zero hour» state building
Value coordinates	Traditional values	Formation of new values

The report analyzes three cities that were administrative centres as well as had special socio-cultural and historical importance for their regions: Lviv, Kharkiv and Kyiv.

Then we will compare general trends of urban development in these cities and formation of a new buildings and structures typology and how these processes reflected ideological and political goals of both states.

Interwar period was a period of an active urban development of Lviv. This process was associated with the name of the architect and urbanist Ignacy Drexler. In 1920 he published his work "The Great Lviv", which analyzed territorial development of Lviv from the old times of the princes of Galicia to the modern era as well as presented statistics about the city, characteristics of a new urban organism, proposed by the author, which should be formed through merging Lviv with suburban areas. This work, along with maps and plans, built up basis for revision of urban development. In particular, Drexler took "strong growth of communication, construction and industrial needs ..., increasing the number of inhabitants to about half a million" as a basic hypothesis for his project [1]. However, pragmatic and economic aspect had a priority for urban development of Lviv (Fig.1).

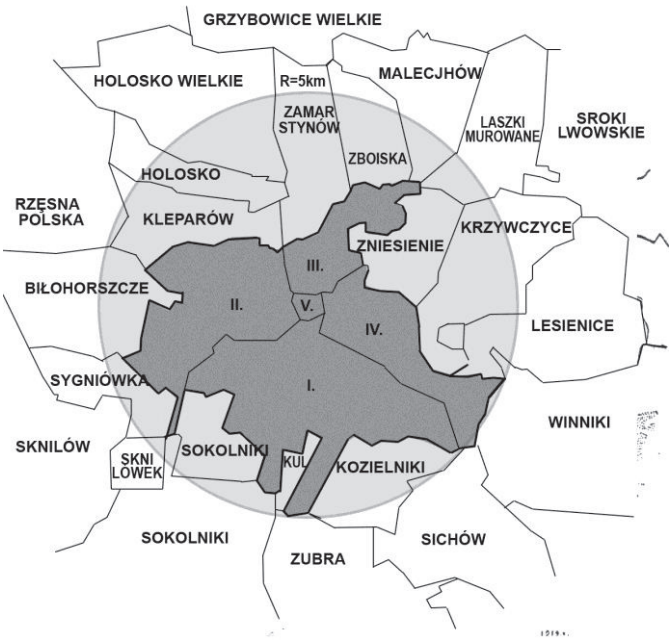

Fig. 1. "Great Lviv" by Ignacy Drexler (1920). Drawing by Olena Linda in according to "*Arkhitektura Lwowa. Chas i styl: XIII – XXI st*, Lviv, 2008, p. 528

This approach formed the basis for a new typology of buildings, best example for which could be found in housing for workers and the middle class – the brightest expression of Polish social policy (economic workers cottages (Syhnivka, Bogdanivka) (Fig. 2), cottages for the middle class (Professor's colony, "Vlasna Strikha" [Own Roof]) (Fig. 3). At this time, tenement houses were built for workers and employees (Fig. 4). All these buildings had common characteristic features: typical designing, creating minimal but fully private housing (with kitchens, bathrooms, bedrooms), formation of small blocks of individual cottages. Multifamily complexes used similar trends: economic, but traditional houses.

Fig. 2. Economic workers cottages, Sygnivka (1930s). Photo by Svitlana Linda

Fig. 3. Cottages for the middle class, the colony "Własna Strzecha" (Own Foof) (1931). Photo by Svitlana Linda

Fig. 4. Tenement house at Stryjska 32/38 Street (1930s). Photo by Julia Bohdanova

Therefore, the general plan of Lviv and housing typology developed according to the requirements of feasibility, practicality, economy. Housing typology was formed based on traditional social values (separate family, personal space etc).

The situation was somewhat different in Kharkiv. For the period of development of the general city plan, Kharkiv was the largest educational center for all sectors of the economy in Ukraine. Kharkiv railway junction took second place in the Soviet Union. Therefore, during the development of the plan, team of authors took into account the prospects for growth in industrial production. Project of the socialist reconstruction of Kharkiv was developed in 1931-1933, and counted with 1 million 810 thousand residents [2].

The main objectives of the general plan were: limiting the growth of its territory within five selected planning areas while preserving building priority row; solving the housing problem by building new residential complexes and reconstruction of existing ones; solving the transport problem, in particular in the historic centre; preserving network of central streets and railway tracks that cross the city; fixing the functional role of a new public-administrative centre on Dzerzhinsky Square (now - Freedom Square). The ensemble was a testing ground for project development for the grand ensemble of administrative and public centre. It embodied the ideas of space organization, designed for business and proletarian mass action in the days of celebrations, meetings and demonstrations. The main compositional task was to ensure the architectural integrity of the new elements of this architectural ensemble. Thus, the general plan defined the same high importance of practical, ideological and artistic values.

The development of social housing was fundamentally different. During the 1929-1931 construction of a "socialist city New Kharkiv" (team led by architect P.Alyoshyn) which had to become an embodiment of Milutin's concept of a linear city. The "socialist city New Kharkiv" was originally designed for 100-120 thousand people as a satellite city of Kharkiv, which could exist independently of the capital of Ukraine. The "Socialist city New Kharkiv" included infrastructure that provided life and leisure of people, who, as it had been originally planned, worked at Kharkiv tractor plant [3].

In the "socialist city New Kharkiv" the principle of linear building was first used: "twin" houses in a line parallel to each other instead of closed quarters with inner yards (Fig.5). The apartments did not include kitchens, because the workers were considered to eat together in the dining rooms. Living place was minimal: 4-6 m². Kindergartens and boarding schools were designed, where children were brought up separately from their parents. Houses were designed to be connected by covered passages on the first floor for the free movement of residents to shops, clubs, canteens, schools, kindergartens. In addition, public utilities such as dining hall and laundry were designed (Fig. 6). In fact, the planning structure destroyed the traditional family values and lined up new hierarchy, on top of which was a new Soviet man, deprived from "remnants" of bourgeois capitalist past [4].

The "socialist city New Kharkiv" embodied the idea of the city of the future, universal brotherhood and equality, the ideal model of proletarian existence, where all domestic functions until the cooking had to be centralized. Thus, the general plan and housing typology of Kharkiv is clearly dominated by ideological component, which should emphasize the fundamental newness of everything being built.

Similarities in the urban development of Western Ukrainian and Soviet cities were embodied in an effort to streamline urban processes and create "cities of the future"; differences: Lviv claimed functional expediency as a priority, at the city planning level it was deprived from ideological subtext, all processes are rational and conservative; Kharkiv – ideological affirmation of the idea of building a new society at the urban planning level and in typology, continuous experiment (table 2).

Fig. 5. House of the "socialist city New Kharkiv". Photo by Svitlana Linda

Fig. 6. Dining hall of "socialist city New Kharkiv". Photo by Svitlana Linda

Table 2. Comparison of the urban development of cities in the Second Polish Republic and Soviet Ukraine

	Second Polish Republic Lviv	Soviet Ukraine Kharkiv
General plan: main idea	Rationalism and pragmatism	Ideology domination (artistical expressiveness)
State-building basis	Traditional methods of social life organization	Experiment and break with traditional social values
Link to history	Continuation of city-planning guidelines	Structural development, new spatial semantics
Relation to neighbor countries (Europe)	Part of Europe	Opposition of the state to the whole world

These differences have been implemented in the stylistic urban development. The desire to create a national state, declared in Poland in 1918, required visual implementation by artistic and architectural means, expressed through the category of style. This problem was complex. On the one hand, the formation of a single European avant-garde architectural language required its mastering to become part of a common European and global space of a new architectural aesthetics. On the other hand - it was necessary to take into account the significant impact of national (classicist – from the times of the Polish king Stanislaw August) – principles and means of architectural image formation. That era was associated

in the minds of Poles with the period of the highest civil and economic development of Poland as an independent state. The second search vector of a "national style" was an appeal to the manor ("dvorkovyi" style (styl dwórkowy)), traditions of "Sigismund's Renaissance" – for the construction of apartment houses and "Vistula Gothics" – for religious buildings [5].

However, since the 1930s stylistic pluralism in the architecture of Lviv was replaced by a single dominant direction - functionalism, which symbolized architectural inclusion of Lviv (and Poland) to the global architectural process. Obviously, the stabilization of the national state and strengthening of its legitimacy on the international arena removed the need for constant support of its national identity from the agenda. "National styles" fulfilled their mission: now it was necessary to affirm Poland as an integral part of Europe.

Stylistic evolution in the Soviet Ukraine took the opposite direction. With the increase in urbanization and industrialization speed, innovative architects-constructivists were looking for a new harmony. This artistic current swept the territory of the former Russian empire. Kharkiv became the main centre of constructivism in the Soviet Ukraine.

The ensemble of a new center was formed by Derzhprom House, Projects House, Cooperation House, Communist Party high quarters, "International" hotel. The symbol of the new architecture (the new life) was Derzhprom House (1925-1929, architects S.Serafimov, S.Kravets, M.Felher) (Fig. 7). According to the authors the building had to represent a huge factory, converted into an industry palace. The building meets the spirit and direction of the era - its revolutionary romanticism. The Projects House (1930-32) was designed as a continuation of Derzhprom building composition. 7 to 10-storied growing to the center volume arrays ended with a 14-storey tower-plate, facing the center of the Freedom Square [6].

Fig. 7. Derzhprom House in Kharkiv, (1925-1929, architects S.Serafimov, S.Kravets, M.Felher). Photo by Svitlana Linda

The transformation of Kyiv city community center began when the city was granted with the status of the capital of Soviet Ukraine (1934). It was decided to place a new Government square in the Old (Ducal) town, after the demolition of the St. Michel's Golden-Domed Monastery (XII-XVIII cent.) and the Vasylivska (Church of Three Saints) church. There have been several rounds of competition, as a result of which were defined the principles of public space. They used composition techniques representing political programs and myths of the communist ideology (planning axles, large areas for demonstrations, symmetrically located monumental buildings, ideologically saturated sculptures, etc.). The Draft of the Government Center (arch. Joseph Langbard) has demonstrated

a divergence from the ideas of Constructivism: the historicism has become the leitmotif of style solutions. Morphology of buildings focused on the style of the Palace of Soviets in Moscow, the design of which lasted until the World War II. By the end of 1937 one of the buildings (the building of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (Bolshevik) of Ukraine) was raised [7]. Now there is the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine (Fig. 8).

Fig. 8. The building of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (Bolshevik) of Ukraine in Kyiv (1934-1937, architect J.Langbardt). Photo by Svitlana Linda

The buildings of Derzhprom in Kharkiv and the Government Center in Kyiv are unique objects that determined changes of architecture style development of the Soviet Union in the interwar period from orthodox constructivism to orthodox historicism – "Stalinist Empire". In our opinion, one of the reasons for a sharp change was in the necessity of updating the history in the Soviet Union in the 1930s. The revolution and Lenin have become history themselves and required memoralization. The country was transforming from a supernational "progressive" state into an empire that required a historical confirmation of the right to exis (table 3).

Table 3. Comparison of the style development of cities in the Second Polish Republic and Soviet Ukraine

	Second Polish Republic Lviv	Soviet Ukraine Kharkiv, Kyiv
Main idea of the style development stage	National: stressing the Polish national identity	Internationalist, proletarian
Pluralism	Style diversification	monism
Evolution direction	From historicism to functionalism	From constructivism to historicism
Interpretation of the state role on the global context	Interpretation of own national state as part of Europe and aspiration to get involved into general development trends	Opposition of the state to the whole world

Let us compare space codification methods of formed spaces. Cities represent the collective memory of their past and demonstrate it in new conditions using symbols - space codifiers: monuments, plaques, street names, some places – they are witnesses of socially significant events. These objects identify and semantically mark an environment as part of certain statehood and culture.

Lviv primarily represented the collective memory of their "polishness". With the change of government in 1918, and after 1923 there was almost no monument displacement and replacement in urban space. However, after the World War I romantic and national components of Polish nationalism in Lviv was replaced by the heroic struggle for Lviv and Eastern Galicia. The new cult objects immortalized in stone and bronze were soldiers (some of them - children and teenagers) who died for their country and for the free Polish Lviv. Two monuments were erected in memory of these soldiers: one of them was raised not far from the railway station, where the fighting took place, the other one in the courtyard of the Polytechnic Institute, where Polish soldiers were buried. The most important new place of worship – "Lviv Eaglets Memorial" was erected near Lychakiv cemetery that housed the earlier Polish monument to the participants of the November and January uprisings in XIX century. The Pantheon was built as a stately ensemble, which was supposed to symbolize the eternal presence of Poles in Lviv. The tomb of the Unknown Soldier, the colonnade, powerful lions and the sword "Scherbets" on the triumphal arch testified the underlined national orientation of the idea (Fig. 9) [8].

Fig. 9. "Lviv Eaglets Memorial" on Lychakiv cemetery in Lviv (1922-1939, arch. R. Indrukh). Photo by Svitlana Linda

A new collective memory and a new identity was being created in Soviet Ukraine. Apart from mass renaming of streets and squares, in 1919-1920 the implementation of the Soviet plan of monumental propaganda began. The Bolsheviks gave a great importance to it as an instrument of ideological struggle. The active role of monuments in the cities was emphasized. "Monuments-calls", "Monument-slogans" represented propaganda. They were by semantics close to political posters and subordinated its laws (minimalism of means and forms, clarity, brevity, clarity of perception). They were made of cheap and, therefore, fragile building materials: wood, plaster, plywood (most monuments of 1920s did not survive).

According to the 1919 Decree, monuments to tsars and statesmen of Russian Empire on squares and city streets were demolished. In place of them there were erected monuments to ideologists of socialism, prominent revolutionists and politicians (K. Marx, V. Lenin, et al.) in the largest Ukrainian cities (Kyiv, Kharkiv, Odessa, Katerynoslav). They weren't of a special artistic value, but served as ideological symbols of the new regime. In the meantime, monuments built before the revolution, were destroyed. Many of them were works of art (Monument to Peter Stolypin, Emperor Alexander II). On the pedestal of the latter they set a 8 meters plywood figure of a Red Army soldier. This work was called "To a Red Army soldier – the defender of the masses" [9].

New public spaces of Soviet cities were formed as an environment for numerous parades and demonstrations. For this purpose they were decorated with slogans, posters, Soviet symbols, mostly in red colors. The red color becomes an important allegorical mean. Volhanf Holtz called this method "carnival of red". By coloring everything associated with socialist ideology they wanted to achieve the illusion of victory of socialism (table 4).

Table 4. Comparison of the space codification ways of cities in the Second Polish Republic and Soviet Ukraine

	Second Polish Republic Lviv	Soviet Ukraine Kharkiv, Kyiv
Spaces codification ways	Continuation Preserving old street and square names, building new monuments beside the old ones	Radical transformation Massive renaming of streets and squares, elimination of the old monuments and erection of the new ones, perception of public places as a background for demonstrations and marches, red color domination
Main idea	National: stressing the Polish national identity	Internationalist, proletarian
Pantheon of heroes	Adding new heroes to a historical pantheon – soldiers, who fought for the national liberation	New pantheon formation Heroes – socialist activists, "anonymous" ideal soldiers and socialism builders
Memory construction	Continuation of the historical process	"Zero hour" memory formation – starting from the socialist revolution

Since 1939, Lviv has also become red (Fig. 10). In October 1939 the communist ideology spread over the whole city. At the initiative of the Communist Party a large Monument to the Stalin's constitution was constructed. It consisted of a column surrounded by red flags. Particularly important part of this memorial was in its bottom, where figures of a soldier, a worker, a mother with a child, a girl student and a peasant with a boy symbolized social unity and the base had three plates with the inscription "Friendship of peoples" in different languages (Ukrainian, Polish, and Jewish).

Fig. 10. The monument to the Stalin Constitution in Lviv (1939). The cover of magazine "Rabotnitsa", 1940, #27.

3. Conclusions

As a result, we can state that

1. Different historical experience, collective memory and purposes existence of states, which included parts of modern Ukraine in the interwar period, significantly influenced the development of architecture at the urban, typological and stylistic levels. The main goal of Polish and Soviet power was the legitimization of the state and society identification, the reinforcement of a dominant ideological construct in the minds of citizens.
2. Various historical experiences and different ways of statehood legitimization led to a variety of methods for visualizing a new identity in each of the states: in the Second Polish Republic and the Soviet Union. Comparative analysis of the main trends of spatial development of the cities, planning and stylistic solutions of buildings indicates that they evolved under the influence of ideological factors and were subordinated to the single goal – formation of a new state.
3. The architecture played an important role in the formation and consolidation of a state ideology using spatial and compositional techniques and expressive means. Among them, the most important – the creating of new ensembles of streets and squares, the construction of new symbolic buildings, the formation of local environment of eliminating the old state symbols and monuments, as well as simultaneous filling of city space with "their" symbols.

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Symbole wizualne nowej tożsamości w miastach dzisiejszej Ukrainy w okresie międzywojennym

Switlana Linda[1], Olga Mychajłyszyn[2]

[1] Katedra Wzornictwa i Podstaw Architektury,
Uniwersytet Narodowy "Politechnika Lwowska", Lwów, Ukraina,
e-mail: svitlanalinda@gmail.com
[2] Katedra Architektury i Projektowania Środowiska,
Uniwersytet Narodowy Gospodarki Wodnej i Zarządzania Zasobami Naturalnymi, Równe, Ukraina,
e-mail: o.l.mykhaylyshyn@nuwm.edu.ua

Streszczenie: Zachodnia i wschodnia część dzisiejszej Ukrainy w okresie międzywojennym znalazły się na terenie dwóch państw – Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej i Związku Radzieckiego. Rozwój miast na tych ziemiach w latach 20. i 30. odbywał się więc według różnych wzorców ideologicznych i kulturowych. Zmiany "modeli kulturowych" i wytycznych ideologicznych, jak również odejście od form tradycyjnego społeczeństwa w tym okresie, w obu częściach można postrzegać jako związane, ale semantycznie nieskoordynowane procesy, były bowiem prowadzone w różnych warunkach społeczno-politycznych i pod wpływem różnych kierunków przemian społeczno-kulturowych, które są najbardziej widoczne w planowaniu przestrzennym miast. Podejście do planowania miast dzisiejszej Ukrainy Zachodniej, oparte na syntezie elementów tradycyjnego, historycznie ukształtowanego środowiska, identyfikowały środowisko miejskie jako integralny europejski element procesu globalizacji i były interpretowane jako alternatywa dla internacjonalizmu socjalistycznego, konsekwentnie realizowanego w Ukrainie Radzieckiej. Proces kształtowania narodowej i zbiorowej tożsamości był wizualizowany przez "mieszanie" oraz modernizację warstw środowiska architektonicznego, integrację lub likwidację obiektów architektonicznych, powstałych w ciągu poprzednich epok, symbolizował zmiany społeczno-kulturowe, był częścią interakcji systemów społecznych i kulturalnych.

Słowa kluczowe: architektura, tożsamość, Druga Rzeczpospolita, Ukraina Radziecka, Lwów, Kijów, Charków, okres międzywojenny.