

## Sleeping districts: alternative images of old city

*Small note: It is cultural studies essay concerned with visual documents. I don't consider it as a historical or theoretical study therefore omit precise quotations on theoretical sources and specific historical or statistic data of easy access. According to the main goal – to highlight alternative narratives from the city of Lviv I used a wide set of examples from different spheres: newspapers articles, internet pages, literature stories, popular songs, visuals from streets, interviews, personal experience of living. I ground some of my conclusions on research data from my MA thesis. More visual data could be found on <http://www.livejournal.com/community/visualarchive> .*

Notion of urbanism always was problematic in Ukrainian nationalistic context. During the nineteenth century the biggest cities were influenced by dominant cultures of two empires – Russian on the East and Austro-Hungarian on the West. Ukrainian population in cities was the minority, more or less assimilated, more or less active in the fight for its rights. This situation was changed during Soviet times when industrialization brought huge amount of working class people from the countryside to cities. But Ukrainians were on position of repressed majority in Soviet Ukraine until the declaration of Ukrainian independence in 1991. I don't want to retell all history of Ukrainian national coming into being here. I'll concentrate instead on particular *story/stories* about one city crucial for Ukrainian national discourse. These stories are usually hidden behind image of ancient city of multicultural heritage and strong nationalistic doctrine.

Lviv was founded as a fort in the mid-13th century by Prince Danylo Halitski of Galicia. It was situated on the crossroads of trade and quickly became the center of trade and commerce for the region. In the 14th century Galicia and Lviv were taken by Poland. There were few national groups coexisting and conflicting with each other – Poles, Germans, Armenians, Jews and Ukrainians. National composition of population was changing during centuries, as well as local authorities. In 1772 Galicia became part of the Hapsburg Austro-Hungarian Empire but remained dominated by Poles. With the collapse of the Hapsburg Empire at the end of World War I, Lviv was proclaimed capital of the independent Republic of Western Ukraine. Lviv was crucial city for another national discourse – Polish, so Poles soon took control over the city until the Red Army took control over it in September, 1939. Lviv was occupied by Germany from 1941 to 1944. In 1944, Lviv again went under the Soviet

rule, until 1991. In independent Ukraine Lviv is crucial center for Ukrainian nationalism. It has dominant Ukrainian culture, language and clear pro-European orientation<sup>1</sup>.

It is the first time in city history when Ukrainians become representatives in Lviv. There is a bit of irony in historical conditions that caused such a situation. The transformation of Lviv into soviet industrial centre after the Second World War entailed increase of population and changes in its combination. Previous population (most part was killed during war or removed by Communist after it) was replaced by party officials, technicians and engineers from Russia and other Soviet republics and numerous local working class people who came to work on Lviv's factories from neighboring villages. Old historical downtown was encircled whit industrial areas and residential districts behind them. Contemporary city map shows alternation of historical-industrial-residential urban zones usual for post-soviet city.

### Forgotten past

The prominent narrative, which one can recognize in Soviet texts about Lviv, is industrial discourse. There is one crucial quotation at any historical or guidebook – paragraph 32 from the law about five-year plan (1946-1950) that prescribes to transform Lviv into the large industrial center of Ukraine. As well as Lviv never was an industrial center (the city used to be concerned with trade and administration) and there were no deposits of coal or other natural resources was decided to built there high technology plants (most of them collapsed altogether with Soviet Union in 1990s). It's obvious that economical reasons weren't the sole motive for these processes. New factories were prominent visual signs of soviet power in Western Ukraine, showed its successfulness. From the other side, factory was a structure that provided facilities for thousands of people and also holds possibilities to control and influence them. Nevertheless what reasons had soviet government to do so it's obvious that Ukrainians, who always dislikes Soviet rule on Western Ukraine, become majority in Lviv exactly because of these processes.

Soviet heritage in Lviv (and in Western Ukraine as well) isn't investigated and what is more – partly destroyed, prohibited and passed over in silence. Post-soviet trauma causes these processes and results in neglect of existing social problems and cultural practices – for example, uncontrolled transformation of huge industrial areas into commercial and trade centers and specific culture of post-soviet residential districts. Nationalistically oriented city officials and city dwellers blame soviet period in city history. But behind this common mood one can find unarticulated nostalgia for some advantages of soviet life (proper order, cleanness, concern for people's welfare, feelings of unity and

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<sup>1</sup> The brief history of Lviv in English can be found on [http://www.history.ucsb.edu/projects/holocaust/Resources/history\\_of\\_lviv.htm](http://www.history.ucsb.edu/projects/holocaust/Resources/history_of_lviv.htm). Perfect study of Lviv's multiculturalism was done by Yaroslav Hrytsak: Lviv: A Multicultural History through the Centuries, *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, Volume XXIV (1/4), 2000, Lviv: A City in the Crosscurrents of Culture.

collectivity) even among nationalists. Working on my MA thesis<sup>2</sup>, I realized deep interviews with former fabric's workers. Certain regret for industrial greatness (LFTM was famous all around the Soviet Union), its huge production and provision possibilities, which were lost in 1990s, were articulated by different persons – ordinary workers, technologists, shop superintendents etc. Even contemporary direction of public corporation, who have nothing to do with glorious soviet past and solve the problem with standing plant by transforming its attractive realty in city center into hotels, shopping malls and office centers, are influenced by common nostalgia and retell romantic stories about plant's past.

It is obvious fact that majority of contemporary citizens were formed during Soviet times. City dwellers, who came to Lviv from neighboring villages, all around Ukraine or from other Soviet Republics to work on plants or to study in universities keep different memories, not just negative. Soviet past of the city deserves study and cool-headed respect as any other heritage. Study of soviet urban strategies is also crucial because of its inert usage by new city officials.

Soviet officials tried to solve constant problem with nationally-oriented religious Lviv population by explicit and implicit power strategies<sup>3</sup>. Ideological declarations were supported on few levels. Other great narrative about Lviv was inheritance of historical development. Proper facts from the past (worker's revolts, demonstrations, socialist publications and others like that) were discovered in books and honored (altogether with soviet heroic pantheon) in names of streets, monuments and museums, mostly situated in the city center. The organization of story in guidebooks exposes to us strategies used to transform the city. Excursion's routes were organized in a way to pay considerable attention to soviet heritage and soviet present of the city. Factories, residential districts, new monuments were an object to observe at first. In the non-soviet heritage case (especially with churches) was accentuated on ideologically correct current use as archives, museums etc. Monuments, memorable boards, names of streets served as symbolic signs of Soviet. Constructed image of the city was supported by the whole way of life in Lviv.

Beside ideologically correct discourses of party and youth organization, media, education, there was used strategy of paternalism. Distribution of material welfare (habitation, rest possibilities ("*put'ovka*")) was organized in a way to *give* welfare to proper citizens-workers. No one can simply buy a flat. Habitations were built by organizations and distributed among their workers. One should fit to ideological demands – be good, devoted worker, ideologically reliable, take a part in social activities

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<sup>2</sup> "Memory of the place and transformation of cultural cityscape: on example of Lviv Fabric for Telegraphic Machinery", in MA and PhD Program in Social and Cultural Studies at the Ivan Franko National University of Lviv, 2004; <http://www.cfh.lviv.ua/eng/magister-programs/sub7>.

<sup>3</sup> One can find a lot of indirect mark of this problem in local newspapers. The article "Walking through the new Lvov with an old guidebook" in Lvovskaya pravda (June 12, 1979) is significant because of few facts. At first, author chose old guidebook in Ukrainian (from the 1930s, the times when Poles and Polish press dominated in Lviv) and sneered at proud notes about Ukrainian fabrics or charities. At second, all comparison was centered on industrial achievements and people's welfare (especially unemployment/employment, paid/free public health etc) in old and new Lviv according to the main goal – to show that Ukrainians are much happier in Soviet Lviv than in previous one.

like sport or socialistic competitions etc to receive it. Of course, if strategies of impact were provided there were some tactics of evasion also. Soviet Lviv citizens tried to use advantages of soviet regime and avoid its pressure. During interviews for the thesis I was told about secret celebrations of religious holydays even by party members and ironical attitude to participation in meeting and demonstrations.

Nevertheless what attitude can be towards the soviet past, contemporary Lviv territory and number of population were formed during that period of city history. Ambitious project of transforming Lviv into industrial center caused significant growth in city population. In 1959 there were 441 thousands of people, 554 thousands in 1970 and 753 thousands in 1984 (it is close to 800 thousands nowadays). New population that came to work or study in Lviv had seen the ordinary soviet city, managed and explained by Communist. Plants and residential areas were places of great importance for them not only as symbolic signs of soviet greatness – they provided all facilities of living.

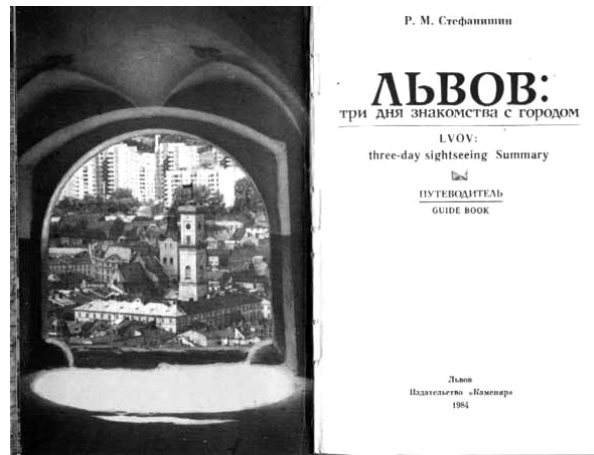
If industry was the main topic for Lviv's media in 1950-1960s (grandiose plans, first notes from new fabrics, developing story about glorious working days there), in late 1970s and 1980s it was changed to the house-building narrative. Obligatory set of pace-makers and political declarations was retained but a multitude of articles about glorious builders and new residential districts ("microrayons") around city center appeared. The construction itself had a lot of problems (low-quality and monotony of block buildings) but it solved the main problem of overpopulation. New districts were proclaimed real Soviet Lviv and celebrated through the media, inserted into image of old city. Only in late 1980s one could find some critical notes about low quality of living and consumer problems in new districts.



*New districts, new heroes. From Lvovskaya pravda, July, 1979.*

These new spaces were called to become new (soviet) Lviv – huge and modern, "covered by steel, glass and concrete"; they were combined with "romantic architectural antiquity" and created

"new, cheerful city image, adequate to our great epoch of communist building"<sup>4</sup>. This combination was literally shown in guidebooks. The one from 1984<sup>5</sup> demonstrates this attempt to insert new blocks into the ancient city. The picture below isn't photo – there is no such view in Lviv. This is collage used to achieve particular goal.



The real Lviv landscape was changed so representation of it was changed also. New districts became inherent part of city image, celebrated in different media.



*Lviv's landscapes. From Lvovskaya pravda, June 30, 1988.*

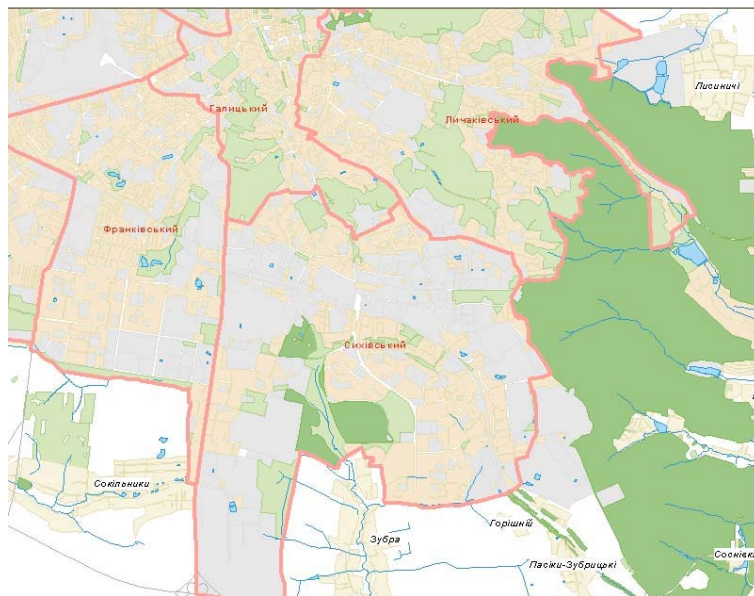
Optimistic rhetoric of articles was appealing to residential possibilities of new districts. Story of one of the last soviet districts built in Lviv shows clear the misfortune of ambitious project caught by changes and confusion of late 1980s – early 1990s. The building began in 1979. Architects were pretending to create not a district but a city:

<sup>4</sup> Vujcyk V., Lypka R. 1987. An Encounter with Lvov. Lviv: Kamenyar. – P. 168.

<sup>5</sup> Stefanyshyn R. 1984. Lvov: three-day sightseeing. Lvov: Kamenyar. *Photo from second cover.*

One who was there a year ago would get lost now for sure. There were bushes then, and now there are floors of future beautiful school. Not far from there, as mushrooms after the rain, apartment houses grown up. Some of them already have inhabitants. A little less than year ago the first nine-floor block was inhabited. By those times hundreds of families have had house-warms in Syhiv residential district. 10 – 15 years would pass and here, on these neglected grounds would be the new city – as big as Ternopil, Ivano-Frankivsk or Lutsk – inhabited by 200 thousands of people<sup>6</sup>.

This statement of communist journalist became almost true. From 2001 Syhiv is administrative district of city of Lviv inhabited by 145 932 citizens<sup>7</sup>.



Did city planners foresee, or was it the goal, that such a big integrated urban area situated on noticeable distance from others parts of the city, in comfort seclusion between industrial area, forest and remnants of previous villages would certainly possess own local identity? And Syhiv does possess. It can be easily distinguished from other soviet residential areas in Lviv because of separate location and big size. Syhiv wasn't built as a couple of streets; from the beginning it was well-planned separate district, with administrative and entertaining complexes. My own observations suggest few examples of self-determination of locals. Once upon a time I made small inquiry among Syhiv inhabitants (close to 20 persons, questioned on the street in May 2003) on topic "Are you Syhiv resident or Lviv resident?". I was surprised that most part of people answered that they are Syhiv residents at first. Of course this small inquiry couldn't be taken into consideration as a sociological research but the result is significant.

<sup>6</sup> Lvovskaya pravda, August 9, 1981. Translation from Russian mine.

<sup>7</sup> Information from Verhovna Rada (Ukrainian parliament) official web-site

<http://gska2.rada.gov.ua:7777/pls/z7502/A005?rdat1=10.10.2006&rf7571=21690>. Detailed city map can be found on [www3.city-adm.lviv.ua](http://www3.city-adm.lviv.ua).

Another time I was told about tourist group from Lviv. Visiting some spot they were asked about the place of origin. In contrast to others one boy pointed that he was from Syhiv. The most significant manifestation of local identity was tablet with "Syhiv" inscription hold by people on Orange revolution. There were dozens of that kind with different inscriptions, which showed places from where people came, places that supported Orange revolution: Rivne, Lutsk, Ternopil, Odessa, different small towns and villages. Syhiv was among others, like separate settlement.

The Soviet project was glorious. Numerous articles about it were published in local newspapers, informing about new microrayons, schools and shops. It was ordinary story about soviet achievements. As well as it was middle-1980s, the story was shifted from ideological statements to the discovering of consumption advantages of new district. The text on photo below describes improved heating system in Syhiv's blocks. In other article full infrastructure (shops, cafes, schools, children-gardens, post-offices, polyclinic) are carefully described. It was the fifth year of district's story. Syhiv had 30 thousand inhabitants by that time<sup>8</sup>.



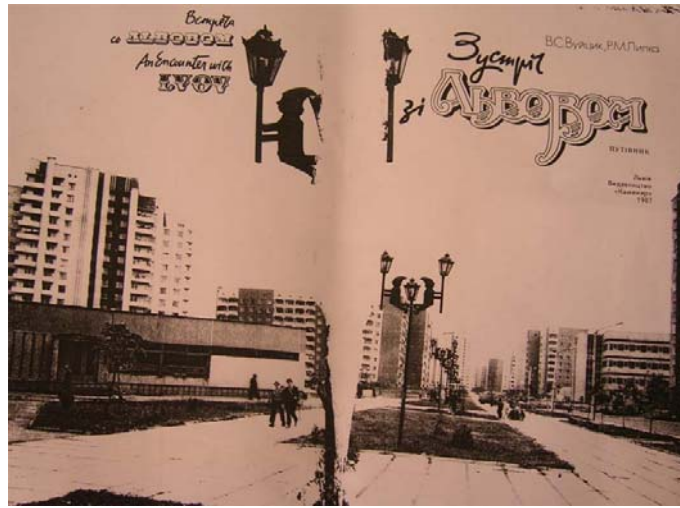
*Photo of Syhiv blocks in the "Soviet Lviv. Newspaper in newspaper", Vilna Ukraina, January 16, 1985.*

In spite of all statements it wasn't lovely place to live in 1980s because of transport problems and rather deficient consumer system. One can find indirect marks of this problem in local press in late 1980s<sup>9</sup>; and in tradition of calling such spaces "sleeping districts" – places just to sleep, not to live. In 1987 Syhiv took place in guidebook's story about Lviv (on guidebook's cover as well as in article about soviet architecture<sup>10</sup>) and became native to thousands of people. Someone called it "ukrainian ghetto" and "rural place".

<sup>8</sup> Rysina E. Syhiv complex // Vilna Ukraina, February 6, 1985.

<sup>9</sup> How Syhiv market should look? In Lvovskaya pravda, April 22, 1988.

<sup>10</sup> Vujcyk V., Lypka R. 1987. An Encounter with Lvov. Lviv: Kamenyar. – p. 165-166.



*Syhiv street in 1987 guidebook (inside cover).*

### "Rural" suburb

By now Syhiv had excellent infrastructure (shops, supermarkets, cinemas, cafes, beauty salons etc.) and good transport connections with other parts of the city. Here is situated famous market "Shuvar" which finance local newspaper "Syhiv info". It still receives slang names as: "Psyhiv" (allusion to two meanings: "psy" (dogs) and "psyhy" (mad people); ghetto, nigger's district (offensive ones); and famous comparison with New York (I have heard it many times from Syhiv (and non-Syhiv) dwellers, proud remark about it can be found in newspapers<sup>11</sup>).

The strange fact can be recognized in contemporary intellectual's writings about Lviv. As it was pointed above, new population was mostly from country by origin. Inhabitants of new residential (sleeping) districts brought to the city some feelings of country life that become apparent in organizing of small gardens around block buildings and construction of churches in each district (in 1990s).

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<sup>11</sup> [http://visnyk.iatp.org.ua/dev/cat\\_article:308](http://visnyk.iatp.org.ua/dev/cat_article:308) .



*Newly built church on Hotkevycha street, Syhiv*

According to the dominant Lviv myth this "peasant" population did a lot of damage to the ancient city – paying no attention to urban traditions and destroying old buildings (whose bad condition is much more determined by irresponsibility of city officials). Huge residential areas inhabited by most part of Lviv's population are stricken out from the popular city's image and proclaimed unimportant. Lviv means just the historical center of the city. At the same time culture of sleeping districts that possess own history, problems and original identity is blamed as no-culture, something hybrid "rural-urban".

Then there were developed demographical phenomenon that I would call ruralize of Lviv. In connection with mass building and developing of industrial enterprises "Silmash", "Electron", "Avtonavantazhuvach", "Kinescope", bus factory, fabric of telegraphic machinery and others industrialization needed a lot of labour force. And then a huge invasion from neighbouring villages went to Lviv. New block districts of Artema, Tereshkovoï, Naukovoï and later Stryiskoi, Kulparkivskoi streets and Syhiv were growing. Lviv began to rusticate, finally losing its urban culture<sup>12</sup>.

Importance of this new population for Ukrainian presence in Lviv is obvious. Intellectuals who blame "hybrid" citizens would be repressed minority in Lviv without their presence. There can be few reasons for such deviation.

'Ukrainian means rural' is widespread stereotype even by now. It's result of historical conditions of development of Ukrainian nation. Different Ukrainian regions and big cities were parts of different empires and dominated by imperial cultures. Consequences of these dominations can be seen in contemporary culture of Ukrainian regions. At the west of Ukraine, which was the part of multicultural Austro-Hungarian Empire, Ukrainians had more possibilities of development and at the end of

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<sup>12</sup> Lemko I. 2003. Lviv above all. Lviv. – P.139, translation fro Ukrainian mine.

twentieth centuries easily became dominant in such big cities as Lviv, Ternopil and Ivano-Frankivsk. At the East of Ukraine, colonized by Russian Empire, big cities always were deeply influenced by Russian culture. Hotshot attempts of Ukrainization in the mid of nineteenth century were banned by Valuyesky Ukaz in 1863 and Ems Ukaz in 1876. During the Soviet times the first wave of Ukrainization was literally shouted in 1930th<sup>13</sup>. Nevertheless that in the second half of twentieth century official soviet doctrine was proclaiming free use and development of local languages and cultures, domination of Russian culture was supported. Big industrial Russian-speaking cities of Eastern Ukraine were surrounded by Ukrainian-speaking countryside and had considerable amount of Ukrainian population, but Russian was the language of administration, education, newspapers, theatres and a sign of privilege. Ukrainian was implicitly prescribed to rural, funny, ethnographic culture. Ukrainians in these cities hadn't real possibilities to develop own culture because of no prestige used as a power strategy for implicit repression. Such a situation was more or less characteristic for all Ukrainian cities during the Soviet rule and Lviv wasn't the exception.

This unconscious vestige of soviet stereotypes in public opinion can be connected with other, at first sight separate phenomenon. Yaroslav Hrytsak describes in detail ukrainization of city space in Lviv in 1990-1997 and different critics concerned with it<sup>14</sup>. During that period of time most part of Lviv streets was renamed – in some cases they received pre-soviet names but mainly they were dedicated to Ukrainian national heroes and crucial events in Ukrainian history. New city administration operated by the same scheme as soviet one: renaming streets, destroying soviet monuments, installing new monuments and memorable tablets, organizing celebrations. Semiotics of city space was completely changed according to the main goal – to represent Lviv as the city of strong national identity. Renaming of streets and stabilization of Ukrainian domination was a victory for Ukrainians in Lviv. But it also was a great damage (corresponding with Soviet one) to multicultural heritage in Lviv.

From my point of view, Lviv's intellectuals gave their voices for multicultural city heritage because of aggressive privatization and un-correct rebuilding in historical downtown and also because of merely ukrainization changes in semiotic of cityscape in 1990s. The common mood for historical cities – nostalgia about lost paradise – found good basis in Lviv. One can easily recognize contemporary main city myth checking guidebooks. Image of soviet city was replaced by enthusiasm for ancient heritage and celebrations of false multiculturalism of the city. I titled this kind of multiculturalism "false" because of its depending on history. Contemporary ethnic configuration of Lviv's population (Ukrainian, Russians, small assimilated communities of Poles, Jews, Armenians) was ignored and historical configuration (Poles, Jews, Armenians, Ukrainians) was claimed important. Myth about cultivated multiculturalism altogether with Austro-Hungarian nostalgia (it would be better to call

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<sup>13</sup> More information about it can be found on <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ukrainization>.

<sup>14</sup> Hrytsak Yaroslav. The construction of national city // Krytyka, January-February, 2007. – p.13-17.

it Austro-Hungarian necrophilia) seems to be favorite for Lviv's intellectuals<sup>15</sup>. Selectiveness of constructed (chosen) historical memory resulted in celebration of certain period in city history. The sweet myth about peaceful grandma-Austria was perceived and spread by intellectuals as an example of peaceful coexisting of different nationalities in Lviv, developed urban culture and city tradition. Contemporary period in city history was blamed for un-correct management of city heritage and low culture of officials and inhabitants and it should be said that most accusations were correct. Intellectuals tried to make a just cause: to renovate historical memories destroyed by Soviets / or to construct false historical memories for new "rural" citizens according to the main goal – to command respect to city's (often non-Ukrainian) heritage. This helpful attempt of protection of historical heritage and memory had some encouraging results but also damaged feelings of belonging and identity of thousands of people who used to live in post-soviet residential districts.

By now all multiculturalism talks was broken by strong nationalist doctrine. In 2006 the new city mayor took up the post. Andrij Sadovyj is known as liberal educated person who cares about unique city of Lviv. It looks obvious that new city mayor do cares about one of most profitable world business – tourism. During last few years Lviv became more historicized than ever. Past is packed into interior of cafes, restaurants, and antique shops, galleries with decorative paintings, souvenirs and successfully sold. The semiotic of city space still remained about Ukrainian domination in Lviv but tourist routes constructed according to demand for antiquity. It looks like income from tourism is the sole power able to broke strong nationalist doctrine and provoke some shifts in official city image and toponymy. But that shift would be dedicated solely to the pre-soviet period in city history – except some district like Syhiv wouldn't become famous tourist site as Nowa Huta in Krakow.

### Popular culture of sleeping districts

City doesn't exist in consciousness of its dwellers as sole entirety; it is always constructed from personal routes, shared experience of social group and stories (official and unofficial) about the city. Widespread image of old city can have a little importance for suburban dweller. It looks like sleeping districts exist in its own alternative reality, communicate with each other (and similar districts from other cities) and generate specific cultural activities, which remind that Lviv is bigger and much more complicated than mythical historical center.

Two particular Lviv's sleeping districts became famous all around Ukraine thankfully to singers who used to live there. Song 'Levandovka' performed in Russian by Garik Krichevskyj, famous criminal-'shanson' singer tells about romanticized every day life of local pickers. Subculture of young inhabitants of Levandovka inscribed in this song can be shaped in criminal networks, small thefts and

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<sup>15</sup> 29 volume of "І" magazine can be considered as an example <http://www.ji.lviv.ua/n29texts/N29-lviv.htm>, the same topic was discovered in Krytyka, 7-8 (57-58)/2002, <http://krytyka.kiev.ua/showissue.php3?id=86>.

robberies, drug trade and specific rules of behavior and appearance. There is no serious criminal organization in fact – this kind of criminality exists mostly on the level of romantic narrative and rules for "real cool guys". Thankfully to the low level of danger this subculture (peculiar not just to one Lviv's district but to similar areas in other cities too) become an object of interest and interpretation for younger intellectuals and writers. Levandovka's identity was humorously interoperated on the internet-site [www.levandovka.lviv.ua](http://www.levandovka.lviv.ua). Representatives of this subculture, titled "gopniki" become main heroes in ironical novel "Pisma bratana" ("Brother's letters") by psevdo-gopnik author Genya Galyas from Kyiv.

Usually this subculture is blamed for low standard of speech and behavior. It unexpectedly entered into intellectual discourse because of interest of young writers and internet-users, who saw artistic potential in it. Characteristic notion of honor combined with small robberies seems funny. Young writers use the style of speech (slang) and ironically interpret heroic spirit of this subculture to show social problems and cultural phenomenon, which usually remain undiscovered by official literature.

Another district Syhiv is sing in rap-song by VovaZiLvova (Vova from Lviv). The picture of this area differs from previous one. VovaZiLvova sings about district in which he grown up used to walk with friends and play basketball. The mood of Syhiv song is similar with mood of Syhiv Internet site ([www.syhiv.nashlviv.com](http://www.syhiv.nashlviv.com)) titled 'For those who like it as it is'.



*The title of Syhiv's site*

Analysis of Internet-content about Syhiv shows clearly two groups of people with opposite opinions about it: one who loves Syhiv, enjoy big spaces and call it "native" and the rest who hates it and call it boxes of matches. I used to be one who loves ;-).

The fact of some confrontation between Syhiv and Levandovka young inhabitants is significant. Both districts are excluded from official myth about ancient city and communicate with each other in own alternative reality. At the same time historical center seems to be alien and hostile to them. Of course there are no exact borders between outskirts and center. A lot of people go to their working places and educational institutions in the center or other districts of the city, but their feelings of belonging and identity are formed by their everyday experience of living and local subcultures as well

as by mythological city discourse. This local experience shouldn't be ignored. City can be seen in different ways and all personal images have a right to exist.

Usually beauty of Lviv is considered through the polish of separate buildings:

More soul and creation are put into the one old building than into the whole soviet microrayon. Can you imagine modeling in front porch of block building? And this two holes in each granite footstep (for carpets, by the way), and copper door handles, and wrought banisters? And stained-glass windows? No, for what proletarian can need such architectural extravagances?<sup>16</sup>

This is usual opinion that explains dislike of block districts and anxious attitude to historical center. VovaZiLvova song is some kind of answer to it:

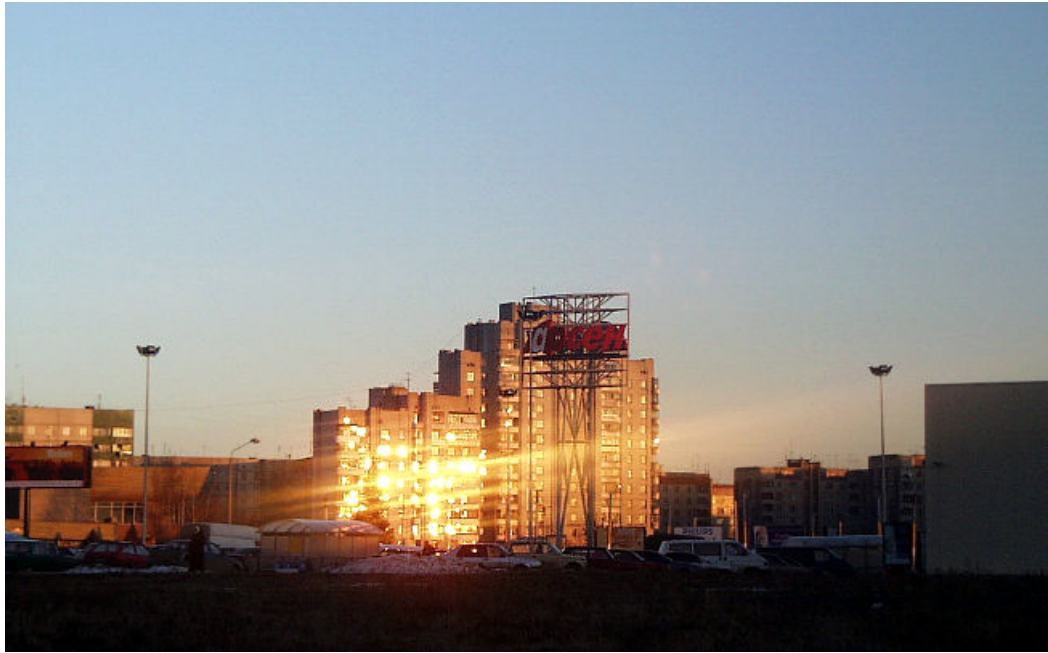
15-floors from bricks, 9-floors from concrete  
Identical buildings, along and across of my block.  
The architectural variety doesn't threat us  
I see the same view from different windows of my flat.  
But I love this view, I love these buildings  
I pass part of my life in one of them<sup>17</sup>.

If one becomes to think on a large scale of urban modules one can recognize that Lviv is beautiful, that silhouettes of block buildings have own rhythmic and dynamic of spaces, that there are a lot of free space, lovely forest and wide sky.

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<sup>16</sup> Private opinion of blogger <http://posmixator.livejournal.com/170359.html>, translation from Ukrainian mine.

<sup>17</sup> Translation from Ukrainian mine.



*Photo of Syhiv borrowed from Internet<sup>18</sup>.*

Syhiv develops rapidly. Few supermarkets were installed here during the last few years. This perspective district is waiting for big investments. An international contest for the best conception of public center in Syhiv was announced by city officials in May, 2007. Yuriy Kryvoruchko, the chief of Lviv's architecture department, expects that famous European architecture schools would take part in this contest<sup>19</sup>.

Commercial potentialities are not single attraction of Syhiv. Some girl from Dnipropetrovs left significant remark about similarity of this space with her own on Lviv internet forum<sup>20</sup>. Soviet residential districts are common all around Ukraine and subcultures of these districts have certain similarities. This feeling of similarity and commonality can be used to cover dramatic differences between Ukrainian regions.

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Contemporary guidebooks pay a little attention to the soviet heritage. Story was rebuilt according to the tourist gaze that looks for antiquity. Soviet buildings that could be interesting for tourist, especially huge plants, were transformed beyond recognition, monuments removed and museums closed.

Lviv always was a place for contesting interpretations. Now these semiotic fights seem to be solved according to two goals – to affirm Ukrainian domination in Lviv and to attract tourists. Tourism is seen as one of the main source of income after the collapse of industrial enterprises in Lviv.

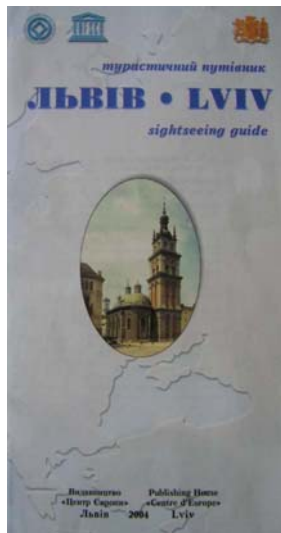
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<sup>18</sup> [http://www.leopolis.lviv.net/ukr/evening/evening\\_3.htm](http://www.leopolis.lviv.net/ukr/evening/evening_3.htm)

<sup>19</sup> <http://www8.city-adm.lviv.ua/info/vgz.nsf/Comments/FC832CA2346D1D97C22572DB0053A0DC>

<sup>20</sup> <http://misto.ridne.net/viewthread.php?tid=3182>

Guidebooks are useful for analysis of these processes. Two contemporary guidebooks, published by the same publishing house and almost in the same time (2004 – Ukrainian-English version, on the left; 2003 – Polish version, on the right<sup>21</sup>) have significant differences in content and pictures on cover. On the first one can see Rus'ka church – significant Ukrainian heritage in Lviv, on the second – Adam Mickiewicz monument, significant for Poles.



There is one route around new residential districts in Ukrainian-English version. Maybe this is a small mark of interest to soviet past or prevision of fashion on Soviet. For example Nova Huta, soviet district in Krakow, possesses strong identity and is very attractive for tourist. There are dozens internet-sites dedicated to Nova Huta. It is much older (as a project of 1950s) than Syhiv, but some similarities in urban discourses could be found. Syhiv doesn't have such popularity by now, but if some stylish public center would be installed it can turn into popular tourist object – as an example of perfect post-soviet area.

Lviv itself could be seen as a site of memory – crucial for Ukrainian and Polish national discourses, maintaining heritage of Jews community, forgotten soviet past, developing consumer culture, neglected identity of sleeping districts and producing new meanings for own dwellers and for guests. This city utterly differs from the myth of "lovely ancient city". By the times when tourists observe historical center, intellectuals exclude residential districts from the city myth, block dwellers don't care about the city center, city officials install new monuments of doubtful artistic values, – businessman plan to built new residential district – Lysynychi<sup>22</sup>. Such opportunity was reserved for that area (east suburb of Lviv) from the Soviet times. Communist city officials understood that they still had problems with housing in late 1980s. They managed to introduce new industrial methods of house-building during previous years and reserved areas for it for future. Organizers promise that Lysynychi

<sup>21</sup> Lviv: sightseeing guide. 2004. Lviv: Publishing house “Centre d’Europe”; Lwow: ilustrowany przewodnik. 2003. Lwow: Centrum Europy, Wroclaw: Via Nowa.

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.poralviv.org/publications/view/371>

wouldn't be the "new Syhiv". A few years would pass and there, on undiscovered grounds of eastern suburb could be the new district – consumer paradise for 40 thousands of new Lviv's middle-class bourgeois, the new incarnation of old city.