

Chernivtsi's Squares and Monuments in the Context of Distinctive Bukovinian Identity, Cultural Heritages and Urban Historical Memory

Abstract:

Since the twentieth century, the interdisciplinary field of 'memory studies' has become especially topical and drawn upon a variety of theoretical perspectives, while offering a plethora of empirical case studies exploring the politics of memory and urban space, cultural heritage and cultural identity that mould a space's distinctiveness. This study draws on a comparative analysis to theoretically prove and develop a multifaceted memory of Chernivtsi's significantly transformed and enriched urban landscape through an interdisciplinary approach involving various methods and instruments for handling the essential societal resources of history, memory and identity.

The city of Chernivtsi and the region of Bukovina, historically part of Central Eastern Europe and geo-strategically the heart of Europe, has recently strengthened its voice in becoming culturally and economically bound to the European Union. As a well-preserved city ruled, at different times, by the Habsburg Empire (1900-1918), Romania (1918-1939) and the USSR (1940/41-1991), Chernivtsi (Czernowitz, Cernăuți, Chernovtsy) serves as a case study for exploring the human fingerprints of every epoch. The city's architectural diversity offers testimony as to how Chernivtsi's urban society preserved its unique landscape of identity, embodied in a patchwork of ethnic, linguistic and confessional affiliations, while integrating representational claims and moderating its space.

This study analyses the policies and practices of these three epochs in Chernivtsi's history, in terms of how the city attempted to promote, develop and preserve its cultural heritage, while preserving the collective memory and shaping supranational identity.

Keywords: *Bukovinian supranational identity, cultural heritage, urban space, memory studies, Chernivtsi*