

CELEBRATING DIFFERENCE, BECOMING
UKRAINIAN.
EVERYDAY ETHNICITY IN A MIXED
UKRAINIAN TOWN

By

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ABSTRACT

Chernivtsi, the contemporary town located in Western Ukraine is perceived as one of the most multiethnic places in Ukraine. However, it is special not only because of its current ethnic diversity but also its rich history. During the last century, its status changed four times. Before the First World War it was a part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, then the Kingdom of Romania and after the Second World War it became a part of the Soviet Socialist Republic. Since 1991, Chernivtsi is the arena for, on the one hand, the “Ukrainization” policy of local municipality and, on the other, the revival of national minority institutions.

This thesis, based on my ethnographic fieldwork, which I have conducted in the town since 2010, seeks to explore why and when does ethnicity as a category of practice matters for ordinary people in Chernivtsi. As I show, by using the methodology of the “everyday” and taking “situational” ethnicity as a major approach, for individuals in Chernivtsi, “Ukrainianess” became an unmarked, obvious and taken for granted category in their daily life. Thus, the nationalizing efforts of the local municipality, which since the late socialist time constantly marked “Ukrainianess” as a significant category, can be perceived as successful.

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INTRODUCTION

The 1990s brought changes not only in the geopolitical map of Europe but also began the long path of the socio-cultural transition of the populace living in the former Soviet bloc. Moreover, it was a time of rediscovering “lost” memory and “black holes” in the history of Central and East European societies in reference to pre-Soviet period.¹ One of the most important question, which was raised at that time, was that about the future of interethnic relations in the region.

In the context of Ukraine, ethnicity is primarily discussed in reference to the linguistic debates between Ukrainians and Russians. According to this, the Ukrainian state and nation formation is seen through the problems of Ukrainian-Russian relations and case studies of Lviv as highly Ukrainian and Donetsk as Russian cities.² However, the case of Chernivtsi, a town in Western Ukraine which is the subject of the following thesis, shows that there are still highly ethnically diverse places in which the main relations are formed between different minorities.³ By showing the complexity of everyday ethnicity in this particular town since the Ukraine’s independence, I offer a kind of counterpoint to the mainstream academic literature on the current Ukrainian identity formation.

According to the census of 2001, around 65 different nationalities live in Chernivtsi.⁴ Four of them are the most important for the city’s history and present local politics, namely

¹ Ruth Ellen Gruber, *Virtually Jewish: Reinventing Jewish Culture in Europe* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

² Taras Kuzio, *Ukraine: state and nation building*, Routledge studies of societies in transition 9 (London: Routledge, 1998). Andrew Wilson, „Myths of National History in Belarus and Ukraine”, w *Myths and nationhood*, b.d., 182–197.

³ Anatoliy Krughlaschov, „Interethnic relations stability on the Ukraine-Romania border: a case of Chernivtsi region”, *Ethnicity, Confession and Intercultural Dialogue at the European Union Eastern Border* Munich Personal RePEC Archive paper, nr 44082 (2013): 299–320.

⁴ All data from State Statistics Service of Ukraine, title: “All-Ukrainian population census” conducted in 2001, accessed September 10, 2009, <http://www.ukrcensus.gov.ua/ukr/notice/news.php?type=2&id1=21>.

“Ukrainians”, “Jewish”, “Romanians” and “Poles”.⁵ All of these groups have a long tradition (up to the time of the Austro-Hungarian Empire) of activity in cultural associations (known as National Houses), which have been publishing the press in their own language and organize a number of national celebrations.

What is more, since the beginning of 1991, Chernivtsi has shown a slow process in the revival of multiethnic life: children have the possibility to be educated in national languages, a Jewish school was opened, a number of new national associations appeared, a new synagogue opened, the city center became revitalized, and a number of books on the city’s history were published, just to mention a few characteristics of the city since the fall of socialism.

However, Chernivtsi is a special town not only because of its current ethnic diversity but also its rich history. During the last century, its status changed four times (before the First World War it was a part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, then the Kingdom of Romania, after the Second World War it became a part of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and in 1991 an independent Ukraine). Moreover, in the literature it is discussed through the phenomena of “bukovinism” connected with the city’s multiethnic peaceful condition under Austrian rule, known as “Little Vienna”, “Babylon on the Prut River” and “Switzerland of the East”.⁶ Since 1991 different forms of the so-called “cosmopolitan myth”⁷ and the “Golden Age myth”⁸ have been constantly reused and renegotiated by the national elites and serve as a tool in building the identification of particular communities.

⁵According to the mentioned census in 2001 among around 220 thousand citizens, there were 189 021 Ukrainians, 10 553 Romanians, 1408 Poles and 1308 Jews. What is interesting the census does not mention Roma population. Accordingly to some unofficial estimates, in Chernivtsi district live around 2000 people of Roma origin.

⁶ Krzysztof Czyzewski, *Linia powrotu. Zapiski z pogranicza* [*The Line of return. Notes from a borderland*] (Sejny: Pogranicze, 2008). Natalya Shevchenko, *Chernovetskaya Antlantyda* [*The Chernivtsi Atlantis*] (Chernivtsi: Zolotye Lytavry, 2004). Volodymyr Zapolovskij, *Mini-Kosmos Bukovyny* [*Mini-Cosmos of Bukovyna*] (Chernivtsi: Zolotye Lytavry, 2006).

⁷ George Schöpflin, “The Function of Myth and a Taxonomy of Myths,” in Geoffrey A. Hosking i George Schöpflin, *Myths and Nationhood* (C. Hurst & Co. Publishers, 1997), 19–35.

⁸ Anthony Smith, “The ‘Golden Age’ and National Renewal,” in *Ibid.*, 36–59.

For many scholars, nationalism should be studied both from “above” and “below”⁹ or from its “formal” and “informal” side.¹⁰ However based on my ethnographic research I have conducted in the city since 2010, I focus primarily on local nationalist politics and everyday patterns of identification and categorization. Thus the primary aim of the following Master’s thesis is to focus on the bottom up perspective of everyday patterns of self-ascription and categorization¹¹ in which ethnicity is “situational”.¹² My main questions are, why and when does ethnicity as a category of practice matter in the everyday life of the citizens of Chernivtsi? And to what extent does it shape people’s everyday choices and in which situations does it become important? Based on the everyday ethnicity approach I claim that, although there is observed minority institution revival, after more than 20 years of Ukraine’s independence for ordinary people “Ukrainianess” has become an unmarked, taken for granted and almost obvious category of their everyday life, visible, reused and reconstructed in a number of social situations. As such other minority expressions are closed in the narrow circle of national institutions and serve particular instrumental goals of individuals. This is the result of almost 30 years of constant nationalization in almost every domain of life by the Ukrainian state, and on the local ground of Chernivtsi – local municipality and Ukrainian elites. Although in the case of Chernivtsi one can find different national myths connected with the diverse history of the region, still they are at the margin of a mainstream state’s nationalizing efforts.

In the first chapter of my thesis I describe the most important methodological fundamentals of the following work. Being trained as an anthropologist and using participant

⁹ E. J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge University Press, 1992).

¹⁰ Thomas Hylland Eriksen, „Formal and informal nationalism”, *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 16, no 1 (1993): 1–25.

¹¹ Henri Tajfel, “Social categorization, social identity and social comparison,” in Henri Tajfel, *Human groups and social categories: studies in social psychology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981). 254–267.

¹² Jonathan Y. Okamura, „Situational ethnicity”, *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 4, no 4 (1981): 452–465.

observation as a main method, I need to precisely describe my own position in the field stressing the advantages and limits of used perspective. In this part also I stress my perspective on the concept of “everyday”, widely used by scholars. As for me “everyday” is described through informal, natural, routine, spontaneous and very often unreflecting experiences and acts which can be observed by a fieldworker in the form of particular “social situations”. This chapter deals also with the most important aspects of investigating the urban setting through the relation between place, identity and memory.

The second chapter introduces the most important aspects of investigating ethnicity in social science. By stressing the differences between primordialist, circumstantialist and constructivist approaches, I present the idea of everyday and situational ethnicity which led me throughout my thesis. By following the work of Rogers Brubaker, I claim that ethnicity should be investigated as *perspective on* rather than *thing in* the world.¹³ The everyday ethnicity approach is a useful tool if one wants to focus on how individuals in various social situations identify themselves and categorize others in ethnic terms. In this sense it is important to note why and when people *talk, choose, perform* and *consume* ethnicity.¹⁴ This distinction later serves as a guideline in the empirical part.

I introduce to the reader the complexity of history and interethnic relations in Chernivtsi in chapter four. Here on the one hand, I present the traditional diversity of the region and, on the other, the process of shaping the contemporary specificity of the city. The complicated history of the region, which ones used to be a part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Kingdom of Romania, Soviet Union and nowadays independent Ukraine is the basis for different politics of remembrance which entered the elite’s discourse in the city in 1991, which I discuss in chapter five.

¹³ Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalist Politics and Everyday Ethnicity in a Transylvanian Town* (Princeton University Press, 2006).

¹⁴ Jon E. Fox and Cynthia Miller-Idriss, „Everyday Nationhood”, *Ethnicities* 8, no 4 (12 January 2008): 536–563.

Although competing cosmopolitan myths are important elements in elites' efforts toward shaping the identification of the national communities, they are still at the margin of mainstream "ukrainization" processes. Here I show how "Ukrainianess" since the late 1980s, both in the cityscape of Chernivtsi as well as in the everyday life, is constantly marked as a significant category by local municipality and Ukrainian elites. As such this practice has led to the "unmarking Ukrainianess" on a daily basis.

I describe the meaning of ethnicity for ordinary people in the last chapter. Here by showing the specificity of the ways how people talk about ethnicity, the place of ethnic stereotypes and prejudices in it, ethically framed choices and practice, I show how for individuals "Ukrainianess" has become the unmarked, taken for granted category which dominates a variety of social situations mostly because of the privileged position of Ukrainian language. Other ethnically framed choices are made instrumental in order to get particular goals and as such do not threaten Ukrainian identification.

Last but not least, a few words should be said about my use of particular concepts. Although I introduce my perspective on everyday ethnicity in chapter two, in some parts of my thesis I use the term nationness. It needs to be noted that I use both terms interchangeably. I claim that in routine expressions of everyday life, it is quite difficult to divide them, and state where ethnicity ends and nationhood starts. However, in the following thesis I refer to the ordinary people's experience, perception, actions - many times in response to their interactions with other citizens of Chernivtsi or the elites' discourse. Following Ben Fowkes ideas, as a cultural anthropologist who bases his research on participant observation, I am more likely to use the term ethnicity (and interested in its cultural expressions) rather than nationhood.¹⁵ However, I bear in mind that there is a long scholarly differentiation and theoretical understanding of both nationhood and ethnicity. Several times I also use the term

¹⁵ Ben Fowkes, *Ethnicity and ethnic conflict in the post-communist world* (New York: Palgrave, 2002). 10.

“multicultural”. However I understand it in a sociological way in which it means simply “multiethnic”. Finally, although I do not develop the meaning of the concept of “identity”, the reader should bear in mind that I am far from any kind of essentializing attempts. Thus when I use quotation marks while writing about particular ethnicity, I treat it as a category of analysis (for example the category of “Romanianess”), while when I omit them it means that I treat it as a category of practice (how people describe themselves, others and particular institutions).¹⁶

¹⁶ The distinction between the category of practice and the category of analysis is explained by Rogers Brubaker and Fredrick Cooper in their article “Beyond ‘identity’”, *Theory and Society* 29:1-47, 2000.

CHAPTER 1: METHODOLOGY

The following Master thesis is based on my ethnographic fieldwork conducted in the city of Chernivtsi by the participant observation method. Being trained as an anthropologist, in my work I focus on the everyday routine social practices of the citizens of Chernivtsi, their habits, identifications and ways of spending their time by trying to investigate why and when ethnicity matters in these spheres. In this regard, the anthropological concepts of everyday life and social situations are the methodological fundamentals of my thesis. Although I discuss my main theoretical approach of everyday ethnicity in chapter 2, here I point to the most important aspects of investigating the everyday in general. Thus, in the first part of the chapter I briefly discuss the most important aspects of everyday life and the meaning of the social situation and setting in which they are experienced. Moreover, because I conducted my fieldwork in the urban setting, in this part I describe the most important relations between space, identity and memory, as I address these issues in the latter part of my thesis in which I describe the symbolic meaning of Chernivtsi's architecture and local politics of remembrance created by the elites and experienced by ordinary people.

For a contemporary anthropologist, a crucial point is to show both advantages and limitations of his or her own fieldwork. In the case of Chernivtsi, which is inhabited by almost 220 thousand people, it is important to stress to what kind of surroundings I got access to, with whom I talked and which social situations I observed. This is especially the case, as my main research method was participant observation complemented by semi-structured interviews. These issues I discuss in the last part of the chapter.

1.1 The concept of everyday life

The concept of everyday life is one of the most frequent and automatically used by scholars.¹⁷ As Norbert Elias claims, “the concept of the everyday has become anything but everyday”¹⁸, stressing by this that it is actually unclear what “everyday” means. He distinguishes two main approaches to the investigation of this phenomenon. The first, developed by ethnomethodologists, defines everyday as almost “objective aspects of the communal, social life of human beings”.¹⁹ In contrast, structural functionalists claim that ‘everyday’ is involved in the subjective experience of social reality by individuals. It is bounded by these aspects which are unofficial, non-public and not institutionalized.²⁰

Following these ideas, Michel de Certeau distinguishes two aspects in which the everyday ways of operating are expressed by people. The first concerns *behaviors* which are visible in the social organization of urban space and its “consuming” by ordinary people.²¹ It contains the variety of ways in which people “are doing things” selected by the researcher according to the value for the strategy of analysis.²² These are mostly practices related to the utilization of everyday rituals and tactics connected with the re-uses of the memory shaped by authorities that make this practices possible.²³ The second element is bound around *expected symbolic benefits* - those interactions (very often unselfconscious) which are relative to structures of expectations, negotiations and improvisations.²⁴ As anthropologists, I focus on the first approach proposed by Michel de Certeau, mainly routine behaviors, which are

¹⁷ Norbert Elias, “On the Concept of Everyday Life,” in Norbert Elias, *The Norbert Elias reader: a biographical selection* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers, 1998), 166..

¹⁸ Ibid., 167.

¹⁹ Ibid., 167.

²⁰ Erving Goffman, *The presentation of self in everyday life* (London: Penguin Books, 1990).

²¹ Michel “de” Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life: Living and Cooking. Volume 2* (U of Minnesota Press, 1998), 8.

²² Ibid., 9–10.

²³ Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (University of California Press, 2011), 9–10.

²⁴ Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 1998, 8–10.

visible, observable and noted as significant acts by ethnographer through his or her contact with people in the field.²⁵

Both elements, mainly *behaviors* and *symbolic benefits* are the fundamentals of the concept of *cultural practice*: “the more or less coherent and fluid assemblage of elements that are concrete and everyday or ideological at once coming from tradition”²⁶ and bound in routine and repeated habits. In this regard, for an anthropologist, a crucial factor is the ability to define and distinguish a social situation from a social setting of observed behaviors and interactions.²⁷ The former relates to “dyadic, face-to-face relationships”²⁸ experienced and understood by individual, and as such is one of the most basic social organizations, while the latter refers to “objective” point of view observed by analysts. The setting includes such elements as political and socio-economic status of individuals and groups they refer to, the distribution of occupation, education, income and so on.²⁹

However, my understanding of the ‘everyday’ addressed both in my fieldwork and in the following thesis is much broader than mentioned above. For a scholar who tries to catch the idea of everyday, one of the most important elements is to define what is not everyday life.³⁰ Are holidays, occupational and institutional life part of the everyday? Or maybe this concept refers only to those aspects which are connected with private and family life? In my case I define both as a part of the everyday. Thus my broad definition concerns those aspects of human life which are related to the sphere of natural, routine, spontaneous and very often unreflecting experiences, acts and thinking. In this regard “not-everyday” are those aspects which are reflective, artificial, unspontaneous and very often institutionalized. However, I need to point that on the ground both levels very often intermingle and sometimes it is

²⁵ Kirsten Hastrup, *A passage to anthropology: between experience and theory* (London: Routledge, 1995), 90.

²⁶ Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 1998, 9.

²⁷ Okamura, „Situational ethnicity”, 453.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid., 454.

³⁰ Elias, *The Norbert Elias reader*, 170–171.

impossible to separate them. Concerning the problem of ethnicity and nationness I study it from “below”³¹ and “informal”³² perspectives, when they are experienced by ordinary people through their everyday identification processes.

1.2 Investigating the urban setting

A city forms a particular setting of everyday interactions mostly because its size, infrastructure, population and a number of accidental contacts.³³ The city is a meeting point of “Strangers”.³⁴ Thus, one of the most important aspects here are the relations between individuals, identity and memory in the urban space. “A city is a unique system of significations and meaning and therefore values”³⁵ which exist in the context of the city’s history, its architecture, monuments, names of streets and squares, revitalization and so on.

According to David Lowenthal, a common vision of the past is a necessary element in the process of identity building of those who treat the past as theirs.³⁶ Thus, the question “who are we?” refers to the question “who were we as a group in the past; who were our ancestors?”³⁷

A similar relationship can be perceived between memory and space. On the one hand, space cumulates historical experiences – past events, which were so powerful that they are still present in the landscape. In this sense, space is a kind of *model of*: representation of the

³¹ Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780*.

³² Eriksen, „Formal and informal nationalism”.

³³ Ulf Hannerz, *Exploring the city: inquiries toward an urban anthropology* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980).

³⁴ S. Dale McLemore, „Simmel’s «Stranger»: A Critique of the Concept”, *The Pacific Sociological Review* 13, no 2 (1 April 1970): 86–94.

³⁵ Henri Lefebvre, *Writings on cities* (Cambridge, Mass: Blackwell, 1996), 114.

³⁶ David Lowenthal, *The past is a foreign country* (Cambridge [Cambridgeshire]: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

³⁷ Ibid., 42.

remembered past.³⁸ On the other hand, space can be consciously created by those people who have the power to shape it and thus shows only the elements of the past which somehow serve their needs. In this sense, space is the *model for*: a kind of instruction of our memories, in which some of them are more visible and powerful.³⁹

Thus, the city's landscape is full of "significant places" which mirror its concrete features.⁴⁰ The open question in the case of every city is how people remember (or rather how should they remember) these places and thus perceive their present residence. The methodological problem, which stands behind such questions, is how to measure people's bonds with places. In this sense two factors seem to be the most important: place attachment and place identity. By the first one, Lewicka understands "relations people develop with places".⁴¹ For her, historical sites create a sense of continuity with the past, which embody the group traditions. The second, place identity, has a dual meaning. It refers, on the one hand, to a set of place features that guarantee the place's distinctiveness and continuity in time, and on the other, an individual's personal identity in relation to the physical environment.⁴² The existence of these "urban reminders" depends on the social memories connected with them, which tend to be biased. Some events or historical features are remembered, some absent and still some are created in order to make a "better story".⁴³ Thus, history here is not an objective fact, but an intellectual construct, in the cityscape visible in forms of the "concretisation of history".⁴⁴

³⁸ Clifford Geertz, *The interpretation of cultures: selected essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 90.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Tim Edensor, *National identity, popular culture and everyday life* (Oxford ; New York: Berg Publishers, 2002), 65.

⁴¹ Maria Lewicka, „Place attachment, place identity, and place memory: Restoring the forgotten city past”, *Journal of Environmental Psychology* 28, no 3 (September 2008): 212.

⁴² Ibid., 215.

⁴³ Ibid., 229.

⁴⁴ Dunja Rihtman-Augustin, "The monument in the main city square: constructing and erasing memory in contemporary Croatia," in *Balkan identities: nation and memory* (New York: New York University Press, 2004).

1.3 Advantages and limitations of anthropological fieldwork

I conducted my fieldwork in Chernivtsi in three phases. First, from February till May 2010, I investigated the variety of Jewish institutions operating in the town. I conducted participant observation among the members of the Chernivtsi Jewish Welfare Center “Hesed Shushana” and the Chabad movement and interviewed members of the Jewish National House, the Museum of History and Culture of Bukovinian Jews, the director of Jewish school, and authorities from the local municipality.

The second phase of my fieldwork took place from May 2011 until February 2012. At that time besides the continuation of previous observations, I conducted fieldwork among the Polish community gathered close to the local Catholic Church and the Polish National House. I was involved in teaching Polish language in the Catholic Church which gave me the opportunity to investigate different patterns of ethnic identifications developed by people who perceived themselves as Poles or as having Polish roots. In this part of my research I worked also in the city’s archive and libraries investigating the shape of ethnic and national rhetoric in the local press since the beginning of 1991.

Moreover, from 2009 until 2012, every August I participated and observed the action of cleaning the Jewish cemetery in Chernivtsi and the process of creating the cultural heritage there. During this time I had several occasions to meet and talk with the members of Czernowitz-L group, who by the time of my stay in Chernivtsi had visited the city several times.⁴⁵ Thus, I had a chance to observe their attitude towards their “home”, attempts to restore the local Jewish cemetery and through the walking memory path method visualized

⁴⁵ Czernowitz-L is a kind of on-line platform which gathered people of Jewish roots who were born (or they ancestors used to live) in Chernivtsi before the Second World War.

their subjective perception of the city. From November 2011, I have also been a member of their discussion mailing list.

During my research my main method was participant observation. According to this, I was trying to not only observe people's everyday life and listen to their everyday talks, but also trying to experience the social and cultural life with them. I was working with them, spending all my free time listening to their complaints, going to the same shops, markets, restaurants and, what is particularly important, exploring their networks. I spent my time with people of all ages, all social classes and ethnic backgrounds. Thus I was trying to get to as many people and social circles as was possible.⁴⁶

However, I need to admit that because of my knowledge of Ukrainian language (which was the most important language in my everyday communication), most of my contacts I developed with people whose native language was Ukrainian. Thus, I had some difficulties in contacting members of local Jewish community who spoke mostly Russian and those people who knew only Romanian and Russians (a part of Moldovan and Romanian citizens of the city). At this point language was not the only difficulty I met. In some social situations my Polish origin was perceived as an advantage by people I talked to in Chernivtsi (especially by Ukrainians when I was interested in Ukrainian issues), while in others as a kind of disadvantage (for example my interest in Jewish life and culture). I come back to these issue in latter part of my thesis, while discussing the problem of ethnic stereotypes and prejudice in the everyday life.

The third stage of my research took place from 22 of April until 5th of May 2013. Thanks to the grant given by my department I was able to continue my research and fill one of the most important gaps, mainly the situation of the Romanian community in Chernivtsi. This

⁴⁶ Thus I followed the field methodology implemented by Janine R. Wedel, *The private Poland* (New York, NY: Facts on File, 1986). who focuses mainly on investigating informal networks.

time, I talked with the representatives of Romanian and Ukrainian national organizations about projects conducted by them in the city and the situation of their communities. Additionally I visited those places in the city which are perceived as ethnically mixed (local open-air market) or ethnicized (the so-called “Moldovan restaurant”). However because of the short time of my stay I was unable to develop any kind of networks regarding the members of Romanian community. Thus, the reader of the following thesis should take into consideration about given asymmetries of my work. I spend more time with people who have stronger Ukrainian, Polish or even Jewish identification (in the same sense I know more facts and specificities about their national institutions) than in the case of Romanians and Moldovans.

To sum up, in the following thesis I use 20 semi-structured and recorded interviews. Teen of them I conducted with local elites who held an important position inside the national institutions. The rest I carried with people who were engaged in the activity of their own national communities (however without any significant position in it). In most of the cases, before I decided to record the interview, I visited particular person several times trying to understand his or her work better. In most of the cases also after interview I came back to the person for more detailed information. Some of the people I interviewed became my close friends and gatekeepers to different social circles. Besides interviews and observations, visual materials are another source of my thesis. During my research I documented the changing cityscape, its ethnic markers and events especially in the context of old images of the city. Finally, some parts of my thesis rely on archive materials which I gathered during my work in Chernivtsi. These are mainly local national newspapers published by national organization and available only there.

Last but not least, few words should be said about the time frame of the following thesis. Although I conducted my research (with breaks) from February 2010 until May 2013, my main focus is to present changes in ethnic life of Chernivtsi from 1991. However, in order

to understand the variety of social situations in which the ethnic question entered the everyday, I need to stress the importance of different national myths which dominated the discourse of national elites in Chernivtsi. Thus, in some parts of my thesis I refer to the periods of Chernivtsi's belonging to the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Kingdom of Romanian and the Soviet Union.

CHAPTER 2: THE CONCEPT OF ETHNICITY IN SOCIAL SCIENCES

In the last decades of the development of social sciences such terms as *ethnic group*, *ethnic identity* and *ethnicity* became central in scholarly analysis.⁴⁷ Global migration movements, raising indigenous rights, the fall of the Soviet Union and Yugoslav state to mention just few examples resulted in raising ethnic awareness and claims. Already in the late 1920s Robert E. Park, one of the most influential sociologists in the United States, predicted that over time the contact of many ethnic groups, the competition in market economy and raising class interests would result in gradual assimilation of most ethnic communities and in the decline of ethnicity as an important social force in the modern world.⁴⁸ However, none of this has happened and ethnicity still seems to be a crucial aspect in the life of many communities around the world.

When the concept of ethnicity entered social sciences, it caused many problems for scholars. Their struggle to describe many aspects of social reality in which ethnicity seemed to be present resulted in different approaches and scholarly perspectives. For some, ethnicity is a manner of almost biological attachments, for some a personal or instrumental choice, while for others the result of elite's activities.⁴⁹ Different scholars stress its symbolic, cultural, cognitive or situational aspects. In the maze of many definitions, it is hard to find one which would satisfy all.

This is why, when one writes about the problem of ethnicity in a particular setting, first one needs to define what he or she actually means by it. Thus, in the following chapter of my thesis my main aim is first to show briefly the most important concepts of ethnicity in the

⁴⁷ Stephen E. Cornell and Douglass Hartmann, *Ethnicity and race: making identities in a changing world*, Sociology for a new century (Thousand Oaks, Calif: Pine Forge Press, 1998).

⁴⁸ Ibid., 9.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 10–11.

history of social sciences and secondly to introduce the concept of everyday ethnicity which is crucial for my own work and approach. Because of my methodology which is based on ethnographic fieldwork, I put stress mostly on anthropological theories of ethnicity.

2.1 From primordialist to constructivist approach

In social sciences, the concept of ethnicity became central in the late 60s.⁵⁰ From the beginning it was perceived as an integral part of the idea of ethnic groups. From the first scholarly oriented perspective, called primordialism, an ethnic group is perceived as a bounded entity, whose members share objective cultural traits such as customs, traditions, behavior, language, religion, have common ancestors and homeland.⁵¹ In this kind of definition, little (if any) stress is put on the subjective understanding of the individual's belonging to a particular group. It rather highlights those elements which can be observed, analyzed and classified by scholars and which 'objectively' proves one's belonging to the particular group. In this sense, ethnicity is understood almost in biological terms.

Max Weber was one of the first scholars who introduced the subjective meaning of ethnicity.⁵² He defines the members of ethnic groups through their shared belief in common ancestry. Thus it is not important whether a collectivity has a common origin and roots, but rather their conviction that they have it.⁵³ In this sense another important aspect is the way how groups cultivate their sense of collective memory by sharing particular myths and symbols.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ Eriksen, *Ethnicity and nationalism*.

⁵¹ Steve Fenton, *Ethnicity*, Key concepts (Cambridge: Polity, 2003), 76.

⁵² Max Weber, "Ethnic Groups," in *Economy and society: an outline of interpretive sociology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 385–398.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 389.

⁵⁴ Anthony D. Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation* (Oxford University Press on Demand, 1999), 3–27.

The primordialist approach seems to prove that both ethnicity and ethnic identity are deeply rooted and stable aspects of individuals' everyday life. The so-called "ethnic ties" are perceived as one of the most important reasons why in so many cases assimilationist policies fail.

However, another group of scholars claim that it is not the assumed ancestry which keep people together but their interests. In this approach, known as circumstantialist or instrumentalist, the stress is put not on the shared culture as a bounding factor but common group interests.⁵⁵ Ethnicity is seen as a fluid and situational political phenomena which first drives individuals into groups and later let to their struggle over new positions of power. In this way, individuals emphasize their own ethnic identities in situations when they want to achieve particular goals and when they see advantage in them. Similarly, they ignore ethnic bonds when they do not see interests in them. Thus, the non-ethnic forces (such as economy, political power) cause people's ethnically framed attachments.⁵⁶

Although the circumstantialist approach seems to be very fruitful in analyzing diverse communities, still it does not fully explain the phenomena of ethnicity. It shows that very often ethnicity is used instrumental by people in order to get especially particular economic and political privileges. Nevertheless, what this approach fails to answer is why in so many cases ethnic attachments motivate people to particular action and decision and not other potential bases such as class, occupation, gender or religion.⁵⁷

The new approach in investigating ethnicity came together with Fredrik Barth and his fundamental work "Ethnic Groups and Boundaries".⁵⁸ According to this anthropologist, ethnic groups are created and negotiated through the boundaries which distinguish members

⁵⁵ Cornell and Hartmann, *Ethnicity and race*, 56.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 66.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Fredrik Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference* (Little, Brown, 1969).

of one ethnic group from another.⁵⁹ Thus ethnicity is a product of routine social interactions through which the mentioned boundaries are constructed. Barth's approach gave the beginning of another perspective of describing ethnicity – constructivist. According to it, ethnicity is an outcome of a process of social classification⁶⁰ through which such categories as race, ethnicity or even nationhood are constantly negotiated and re-negotiated.⁶¹

The constructionist approach stresses a very important aspect of the process of creating ethnic groups, namely the significant role of elites and the state in the process of social classification. Edwin Ardener goes even further, claiming that 19th century ethnographers, anthropologists and sociologists were responsible for first describing, naming and classifying different groups of people into ethnic ones.⁶² For him, the process of social categorization has distinct features of power relations contained in the relationship between, on the one hand, those who have the power to name others and, on the other, those who are the subject of these hierarchies. These “struggle over classification” and thus over the monopoly of power to recognize “make and unmake groups”.⁶³

Nevertheless, there is a fundamental similarity between the so-called primordialist and constructivist approach. While discussing the problem of ethnicity, both refer to group as a fundamental basis for later analysis. It does not matter whether we talk about shared common values⁶⁴, the group belief about their past⁶⁵ or the commonality of symbols which binds individuals⁶⁶, all these approaches take the presence of the ethnic group as a starting point.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 15.

⁶⁰ Jenkins, *Rethinking ethnicity*.

⁶¹ Patricia Ahmed, Cynthia Feliciano, and Rebecca Jean Emigh, „Ethnic Classification in Eastern Europe” (Unpublished Paper, 2001).

⁶² Edwin Ardener, „Tozsamosc i utozsamianie [Identity and identification]”, *Prace Socjologiczne* 15 (1992): 21–42.

⁶³ Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and symbolic power* (Cambridge, Mass: Polity Press, 1991), 221.

⁶⁴ Barth and Bergen, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, 17.

⁶⁵ Weber, *Economy and society*, 389.

⁶⁶ Anthony P. Cohen, *The symbolic construction of community*, Key ideas (London: Routledge, 1995), 27.

The new approach in social sciences which tried to break up the primordialist – constructionist debate came together with the cognitive turn in the late 70s. As Rogers Brubaker argues, the cognitive approach strengthens and unites both approaches by stressing, on the one hand, the features of ethnicity as naturally given as perceived by many individuals and, on the other, its situational character which depends mostly on the elite's activity.⁶⁷ Thus ethnicity is not only embodied in people's practices, but also is a manner of cognitive schemas and the way how they think about themselves and others.⁶⁸

Rogers Brubaker argues that ethnicity together with race and nation should be perceived as a “perspective *on* the world rather than thing *in* the world”.⁶⁹ According to this view, ethnicity is part of cognition – central for a human's way of seeing, thinking, talking and acting. This approach allows us to avoid *groupism* – the essentialized way of describing individuals and groups. In opposition to this, the term *groupness* should be introduced. It treats groups as a temporary event, both highly contextual and situational. The methodological result of this way of conceptualizing the term of ethnicity, race or nation, directs our attention to the individuals and their networks. However, one should remember that although the cognitive approach allows us to omit the essentialized idea of groups and directs our attention to the individuals' categorization process, again it is only one side of the story. Ethnicity as well as in mental schemas, exists also in people's practice and beliefs.⁷⁰

Let me conclude, in social sciences ethnicity is understood as an identification made in ethnic terms by individuals who believe that they belong to an ethnic group. For some scholars the most important element which binds people together is shared culture (as in the

⁶⁷ Rogers Brubaker, Mara Loveman, and Peter Stamatov, „Ethnicity as Cognition”, *Theory and Society* 33, no 1 (1 2004): 31–64..

⁶⁸ Cornell and Hartmann, *Ethnicity and race*, 19.

⁶⁹ Brubaker, Loveman, and Stamatov, „Ethnicity as Cognition”, 32.

⁷⁰ Another important aspect of categorization appears on a macro level through which state authorities (in forms of different minority laws, constitution, censuses and so on) also tries to push their categories on ordinary people.

primordialist perspective), the belief in common ancestry,⁷¹ common set of claims (circumstantialists), a boundary which is the result of social categorization process⁷² and finally cognitive schemas⁷³ which determine the way they see the world. However, in my thesis I propose another scholarly oriented perspective, namely situational ethnicity. In this sense ethnicity, on the one hand, is strategically changing perceptions of belonging and, on the other, it is shaped by the elite's activity, who across time and situations impose their categories on people. As I show in the next part of the chapter, situational ethnicity allows us to take deeper insight into the ordinary people and their everyday experience.

2.2 Everyday ethnicity

Social anthropology can offer a unique position to investigate ethnicity while focusing especially on the ways “in which ethnic relationships are being defined and perceived by people” in everyday contexts.⁷⁴ It is observed and perceived by individuals in national holidays, festivals, the daily press, political discourse, popular culture just to mention a few examples.⁷⁵ However, ethnicity first appears and is constituted through the social contact of individuals, who as a result of it define themselves as members of a particular group opposite to the “Others”. In this sense social categorization always brings the division between “us” and “them”.⁷⁶ Thus, according to this social identity theory, individuals by various ways of identifying themselves and others become a part of “groups” (the same as they see “Others”).

⁷¹ Weber, *Economy and society*.

⁷² Barth and Bergen, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*.

⁷³ Brubaker, Loveman, and Stamatov, „Ethnicity as Cognition”.

⁷⁴ Eriksen, „Formal and informal nationalism”, 1.

⁷⁵ Edensor, *National identity, popular culture and everyday life*, 15.

⁷⁶ Tajfel, *Human groups and social categories*, 254.

Everyday ethnicity can be both inclusive when it refers to those who are believed as forming one group and exclusive when they think about those who are not.⁷⁷

Fredrik Barth was one of the first scholars who stressed the situational character of ethnicity, constructed through social boundaries. By “social situation”, according to Jonathan Y. Okamura, I mean the face-to-face relationship of individuals.⁷⁸ For this scholar, ethnicity is “situationally determined”, in some situations it is a relevant factor which influences the interaction while in others it can be fully meaningless. It is always a matter of the individual’s decision in which group he/she wants to be member and in which not. Thus, ethnicity should be understood through subjective patterns of individual’s everyday ethnic self-ascription and categorization but also embodies aspects of this knowledge through which ethnicity becomes visible.

Rogers Brubaker and his colleagues introduced the situational and everyday approach to ethnicity in their research in Cluj-Napoca.⁷⁹ The main aim of the book, *Nationalist Politics and Everyday Ethnicity in a Transylvanian Town*, is to show “how ethnicity works – in politics and in everyday life - without automatically taking ethnic groups as their unit of analysis”.⁸⁰ In practice, this means focusing on everyday social interactions, networks, institutions, patterns of identification, but without assuming that ethnic so called “identities” play a significant role in it. The aim is rather to show why, when and how ordinary individuals identify themselves with a certain ethnicity or “nationness”.⁸¹

⁷⁷ Edensor, *National identity, popular culture and everyday life*.

⁷⁸ Okamura, „Situational ethnicity”.

⁷⁹ Brubaker, *Nationalist Politics and Everyday Ethnicity in a Transylvanian Town*.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 8.

⁸¹ The book is focused on Hungarian – Romanian everyday relations with the stress on such aspects as: biographies, preoccupations, languages, institutions, social networks, migrations and local politics and ways in which ethnicity plays (or not) a central role in them.

One step further is provided by Jon E. Fox and Cynthia Miller-Idriss, who describe four ways in which nationhood is negotiated and reproduced in everyday life.⁸² The first, *talking the nation*, represents the idea how the nation as a discursive construct is legitimized in the elite discourse, to what extent it influences ordinary people and what it means to them. As was suggested by Rogers Brubaker, ethnicity is rarely not something ordinary people talk about.⁸³ Mainly it appears in the forms of prejudice and stereotypes, which can have their origin in local socio-cultural specificities of inter-ethnic relations, particular experience of reality or dominant ideologies.⁸⁴

The second, called *choosing the nation*, refers to the way people's choices are framed by nationhood. In this approach, one should focus on such aspects of everyday life, as choices to read the national newspaper, sending a child to the national school, being part of a particular nationally framed institution or religious one, such as churches.

The third way in which nationhood is produced and reproduced in everyday life is called *performing the nation* – here the stress is put on the understanding and use of national symbols by people. This approach is partially based on Michael Billig's sense of "banal nationalism".⁸⁵ For him nationhood is "regularly flagged" mostly by the media, national holidays, elites' activity through which "citizenry being unmindfully reminded of their national identity".⁸⁶ It is also close to Thomas Eriksen's idea of informal nationalism which in contrast to the formal one (state-level) refers to dimensions typical for civil society such as collective events, ritual celebrations, international sport competitions and so on.⁸⁷

Performing is very closely related with *consuming* – the last way in which ethnicity and nationness is produced and reproduced in everyday life. In this approach one can study a

⁸² Fox i Miller-Idriss, „Everyday Nationhood”.

⁸³ Brubaker, *Nationalist Politics and Everyday Ethnicity in a Transylvanian Town*.

⁸⁴ Rupert Brown, *Prejudice: its social psychology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995).

⁸⁵ Michael Billig, *Banal nationalism* (London: Sage Publications, 1995).

⁸⁶ Ibid., 154.

⁸⁷ Eriksen, „Formal and informal nationalism”.

variety of everyday life features: from the food choices of particular individuals to the shopping and tourism industry.⁸⁸ Moreover, by *consuming the nation* Jon Fox and Cynthia Miller-Idriss (understand also the role of public space, the character of restaurants, bars, cafes, squares and parks and the way how they are perceived or consumed by ordinary people.⁸⁹

These last aspects can be quite problematic according to Tanja Blokland.⁹⁰ For this scholar, using the public space by many groups can lead to four different routes of discriminatory repertoires. The first one, called *uncommunity*, appears when ethnicity is not constructed to actively include or exclude, however it does not mean that the community as a whole is tolerant. The second is characterized by the principles of good neighborliness and antiracist discourse, but at the same time with strong differentiation between “us” and “them”. The third one forms non-realistic conflicts and the last one opens interethnic conflicts between different groups.

The appearance and strength of ethnicity vary in different social situations. In some, ethnicity may be a crucial factor which determines people’s choices and acts (the so-called “thick” ethnic identity) while in some it remains salient in the form of symbolic or “thin” ethnic identity.⁹¹ Circumstantialists provide useful reasons why in some cases ethnicity matters and in some not, by stressing the economic and political factor in people’s decisions. Although important, they are not the only important factors which determine the situational aspects of ethnicity. Stephen Cornell and Douglas Hartmann provide three dimensions which determine people’s self-ascription and categorization in everyday life, namely *boundary*, perceived *group position* and *meaning* which is attached to group belonging.⁹²

⁸⁸ Melissa L. Caldwell, „The Taste of Nationalism: Food Politics in Postsocialist Moscow”, *Ethnos: Journal of Anthropology* 67, no 3 (November 2002): 295–319.

⁸⁹ Fox and Miller-Idriss, „Everyday Nationhood”, 25.

⁹⁰ Talja Blokland, „Ethnic complexity: routes to discriminatory repertoires in an inner-city neighbourhood”, *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 26, no 1 (2003): 1–24.

⁹¹ Cornell and Hartmann, *Ethnicity and race*, 79.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 81.

The *boundary* between “us” and “them” is one of the most important aspects of identity formation.⁹³ The establishment of positive self includes the construction of a set of criteria through which individuals can distinguish themselves from others. However, in this sense the criteria themselves are unimportant, rather it is the process of establishing categorical boundary. In one word – which individuals in a particular situation define as theirs as members of a particular group and what they ascribe to others just because they are believed to belong to a different group.

Perceived position is the second aspect through which ethnicity becomes significant in social situations. It contains not only people’s beliefs and awareness about the diversity of a particular setting (so we know that there are some of “us” and some of “them”) but also that there are some inequalities in the distribution of power, status and resources between perceived groups. In many situations the perceived position strategy is observed more in the form of stereotypes and prejudices than actual power relations in multiethnic communities.

Last but not least *meaning* attached to identity is one of the most important aspects of everyday identity construction. The distinction between “us” and “them” very often contains particular values (“we are good they are evil) and feeling of pride or shame.

The main inspiration for my thesis is provided by Brubaker and his colleagues research in Cluj-Napoca.⁹⁴ For many reasons this city is quite similar to Chernivtsi. They are both located on postsocialist ground, have a long multicultural tradition and shifting borders. However, the specificity of the present interethnic relations is slightly different. In the case of Cluj-Napoca the main ethnic relations are formed by Hungarians and Romanians and these “groups” are in the center of Brubaker’s analysis. Chernivtsi, on the other hand, is characterized by a lack of dominant nationality (only Ukrainians form the majority). Thus, the

⁹³ Tajfel, *Human groups and social categories*.

⁹⁴ Brubaker, *Nationalist Politics and Everyday Ethnicity in a Transylvanian Town*.

main interethnic tensions are characteristic in some situations for Ukrainians-Romanians, in some: Ukrainians-Jews and in others Romanians-Jews. Thus, the situational approach introduced first in my research and then in the following thesis is a sort of a challenge in which I try to find the most important patterns of everyday self-identification and categorization shaped by individuals (which I believe lies in their sense of boundary, group position and attached meanings) who belonged to many national associations, religious organization or in particular situations *talk, choose, perform* and *consume* the nationhood.

CHAPTER 3: THE HISTORY OF ETHNIC RELATIONS IN CHERNIVTSI

One cannot understand the contemporary dynamics of interethnic relations in Chernivtsi and Bukovina region without taking into consideration their long and complicated history. In the past Bukovina used to be a part of the Kyivan-Rus (10th century), the Kingdom of Poland (14th century), the Principality of Moldavia (until 1775), the Austro-Hungarian Empire when the city was named *Czernowitz* (1775-1918), the Kingdom of Romania with the new name *Cernătu* (1918-1940 and 1941-45), the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic - *Chernovtsy* (1945-1991) and from 1991 the Independent Ukraine with its modern name – *Chernivtsi*.⁹⁵ The present city is a regional center of the historical region of Bukovina. Nowadays it is inhabited by around 220 thousand citizens. Chernivtsi and Northern Bukovina are perceived as one of the most multiethnic places in Ukraine.⁹⁶



Rysunek 1 The map of Ukraine

Source: <http://travelro.wordpress.com/2009/05/23/158/>, accessed: May 27, 2012

⁹⁵ Although the city was named differently in all these periods throughout this part of my thesis I use the modern name Chernivtsi in order to describe the city's history. However, in later parts of my thesis I use the name Czernowitz to discuss forms of politics of memory which refer to the time of the city's belonging to the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

⁹⁶ According to the "All-Ukrainian population census" conducted in 2001 around 220 thousand citizens, there were 189,021 Ukrainians, 10,553 Romanians, 1,408 Poles and 1,308 Jews. All data from State Statistics Service of Ukraine, title: <http://www.ukrcensus.gov.ua/ukr/notice/news.php?type=2&id1=21>, date of use 10.09.2012.

Next to shifting borders, ethnic mixture is another significant factor in the history of the region. Traditionally it was inhabited by Ukrainians (or Ruthenians), Romanians, Germans, Jews and Poles but also by many smaller groups such as Armenians.⁹⁷ Throughout centuries Chernivtsi's ethnic mixture, composition and political struggles changed. The tragic events of the Second World War and mass migration after it changed the ethnic structure of the city. Thus in almost all the cases there is a lack of continuity between the nationalities living in the present city and their national ancestors. Nevertheless, the diverse and complicated history of Chernivtsi serves as a tool for presenting politics of remembrance shaped by local national elites. From this perspective three periods of Chernivtsi's history are perceived as the most important: its belonging to the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Kingdom of Romanian and to a lesser extent the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic.

Thus, in the following chapter I discuss the changing patterns of local interethnic relations and shaping of local national cityscape throughout these three periods. In later parts of my thesis, this description serves as a tool for understanding how local politics of memory represent the so-called "Golden Age"⁹⁸ or "cosmopolitan"⁹⁹ myths, rather than historical facts.

3.1 The Austro-Hungarian Empire

In the development of Chernivtsi, three factors played the most significant role: geography, trade and politics. Although there is no significant data that during Bukovina's belonging to the Kyivan-Rus in the 5th century, Chernivtsi formed any significant settlement, this part of the region played a rather peripheral role. It used to be an agrarian area, rather

⁹⁷ There is no agreement between different scholars on the distinction between Ruthenians and Ukrainians. For some, Ruthenians is the earlier category for Ukrainians (perceived as a modern nation) while for others Ruthenians formed a distinct ethnos.

⁹⁸ Smith in Hosking and Schöpflin, *Myths and Nationhood*.

⁹⁹ Schöpflin in Ibid.

underdeveloped and with low population.¹⁰⁰ For centuries it was a borderland region between different monarchies in medieval Europe and because of this at least in the 15th century the settlement of Chernivtsi was established as a customs control and trade center.¹⁰¹ The first note about Chernivtsi came from the year 1408, when the city was mentioned in one of trade documents written by Aleksander Dobryji in the response to the tax problems and relations with merchants from Lviv.¹⁰²

Since 1775, Chernivtsi belonged to the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The time of changes started not only in the area of Bukovina region but first of all at the creation of a modern-planned town of Chernivtsi. One of the most important factors was the demographic changes in the region. Until 1779 Bukovina was inhabited by 66 thousand people, in 1850 this number grew to 381 thousand.¹⁰³ The growth was even more significant in the case of Chernivtsi – when in 1850 already 20 thousand people lived there.¹⁰⁴ The most important reason for this rapid growth of the population was mass migration to the territory of Bukovina from neighborhood provinces and other parts of the empire.¹⁰⁵ Because from the beginning Bukovina was integrated into and protected by Galicia province (until 1848), one of the first

¹⁰⁰ Serhij Kostyshyn, *Bukovyna. Istorycznyj narys [The history of Bukovyna]* (Chernivtsi: Zelena Bukovyna, 1998).

¹⁰¹ Rajmund Kaindl, *Istoriya Chernivtsiv [The history of Chernivtsi]* (Chernivtsi: Komitet Vyborciv, 2003), 25.

¹⁰² Marija Nykyrsa, *Chernivtsi. Dokumentalni narysy z istorji vulyc i plosch [Chernivtsi. The history of streets and squares]* (Chernivtsi: Zolotye Lytavry, 2008), 14.

¹⁰³ Alfred Ableitinger, „Nacionalni superechky na Bukovyni do 1914 roku. Ijh specyfyka u konflyktach nacionalynostej Cislajitaniji.” [The national struggles in Bukovyna until 1914. Their specificity among national conflicts of Cislajitanii].”, in *Mini-Kosmos Bukovyny. Kulturni zdobutky rehionu.*, ed. Volodymyr Zapolovskij (Chernivtsi: Zelena Bukovyna, 2006), 112.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ According to the Austrian census from 1900, Chernivtsi (together with its suburbs) was inhabited by 67 622 people. Among them were (by confession) 26 780 Catholics, 21 587 Jews, 15 621 Greek Catholic and Greek Orthodox and 3634 individuals who declared other confession (mostly protestants). By language of everyday use criteria German was used by 34 441 individuals, Ruthenian by 13 030 and Romanian 9400, 8896 declared other language (mainly Polish, but also Czech and Hungarian). All data from Austro-Hungarian Census: “Gemeindelexikon. Der Bukowina. Bearbeitet auf Grund der Ergebnisse der Volkszählung vom 31 Dezember 1900, published by Herausgeben von der K.K. Statistischen Zentralkommission (Central Statistic Office) in 1907, Vienna.

group who came to the city were Poles who dominated that time in Galicia and thus took over the administrative positions in the city.¹⁰⁶

In the Bukovinian countryside two groups dominated, namely Ukrainians who settled especially in the northern and south-western part of Bukovina and Romanians who inhabited the southern parts and formed mostly the native population there.¹⁰⁷ However, both groups were underrepresented in the city. They occupied the niche of low prestigious jobs such as petty trade and crafts.¹⁰⁸ The similarity of both groups, namely their rural character, social class, population, confession (mostly Orthodox) and significant political underrepresentation caused some national tension between them.¹⁰⁹ However, during the Austrian time they never turned into serious conflicts.

The Germans came to the region in two migration waves. First those who came in 1850 from the western part of the Empire, and worked as blue collar workers in the building industry, worked in the forests or were farming.¹¹⁰ The second phase included those who came in the second half of the century and worked in the administration and universities and thus formed local elites in Chernivtsi.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁶ For Alfred Ableitinger, „Nacionalni superechky na Bukovyni do 1914 roku. Ijh specyfyka u konflyktach nacionalynosteji Cislajitaniji.” [The national struggles in Bukovyna until 1914. Their specificity among national conflicts of Cislajitanii].” the domination of Poles during the first period of Bukovina belonging to the Austro-Hungarian Empire was a reason for some ethnic tensions in the city – especially from the side of local Romanian and Ukrainian population.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 118.

¹⁰⁸ Anatolij Krughlaschov, „Chernivtsi: (ne)porozuminnja mix spadshynuju ta spadkoemcjamy.” [Chernovtsi (mis)understanding between heritage and inheritances], in *Chernivtsi v kontekstki urbanistychnych procesiv Centralnoi ta Schidnoi Evropy XVIII-XX st. [Chernivtsi in the contest of urbanization processes of Central and Eastern Europe]*, 19.

¹⁰⁹ Ableitinger, „Nacionalni superechky na Bukovyni do 1914 roku. Ijh specyfyka u konflyktach nacionalynosteji Cislajitaniji.” [The national struggles in Bukovyna until 1914. Their specificity among national conflicts of Cislajitanii].”, 118.

¹¹⁰ As Sophie A. Welsch points the first group of German in Bukovina came from the Banat region. They were state sponsored groups which received many privileges from the state: free land, free from feudal obligations, frame houses and stables, see: Sophie A. Welisch, „The Bukovina Germans during the Habsburg period: Settlement, ethnic interaction, contributions”, *Immigrants & Minorities* 5, no 1 (1986): 78.

¹¹¹ Ableitinger, „Nacionalni superechky na Bukovyni do 1914 roku. Ijh specyfyka u konflyktach nacionalynosteji Cislajitaniji.” [The national struggles in Bukovyna until 1914. Their specificity among national conflicts of Cislajitanii].”, 118.

However, the opportunity to settle in Chernivtsi was especially used by Jews, who in the middle of the 18th century came to the region as mostly blue-collar workers or craftsmen and later in the beginning of the 20th century were one of the biggest and most influential national groups who inhabited the city.¹¹² The local Jewish community in the end of the 19th century can be divided into several subgroups. They belonged to many different politically oriented organizations, religious groups and social classes.¹¹³ However, one can distinguish two main groups which actually represent the spatial division of the city.¹¹⁴ The upper part was inhabited by Austrian Jews, a non-religious or enlightened German speaking group whose members occupied the most prestigious positions in the city (they were lawyers, doctors, workers in the city administration, owned factories and so on). As Anatolij Kruglaschov described them: “They were more Austrians than Austrians themselves”¹¹⁵ and as such they maintained the values of high-level European urban culture.¹¹⁶ However, the lower part of the city, the so-called “Jewish quarter” was inhabited mostly by poor and religious Jews who worked in local factories or in petty trade.¹¹⁷

From the end of the 18th century the town of Chernivtsi started to develop and grow very fast: roads were built, new work places appeared, new complexes of buildings emerged. Austrians transformed this rural settlement to suit their purposes. Streets received German names, monuments of German writers and heroes were raised and a number of German cultural institutions, cafes, restaurants, hotels were established and, what is particularly important, German became the dominant language in the public sphere. Chernivtsi together

¹¹² Shevchenko, *Chernovetskaya Antlantyda [The Chernivtsi Atlantis]*.

¹¹³ David Sha'ary, "Die jüdische Gemeinde von Czernowitz [The Jewish community of Czernowitz]", in *Czernowitz. Die Geschichte einer ungewöhnlichen Stadt.*, ed. Harald Heppner (Böhlau, 2000), 103–128.

¹¹⁴ Shevchenko, *Chernovetskaya Antlantyda [The Chernivtsi Atlantis]*.

¹¹⁵ Kruglaschov, „Chernivtsi: (ne)porozuminnja mix spadshynoju ta spadkoemcjamy.” [Chernovtsi (mis)understanding between heritage and inheritance], 18.

¹¹⁶ Andrei Corbea-Hoisie, *Czernowitzer Geschichten. Über eine städtische Kultur in Mittel(Ost)Europa. [The history of Czernowitz. Urban Culture in Central and Eastern Europe]* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2003), 29.

¹¹⁷ Their cultural center was located outside Chernivtsi – in Sadhora (today it is one of the city's districts) where lived one of the most significant Hasidic dynasty of Tzadiks started by Isroel Friedman (Shevchenko 2004).

with other imperial cities such as Lviv, Cracow, Budapest and Prague resembled the capital of Vienna which they copied.¹¹⁸

I claim that the way the Austro-Hungarian Empire shaped its policy towards Chernivtsi and the way they urbanized it can be best described by the symbolic influence.¹¹⁹ In this way, the basic understanding of urbanization is through its symbolic power.¹²⁰ Symbolism in urban planning can be understood from different levels. First of all, the way Austrians planned the city using the architecture, similar to what can be found in other parts of the Empire, was a mark of their occupation and power in this area.¹²¹ The process of transforming Chernivtsi from a rural settlement into a planned town was a visible sign of ‘who is the ruler here’. Although it needs to be admitted that actually they built this town and formed the activities of its citizens. In this sense, their influence had a truly civilizational mission, which was necessary for the stabilization of the Empire and for protection of its borderlands.¹²²

The second factor for understanding the urbanization through symbolism is the kind of buildings they raised: a town hall, theater, German National House all in similar eclectic style, in which the most important administrations were located.¹²³ Almost all of them survive till now and can be observed and admired in the modern architecture of the town. The third factor was the domination of German in all aspects of the public sphere. Although it is perceived

¹¹⁸ Paul R. Magocsi, *A history of Ukraine* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 414.

¹¹⁹ According to Paul Magocsi the tangible symbols of Habsburg imperial culture were bureaucracy, legal and schooling system and the domination of German language in all spheres of public life. However, architecture and city planning are perceived as the most important and significant symbols of Vienna’s domination and influence. See: Ibid.

¹²⁰ Elliott Percival Skinner, *African urban life: the transformation of Ouagadougou*, (Princeton University Press, 1974), 15.

¹²¹ Nykyrsa, *Chernivtsi. Dokumentalni narysy z istorji vulyc i plosch [Chernivtsi. The history of streets and squares]*.

¹²² In the anthropological literature this kind of impact which has the truly civilizational mission is often described as “benevolent colonialism” (see: Sampson Steven, „Weak States, Uncivil Societies and Thousands of NGOs: Benevolent Colonialism in the Balkans”, *The Balkans in Focus: Cultural Boundaries in Europe* (2002): 27–44..

¹²³ Svitlana Bilenkova, w *Chernivtsi v kontekstki urbanistychnych procesiv Centralnoi ta Schidnoi Evropy XVIII-XX st. [Chernivtsi in the contest of urbanization processes of Central and Eastern Europe”]* (Chernivtsi: Zelena Bukovyna, 2008), 118–132.

that Chernivtsi of the Austrian period used to be a multilingual city, when one could communicate in at least five languages, still German was the language of administration, economy and local high culture.¹²⁴ Not only streets, squares and monuments received German names but also restaurants, hotels, shops and bookstores.

For many scholars the most significant feature of Bukovina and Chernivtsi from the Austrian time is the rather peaceful and tolerant character of the region. While the consolidation and ethno-political mobilization in different parts of Central Europe (for example in the neighborhood Galicia) took the form of open conflicts, Bukovina and Chernivtsi remained salient.¹²⁵ The so-called ‘bukovinism’ was a kind of local identity, attachments and responsibility formed partially by local national elites and partially by the Austrian government.¹²⁶ For many authors, one of the most important questions is the reason why Chernivtsi remained so peaceful. For Anatloji Krughlaschov, the most important factor was that in the city and in the region one could not find a dominant national group.¹²⁷ Although Jews dominated in Chernivtsi, their number was not big enough to control the city. Moreover, among the Jewish community it was actually quite hard to establish their actual

¹²⁴ In the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, the city was a center for German literature and art life. Thus especially from the German cultural studies perspective Chernivtsi is represented through the literature phenomena and the so-called “Myth of Czernowitz” mostly because the city was inhabited by such authors as Karl Emil Franzos, Paul Celan and Rosa Ausländer. See for example: Cecilé Cordon and Helmut Husdat, red., *An der Zeifen Ränder. Czernowitz und die Bukowina. Geschichhte, Literatur, Verfolgung, Exil [At the Zeifen edges. Chernivtsi and Bukovina. Geschichhte, literature, persecution, exile]* (Vienna: Theodor Kramer Gesellschaft, 2008); Hans Klaus, ed., *Mythos Czernowitz. Eine Stadt im Spiegel ihrer Nationalitäten [The Myth of Czernowitz. The city in the mirror of its Nationalities]* (Potsdam: Deutsches Kulturforum östliches Europa, 2008). To the phenomena of the literature of Chernivtsi I come back in later part of my thesis while discussing the present imaginary of the past city.

¹²⁵ However, still an open question is to what extent in everyday life ethnicity was not a exclusive category. The interesting insight in the Austrian period of the history of Chernivtsi is provided by diaries and memories written by former inhabitants of the city. See: Marianne Hirsch and Leo Spitzer, *Ghosts of Home: The Afterlife of Czernowitz in Jewish Memory*, Reprint (University of California Press, 2011), Julius Scherzer, *While the Gods Were Salient. Growing up Under Fascists and Communists* (Baltimore: Publish America, 2005). In all cases they confirm the vision of Austrian Chernivtsi as peaceful place. However, all of them are written from post-War perspective thus it is hard to say to what extent the images of the Austrian city reflect the reality and to what extent they are influenced by the later experience and thus show rather the nostalgia to the “lost” city.

¹²⁶ Ivan Monolatij, „Avstrijska Bukovyna: osoblyvosti nacijonalnych, profesijnych ta movnyh podijiv [The Austrian Bukovyna: peculiarities of national, professions and language aspects]”, *Czasopis „ji”* nr 56 (2009).

¹²⁷ Krughlaschov, „Chernivtsi: (ne)porozuminnja mix spadshynuju ta spadkoemcjamy.” [Chernovtsi (mis)understanding between heritage and inheritance].

number and national orientation. As Alfred Ableitinger stresses, although the majority of local Jews in the Austrian census from 1910 declared German as their main language, it is hard to say to what extent they all identify themselves as being German or even part of one group.¹²⁸

Another important role for interethnic relations in the city was the economic factor. As mentioned previously each nationality occupied a certain niche. Only in few cases, such as between Romanians and Ukrainians because of their similarity, can one find some tensions. In other cases there were no overlapping interests in spheres of economy and national mobilization. Nevertheless, the character of the Austrian monarchy and its multinational and multi-religious policy together with the political and cultural domination of German language (and thus the subordination of any national language) formed a fruitful ground for the peaceful coexistence and cooperation between nationalities here.

3.2 The Kingdom of Romania

The economic, political and cultural balance between nationalities in Chernivtsi formed by Habsburgs finished in 1918. As a consequence of the First World War, Chernivtsi was taken over by the Kingdom of Romania. Almost 22 years of this new rule (1918-40 and 1941-44) brought new visions and physical acts in the urban sphere. In 1923 Bukovina lost its autonomy and went through the process of the administrative centralization and cultural unification of Greater Romania.¹²⁹ The process of Romanization of the multiethnic region started.

¹²⁸ Ableitinger, „Nacionalni superechky na Bukovyni do 1914 roku. Ijh specyfyka u konflyktach nacionalynosteji Cislajitaniji.” [The national struggles in Bukovyna until 1914. Their specificity among national conflicts of Cislajitanii],” 120.

¹²⁹ Krughlaschov, „Interethnic relations stability on the Ukraine-Romania border: a case of Chernivtsi region”, 304.

This time gave rise to not only changes in law and the position and structure of many national groups, but also brought changes in the urban space. All nationalities, besides Romanians, found themselves in a subordinate position.¹³⁰ They were forced to learn Romanian, which became the main language of schooling and administration system and their members were forced to leave important positions in the city council in order to be replaced by the new Romanian clerks coming from Bucharest. Ethnic Germans and German speaking Jews lost their privileged position in the city.

The Romanian government decided also to change the Austrian character of the city. One of their first projects was building of the Romanian Cultural House in the present Theater square. The building in style was totally different from the surrounding: straight in form without decorations and (which is important) higher than those buildings which came from the Empire. The Romanian transformation of the town had a rather cosmetic influence. They did not demolish the old buildings but rebuilt them. For example, to the theater building, one of the most characteristic for the style of the Empire, they added a small roof. They raised new monuments and immediately changed the German names of the streets. Although their acts had the notion of colonization, they were rather micro-scale changes.

The second stage (from June 1940) of the Romanization of Chernivtsi's citizens took a more aggressive tone. The discriminatory policy touched especially members of the Jewish community who suffered the most from the antisemitic politics of the Bucharest rule. First of all, the anti Jewish policy was directed to the German speaking elite group inhabiting mostly the upper part of the city. They were forced to leave their apartments, degraded in their jobs or

¹³⁰ In the first period of the Romanian rule, ethnic tensions were visible especially between Romanians and Ukrainians. It was a continuity of past struggles between two similar national groups, see: *Ibid.*, 305.

even forced to leave their position. They suffered public abuse and open attacks and many of them had problems to buy necessary products.¹³¹

When in 1940 Chernivtsi for a short period became a part of the Soviet Union, most of the local poor Jewry supported the socialist ideas. Thus, this group (being associated with communism) one year later was the main target of Romanian antisemitic policy and later the Holocaust of local Jewry. From July 1941 when Chernivtsi was conquered by a new Romanian army until September, around 10 thousands Jews were killed.¹³² On the 11th of October 1941 a ghetto was established in the borders of the former Jewish quarter. Almost all the Jewish inhabitants of the upper town were forced to move into it. Only those who played an important role in the local market (for example doctors or accountants) were allowed to stay. Later some of them were o stayed in the city thanks to the authorization, a special document which testified that the particular individual played a significant role in the local economy. In practice, authorization could be purchased by cash and as a consequence the wealthiest individuals stayed in the city. The most important role in the authorization procedure was played by the contemporary mayor of the city, namely Traian Popovici, who was responsible for the documentation and signing of most of the staying forms. Around 14 thousand Jews survived the war.

However, the majority of the pre-War Jewish population was killed. Although the ghetto was formed in the border of the city, most of the Jews were killed outside – during the so-called “death walks”. In about one month at least 100 thousand Jews were deported to Transistria. Most of them died on their way suffering from hunger and diseases. From Transistria around 10 thousand people returned. Chernivtsi, however, was not the same place

¹³¹ Julius Scherzer, *While the Gods Were Salient. Growing up Under Fascists and Communists* (Baltimore: Publish America, 2005), Hirsch and Spitzer, *Ghosts of Home*.

¹³² All data came from my interview with prof. Oleh Suvocev who works in the Jurij Fedkovych University in Chernivtsi on the topic of the Holocaust in Chernivtsi. In this part I rely on his research mostly because there is a lack of historical sources describing the form and politics of Holocaust in Bukovina region.

they left. Most of their apartments were inhabited by new locators, they could not find any job and soon they left the region.

3.3 The Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic

Urbanization has four main aspects connected with trade, communication, agriculture, and industry.¹³³ Trade and communication as well as the transformation from rural to urban settlement were the most significant factors of the early years of Chernivtsi. This was strongly connected with geography and the location of Chernivtsi on the borderlands of all of the ruler states. Industry was inevitably the key factor of the development of Chernivtsi during the Soviet time.

The way the Soviets shaped their policy towards Chernivtsi from 1945 can be best described as colonization.¹³⁴ They changed the town's administration, and national character by moving soviet soldiers here and opened the possibility of migration for other inhabitants of the Soviet Union (especially to so-called Soviet Jews) and later opened the borders for those local Jews who survived the Holocaust to emigrate to Israel and Western Europe. Formally, both in the city and in the region Ukrainians formed the majority group. However, taking into consideration the actual political power and position in the city, Russians and Russophone nationalities played the dominate role.¹³⁵ They played the most important role in the communist party and were responsible for developing industry.

Moreover, one of the most visible changes was observed in the urban space.¹³⁶ Again streets and squares in Chernivtsi became re-named, new monuments were raised (with the

¹³³ Hannerz, *Exploring the city*.

¹³⁴ Leela Gandhi, *Postcolonial theory: a critical introduction* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998).

¹³⁵ Krughlaschov, „Chernivtsi: (ne)porozuminnja mix spadshynuju ta spadkoemcjamy.” [Chernovtsi (mis)understanding between heritage and inheritance]”, 27.

¹³⁶ An interesting insight into the politics of shaping local cityscape in Soviet period is given by the guide book: *Chernivtsi. Scho? De? Jak* [Chernivtsi. What? Where? How?] published in 1989. It is an alternative vision of the

necessary monument of Lenin in the city center) and new industrial districts around the old center were built.¹³⁷ Thus the Soviets ensured the formation of the local working class, whose members, brought to the city from outside, inhabited the new industrial suburbs and were the tool of Russification of the local population and as such changed the culture and traditions of the city itself.¹³⁸

The new colonial Soviet policy brought changes to the local interethnic specificity. Again, in the history of Chernivtsi, there was a lack of a dominant national group. Ukrainians could not satisfy their cultural needs, Russians (although the language was dominant) were outnumbered and local Jews mostly from 1970 until 1980 emigrated to Israel, the United States and Western Europe.¹³⁹ The new distinction in the population was established according to native and newcomers status. Most of the immigrants from other parts of the Soviet Union (especially of Jewish nationality) did not know the local traditions and specificities and brought with themselves the domination of Russian and soviet culture. This situation resulted in ignoring the local, native population's national interests.

When it comes to institutional aspects of the functioning of nationalities in Chernivtsi, all ethnic groups lost the possibility of legal activity. The National Houses and other national cultural institutions were closed and the only way to manifest one's nationality in public was in the form of folklore and symbolic representation, but always in the context of subordination to the party regime.¹⁴⁰ In some cases – especially among Ukrainian students, manifestation of one's nationality resulted in repressions and punishments. Thus, although theoretically Chernivtsi still remained multinational, and as Anatolij Kruglaschov ironically

city and its buildings where the old Austrian symbols are replaced by the new Soviet one connected with party rule and laborer movement.

¹³⁷ Hirsch and Spitzer, *Ghosts of Home*. Scherzer, *While the Gods Were Salient. Growing up Under Fascists and Communists*.

¹³⁸ Krughlaschov, „Interethnic relations stability on the Ukraine-Romania border: a case of Chernivtsi region”, 308.

¹³⁹ Krughlaschov, „Chernivtsi: (ne)porozuminnja mix spadshynuju ta spadkoemcjamy.” [Chernovtsi (mis)understanding between heritage and inheritance]”, 27.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 28.

suggests – again in the history of Chernivtsi ethnic balance was created, in practice any kind of national activity was ignored and was possible only in the narrow aspect of the party's permission.¹⁴¹

3.4 The complicated Ukrainian-Romanian neighborhood

Since 1991, the territory of Northern Bukovina faced several transformations of its ethnonational specificity. First of all, it became an arena of border disputes between Romania and Ukraine. Secondly, relations between the two countries were influenced by the issue of ethnic minorities and finally the grass root cooperation in the form of euroregions. All transitions occurred in the context of demographic change, namely the further migration of most of the Jewish citizens abroad and mass labor migration to West European countries. Although the ethnonational situation in the region immediately following Ukraine's independence was quite dense, still it needs to be stressed that all changes appeared in a rather peaceful and tolerant way.¹⁴²

On the 24th of June, 1991, the Romanian Parliament approved the “Declaration of The Romanian Parliament as to the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact and its Consequence for the Country”.¹⁴³ According to this, it was suggested that the country should return to the Romanian lands integrated as a result of the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact, including Bessarabia, the Hertsa district and North Bukovina.¹⁴⁴ As the Romanian president Ion Iliescu stated, “We will insist on negotiations concerning sovereignty over the ‘ethnic’ Romanian lands, of North

¹⁴¹ Krughlaschov, „Interethnic relations stability on the Ukraine-Romania border: a case of Chernivtsi region”, 302.

¹⁴² For Anatolij Kruhlasov in the beginning of 1990s the cooperation between different national elites in Chernivtsi was possible because of their opposition to the Soviet heritage and politics. See: Anatolij Krughlaschov, „Troublesome neighborhood: Romania and Ukraine relationship”, *New Ukraine. A Journal of History and Politics* no 11 (2011): 114–124.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 118.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

Bukovina in particular which was received by the Ukraine as a result of the Soviet-German pact of 1940”.¹⁴⁵ Although criticized by Ukraine as against international law, Bucharest continued its policy. As a consequence, the Romanian parliament voted for the exclusion of the Romanian community in Northern Bukovina from participating in the referendum of independence in 1991. As Anatloji Kruglasov puts it, “the regional Cold War between Bucharest and Kyiv has started”.¹⁴⁶ As a result of external politics, some of the local Romanian elites boycotted the referendum on Ukraine’s independence. This act influenced both their relations with Ukrainian elites and had an impact on local Romanian-Ukrainian relations.¹⁴⁷ Nevertheless, at the beginning of 1992, Romania recognized Ukraine’s independence.¹⁴⁸ From this period two and to some extent contradictory policies were introduced by both states. On the one hand, through the fact that Romania established a new citizenship policy which granted Romanian (and European Union) citizenship to the citizens of Ukraine of Romanian origin or whose ancestors lived in the territory of Romania prior to 1940 up to three generations, the delicate issue of Kyiv – Bucharest relations suffered as well as there appeared the illegal passportization of ethnic Romanians in the region. On the other hand, there were several attempts to improve the Ukrainian-Romanian relations especially in the context of the situation of the Romanian minority in Bukovina.

The “Upper Prut” Euroregion established in 2000 as a multilateral cooperation between Ukraine-Romania-The Republic of Moldova served especially in the spheres of education and the cultural dimension.¹⁴⁹ At the beginning of the 2000s, Romania initiated the

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Krughlaschov, „Interethnic relations stability on the Ukraine-Romania border: a case of Chernivtsi region”, 310.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Krughlaschov, „Troublesome neighborhood: Romania and Ukraine relationship”, 119.

¹⁴⁹ Aurelian Lavric, „Romanian Ethnic Minority in Ukraine: Current Issues and Prospects of Survival”, *Ethnicity, Confession and Intercultural Dialogue at the European Union Eastern Border* Munich Personal RePEC Archive paper, no 44082 (2013): 179–190.

idea of opening a multicultural university in Chernivtsi.¹⁵⁰ However, the Ukrainian side postponed its establishment mainly because of the Romanian language character of the planned university and the lack of possible places on the local job market for students educated only in Romanian. Moreover, because of the financial and other formal problems (the recognition of diplomas), the idea has been postponed. In addition to the university, there was a plan to open a Romanian theater in the city (which also did not happen) and the request to return to the Romanian community the building of the former Romanian Palace of Culture.¹⁵¹ Thus, for Aurelian Lavric, the Romanian community of the Northern Bukovina region suffered from constant discrimination, and from 1991, it has been the victim of the Ukrainization policy.¹⁵² Although they have been guaranteed the Romanian education in several schools in the district and one high school in Chernivtsi, still the language itself is being marginalized in the public space. As Anatolij Kruglasov concludes, Bukovina slowly loses its multicultural character, and appeared to be a region of bi-ethnic (Romanian-Ukrainian) relations.¹⁵³

¹⁵⁰ A model for multicultural University in Chernivtsi was followed by the example of the University at Cluj-Napoca. See: Kruglaschov, „Interethnic relations stability on the Ukraine-Romania border: a case of Chernivtsi region”, 313. The same as very often in the literature, especially written by Romanian scholars, the policy of Romania towards Bukovina should resemble the Hungarian policy in Romania, see: Lavric, „Romanian Ethnic Minority in Ukraine: Current Issues and Prospects of Survival”..

¹⁵¹ The building has still not being return to the community. However, there is a plan to open a museum of Mihail Eminescu in this place in the near future.

¹⁵² Lavric, „Romanian Ethnic Minority in Ukraine: Current Issues and Prospects of Survival”.

¹⁵³ Kruglaschov, „Troublesome neighborhood: Romania and Ukraine relationship”.

CHAPTER 4: THE CONTEMPORARY SPECIFICITIES OF INTERETHNIC RELATIONS

In the last years of the existence of the Soviet Union, the ethnic question reappeared in the public space of Chernivtsi. This period is marked by two parallel processes, namely the constant nationalization of public space and the life of ordinary people from the point of Ukrainian state and on the other the slow revival of other national institutions, and raise of alternative visions of city's history produce by their elites.

Thus, I start the following chapter with a brief overview of the official Chernivtsi municipal policy towards nationalities in order to provide a context for local national institutional revival which has been observed in the city since 1991. Then I describe the most important sites of nationalizing through which the category of "Ukrainianess" became constantly marked both in the cityscape and in people's everyday. In the last part of the chapter, I outline competing national myths of Bukovina and Chernivtsi which entered the public space of the city and served as tools for local national elites in shaping their policy towards their own communities. Although in contrast to the nationalizing efforts of the Ukrainian state alternative national myths do not play such a significant role in the public space, still they are important aspects of especially national elite's activities in the city and their categorize imposed on ordinary people.

4.1 Politics of municipality

Although the "top-bottom" perspective (described in the previous chapter) suggests that the post-1991 changes in Bukovina region were caused by Ukrainian-Romanian struggles, it shows only one side of the interethnic "story" in contemporary Chernivtsi. Certainly, Romanians as a third nationality in the Northern Bukovina region (after Ukrainians

and Russians) has one of the biggest influences on local interethnic politics and relations.¹⁵⁴ However, when one looks at the process of the formulation of the modern multiethnic community in Chernivtsi from the “bottom-up” perspective, it is visible that both institutionally and culturally, many factors touched other communities such as Jews, Poles and Moldovans.

Officially, Chernivtsi’s city council stresses that one of its crucial aims is to protect the situation and aid the development of national minorities in the district and create the environment for the development of national institutions, which are directly responsible for strengthening national identities.¹⁵⁵ In the district, 25 national organizations operate, which are responsible for national language education, the promotion of traditions, and the protection of religious spheres. One of the most important aspects of the lives of minorities is education. Thus, in 85 schools, members of different nationalities have the possibility to learn their own language and traditions. This is especially visible in the case of Romanians, where in 82 schools in the district pupils have the possibility to attend classes in Romanian.¹⁵⁶ Moreover, in three schools in the district and one in Chernivtsi, pupils have the possibility to study Polish language and traditions. In the city there is also a Jewish school in which 60% of pupils have Jewish origin.¹⁵⁷ The national language education can be also fulfilled in some of the high schools in the city as well as at Jurji Fedkovych National University in Chernivtsi.

¹⁵⁴According to the mentioned census in 2001 among around 220 thousand citizens, there were 189,021 Ukrainians, 10,553 Russians, 10,553 Romanians, 1408 Poles and 1308 Jews and around 60 other smaller nationalities. All data from State Statistics Service of Ukraine, titled: “All-Ukrainian population census” conducted in 2001 <http://www.ukrcensus.gov.ua/ukr/notice/news.php?type=2&id1=21>, date of use 10.09.2012.

¹⁵⁵ <http://buktolerance.com.ua/wp-content/uploads/2010/02/broshura.pdf>, accessed date: 21.05.2013.

¹⁵⁶Thus, according to the situation in the year 2004/2005, in the district 17,60 percent of pupils study in Romanian, 81, 15 percent in Ukrainian and 1, 15 percent in Russian. See: <http://buktolerance.com.ua/wp-content/uploads/2010/02/broshura.pdf>, accessed: 21.05.2013.

¹⁵⁷By Jewish school I mean that it was established and financed by Ukrainian Jewish Organization which aim was to educate people of Jewish origin about their religious tradition and language. However, because of the good financial situation of the school as well as the high education level, the school is very popular in the city among other. To the issue of Jewish school I come back in later part of the thesis.

Next to education, the local municipality stresses its support for the cultural activity of institutions in the form of collective events and festivals connected mostly with folklore and literary traditions. Such examples are the commemoration of the death of Romanian writer Mihail Eminescu, the Romanian festival of Spring “Mercishor”, meetings in memorial places connected with the tragic events of the Jewish community during the Second World War, and victims of the Stalinist regime. Moreover, Chernivtsi took part in the international folklore festival “Bukovinian meetings,” which was also held in Romania, Poland and Hungary.

The communication issues are fulfilled by 28 printed periodicals which are published in the district. Twenty of them belong to the Romanian community. However, most of them are bi or even trilingual (Ukrainian-Romanian-Russian). Almost every national institution has its own magazine which is distributed mostly by the National Houses themselves or through local press shops. Moreover in local television 36,1 hours per month are dedicated to national language programs.¹⁵⁸

Officially, in Chernivtsi among 99 different non-governmental organizations, 21 institutions operate dedicated to the national life of its citizens. Among them are six which refer to the Romanian community, four to Jewish, one to Polish, two to Ukrainian as well as to Russian and others are directed to Belarusian, Azerbaijan, Armenian and German communities. For Ukrainians, Jews, Romanians and Poles, four nationalities which are historically bound with the city, the most important institutions are the so-called National Houses.¹⁵⁹ Although they are perceived as the most prestigious national organizations, in most cases they are not very active and other institutions to some extent replaced them. Thus, for example, for Poles the local Catholic Church is the most important point of meetings, Jews are divided into several smaller circles along religious and social lines, for Romanians the

¹⁵⁸ Among which 35,5 hours for Romanian language, 0,2 for Polish and Yiddish – 0,3 hour. See: <http://buktolerance.com.ua/wp-content/uploads/2010/02/broshura.pdf>, date of use: 21.05.2013.

¹⁵⁹ They were all established during the Austro-Hungarian time. However, throughout the Soviet period they did not work.

local Orthodox church seems to be more important and most of the Ukrainians I talked with do not see the point of having their own national institution. As Sasha, one of my Chernivtsi's friends, concludes *although you have all these institutions, they do not produce anything significant – it looks like they are and in the same time they are not*. I come back to these organizations in a later part of my thesis where I discuss individuals' motivation in joining their activity.

4.2 Marking “Ukrainianess”

Beside the national institutions, which are the places where members of particular nationalities gather (but it is not always the case), in Chernivtsi there are no ethnically marked places. One cannot say “I am going to a Jewish restaurant” or “visit the Romanian barber” mostly because these kind of places do not exist. This lack of ethnically marked places can be determined by the widespread status of Ukrainian and Russian languages in all kinds of public spheres. The same is the case of the territorial dimension of the city. In the past, especially during the Austro-Hungarian period, ethnicity was partially territorialized in the city.¹⁶⁰ The upper part (today's city center) was inhabited by members of the high-status Jewish and German communities, while the lower part was mostly occupied by poor and religious Jews.

In the city nowadays, ethnicity is not territorialized, which was stressed by one of my interlocutors while describing the situation of the Romanian community. All nationalities live together, do their shopping in the same places, go to the same restaurants (which represents *Bukovinian cuisine* rather than any national cuisine), pubs, doctors and lawyers, use the same public transport, and in all cases, Ukrainian and Russian are the most frequent languages.

¹⁶⁰Hanna Skorejiko, „Do istorji peredmist Chernivtsiv: socjalnij ta etnichnyji aspekt [The History of Chernivtsi's suburbs: social and ethnic aspects]”, in *Chernivtsi v kontekstki urbanistychnych procesiv Centralnoi ta Schidnoi Evropy XVIII-XX st. [Chernivtsi in the context of urbanization processes of Central and Eastern Europe]* (Chernivtsi: Zelena Bukovyna, 2008), 101–110.

Once, Oksana described to me the problem of one of her former students who was Romanian by origin. This girl faced a huge problem by learning the Ukrainian language at university. Through a huge effort, she learned Ukrainian and managed to obtain her degree in psychology (mostly because of the part-time studies in Romania as well). When she came back to the city, Oksana suggested that she open an office for the local Romanians as there is no psychologist in Chernivtsi who speaks in Romanian, and Romanians are the third largest nationality after Ukrainians and Russians in the city. Although the girl followed her advice, she faced another difficulty. She did not know how to get access to the individuals who speak Romanian, as she stressed that *there are no Romanian places in the city where she could even leave her card*.

Since independence, in the official rhetoric of municipality, the category of “Ukrainianess” is constantly marked. Although recently in particular local politics turned into the cosmopolitan myth, still it serves particular “Ukrainian” interests. As it is stressed by the municipality, each of the nationalities has a right to organize itself in forms of associations which then should bear the educational and cultural aspects of the everyday life of people. In this sense, ethnicity is being closed in institutional circles and as such does not enter a public sphere. Nonetheless, in the official rhetoric of the municipality one can find a kind of pride that Chernivtsi both used to be such a diverse city and still to some extent remains so. It is visible especially in the cityscape in which one can find asymmetries between different national representations.

One of the first monuments which was raised after independence was in commemoration of Paul Celan, a prominent German-Jewish poet who used to live in Chernivtsi during the Austro-Hungarian time. However, it is located in the periphery of the city center and looks rather neglected. The main square which is located next to the town hall is reserved for a huge monument of Taras Shevchenko, a prominent national Ukrainian poet,

one of the most influential figures in building the modern Ukrainian nation.¹⁶¹ Behind the monument there is a huge banner which provides the first written information about Chernivtsi from 1408 and a number of Ukrainian flags. The information and the significant presence of the monument create an obvious link between establishing the city and building the Ukrainian national consciousness. What is even more important, the small square next to Taras Shevchenko's monument is a place for almost each national holiday, nationalist demonstration, and a number of other public events. Although in the upper part of the city center there is a much bigger and more suitable place for this kind of events square ("Soborna square"), it is a rather neglected. There, the monument commemorating Soviet soldiers in the Second World War is situated.

The same asymmetries can be found in streets names. The municipality claims that the streets names reflect the influence of all nationalities in the development of the city. However, the most important and prestigious streets in the center are named after prominent Ukrainian individuals: *Kobylanska* street, *Kotljarebskoho* street, *Lesi Ukrainki* street, *Ivanka Franka* street, while all those which refer to others (*Mihail Eminesku* street, *Sholom Aleheim* street, *Turecka* street and so on) are rather small streets located in the city center or in its peripheries.

An interesting source of investigating the ethnically framed marking in the cityscape is from memorial boards. However, one should note that although they are quite visible and important for an outside person, for locals very often they are an unnoticed element of the cityscape. As I indicated through my survey conducted with my students during Polish classes that I held in Chernivtsi, they very rarely know the history of the city's architecture and particular buildings, such as theaters, concert halls, schools and churches as well as other aspects of the cityscape like streets and squares. Thus, in the case of memorial boards, they very rarely read them and know the individuals who are commemorated. However, for the

¹⁶¹ See Appendices 1.1 and 1.2

fieldworker who tries to understand the phenomena of ethnicity in Chernivtsi, the way in which memorial boards are ethnically marked or not can be a useful point of analysis.

In most of the cases memorial boards commemorate Ukrainian and Romanian artists and writers who used to live in the city or performed here. In their cases there is almost always information written in both Romanian and Ukrainian. Only a small number of memorial boards commemorate the Jewish origin of the mentioned person. However, in several cases, even if it is well known that a commemorated person was Jewish in origin, there is no sign about it. Through my own exploring of the cityscape of Chernivtsi, I have not found any memorial board which would indicate a person of Polish nationality.

When it comes to memorial boards, one of the most interesting examples is the building of the concert hall.¹⁶² There can be found four different memorial boards placed next to each other. The first one commemorates Mykola Vitalijovich Lysyenko “a well known Ukrainian composer who performed in the hall on the 4th to the 8th of May 1905”; the second – informs about the event which happened on the 20th of March 1917 “when were chosen deputies to the local garrison” (on the board are presented peasant and labor symbols); the third one presents the sculpture of an artist and the information that “from 1945 till 1983 in this building work merited artist of Ukraine – Sida Tal”; the fourth one commemorates Nazariy Yaremchuk “a national Ukrainian artists who has worked in the concert hall since 1973.” In the two cases that mentioned Lysyenko and Yaremchuk – “Ukrainian” is a marked category, stressing the importance of artists in the Ukrainian national culture. An interesting element is visible on the Sida Tal memorial board. The information about her is written in both Ukrainian and Yiddish – which can suggest the Jewish origin of the artist. In the case of 1917s memorial boards, they are clearly references to the Soviet symbols. It is hard to point

¹⁶² See Appendix 1.3

out when the mentioned boards were established. However, I can assume that besides the 1917 commemoration they were all built after 1991. Mostly because before this time, using national categories in the city markings could be perceived as not politically correct; in three of them “Ukraine” is used as the most important indicator (and not Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) and last but not least the importance of some of the artists raised after 1991 as in the case of Nazarij Yaremchuk.

The second interesting place one can find is the local cinema “Chernivtsi.” In the Austrian past it used to be the Tempel, the most important Jewish reformist synagogue in the city which was burnt down in 1941. Although there is no visible sign about this place on the facade, inside is located a small memorial board which commemorates both the synagogue, which used to be here, and Josef Schmidt – a well known singer.¹⁶³ Next to the drawing of the synagogue and portrait of the artist is written: “Chernivtsi’s synagogue built in 1877 by the architect Zaharevich. Here between 1910-20s performed the well-known Bukovinian artist singer Josef Schmidt (1904-1942). The synagogue was burnt down by fascist in 1941.” On the board, an important element forms dates of the establishment and the destruction of synagogues which are also marked according to the Jewish calendar. The interesting feature here is that the marked category is *bukovinian* which expresses a kind of regional identification of the artist.¹⁶⁴ It was only my friend who informed me that Josef Schmidt was actually Jewish in origin and his life is very much connected with the Second World War (he died somewhere in Switzerland while he was trying to escape from the Nazis to the United States). Here again, the only markers of the “Jewishness” of the artist one can assume from the German sound of his name but even more from the character of the written information, in

¹⁶³ See Appendix 1.4

¹⁶⁴ This is the only memorial board I found that *Bukovinian* appears as a marked national category.

which the life of Josef Schmidt is placed between the establishment and demolition of the synagogue.

Examples of different ethnic markers can be found all around the city center. In most of the cases, they were raised after 1991 and “Ukrainianess” is the most frequent marked category. In other cases, “Romanianess” or “Jewishness” are hidden, unmarked categories which one can assume from the place they are raised (such as synagogues), the sound of names (Popovici), the presence of languages other than Ukrainian or simply the knowledge of the biography of the particular person. In their cases other expressions are used, for example “bukovinian” or “artist of Ukraine.” However, in the case of the Romanian marked places, there are some examples – especially of national writers where “Romanianess” is a marked category – as in the case of the memorial board of Mihail Eminescu and the composer Cyprian Porumbescu. However, in the case of Eminescu, the information is written only in Ukrainian while in the case of Porumbescu, in Ukrainian and Romanian.

One of the most significant events in contemporary Chernivtsi was the city center’s revitalization, which took place in 2008. The municipality decided to revitalize the city center and completely reconstruct the main squares to celebrate its 600 anniversary. Within a few months, three squares and one street were transformed from a traffic junction to a pedestrian zone with new paving, benches, numerous garden cafes, restaurants and exclusive shops. These new revitalized places became one of the most powerful symbols of the new urban life in Chernivtsi. Although I do not have a place here to discuss this process in detail, two important elements should be stressed; first, the image of the city which was created by the municipality in the process of revitalization and secondly the ordinary people’s perception of it.

All the revitalized places were connected with the Austrian heritage of the city. All streets and squares were built at that time and were important points for different nationalities.

However, in the local municipal newspaper, namely “Chernivtsi”, there was a short history of restored place with old photos included in every issues.¹⁶⁵ However, all of the renovated places are connected with the different ethnic groups who used to inhabit them (Philharmonic square was a German market, Turkish square known for its Jewish ritual bath, and Kobylanska street had been widely used by local elites; city hall was a place of quite multiethnic governments in different periods.) In the newspaper, surprisingly, one can find information proving the “Ukrainianesses” of places. Each of these places were connected with prominent Ukrainians or events important for Ukrainian nation-building. There was little to no information on the “Jewishness”, “Germaness”, “Romanianess” or “Polishness” of these places. Although the city was renovated due to the local cosmopolitan myth (so only places connected with the Austro-Hungarian period were restored), the general idea behind this was to build a Ukrainian identity of particular places.

However the marking of “Ukrainianess” and national asymmetries did not only refer to the rise of Ukrainian institutions, education system (provided in Ukrainian) and described changes in the cityscape, but also in public events. In this regard, one of the most important events which occurred in Chernivtsi in the beginning of the 1990s was the “Chervona Ruta” Music Festival. It is perceived as one of the most important and first festivals promoting Ukrainian language and culture and presenting alternative visions of historiography to the Soviet one.¹⁶⁶ Surprisingly, the festival was organized in Chernivtsi which, until the mid of 1980s, was almost 90 percent Russian speaking. “Chervona Ruta” was the name of a popular love song written by Volodymyr Ivasiuk, one of the icons in Ukrainian pop culture. Although the festival promoted different kinds of rock music, it stresses the importance of Ukrainian folk music. Moreover, each song was presented in Ukrainian and very often referred to

¹⁶⁵ These information came from my research in city’s archive during the second phase of my fieldwork from May 2010 till February 2011.

¹⁶⁶ Catherine Wanner, *Burden of dreams: history and identity in post-Soviet Ukraine*, Post-Communist cultural studies (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), 123.

Ukrainian independence. It was like a few days of celebrating Ukrainian culture, traditions and language.¹⁶⁷

Another important collective event, which stressed the “Ukrainian” identifications, appeared 15 years later. The Orange Revolution is remembered by many of my interlocutors as one of the unique examples in the modern history of Chernivtsi where all social and national circles were united. It was a time of great hopes and strong feelings connected with the transformation of Ukraine’s political system and pro-European orientation of the country.

4.3 Politics of remembrance

In the beginning of 1991, national elites in Chernivtsi faced not only problems of external state policy and the institutional rise in the city, but first of all the struggle to build the national identity of their communities. For decades not only the organizational option of their activity was measured but also local cultural specificity was disturbed. Several emigration waves of local Jews to Western Europe, Israel and United States, Jewish immigration to the city from other parts of the Soviet Union, emigration of local Poles and Romanians are just a few characteristics of the demographic changes which occurred in Chernivtsi throughout the Soviet period. In the beginning of 1991 the national elites of Chernivtsi faced the problem of creating their own national myths and thus building a unique culture for their own communities.

Nostalgic and antinostalgic visions can be found in the physical spaces of city ruins, construction sites, renovations, heritage places, in concrete buildings and architectural style. The urban landscape is the product of city planners, architects, politicians but also writers and scholars. In this sense, a very interesting process can be observed in the post-socialist part of

¹⁶⁷ The importance of the “Chervona Ruta” festival was stressed by several of my interlocutors.

Europe. It is almost a wave of constant “filling of black holes”, discovering the past or inventing new traditions.

Anthony Smith distinguishes three kinds of the so-called “Golden Age myth.”¹⁶⁸ The first one refers to political and military expansion, the second to inviolability and purity, and the third one to the cult of beauty and intellect, philosophy and creativity. Georg Schöpfunglin in his typology of myths he investigates the relations between nation and territory. He stresses the importance of the myth about territory and ethnogenesis as one of the most important ones.¹⁶⁹ In contrast, Andrew Wilson claims that the most significant is the “Myth about Home” understood as historical right for possessing a certain place.¹⁷⁰

To translate the variations of the “cosmopolitan myth” into nationalist ideology two things are highlighted. The first one is the belief that one’s own nation is in the center of the universe and the second one’s own nation is the first one on a given land.¹⁷¹ Such myths served the nation’s claim to be the most important in their land, have the right for their own state and in consequence stress one’s own significance and uniqueness. However, in order to stress all these points, a nation needs to have a point of reference in the form of a significant Other. The Other here is always less developed, backward and left in the margin.

As Vangeli points out, “through the narrative of the glorious past and the historically unjustified degraded present, nationalist leaders mobilize the masses”.¹⁷² Thus the constant (re)use of cosmopolitan myths requires the process of rereading history, remembering the past and writing the future.

The Austro-Hungarian period in the history of Chernivtsi became the most important for Germans, Jews and to some extent Poles, who culturally dominated in the city at that time.

¹⁶⁸ Anthony D. Smith, „The ‘Golden Age’ and National Renewal”, in *Myths and nationhood*, 36–59.

¹⁶⁹ George Schöpfunglin, „The Function of Myth and a Taxonomy of Myths”, in *Myths and nationhood*, 19–35.

¹⁷⁰ Andrew Wilson, „Myths of National History in Belarus and Ukraine”, in *Myths and nationhood*, 182–197.

¹⁷¹ Jan Stanisław Bystroń, *Megalomania Narodowa [The National Megalomania]* (Książka i Wiedza, 1995).

¹⁷² Anastas Vangeli, „Nation-building ancient Macedonian style: the origins and the effects of the so-called antiquization in Macedonia”, *Nationalities Papers* 39, no 1 (January 2011): 14.

For Ukrainians, the cosmopolitan myth serves particular national interests in proving their primacy in Bukovina's lands. However for Romanians the time of Greater Romania remained the most relevant. Although the myth of "Romanian historical lands" was significant especially in the first half of the 1990s, mostly because of Romanian state politics towards Bukovina, later it was marginalized by the cosmopolitan myth of Czernowitz, first established outside the city and later implemented by local elites. Thus in this part of the following subchapter I describe the way through which the cosmopolitan myth entered the public discourse in Chernivtsi. First it was constituted as a literary construct mostly by foreign writers, then was easily implemented by Jews who originated from the city and as such influenced the newly established Jewish organizations in the city. Although being especially strong around Jewish discourse of the city, it was to a lesser extent implemented by some of Ukrainian and Polish elites.

4.3.1 Czernowitz as a literary construct

The Land between "East and West," the "Switzerland of the East," the "European citadel," the "last Atlantis of Europe," "little Vienna of the East," "Jerusalem on Prut river", and finally "a city of books and thinkers" are only a few examples of how Czernowitz and the Bukovyna region are described in mainstream literature.¹⁷³

The Austrian city Czernowitz used to be the host of prominent Jewish, Romanian and Ukrainian writers who lived there. They were the first group who shaped the cosmopolitan image of the city. As Karl Emil Franzos concluded in 1876, Bukowina is 'Half-Asia': a place where one encounters European culture alongside Asian barbarism, Western progress next to

¹⁷³ See: Corbea-Hoisie, *Czernowitzer Geschichten. Über eine städtische Kultur in Mittel(Ost)Europa*. [The history of Czernowitz. Urban Culture in Central and Eastern Europe]; Deutsches Kulturforum östliches Europa, „Nach Czernowitz [To Chernivtsi]”, in *Mythos Czernowitz: eine Stadt im Spiegel ihrer Nationalitäten* (Deutsches Kulturforum östliches Europa, 2008), 1–13; Shevchenko, *Chernovetskaya Antlantyda [The Chernivtsi Atlantis]*.

Eastern indolence, and where there exists ‘neither bright day or dark night but rather an eerie twilight’,¹⁷⁴ Czernowitz became well-known because of the poetry of Paul Celan and Rosa Ausländer – two Jewish authors who were forced to emigrate during the Second World War. Later, it started to be perceived as “the Jerusalem on Prut river,” mostly because of the ethnic structure of its citizens, then “little Vienna on the East” in admiration of its architecture, and finally “a small universe, urban culture, the fascination of café,” stressing that there was a bigger number of cafes than bakeries.¹⁷⁵

The myth continued during the Soviet era and was repeated mostly by foreign writers, publicists and politicians. Just to name a few examples, Zbigniew Herbert, a Polish poet who had never been to Chernivtsi, concluded in one of the interviews that Chernivtsi is the last “European city,” Hans Prelitsch described it as a multi-national, multi-religious symbiosis, a model for a united Europe, and Oskar Beck called it “the Switzerland of the East” just to mention few examples.¹⁷⁶ Thus, according to Leslie Morris, Czernowitz is first of all a “literary construct,” “a place that is both heavily remembered and, at the same time, forgotten” which came into being in popular discourse about the vanished Jewish world in the Habsburg Empire written in the post-War perspective.¹⁷⁷

At the beginning of the 1990s, Czernowitz started to be rediscovered also by local elites. A number of books were published in reference to the Austrian-Jewish heritage of the city and the Museum of the History and Culture of Bukowinian Jews was opened. The most powerful cosmopolitan myth refers to the time when it belonged to the Austro-Hungarian Empire (1775-1918).¹⁷⁸ At that time, the city became a significant center of the eastern Crown

¹⁷⁴ Europa, „Nach Czernowitz [To Chernivtsi]”, 5.

¹⁷⁵ Shevchenko, *Chernovetskaya Antlantyda [The Chernivtsi Atlantis]*.

¹⁷⁶ Czyzewski, *Linia powrotu. Zapiski z pogranicza [The Line of return. Notes from a borderland]*.

¹⁷⁷ Leslie Morris, „Translating Czernowitz: The « Non-Place » of East Central Europe”, *STUDIES IN TWENTIETH AND TWENTY FIRST CENTURY LITERATURE* 31, no 1 (2007): 187.

¹⁷⁸ Thus in reference to the cosmopolitan myth of Chernivtsi in the time of its belonging to the Austro-Hungarian Empire, I used the city’s name at that time – Czernowitz.

Land of the Empire, inhabited mostly by Germans and German speaking Jews.¹⁷⁹ This last group formed the majority of the city's population and as for them it was the high point of its cultural development. Thus, the Austro-Hungarian period provided the fundamentals for how the city's space looks today and shaped its cultural magnificence during the 19th century.

The newly established myth stressed not only the significance of a particular period in the city's history but also the domination of most important nationalities at that time, namely Germans and Jews. At the same time putting into shadows the existence and importance of Romanians.

4.3.2 Jewish vision of the city

One of the first groups who reused this myth were Jews who gathered around the Czernowitz mailing list (known as the Czernowitz-L), whose members (or ancestors) originated from the city. The list was first established as a discussion group known as "Sadagoran's United" in 1997.¹⁸⁰ The group grew in size and finally expanded to include Czernowitz and even the rest of Bukovyna. Since 2002, the group turned into an 'e-list' (listserv-based) discussion group, known as Czernowitz-L. In the early summer of 2002, the group consisted of 28 subscribers and has grown to over 350 today. However, Czernowitz-L is not only a virtual community; its members who are very often close friends and visit each other occasionally. Moreover, since 2006 two main reunions of the whole group were held – one in Chernivtsi (in 2006) and the second in Tel-Aviv (2007). Also, almost every year members of the group visit Chernivtsi and try to influence local politics towards the German-

¹⁷⁹ See Appendix 2.

¹⁸⁰ Sadagora used to be a separate village next to Chernivtsi, which became a Hasidic center before the Second World War. Nowadays, it is a part of administrative borders of the city of Chernivtsi.

Jewish heritage of the city.¹⁸¹ Nowadays, the activity of the group members is divided into three main areas: the website, the blog (or rather several blogs) and the mailing list.

The main website of Czernowitz-L can be the source of almost every aspect of everyday life in Czernowitz, and individuals' perception of the city, its culture and history.¹⁸² The website consists of several elements connected with genealogical research, collection of photos, postcards and maps of pre-War Czernowitz, short bios of the group members and information about projects undertaken by list members.

First of all, the website is dominated by the image of Czernowitz. One can find there a huge collection of postcards showing the most important and representative buildings of the Austrian city, such as national houses (symbols of the peaceful coexistence of many minorities in Czernowitz and Bukovyna), a small but stylish building of the local theater (a symbol of "high culture") and finally the Temple – the most significant for local Jews, a reformist synagogue which was established in the city at the beginning of the 20th century. In pictures and postcards one can find clean, cobblestone streets with well-dressed people walking next to beautiful Austrian architecture.

The old photos are compared with the present day images of the following places: demolished and left in ruin synagogues, Jewish schools and hospitals, fashionable restaurants and hotels. The present Chernivtsi does not have much in common with past Czernowitz – a city which one was proud to belong to. The only link between these two is the local Jewish cemetery- the material sign that Czernowitz used to be a Jewish city and that the members of Czernowitz-L have a real link between them and the city. Thus, next to the old photo

¹⁸¹ The members of Czernowitz-L in 2011 established organization, called: 'Organization for Restoration of Jewish Cemetery in Chernivtsi' which aim is to gather funds, clean and restore the Jewish cemetery in Chernivtsi. They also tried to influence the shape of the future Museum of History and Culture of Bukovinian Jews (established finally in 2008).

¹⁸² www.czernowitz.ehpes.com, accessed August 28, 2011.

collection, the pictures from the cemetery are the most important and common representations of the city.

Next to the website, the members of the Czerowitz-L are authors of several blogs published on a variety of topics: from the Czernowitz Art Gallery, which promotes artists who originated from Czernowitz to the Czernowitz Cook Book, which is a collection of people's grandma recipes in which a particular dish has its name in "czernowitzen" and cannot be found in Vienna, Lviv or any other place.¹⁸³

Another even more important platform for exchange between the group's members is the mailing-list. Everyday around 20 posts are sent to the connected members on a variety of topics. The most important and common are genealogical questions – whether any list member knows if a particular person originated from Czernowitz, their classmates, piano teacher, neighbor and so on; questions related to the cityscape – whether anyone remembers where the schools, the hospital, shop, association, synagogue were; and finally, possible trips to Chernivtsi (one of the most important topics was the opening of the renovated airport in Chernivtsi and possible connections with Israel). Some of the list members write their poems about the greats of Czernowitz, some inform about their trips to the city, its present condition (especially the condition of the cemetery) and local politics (such as change of the city council, the work of the Jewish museum) and so on. Although being scattered throughout the world, a huge part of the group is constantly discussing issues connected to both Czernowitz and Chernivtsi – however the latter is in the context of the resemblance of the Jewish heritage.

Another important part of the life of the members of Czernowitz-L besides being engaged in online activity are the constant visits to the present Chernivtsi in the form of root

¹⁸³ There are many websites which presents variety of interests of the members of Czernowitz-L, for example: <http://czernowitz.ehpes.com/>, <http://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/sadgura/ReischToronto.html>, <http://www.museumoffamilyhistory.com/>, <http://czernowitz.ehpes.com/cookbook/cookbook.pdf>.

tourism and heritage travels.¹⁸⁴ However, one should be careful in calling these activities “homecomings”¹⁸⁵, namely because the present city of Chernivtsi is not a point of reference to the members of Czernowitz-L. Although they walk on its streets, and sit in the cafes and restaurants, the city they perceive is a subjectively constructed Czernowitz. In the contemporary building of the Privat bank they see the *Zum Schwarzen Adler* restaurant, in the dormitory they see the most glorious and fancy *Hotel Bristol* and finally they still use Austrian names to describe the city’s topography. The Main Square is called the Ringplatz, Soborna square – Austrianplatz, just to mention a few examples.

The usage of Austrian topography is another aspect of the members’ attachment to the idea of Czernowitz, even though many of them were born during the Romanian time, the dominance of German as an everyday language and the appreciation of high culture produced by the “city of books and writers”¹⁸⁶ form the most important elements in visualizing and constructing their imagined homeland. The present citizens of Chernivtsi can barely recognize not only places connected with the glory of Czernowitz, but also any German-named aspects of the topography. There exist almost two languages describing two different images, and actually two different cities in one contemporary cityscape.

First the activity of the Czernowitz-L influenced local intellectuals who started to rediscover the Jewish past of the city. Nataliya, one of the most engaged persons in the establishing of the Jewish Museum in Chernivtsi, explained the process of finding Jewish marks in the city: *I started to collect all those Jewish artifacts but I did not know where they all come from. And then I started to read about the history of Chernivtsi and I discovered that all the buildings next to us [in the city center] belonged to Austrian-Jews. That it was their*

¹⁸⁴Ruth Ellen Gruber, *Virtually Jewish: reinventing Jewish culture in Europe* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

¹⁸⁵Fran Markowitz, „Ethnic Return Migrations—(Are Not Quite)—Diasporic Homecomings”, *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* 16, nr 2 (2007): 234–242.

¹⁸⁶Petro Rykhlo, *Shibboleth. Poszuki jęwejskiej identyczności w niemieckomowej poezji Bukowyny [Shibboleth. The search of Jewish identity in German literature of Bukovyna]* (Chernivtsi: Zelena Bukovyna, 2008).

city. The Jewish Museum was opened in 2008 on the 600 anniversary of the first written information about Chernivtsi and one hundred years after the famous conference on the importance of Yiddish held in the city. The main exhibits came from Joseph Zissels prominent Jewish activist who originated from the city. The exhibition in the museum highlights the glory and significance of Bukovinian Jews during the Austrian time, presents briefly the Holocaust in the region and as for now omits the Soviet time of Chernivtsi's Jewry. One of its most interesting projects is a map "Jewish Chernivtsi. Unforgotten image" in which all places connected with Jewish culture of Austrian Chernivtsi are marked. Among them are not only synagogues, schools, associations but also the town hall (because one of the mayors was Jewish). What is interesting until recently the Jewish map was the only such example of identifying the ethnic marking of the cityscape. However, in 2012 the Ukrainian National house published a brochure "The Multicultural Chernivtsi" in which it includes seven separate maps of Chernivtsi devoted to: Armenian, Jewish, German, Polish, Russian, Romanian and Ukrainian communities and their significant places in the city. It is a unique example in Chernivtsi, while normally each national institution addresses its work to its own group and rarely one can find any kind of cooperation between them.¹⁸⁷

Although the museum is dedicated to the culture of Bukovinian Jews, it does not have much contact with local Jewish population and organizations. Local Jews rarely visit it and seem not be engaged in its activity. It seems like the museum is directed more to outsiders, namely tourists and scholars than to local people.

¹⁸⁷ I come back to the multicultural project led in the Ukrainian National House in later part of my thesis.

4.3.3 Bukovinian Poles

Poles have never been a significant group in the history of Chernivtsi, the same as Bukovina does not have a very particular place in Polish historiography.¹⁸⁸ Also in the contemporary city, in comparison to other minorities, the Polish community is not so well developed. They have only two institutions, namely the “Adam Mickiewicz Association of Polish culture in Chernivtsi district” (known as the Polish National House) and to some extent the Catholic Church.

At the moment, as was stressed by both the president of the Polish National House, Władysław Strutyński, and other members of the association it does not work very actively. The activity is centered around the organization of a folkloric festival “Bukovinian meetings”, meetings for people who want to obtain a Polish Card and publishes its own newspaper in Ukrainian and Polish financed by the Polish Government. “Gazeta Polska Bukowiny” (“The Polish Newspaper of Bukovina”) has been published since 1883. It discusses the most important events in the everyday life of the community, its traditions and the most prominent individuals. However, one category is marked throughout the issues, mainly “Bukovinian”. “My Dear Poles! My Dear Bukovinians!”, “Bukovinian Polish Diaspora”, “Bukovinian traditions”, “Bukovinian cuisine” to mention just a few expressions in which the category of “Bukovina” appears in the newspapers. “In the heart of every Bukoviner lies saintly words, spell with respect: mother, soil, homeland, family, Bukovina”.¹⁸⁹ In this sense it became visible that “Bukovinian” is created as a sort of regional identity which is supposed to dominate over Ukrainian, Polish or any other national category. “Bukovinian” is something attached to the individual, their family and tradition so those aspects of everyday life which

¹⁸⁸ For example in comparison to Galicia which used to be a part of Poland until the Second World War and which for a long time was in the center of Polish national mythology.

¹⁸⁹ Gazeta Polska Bukowiny no 13-14/2018.

are the most intimate. The category of “Bukovianian” can be understood as a part of the cosmopolitan myth discussed above. It was during the Austrian time when among the national elites the idea of “bukovinism” was raised, defined as local attachment and respect for diversity.¹⁹⁰ However, what is interesting, only Poles and Ukrainians use “Bukovinian” as a marked and important category. In the case of Jews, as I discuss above, “Czernowitz” seems to be the most important.

¹⁹⁰ I describe the most important aspects of “bukovinism” in the fourth chapter.

CHAPTER 5: THE MARKED AND UNMARKED ETHNIC CATEGORIES

Creating categories is one of the most fundamental human activity. Through it, individuals bring together social objects or events in groups in order to somehow orient them and the individual itself in a diverse world. Categories – the products of the categorization process – have several elements in common. They guide us in our daily life through the fact that they form large classes and clusters of similar features; they assimilate new elements into given clusters; because of them humans can identify unknown projects; and last but not least, given categories can have the same ideational and emotional aspect.¹⁹¹ Categories are fundamental aspects of our human world perception. They are very often automatic and work on the subconscious level. Thus normally, people rarely reflect on the way in which they categorize unknown elements or what is the nature of categories they already have.

A very interesting distinction between marked and unmarked categories is provided by Rogers Brubaker.¹⁹² The unmarked category is the normal, obvious, taken-for granted category, while the marked category is special, different or simply the “other.” For example, a category “woman” for a long time was a marked category, while “man” was unmarked. The same may happen in such spheres as ethnicity, race, sexuality, and so on. However, it should be stress that in some social situations, one category can be marked while in others unmarked. In the case of Chernivtsi and the everyday ethnicity approach, it is very important to understand this distinction. In some situations, such ethnic categories as “Romanian”, “Jewish”, “Polish”, “Ukrainian” are marked while in others they are unmarked – and other categories connected with social class, employment, age or gender are more visible.

¹⁹¹ Gordon W. Allport, *The nature of prejudice* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1958).

¹⁹² Brubaker, *Nationalist Politics and Everyday Ethnicity in a Transylvanian Town*, 207–238.

In the everyday life in Chernivtsi, one can distinguish two aspects in which marked and unmarked categories can be investigated. The first one appears in the ways how and when individuals stress them in their conversations, perceptions and social experience. Here, as I claim in a later part of the following chapter, ethnic categories are rarely present in the everyday life of individuals. However, when they appear, it is mostly in the form of ethnic stereotypes and prejudice. They play an important role in establishing the boundary, justifying the perceived position and ascribing a meaning of the group one thinks that belong to or in opposition to others group belonging.¹⁹³ Secondly, the cityscape itself, which is marked by “significant signs” connected with different visions of the city.

5.1 Everyday talks

In shops, restaurants, buses, and in any kind of usual informal conversation one can rarely hear individuals talking with each other about ethnicity. It looks like it is not a kind of topic which is relevant and significant on a daily basis. Labor markets, economic issues, buying necessary goods, complaining, gossiping seem to dominate in everyday talks.¹⁹⁴ The most important is that everywhere and with everyone, one can speak Ukrainian, Russian or in *surzyk*.¹⁹⁵ Ethnicity, if appears, seem to be a very sensitive topic for discussion, mostly because from Ukrainian point of view, “Romanians” and especially “Moldovans” are associated with lower status.

¹⁹³ Cornell and Hartmann, *Ethnicity and race*, 81.

¹⁹⁴ One of the most common topics for conversation, especially with me as a foreigner, was travelling and going abroad. People especially in my age complained how hard it is for them to go abroad (because of the visa regime) and how tired they are of living in Ukraine. Elderly people very often stressed that they used to work in Poland or they asked me about current political and economic issues connected with European Union accession. Very often, they asked me about the quality of roads in Poland (in order to complain about their own in Ukraine).

¹⁹⁵ *Surzyk* is the popular mix of Russian and Ukrainian (in most of the cases by using Russian words in Ukrainian grammatical structures). Both languages are very similar and belong to the same Slavic language family. Thus normally it does not pose a problem when in conversation one person use Russian and the other Ukrainian.

I assume that in almost all cases, “Ukrainianess” is an unmarked category for people in Chernivtsi. It is a natural and taken for granted category mostly because of the visibility and importance of Ukrainian language in daily life. It does not mean that everyone in Chernivtsi speaks this language. In many situations, it appears that Russian or *surzyk* is the most frequent language of conversation. It is quite common that individuals talk with each other by mixing Russian and Ukrainian (one can speak in Ukrainian and the other in Russian) and it looks like till the moment they can’t understand each others, language does not pose a problem.¹⁹⁶ However, in certain social situations, Ukrainian is perceived as a higher language in status than Russian and especially *surzyk*. The latter is perceived as a marker for a “foreign or outside status” of the individual, which associates him with peasantry and the so-called “low culture”. Oksana, one of my interlocutors, who can be perceived as member of the local Ukrainian elite, stressed that very often she reprimands others if they cannot use Ukrainian properly in public places (for example, in restaurants and shops) and calls for learning the language. Once she described to me the situation when she and her husband went to little cafeteria for a lunch. *There was this cute waiter but he couldn’t speak Ukrainian at all. Even his Russian was really bad. I didn’t know whether he is from Chernivtsi or from some village but once he annoyed so much (as he didn’t even understand my Ukrainian) that instead of giving him a tip, I wrote on the bill - Please, learn Ukrainian if you want to have customers! Since that moment, always when I enter the cafeteria, he welcomed me saying: ‘Dobrij den’ (Ukrainian expression to say Good morning) and smiling ironically but he doesn’t know more.* Almost in all the conversations when the problem of *surzyk* appears, it is always in the context

¹⁹⁶ I notice it in two kinds of situations. One in which, because of my knowledge of Ukrainian, I spoke in this language while my interlocutor used Russian. In most of the cases for this person it was not a problem to both understand me and prolong the discussion. However, it posed some difficulties for me as my understanding of Russian is not as good as Ukrainian. The second kind of situations are those when I heard people talking with each other by mixing both languages.

of newcomers in the city connected especially with the rural-urban migration and who are perceived to pose a danger to local high-level Ukrainian language and culture specificity.¹⁹⁷

Rarely, one can hear languages other than Ukrainian, Russian or *surzyk*. Sometimes, in public buses or bus stops, one can hear Romanian but it is reserved for private conversations and can be easily switched into Russian (when the interlocutor has changed). The usage of Romanian is also a complicated ethnic marker. Individuals using the language can be of Romanian origin from Romania or from Moldova. As one cannot find any visible differences between them, other categories seem to be helpful. Again, as in the case of newcomers, clothing especially (again black tracksuit and black shoes) is the most important marker for Moldovans who, by Ukrainians, are perceived as lower in status than Romanians.¹⁹⁸

Polish also cannot be heard in the public space. If one can hear it, it is more probable that the person using it is a tourist or an outsider than a local citizen. Although the local Catholic church is perceived as a 'Polish church' (mostly because of the Polish origin of local priests and the general association of Poles with Catholicism), Polish is not a language of the holy mass but Ukrainian. Moreover, in my communication with local people connected with Polish national institutions, in most of the cases I used Ukrainian (mostly because of the will of my interlocutors). Polish was reserved for the conversation with the priest (who is from Poland), with professor Strutyński who is the head of the Adam Mickiewicz Association of Polish Culture in Chernivtsi's district (known as the Polish National House) and lecturer at Yuriy Fedkovych National University in Chernivtsi and my local friend Sasha who is the translator of Polish literature into Ukrainian. In most other cases, and based on my teaching of classes held in a Catholic church, I can assume that most of people who identify themselves as

¹⁹⁷ Next to language, clothes (the popular black tracksuit) and ways of behaving (being too noisy, the uses of swear words and eating sunflower seeds) are perceived as the most common markers of both rural newcomers and Moldovans in the eyes of my interlocutors. However, I need to stress that "obvious" for my interlocutors differences in clothes and behavior were not so clear for me as I could not distinguish people in this sense and make any kind of "guessing" who might be who based on these "objective" elements.

¹⁹⁸ These kind of statements about Moldovans I heard from a number of my friends in Chernivtsi.

having Polish origin or ethnicity do not know the language well enough for a casual conversation. However, there were a couple of examples when Polish was a well preserved language but used only in private spheres.

5.1.1 The ethnic stereotypes and prejudices

Ethnically formed stereotypes and prejudices are one of the most common examples when ethnicity is marked in the everyday talks. According to Allport, “ethnic prejudice is an antipathy upon a faulty and inflexible generalization, it may be directed toward a group as a whole, or toward an individual because he is a member of that group”.¹⁹⁹ Ethnic prejudices are based on one’s perception of belonging to a particular ethnic group. One cannot understand prejudice and stereotypes without taking into consideration the social context in which they operate.²⁰⁰ They do not exist in a vacuum but are always contextual and I would add situational. First of all, attitudes and prejudice are shared by large groups; secondly they are directed towards others because of their belonging to a particular group; third the existence of prejudice is determined by the relationship between groups – one ascribes him or herself and categorizes the other. In this sense, “group” is not a given entity but also a cognitive domain which is established through the social contact of individuals.²⁰¹ In the case of ethnic prejudice, they appear because one finds it significant to identify with his or her ethnic belonging while the “Other” belongs to a different group. This group may be of higher/lower status, cause a threat to our own group, or maybe a group one wants to belong.

As was already suggested, prejudices do not work in a vacuum. On the contrary, they are group-based. Individuals express their prejudice against the background of their own

¹⁹⁹ Allport, *The nature of prejudice*, 10.

²⁰⁰ Michael Pickering, *Stereotyping: the politics of representation* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 17.

²⁰¹ Tajfel, *Human groups and social categories*, 254–267.

group membership (in-group) towards outsiders (out-group).²⁰² Thus, the basic distinction here is “Us” (those with whom we associate ourselves) and “Others” (those we believe are parts of the “other” group). Stereotypes and prejudices can have at least three dimensions: affective (in the form of emotional expression), cognitive (when they are formed as a result of the cognitive process) and behavioral one (in the case that an individual expresses his/her prejudice through behavior). According to the group-focused enmity approach, the function of prejudice is to legitimize and to explain the devaluation of the perceived groups and their members. In this sense they are a kind of response to and justification to an unequal world. We perceive the world as being divided into equal and unequal groups.²⁰³ Those who have lower or higher statuses are influential or let in the margins and so on. Thus, the fundament of prejudice is the need of belonging and positive self-esteem which are derived from this belonging.²⁰⁴ From the point of view of social-identity theory, and a fundament distinction on “self” and “other”, the need for positive self-esteem results in a negative social comparison to relevant out-groups. Thus individuals categorize themselves in terms of social identities, they evaluate their groups (the one they associate in particular moments) through the process of social intergroup comparisons, and last but not least, their goal is to achieve the positive self-esteem of their own group and thus themselves.²⁰⁵

Going back to the group-focused enmity approach, there are several syndromes which determine prejudice and are characteristic to almost each culture. However, they are all highly contextual and their strength depends on particular places, history, social structure and

²⁰² Andras Zick et al, „Prejudices and Group-Focused Enmity. A sociofunctional perspective,” in *Handbook of prejudice* (Amherst, NY: Cambria Press, 2009), 276.

²⁰³ Brown, *Prejudice*.

²⁰⁴ Andras Zick et al, „Prejudices and Group-Focused Enmity. A sociofunctional perspective,” 283.

²⁰⁵ Martha Augoustinos and Katherine J. Reynolds, red., „Prejudice as a Group Process: The Role of Social Identity”, in *Understanding prejudice, racism and social conflict* (London: SAGE Publications, 2001), 25.

so on. The first one is the threat to social status, then the feeling of insecurity, the perceived attacks on normalcy, and the changing power relations.²⁰⁶

As I suggested before from the point of view of Ukrainians, in the everyday talks in Chernivtsi two “groups” appear the most frequent victims of stereotyping talks. The first one mentioned “newcomers” connected mostly with recent rural-urban migration but also with the work on the open-air market (the so-called new nationalities in Chernivtsi such as Turks and Azerbaijanis), and Moldovans who because of the lack of knowledge of Ukrainian and the perceived “worse” behavior appeared the most frequently in everyday talks.

You know, the specificity of Chernivtsi is that you never make jokes about nationalities if you do not know the company. You never know if there are some Jewish, Moldavians, Romanians or Poles among your surrounding – answered Julia when I asked her about what she thinks is most special about the town and its multiethnic component. The statement shows on the one hand that the individual’s perception of the city as being diverse and on the other the local kind of sensitivity about talking about other groups, which is widely present in many situations. This sentence can also suggest that in some situations people are very cautious in choosing their friends. In the case of Julia, she almost always stresses that all her local friends are Ukrainians, by which she understands both that Ukrainian is their everyday language and that being Ukrainian is their most important identification. She told me once that the father of one of her friends was Romanian and that probably this friend (who I know personally) has a Romanian passport. But Julia stresses that she never talked about this with her. When I asked her why (and maybe this colleague is willing to talk with me), she answered that *I don’t want to ask her about these issues...you know, I can tell you... that here being Romanian is something people are ashamed of*. Two elements seem to be the most important in this

²⁰⁶ „Prejudices and Group-Focused Enmity. A sociofunctional perspective.”

statement. The first one is that ethnicity is a matter of prestige. There are “better” and “worse” ethnicities while Ukrainian, probably because of my interlocutor’s Ukrainian identification, is perceived as the better one. Secondly, one’s own ethnicity is a matter of more identification than origin. This friend of Julia, although having a Romanian father, was still not a Romanian in the eyes of my colleague probably because of the lack of strong identification. It appears in many social situations that people distinguish the ethnic origin and ethnic identification. Ethnic origin is something you can use (to get a citizenship, travel abroad, migrate) but it has rarely something in common with one’s own ethnic identification, which can be connected more with language and family traditions.

For Julia, the second “group” which is visible in Chernivtsi form “Moldovans”. They cannot dress properly, do not have any style (and these elements make them visible and distinguish in the cityscape). She also admits that she does not like to go to places which are popular among Moldovans. According to her, especially one local disco is a meeting point of Moldovans, who she described as *middle-aged, belly guys who wear leather jackets, play with their mobiles, drink too much and want to chat with young Ukrainian girls. This disco is not a good place to go.*

Julia’s knowledge about Moldovans and the “Moldovan disco” is rather a manner of stereotyping imagination that actual reality. In order to check Julia’s opinion, I visited this place once and as for me it was the same kind of disco as any other in Chernivtsi filled with students. Also, some other people concluded that *Tornado* (the name of the place) is the same kind of ethnically-free place as any other in Chernivtsi. However, it is interesting to see how Julia defines this place and Moldovans themselves. They are bad mannered, drink too much, wear not very fancy clothes and, because of their behavior, a Ukrainian girl cannot feel safe in this place. Julia, who is not from Chernivtsi and who came here to study directed her

prejudice towards the “newcomers”, so mostly Moldovans, as for her they are more visible in the cityscape (the characteristic leather jackets), they both share particular space (so Julia lives in the suburbs, she likes to do shopping on the local market, visits local discos in free time) and thus she perceives them as a threat and a source of insecurity. However, one needs to take into consideration that in many other situations Julia freely communicates with Moldovans, Turks and any other newcomers. So, when she is doing her shopping on the local open-air market, she knows that some products she can buy only from there (and there are even better there). In Chernivtsi she used to have a Moldovan boyfriend about whom she talked in all good words (as a hard working and independent person).

Another interesting example provided to me was Svetlana. She used to be my Russian teacher at Yuriy Fedkovych National University in Chernivtsi.²⁰⁷ During our classes she liked to stress her commitment to local Ukrainian traditions (*Bukovinian* – as she named it). As an academic teacher she came to Chernivtsi after she married Sviatoslav, whose family belonged to the local Ukrainian – or rather Bukovinian elite – as she stressed. Many times she described to me how they celebrate local traditions at home, and how Bukovinian Ukrainians are distinct and form special groups than the others in the country. While being proud of her belonging to the local elite, she many times stressed how Romanians and Moldavians are different. She repeated how both groups are lazy and do not want to learn Ukrainian (*you speak in Russian much better than my Moldavian and Romanian students in Ukrainian* – and I speak very bad in Russian!). The presence of other groups in Chernivtsi (such as the Jews) she referred to only in the past, when for her Chernivtsi used to be a Jewish town – but this is no longer the case. Svetlana is a classic example of how one creates the positive self-esteem of his/her own group in the contrast to the out-group. For Svetlana, defining herself as a

²⁰⁷At some point of my research I notice that I need to know the basis of Russian language in order to communicate freely in Chernivtsi. This language was important in my conversation mostly in local Jewish and Romanian organizations.

Bukovinian Ukrainian is a source of pride, a set of values and elements which make her a local elite. Language, customs, and a kind of local specificity make her better not only in the contrast to other local nationalities, but also among other Ukrainians. Moldovans and Romanians who live in the city are perceived as a threat for local traditions, customs and language, and Svetlana – a member of local Bukovinian elite as she sees herself is afraid that they will take power and dominance in the city. Because of the borderland location of Chernivtsi, lots of migration to the city of people from neighborhood countries but also villages, she thinks that it is possible.

However, not only the Moldavians and to some extent the Romanians are objects of stereotypes and prejudices. Another significant group are the Jews. The main difference in perceiving “the Romanians” and “the Jews” is that in the case of the former, stereotypes are directed into the members of one’s own community (local Romanians and Moldovans) while in the case of Jews, they refer to some undefined category of people living abroad. Thus, local “Jews” do not exist in individuals’ stereotyping languages but rather some international group one can benefit from.

One of the examples of how “the unknown Jews” are the subjects of stereotyping language was during my participation in the project of cleaning a local Jewish cemetery.²⁰⁸ Very often with volunteers we used public transport or taxis and it was a great occasion to talk with locals. The majority of them did not see any purpose in cleaning the Jewish cemetery. *If Jews want to have it cleaned, they should pay Ukrainians for doing it.* Together with this kind of statement we heard also lots of stories when Jews who live abroad paid local people a huge sum of money (more or less the monthly salary) for cleaning the Jewish tombstones.

²⁰⁸ From 2008 the project “Mirror of history” is organized in the local Jewish cemetery. The event gathers volunteers mostly from Europe who during two weeks in Chernivtsi, clean the cemetery, meet with local authorities and discover the Jewish past of the town. The project is organized by “Svit Ukraina”, nongovernmental organization from Ukraine and with support of *Czernowitz-L*, which is a mailing list of former Jewish citizens of Czernowitz. As researcher, I participated in the workcamp in 2009, 2010 and 2011.

Thus, for some, Jews are perceived as a very powerful and reach group but whom one can use as an example in expecting too much money on cleaning the cemetery.

Mostly, during my discussions with people, they refer to “Jews” while talking about the past of the town. However, it does not mean that ordinary people know local history: *you just know that Chernivtsi used to be a Jewish town*. They cannot tell any details about what this actually means. However, in certain kinds of talking, the Jews are perceived as a powerful and influential group in the town. Katya was the only volunteer from Chernivtsi, who joined the workcamp cleaning the local Jewish cemetery. She became one of the most engaged participants, warmly welcomed by the international participants, as *the only local young person who cares about the Jewish cemetery*. Once, when she told me her motivation to join the project, she described the situation of her friend, who was working in a local shop. This friend was badly paid and could not afford basic needs. *I was trying to convince her – stressed Katya – that she should join the workcamp. The Jews here are very powerful, many of them are the local deputies. If they just see her here, and then she would ask about the job, they would help her*. Katya could not give me any details on actually who she bears in mind by referring to “powerful Jews in the townhall”, it was more an example of a stereotype which is common for many citizens in Chernivtsi, who like to stress *again these Jews* in order to express they distaste for Jewish political influence in the city.²⁰⁹

The role of ethnic stereotypes and prejudice (as being a part of a human’s categorization process in the everyday life) is to stress the boundary of the group one associates with. In this sense stereotypes about the others helps in establishing the positive self-esteem about individual and group he or she thinks they belong to. It is visible in the

²⁰⁹ It was one of the reactions of my friend, a local journalist in Chernivtsi, while I was talking with her about the festival Meridian Czernowitz, organized in Chernivtsi since 2009.- The festival is perceived as a great event in the town especially for its promotion outside. My friend however, did not want to talk about it. She just pointed that *again these Jews* showing her distaste for the publicized form of event and describing the high budget of it.

common classification of *Bukovinian Ukrainian* who, because of their long traditions and cultural specificities are perceived to be a better group, that not only among other nationalities but Ukrainians in general. Secondly, stereotypes represent the perceived position of different “groups” in the city. It is expressed through the statement about political correctness in the unknown company, expressed by Julia, and consequently the perception that our own community is diverse (there are somewhere “us” and there are “them”), but also in the perceived distribution of power, status and resources. One example could be the common perception of rural newcomers and Moldovans who both represent the fear of the Ukrainian majority in losing their language and cultural status. Last but not least, ethnic categorization and attached prejudices inform about different values and meaning attached to one’s own identity. The sensitivity of ethnicity in public talks together with the common prejudiced about “Romanians” and “Moldovans” result in the lack of identity discourse in the everyday life and highlight the status of minority lower status belonging. In this way strengthening the “Ukrainian” sense of identification and primacy of Ukrainian language.

5.2 *Making the ethnically framed choices*

Nationhood and ethnicity are also issues of people’s everyday choices. Sending a child to a national school, reading a nationalist newspaper or visiting certain kinds of institutions can be defined as national choices.²¹⁰ However, one should distinguish two aspects and meanings of ethnically framed choices. The first one refers to elites. In their case, reading particular newspaper and joining the activities of institutions very often stresses and highlights their sense of ethnic identification. For the Ukrainian elites of Chernivtsi, the most

²¹⁰ Fox i Miller-Idriss, „Everyday Nationhood”, 542.

important practice is stressing the importance of the Ukrainian language in everyday domain. Very often because of the widespread usage of especially *surzyk*, they perceived their own language as threatened. This is also one of the most important agendas of the Ukrainian National House.

Igor Babijuk, one of the most important activists in this institution, described to me the reason for reopening the institution in 1991. *“Many people question, why in Ukraine there is a necessity to have Ukrainian Cultural Institution. We claim that it is important as we are still a minority in our own state. In the 1980s, Chernivtsi was a Russian speaking city, now I can be proud to say that Ukrainian became here the most frequent everyday language.”* Igor is also one of the most active people in the institution who stresses the ethnic diversity of both historical and contemporary Chernivtsi. However, as he said *“they [other nationalities than Ukrainians] should know that no matter of their ethnic origin they are all Ukrainian and should know the language.”* For Oksana, who can also be perceived as a member of Ukrainian elite, visiting other national institutions is not a marker of any identification. *“We (she together with her husband) used to visit the Turkish association to watch good movies, our daughter attended to Polish House to learn the language, in Romanian House we participated in poetry meetings.”*

The second level of ethnically framed choices are made by the ordinary people. As for them the “ethnic component” is not such an important issue. As I stressed in the previous part there are a number of more important aspects which shape the everyday life connected mostly with economic issues.

When it comes to everyday practices in Chernivtsi, “Ukrainianess” is again a matter of “unmarking” choices. The most popular local newspapers, such as “Chernivtsi” and “Molodij Bukovynec” are written in Ukrainian. They present the most important aspects of the local and state life connected with economic, political and cultural issues. Little (if any) stress is put

on ethnicity and the internal life of any national institution. This part is reserved for national newspapers. However, they are sold mostly in national houses and refer to tiny aspects of national community life. The same is with language. Using Ukrainian is an important marker of identification for elites, but for ordinary people is simply a useful and unconscious element of everyday life. When I used to live in one of the poorest parts of the city center (in a communal style apartment), my neighbors used *surzyk* in their everyday talks. In my communication with them I used Ukrainian (as I do not know Russian) and as such it was not a significant marker of any kind of identification. The most important was the understanding.

At university, students who do not know Ukrainian and for whom Russian or Romanian are native languages are forced to learn the language and very often suffer from discrimination and prejudice for not knowing it. Not using Ukrainian can be perceived as a marker of lower status, lack of education and proper behavior. Thus, in many spheres of life choosing Ukrainian is just more convenient, neutral or even privileged way of communication.

However, in Chernivtsi, since the beginning of the 1990s, opportunities to make ethnically framed choices other than Ukrainian have grown. One of the most significant moments was the opening of the Jewish school at that time. It was founded by Jewish organizations in Kiev and sponsored by foreign donors. From the beginning, mostly because of its financial situation, it was perceived as one of the best schools in town. Children whose parents or at least mother were Jewish had the priority for entry to the school. Lesya described to me her struggle to send her daughter there: *My father was a Jew, however my mother was Russian, I do not care that for them I am not a 'proper Jew', I know I AM and thus my daughter is as well.* Only by accident, she managed to find a place for her daughter in the school. What is interesting, the school became extremely popular in the city, mostly because of its financial situation and good level of education. Thus, through time, as the director

informed me, it became popular among Ukrainians who wanted to send their children there.

Lesya became one of the most active participants gathered around Rabbi Glitsenstein in Chernivtsi.²¹¹ She participated in every meeting organized by the Rabbi's wife and always talked about them with full respect, being astonished by their work in the town. Lesya does not follow any of the Jewish traditions and does not care much about the Jewish heritage of the city. For her participating in the activity of the Chabad community is a source of positive self-esteem. It stresses her uniqueness among other Ukrainians.

In most of the cases the reason for people's choices is external and has economic basis. Many people who participated in my classes wanted to obtain the *Karta Polaka* (the Polish Card) with which it is much easier to get a Polish visa and then the permission to work in Poland or the European Union. To get the *Karta Polaka*, you need to pass an interview with an embassy official. Besides documenting Polish ancestry, you need to speak the language fluently, know the traditions and be an active member of local associations. The Catholic Church, which is called by locals the Polish Church, belongs to them. The same is the case with Romanians. Because of the very open citizenship law in Romania many people decide to change their passports. In most cases, it is not because they feel a special connection with "Romanianess" but because simply a Romanian passport is better than the Ukrainian one – especially after Romania joined the European Union. Thus, in most cases, becoming a part of the national institution in this sense is not a marker of identification but rather certain goals one can achieve.

The external factor is also visible in the situation of Jewish organizations in Chernivtsi. Almost all of them (besides the Jewish National House which almost does not work) offer some benefits for its members. Hesed Shushana's work is directed mostly with

²¹¹ Rabbi Mendel belongs to Chabad Lubavitch movement. He came to Chernivtsi in the beginning of 90s. with his family in order to gather the Jewish community. He opened the club-room for teenagers and organized weekly meetings for adults. He initiated the renovation of local synagogues.

helping the poorest and elderly people from the Jewish community. It provides them food, medical and social care and many other services. Many people decide to be part of the institution and thus participate in cultural events mostly because of the opportunity to get necessary products. Also, Rabbi Glitsenstein, while organizing the club-room for teenagers, offered a scholarship for the best students. Thus, very often the economic position of national institutions causes tensions between them. This is especially visible in the Jewish case as there are four main institutions directed towards the Jewish community who struggle between each other over the control of resources and then people themselves. The personal ties and networks are so strong that individuals from Chernivtsi clearly know where they can go and where in the same time should not.

5.3 Becoming national

Ethnicity is not only a domain of discourse, categorization schemas and individuals' choices, it is also an embodied knowledge experienced through social practice. Although in a variety of social situations, people do not stress their sense of ethnic identification, still in some it becomes very visible. In the previous parts of my thesis I mainly described how historiography, urban space, press and language can be a source of symbolic meanings. However, in some social situations *groupness* is the most important element in stressing an individual's ethnic identification.

Vyshyvanka – the traditional folk Ukrainian shirt is a part of wardrobe of almost everyone at least in Western Ukraine.²¹² In the country it became extremely popular in the middle of 1990s. In most of the cases it is a white or black shirt with embroidered sleeves and small collar. People wear it on special family celebrations (baptism, weddings, and

²¹² See Appendix 3.1

anniversaries) and on most important national and religious holidays (the Independence Day but also Easter or Christmas). For each married couple it is almost obligatory fashion to have photo session in *vyshyvanka*, especially in the open-air museum. It is an interesting shift in celebrating “Ukrainianess”. During the Soviet era, folk and peasant symbols as well as Ukrainian language were neglected and associated with lower status. Since 1991 these elements have become a source of positive self-esteem and pride mostly in Western Ukraine. Many of the people with whom I talked in Chernivtsi or Lviv stress that in Eastern Ukraine they do not know this tradition, and together with the widespread usage of Russian, it is the most important element or “Russian” marker of the region.” What is interesting, recently the state invented a new public holiday “The Day of Vyshyvanka” during which it is positively seen to wear *vyshyvanka*, the newly established tradition become especially popular among pupils and students and streets are full of well-dressed people. Different patterns of embroidery entered a variety of aspects of everyday life. This symbol is used in TV commercials, put on products, presents, tablecloths, and in almost each apartment, the painting of Taras Shevchenko is covered by an embroidered towel. Sometimes even on national holidays, monuments are covered by embroidered fabric.

However, in Chernivtsi, people celebrate not only their “Ukrainianess”. In some cases, although very limited, *groupness* is built by national elites and reflects the mainstream national myths. Recently, one of the most important events for the Jewish community was the opening of new synagogue on 25th of September 2011 by the Chabad community.²¹³ The ceremony started in the local cinema – the previous Temple. It used to be the greatest synagogue in the beginning of the 20th century. Although, the Chabad community, whose members came to the city in the middle of 1990s, do not have much in common with these times, the organizers decided to start the ceremony in the old Temple, thus creating a link

²¹³ See Appendix 3.2

between past and present. On this one day, streets of Chernivtsi became full of dancing rabbis and Jews who came from Israel and other parts of Ukraine. From Chernivtsi came mostly people interested in Jewish culture, scholars, writers and museum workers. As for them, this was *the greatest day in history*, a sign of the renewal of Jewish culture. However, only some small groups formed the casual visitors of local Jewish institutions. This is only one of the public events I have recorded which referred to other than “Ukrainian” celebrations. In other cases people perform their ethnicity in more informal circles connected with events organized by national institutions.

Once I participated in the Purim holiday, organized for women by the Chabad community. As mentioned before, Lesya took me there in order to show the specificity of the group formed by Rabbi Glitsenstein and his wife. Everyone was friendly by chatting and laughing. The Rabbi’s wife organized different games (dress up in costumes and choosing the queen Ester), gave lecture about the sense of happiness, and prepared a traditional dinner. As my friend concluded: *she [the Rabbi’s wife] is a true Jew, because she wears a wig, has four children but is slim and always looks good. She has always her house in order and cooks traditional food.*

Also, the Catholic Church organizes some events, mostly small Church markets in which the Catholic community gathered for a barbecue and singing. However here, although the church is perceived as a Polish one, the common language is Ukrainian and there is nothing specific “Polishness” in the events.

CONCLUSION

Talking, choosing, performing and consuming the nation are four ways through which nationhood is produced and reproduced in an everyday context. They show that although ‘hot nationalism’ is not the case of many communities, the powerful and significant aspects of ‘salient ethnicity’ are present in many forms and situations in the way ordinary people see themselves and others.

The primary aim of this thesis was to show why and when ethnicity as a category of practice matter for ordinary people in one of the Ukrainian towns. Chernivtsi, located in Western Ukraine, is perceived as one of the most multiethnic places in the country. In contrast to other places in Ukraine such as Lviv or Donetsk, the interethnic relations here are shaped not by Ukrainian – Russian relations but Ukrainians-Romanians-Jews and Poles. Although since the late socialist period national elites in Chernivtsi, through incorporating different forms of national myths, tried to build a strong ethnic identity around its members, still it seems like all these efforts are at the margin of the mainstream “Ukrainization” process.

In this thesis I argue that in Chernivtsi after 20 years of constant marking of “Ukrainianess” in every aspect of everyday life, it became an unmarked, obvious and taken for granted category for ordinary people. It means that in the way how individuals talk, act and perform, they naturally and almost automatically reused and renegotiated “Ukrainianess”. In this sense, alternative minority identifications serve them as a tool to obtain certain “external” goals, like for example to get the *Polish card*, Romanian citizenship or at least go abroad. Thus, the different national myths imposed by elites do not pose a threat to the mainstream “Ukrainization” efforts.

However, one should take into consideration the particular methodological basis of my work. As an anthropologist I focused on everyday, routine expressions visible in a number of

social situations. Bearing in mind the complexity of defining the concept of the everyday, my main aim was to analyze “situational” aspects of everyday. Thus I wanted to show why and when people spontaneously express themselves according to ethnic lines. By stressing the relation between identity, space and memory I wanted to stress how all these elements are significant when one investigates ethnicity in an urban setting.

The complexity of the concept of ethnicity I introduce in the second chapter. I believe that social scientists should put particular attention to the meanings and contexts of terms they are using. Thus, I start the chapter with a brief overview of the most important aspects of primordialist-instrumentalist and constructionist debates. Nevertheless, “situational” ethnicity is the most important guideline throughout my thesis. By stressing the importance of face-to-face contact and different social settings in which ethnicity may “happen”, it shows how fluid and changeable this category is. In this sense, ethnicity is perceived as a mental schema, discursive practice and embodied knowledge.

Diverse history, shifting borders and long multiethnic traditions are the most important and distinguished aspects in both the history of Chernivtsi and the Bukovina region. It is especially important because different time periods serve as a basis for national myths which are created by local elites since the late socialist time. Thus, the cosmopolitan myth used mostly by German, Jewish, Polish and to some extent Ukrainian elites has its fundamentals in the Austro-Hungarian era, the myth of “Romanian historical land” used by Romanian elites has its basis in the time of Bukovyna belonging to the Kingdom of Romania. However, in this case it seems like the myth was particularly visible in the first years of Ukraine’s independence and now is widely marginalized by the mainstream “Ukrainization” attempts.

I introduce problems of the contemporary specificity of interethnic relations in Chernivtsi in chapter four. Here I wanted to stress how “Ukrainianess” in the late 1980 started to be a dominate category reproduced by the local municipality. Here especially the

organization of “Chervona Ruta” Music Festival and changing cityscapes became new symbols of Ukrainian Chernivtsi. What is interesting here, although especially recently the local municipality follows the ideas of the cosmopolitan myths, still it is rather in the margin of salient and mainstream “Ukrainization” policies and even highlights them.

The last chapter shows why and when individuals talk, choose and perform ethnicity. As I present in a number of social situations, such as reading newspapers, watching TV programs, talking, participating in public events and so on, individuals almost automatically reused the category of “Ukrainianess”. As I showed it is mostly because of the privileged position of the Ukrainian language which seems as though it dominates each sphere of life. Thus, those people who use *surzyk* or Romanian are the subjects of stereotyping talks and ethnically framed prejudices.

It might be concluded that, the shift how in the everyday life the marked category of “Ukrainianess” constructed by municipality became an unmarked and taken for granted category for ordinary people, is a sign of successful nationalizing efforts of the Ukrainian state. However, the observed in the city institutional revival and the growing power of the cosmopolitan myth, especially among the members of Jewish community, suggest that in the future the character of interethnic relations in Chernivtsi might change. Thus, it makes the case of this Ukrainian town, even more interesting for future anthropological investigations.

APPENDICES

1. Marking „Ukrainianess”



1.1 The monument of Taras Shevchenko in the main square. 2013
(photo by Karolina Koziura)



1.2 The celebration of Ukraine's Independence Day 2010 (photo by Karolina Koziura)



1.3 Memorial boards on building of the concert hall. 2013 (photo by Karolina Koziura)



1.4 The memorial board in the cinema. 2013 (photo by Karolina Koziura)

2. The cosmopolitan symbols of Czernowitz. 2013 (photo by Karolina Koziura)



2.1 German National House



2.2 Ukrainian National House



2.3 Polish National House



2.4 Romanian National House



2.5 Jewish National House

3. Becoming national



3.1 A mother with her son wearing *vyshyvanka* during the Ukraine's Independence day. 2011
(photo by Olha Kotiv)



3.2 The celebration of the opening of a new synagogue by Chabad community. 2011
(photo by Karolina Koziura)

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