



Memory about the Others in Postwar Pidzamche

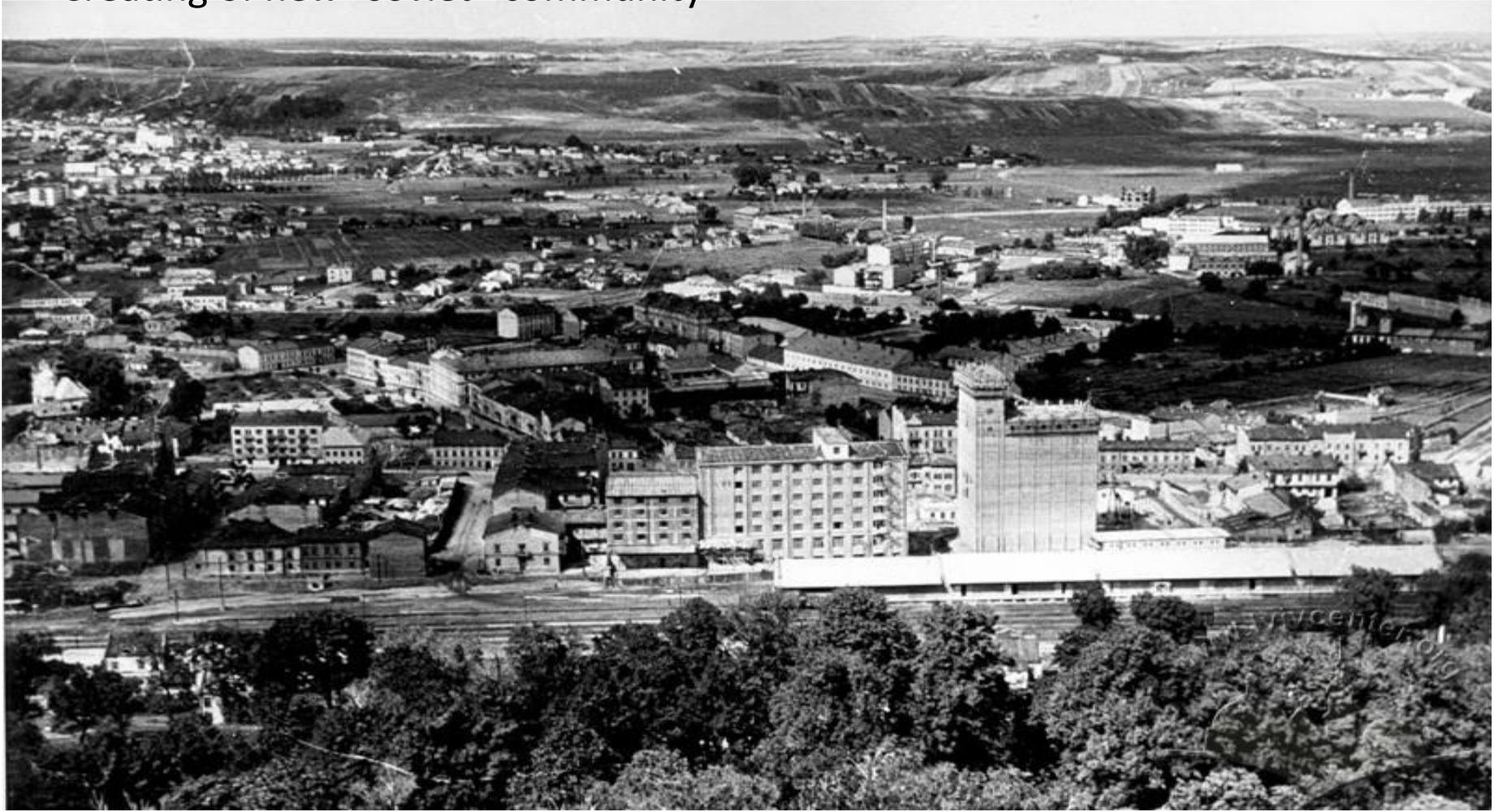
based on oral history
interviews

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Lviv After WWII

- Radical changes in population (312.000 - 1931, 154.000 - 1944, 410.000 - 1959)
- New government – part of soviet Ukraine and USSR
- Creating of new “soviet” community





Methodology of the Research

- Memory about vanished populations and their heritage
- Perception of postwar transformation of the industrial district
- Ways of developing of the feeling of “home” and belonging





Methodology of the Research

- Semi-structured in-depth interviews
- Blocs of questions about family history, everyday life, relations with its neighbors, education, work, leisure time, perception of the district (overall, ten clusters) in 1944-1960
- Field – Summer 2012
- 25 interviews: 7 males and 18 females, selected with purposive and snow-ball sample





Issues to Remember

- Talking about the Past from the present point of view – creating narratives
- Difference between knowing (knowing-about) and remembering (living-through)
- Sensitive (personal) vs. eventual (collective) memory





Memory: Empty Houses

- Well, it started already during the occupation by the Germans because many Jews lived there [at Pidzamche – N.O.]. [They were] Evicted, there were empty apartments (male, 1929, 4-7-12).
- And here the Poles left and there were a lot of empty houses. There, where my mother lived, I remember, [they] came and there was an empty house, completely empty. They washed [it], scraped, whitewashed and there we began to live (female, 1946, 12-7-12).



Memory: Empty Houses

- And it was just an empty during the war. All apartments were empty (female, 1946, 25-7-12).
- Then someone mentioned... that there were many free apartments in Lviv, that Poles were leaving, and you could find some kind of a flat. And they [interviewee's parents – N.O.] came here with their son in 1946. But in 1946, it was already a little late. Because the apartments were released in 1944, I think so... Later they saw an ad “Sell Firewood”. It was a signal that someone was selling apartment (female, 1949, 4-7-12).



Memory: Someone's Space

- How do I know that it was a Jewish apartment? Because they have at the door, you know, the Jews, when they go into the room, they kissed. It was like those thermometers outdoors (female, 1935, 17-7-12).
- And one Polish woman, she lived long, long time. I still remember we had a little conversation, she told me that here all this house belonged to one owner. All three floors. And there, in the yard, in this side [annex], maid lived there (male, 1949, 19-7-12).



Memory: Helping and Empathy

- The war began; just my mother bore me here. I know, my mother told me, that bore me here in this house, midwife helped her to give birth, and then Germans were looking for midwife, because she was Jewish. Mom hid her, well, and so (female, 1942, 9-7-12).
- And when Poles have left and Jews were taken, and then, I do not know whether he left in 1944, it was his house. And he said, “Go, here there is a place”, he said, “here you will have more space, you have children”. We had four children, and so we have lived [there] (female, 1936, 25-7-12).



Memory: Unique Objects

- But it was such furniture, you know; now it would be antiques. Well, but in time of war it was cold, there was no gas, so we burned it all (female, 1935, 17-7-12).
- And no, there was one Polish sideboard. It was probably not even Polish, but Austrian. Very old work, very original ... I'm so sorry that it was sold (male, 1949, 19-7-12).
- They [Poles] left the piano and left a commode. Commode was very fashionable, [with] such drawers for underwear and bed clothes (female, 1938, 6-8-12).



Memory: Communication

- There were four apartments on the balcony, right? You could go into every house, and it did not matter if there was Jew, or Ukrainian, or Pole – all lived together. All spoke in their own language and no one was insulted (female, 1935, 17-7-12).
- It was Saturday gatherings, so called. They came to us, these neighbors, these Gershman family, we mostly communicate with them, because they were very communicable, very literate. And we played lotto, [drank] dry wine, [ate] fruits, if there were grapes, apples (male, 1949, 19-7-12).

Memory: Holidays

- As my mother said, "I celebrate Easter both Russian and Ukrainian". We celebrated all holidays. And Polish holidays. We just lived in the same house, Poles, and Ukrainians, and Russians, right?.. See, if we had such holidays, so we knew that you cannot wash anything and hang outside... Now no one cares about it. Now they wash every day (female, 1949, 10-7-12).
- And there were invitations to the holidays, Polish, Ukrainian. And on Jewish [holiday] [they] brought us matzo. Yes, it was like this. You know, it was a kind of unity (female, 1936, 25-7-12).



Memory: Cuisine

- I loved tomato soup. It is cooked with rice or macaroni. It is Polish, it is their. Polish dish. And so. We learned from each other (female, 1946, 17-8-12).
- Then I saw for the first time how they [Russian soldiers] ate tiny fish, sprat, I could not understand how they ate it with the heads, with the bones. They somehow put it on the bread and ate... And later I saw that people ate [fish] in this way (male, 1929, 4-7-12).
- Since my mother was from Russia, we had Russian cuisine. And Ukraine is here... and here is Ukrainian cuisine, and Polish. Here, in our house, Poles lived. So, we knew all cuisines, [we] learned (female, 1949, 10-7-12).



Memory: Conclusions

- 1) Empty houses (nobody's space) vs. houses/things with stories (someone's apartment/thing)
- 2) Others from the Past and Others-nearby
- 3) Idealization of interpersonal relations between neighbors in not problematic contexts (like leisure, holidays, or cuisine)



More about Pidzamche interviews:

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