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CONSTRUCTION AND DESTRUCTION

HOW ST. GEORGE'S SQUARE IN L'VIV BECAME A BATTLEFIELD

According to the sociology of urban free spaces, ordinary people are usually not aware of the special historic or artistic value of a particular old park.¹ This kind of indifference applies in particular when it comes to smaller public gardens or squares. But this level of awareness can change in situations when such a public space comes under threat. The case of threat and dispute highlighted here below shows how a social conflict over the 'rewriting of the palimpsest' of the cityscape can contribute to and accelerate the development of civil society (on a local level) and how it can bring scientists as well as laypeople together in their efforts to better understand the historical genesis of the city.

This process is illustrated by the example of the plan for the radical transformation of a small, historical park in the centre of L'viv, which was to involve the commemoration of Archbishop Andreï Sheptyts'kyi, a famous figure in local church history. From the very beginning, the plan under discussion for the creation of the monument and the adjoining memorial area proposed mostly destroying the old, landscape-style design of the square. The new monument and the area surrounding it would replace more or less all of the original green space, which had been laid out towards the end of the 19th century. The dispute over the park, accompanied by many different events and interventions, became the top theme in local media reporting in L'viv in 2015. The situation seems to be symptomatic of identity struggles in Eastern Europe today and of the rebalancing of the role of the Church in societies throughout the region.

¹ Wulf Tessin, *Freiraum und Verhalten* (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2011), 158.

However, before taking a look at the debate itself, let us start with a short historical overview.

The History of St. George's Square: A Brief Overview

Many of the green spaces in and around the old town of L'viv were created thanks to the activities of planners and municipal garden directors of German origin, Karl Bauer (1818–94) and Arnold Röhring (1840–1913). Bauer created more than 370 and Röhring more than 200 private and public gardens in the landscape style throughout Central Eastern Europe. Röhring's best-known work is Stryśkyi Park in L'viv (formerly known as Park Kilińskiego).² The creation of these greenspaces can be considered within the broader framework of the European tendency of beautifying urban environments.

The small St. George's Square (only 1.78 hectares), designed by the municipal garden director Arnold Röhring in 1897, is located in the southwestern part of the city, previously known as the Krakowskie Przedmieście. The square sits in a corner between two characteristic sets of buildings: the larger and more dominant ensemble of the Greek Catholic St. George's Cathedral (1743–72) and the newer and lower-lying group of buildings of the Technical University (built here beginning in the mid-19th century). The extensive open spaces in this district had previously been used for weekly markets and the so-called St. George's Fairs. The fairs stopped taking place here in 1860, and the area consequently remained in an abandoned state until the 1890s.³ In the last decade of the 19th century, Röhring started to realize his plan to create a second ring of green spaces around the town centre. The design of St. George's Square was part of this plan. As of 1900, it was one of a chain of green spaces in this district of the city.⁴

² For the current state of knowledge about the work of Röhring, see: *Architectural Studies* 2, 2 (2016). This issue includes the proceedings of a symposium dedicated to the work of Röhring which took place on 19 May 2016 at the L'viv Polytechnic National University.

³ Halyna Petryshyn, 'The Park in St. Yuri (St. George's) Square – The Jewel in the Emerald Necklace of the City of L'viv', *Technical Transactions: Architecture* 112, 10-A (16) (2015): 12.

⁴ Such as the Metropolitan Gardens, the City Garden (Park Kosciuszki), the Garden of the Monastery of the Sacred Heart, and the Garden of the Technical Academy.

The trees chosen for the creation of the square, including beech, black pine, larch, Norway maple, oak, and manna ash, were planted in a picturesque landscape garden style along the pathways and in clusters at various locations in the square. Many descriptions from the period before World War II mention music, because the square was frequently used as a rehearsal space for Polish and Ukrainian choirs.

After the war, the city experienced hard times and a massive turnover of population due to the forced resettlement of many former Polish residents. It is therefore appropriate to speak of a political, cultural, and economic reconfiguration of society, with a range of typical consequences for residents' identification with the cityscape. At that time, green spaces in general and the small St. George's Square in particular did not figure largely in the considerations of politicians or society. However, thanks to their new 'importance for the working class', the parks were enhanced and equipped with a few playgrounds. The last major improvement of greenspace in the city took place in the 1970s and 1980s. Afterwards, there was creeping neglect, documented in some inventory work done during the 1990s. Interestingly, although St. George's Square is located in the buffer zone of the World Heritage Area comprising the Old Town and St. George's Hill, it is slightly too small to be protected by law as a monument of landscape art. According to "The Law of Ukraine on the Protection of Cultural Heritage" of 8 June 2000, only sites with an area of over two hectares can claim protected status.⁵ St. George's Square, unfortunately, has an area of less than this minimum size.

The Monument Competition (and the Chronology of the Dispute)

With the beginning of the independence of the Ukrainian state, the need arose in L'viv to commemorate various outstanding figures of great significance in the history and culture of the Ukrainian nation. One of these important figures was a former Archbishop of L'viv, Andreï Sheptyts'kyï (1865–1944). Born into a Polonized aristocratic family near L'viv, he studied at the universities of Warsaw and Cracow and received doctoral degrees in law and theology. He was only thirty-six when Kaiser Franz Joseph and Pope Leo XIII appointed him as Metropolitan Archbishop of L'viv. Sheptyts'kyï is known above all as the founder of a hospital, the National Museum, and the Theological Academy (today the Ukrainian

⁵ Petryshyn, 'The Park' (see note 3), 13.

Catholic University in L'viv). Sheptyts'kyi, without any doubt an outstanding personality, can be described as a man dedicated to ecumenism and to achieving equilibrium between the various ethnic and religious groups in Ukraine.⁶ Although the idea of commemorating him with a monument arose soon after the Declaration of Independence (1991), there was no further progress concerning the idea over the twenty years that followed. A few years ago, the Church finally decided to commemorate his 150th birthday (29 July 2015) with the creation of a monument next to the Cathedral where he was buried. A national competition was organized in 2010 but it brought no satisfactory results. The problem with the competition tender was that "urban limits for the installation of the monument were not clearly defined".⁷ No first prize was awarded. The two teams who won second prize were asked to make various amendments to their designs. The commission in charge of the competition selected Ukrdesign-group to prepare the design. The vision proposed by this group included the reconstruction of a missing historic statue of Sheptyts'kyi. The reconstructed sculpture and, next to it, parking for forty-seven cars (sic!) on an extensively paved area were to be situated along the existing street between the Cathedral ensemble and St. George's Square. This plan gave rise to the need to move the highway and reorient the overall traffic flow. A four-lane road was subsequently planned, to run next to the building housing the L'viv Polytechnic library (fig. 1, top).

The first thing one notices is that these changes would result in the loss of many old trees and of the original historic landscape design. The persistence with which the municipal council defended the project seems incomprehensible since seven other planning proposals which did not involve cutting down so many trees also emerged from the competition. But they were not recognized or accepted by the municipal council.

⁶ His actions during World War II are controversial and, in part, contradictory. Besides his merit in rescuing Jews and his stance against the Holocaust as well as against the brutality of the German occupation, he also accepted the formation of the Ukrainian Division, which was to fight on the German side for a free Ukraine and against the Soviet Union. This position should, however, be understood within the extremely complex context of Ukrainian-Soviet relations during the interwar period. The highly complex and dynamic situation in the Greek Catholic Church in Ukraine is described by Timothy Snyder in *Black Earth: The Holocaust as History and Warning* (London: Bodley Head, 2015). See also: Yad Vashem International School for Holocaust Studies, 'Sheptytsky Andrei', available at http://www.yadvashem.org/odot_pdf/Microsoft%20Word%20-%20206020.pdf (last visited 24 April 2019).

⁷ For more information pertaining to the competition see Petryshyn, 'The Park' (see note 3), 16.

The plan they chose⁸ contained a number of legal contradictions and, above all, involved the destruction of a large part of the small park. Essentially, the design generated objections on two counts. The first comprised conservational and ecological objections; the second focused on the extremely high cost to the local municipal budget and the lack of transparency in the top-down decision-making process.

Let us now take a look at the first set of objections. The professors and scientists in the Departments of Urban Planning and the Department of Architectural Design at L'viv Polytechnic were deeply involved in the debate. Already in 2013, the two departments had invested a lot of energy in producing an inventory and assessment of the state of the trees in the square. The survey had finally concluded that the overall condition of the park was satisfactory.⁹ In December 2014, they then published an open letter, including the following passage:

“a comprehensive redevelopment of the area is proposed, including a change to the direction of traffic flows in the surrounding streets. According to the plan only 20 % of the historic park in St. George's Square is to be preserved, with the rest disappearing under pavement, driveways, and parking spaces ... The proposed plan displays a totalitarian megalomania and runs contrary to historically accepted town planning logic.”¹⁰

Let us now take a look at the second set of objections, to the decision-making process. While the creation of the Sheptyts'kyi monument was supposed to be financed by the Church itself as well as by private donations, the city offered to cover the cost of the overall remodelling of the site. The costs of this work were ultimately estimated at around 32 million hryvnia, equivalent to more than 1,111,000 euros (a vast amount of money, especially when compared with salaries in Ukraine, which are

⁸ Design from 2014: Myroslava Ivanyk, ‘Pam’iatnyk Sheptyts'komu: velyke ne totozhne velychnomu’, *Zbruc*, 16 December 2014, available at <https://zbruc.eu/node/30590>; design from 2015: ‘Ukhvala L'vivs'koï mis'koï rady...’, available at <http://savesquare.wixsite.com/savesquare/results> (both last visited 24 April 2019). Compare the graphic elaboration: in the first version, the greenery does not play any important role, while in the final version, the greenery does seem to play an important role (despite the massive losses).

⁹ Petryshyn, ‘The Park’ (see note 3), 13.

¹⁰ The letter was published on 26 December 2014 on the official website of the Chair for Urban Planning of L'viv Polytechnic, but has subsequently been taken down from the site. The cited section is identical with the contents of the letter. See *ibid.*, 17.

currently effectively shrinking).¹¹ Many local residents saw the budget as extremely over-inflated.¹² The question ‘How can this be possible in a time of war and political instability?’ therefore seems absolutely justified.¹³ A harsh critique of the lack of transparency and of premature decision-making on the part of the L’viv municipality and the accusation that it was ignoring the value and potential of the square came from L’viv’s internationally most recognized NGO Environment, People, Law: “Quick decisions have been taken not out of laziness but out of the desire to solve the issue for somebody’s personal benefit using old Soviet methods...”¹⁴

The dispute which unfolded involved two groups of actors. On the one hand were the supporters of the plan on L’viv City Council, the Archbishop of L’viv, and the authors of the chosen design project. On the other were the protestors including various non-institutional representatives of L’viv civil society, most of whom could be classified as students, scientists, or intellectuals. The protestors coordinated effectively between themselves and highlighted all the different debates and critical voices on social media. They created two Facebook pages, in 2014 and 2015, one in Ukrainian and the other in English. In this one can see a kind of transparency strategy. The English version in particular was created with the intention of involving foreign publicity and demonstrated a self-awareness of belonging to the broader context of European culture. This wish to appeal to a culturally sensitive audience in Central and Western Europe may – especially in L’viv – seems obvious. But it should also be understood in the context of this very special point in time, the time of the

¹¹ Nowadays, average salaries are around 150 euros or a little more. See Andreas Stein, ‘Ukrainische Durchschnittslöhne stiegen im Januar auf 4.362 Hrywnja’, *Ukraine Nachrichten*, 6 March 2016, available at https://ukraine-nachrichten.de/ukrainische-durchschnittsl%C3%B6hne-stiegen-januar-4-362-hrywnja_4389 (last visited 24 April 2019).

¹² According to an open letter from the art critic Nataliia Kosmolins’ka (23 March 2015), who compared it with other much lower municipal expenses for culture, estimated at 6.7 million hryvnia. See <https://www.facebook.com/SaveYurisPark/posts/804941766258796> (last visited 26 July 2017, currently not available).

¹³ We should bear in mind that the debate in L’viv unfolded only about a year-and-a-half after the downfall of the Yanukovych government (22 February 2014).

¹⁴ For a long list of detailed critical arguments pertaining to the procedures and bills see: Environment, People, Law (EPL), ‘St. George Square Park – The Place for Making Money and the Place for Manipulation with Community or Wise Administration of Municipal Space?’, 28 February 2016, available at <http://epl.org.ua/en/environment/skver-sviatoho-yura-mistse-dlia-zarobitkiv-ta-maidanchyk-dlia-manipuliatsii-hromadoi-uchy-rozumne-upravlinnia-miskym-prostorom-2/> (last visited 24 April 2019).

ЧИМ БЕЗГЛУЗДЕ ПЕРЕНЕСЕННЯ ДОРОГИ?

понад **30(!) млн. грн.**
з міського бюджету розвитку
марнуються на проект
що нічого суттєво не
покращує у місті

нищиться сквер,
що має історичну,
художню та
екологічну
цінність

майбутнє твориться
коштом минулого,
без поваги до
культурної
спадщини

зрізаються рідкісні
дорослі дерева, що
перебувають у доброму стані



I WIN, you LOSE



закладається прецедент
перекроювання громадського
простору на догоду одній
із сторін без врахування
потреб інших
користувачів

погіршуються умови
навчання студентів
НУ «АП»

основні щоденні користувачі
скверу: студенти НУ «АП»
відрізаються від нього
магістральною дорогою

ремонтні роботи
порушують сформовану
екосистему скверу, зруйнують
острівця біорізноманіття у місті



Fig. 2: A poster with a simple explanation of the losses and consequences of the transformation of the square and the 'Save' activists during their protest at the site, Kyiv, 22 June 2015. © Andrii Beliaev (top), Iryna Yaniv (bottom).

Euromaidan in Kyïv, as well as characterizing the self-definition of young, well-educated individuals in western Ukraine.

Over only a few days, the Facebook ‘Save the Square’ page, created on 4 March 2015, attracted more than 2,500 members and became the main platform for all the news about the protest and the City Council’s responses to it. The ‘Save’ activists emphasized their respect and support for the idea of the Sheptyts’kyi Monument, but they also commented that the erection of the monument should not take place at the cost of the extensive destruction of historic greenspace (fig. 2, top¹⁵). They also called on the City Council to justify the cost of such an expensive project. Many activists voted for siting the monument in the middle of the existing green square (fig. 3). In this vision, the monument would remain in harmony with the park – a park constructed during Sheptyts’kyi’s own lifetime! By this logic, the green environment should be regarded as the peaceful contemporary of the great archbishop. This led to alternative studies concerning the possible location of the monument, which became a topic of discussion in spring 2015.

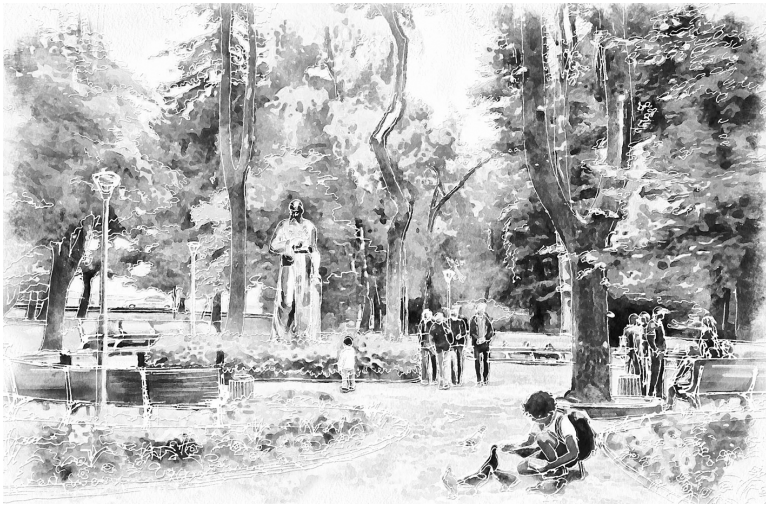


Fig. 3: A sketch which circulated among the ‘Save’ activists. © Andrii Bieliaiev

¹⁵ Both pictures can be seen at <https://www.facebook.com/savesquare/> (last visited 24 April 2019).

It depicts an alternative placement of the monument, without extensive destruction of the layout of the historic square and the established greenery. While the vision of the municipal planners (fig. 1 above) tries to impress with grandiose overviews and panoramas and ignores the perspective of pedestrians, the sketches of the 'Save' activists concentrate above all on envisioning pedestrian, ground-level perspective.¹⁶

By comparing the discourse and in particular the positions shown in the visual presentations by the two sides in the dispute (compare fig. 1 and 3), we can conclude the following: the plans and pictures reveal completely contradictory aesthetic concepts and different approaches to cultural capital on each side. Whereas the Church and the city authorities still employed a style of concrete, stone, and a large-scale, empty space with a monument in the middle, the other side associated precisely this style and this materiality with the artificial production of memorial spaces during the socialist period. The historic park landscape and old trees, in contrast, would provide a bridge to the older, 'European' past of the city. The high frequency of visitors to the 'Save the Square' page confirmed the popularity of several actions on the actual site of the Square (fig. 2, bottom). The most popular of these were the Picnics in the Park, the first of which took place on 5 March 2015. The dynamic development of the debate on the Facebook page also attracted the attention of other, 'official' media.¹⁷

The first mobilization and demonstration of the square preservationists in March 2015 seemed to be a success, but was by no means relaxed. The protests provoked many nervous reactions, especially from the Greek Catholic Church (including some statements by the Archbishop of L'viv¹⁸) and other 'patriotic' circles, making harsh insinuations about the protestors. It was suggested that they were "an arm of the

¹⁶ See <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=787015581386295&set=a.280257952062063.69770.100002335828349&type=3&theater> (last visited 24 April 2019).

¹⁷ Local web-based media such as *Tvoiemisto* and *ZIK* frequently provided information about the protests on the square at the beginning of March 2015.

¹⁸ Bishop Liubomyr Huzar defended the idea of the monument by more or less suggesting that the protestors were on the way to cleaving the national unity which was so necessary in these difficult times. See 'Address of His Beatitude Lubomyr to the People of L'viv Regarding the Construction of a Monument to Metropolitan Andrei', Information resource of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, 13 March 2015, available at http://news.ugcc.ua/documents/zvernennya_blazhenn%D1%96shogo_lyubomira_do_lv%D1%96vyan_shchodo_sporudzhennya_pamyatnika_mitropolita_andreya_73238.html (last visited 24 April 2019).

Kremlin” or a “fifth column”.¹⁹ But the initial result of the protest nevertheless proved positive: it brought about the first roundtable meeting (12 March 2015) and the establishment of a working group including representatives from both sides. Unfortunately, after a period of time, the representatives of the Church resigned from the working group and thereby effectively prevented it from functioning further.

The second peak in the activities of the ‘Save’ community took place in the middle of June 2015, provoked by the felling of many trees on the square. The ‘Save’ activists demonstrated on these days in two places, on the square itself and in front of the City Hall. But despite these protests, the statue of Sheptyts’kyi was erected next to the entrance to the Cathedral in July and the surrounding section of the square was paved. This meant that the 150th anniversary of the Archbishop’s birthday could be celebrated and the memorial site opened to the public on 29 July 2015.

Because the predicted extensive destruction had not yet taken place, discussion of an alternative design for the whole square continued. In the last few days of August 2015, a commission was convened, including independent, and some international, experts from various fields. The commission recommended preserving the authenticity of the site and maintaining a balance between the different representative and recreational expectations of all the stakeholders affected, and proposed a ‘shared space’ concept for the surrounding traffic flows.²⁰

The planning company in charge, Ukrdesigngroup, was subsequently commissioned to modernize its existing design, narrowing the road on the edge of the square from four to two lanes of traffic (fig. 1, bottom). In this way, the previously predicted losses in the park would also be somewhat reduced. According to various sources, the previously plan would have caused the loss of thirty per cent of the trees in the park. After the expert commission gave its recommendations, this loss was reduced to ten per cent.

¹⁹ Facebook post by the art critic Nataliia Kosmolins’ka from 23 March 2015, <https://www.facebook.com/SaveYurisPark/posts/804941766258796> (last visited 30 August 2017, currently not available).

²⁰ In short: the term ‘shared space’ describes a street space in a city where the divisions between pedestrians and car-traffic are radically reduced, see Aut Karndacharuk, Douglas Wilson, and Roger Dunn, ‘A Review of the Evolution of Shared (Street) Space Concepts in Urban Environments’, *Transport Reviews* 34, 2 (2014): 190–220.

This nevertheless only represented a tentative end to the dispute about St. George's Square.²¹ The destruction of the historic structures could not be completely stopped. Now, although works at the square have ceased in the meantime, the activists are still in touch with each other. They use the Facebook page to comment on other developments concerning public space in L'viv and elsewhere.

Conclusions

What might one learn from the case of St. George's Square? First of all: the story provides a good illustration of Laurajane Smith's statement that "There is no such *thing* as heritage".²² What Smith means is that heritage is not something that is given, rather that it is a result of ongoing societal discourse about and beyond material artefacts. In this sense, the case of St. George's Square shows the creation of two discursive levels. On the first level, a pragmatically used, unspectacular place becomes an object of controversial debate. This contributed to the dissemination of knowledge about the history of the park design among broader circles of people in L'viv. On the second level, increasing attachment to the park evolved to some degree into a manifestation of not only the aesthetic, but also the political attitudes of the citizens involved. In this way, a piece of city greenspace became a battlefield on which different groups and demographics negotiated their notions about the right content and form of a public space.

Interestingly, when considered from a sociological perspective, this is not self-evident, which means that a brief explanation is necessary. In ordinary situations, the ongoing aesthetic valorization of our surroundings is either strongly reduced or even blended away in everyday life.²³ Georg Simmel, one of the fathers of urban sociology, testified to a loss of visual sensibility among people in big cities.²⁴ This matters in particular

²¹ There is currently a debate about the extent to which a playground for children should be created on the square – a nice, but also ambivalent idea (because of the further loss of trees). No decision has yet been made.

²² Laurajane Smith, *Uses of Heritage* (London: Routledge, 2006), 13–14. This statement is, of course, a paraphrase of Margaret Thatcher's famous saying "there is no such thing as society".

²³ Jan Murakovsky, *Kapitel aus der Ästhetik* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1974), 14.

²⁴ Georg Simmel, *Die Großstädte und das Geistesleben* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2006), 20. The book was first published in 1903.

with respect to urban green spaces and it can partly be explained by the processes involved in the commoditization and trivialization of nature. As Herbert Marcuse remarked, nature has definitely lost its magical aura since being reduced to a frame for various trivial uses in the era of the Anthropocene (countless motorboats on lakes or countless planes between the clouds degrade the magical value of these two natural surroundings).²⁵ There are also empirical confirmations that our perception of greenspace in the familiar urban context of everyday life is generally severely reduced. This is because consciously observing and enjoying nature is usually associated with the reference frame of leisure.²⁶ It means that the majority of city dwellers enjoy green spaces more consciously during a holiday journey. But when the same people are asked to describe a park in their everyday living environment, they use rather general or trivial terms such as 'lovely' or 'relaxing'.

On the other hand, green spaces in the city to some extent symbolize persistence and timelessness. The plants convey neither their precise age or any expectations of the future, nor any purpose, reason, or values. Simply through existing in the world, they express another one of its ambiguous dimensions.²⁷ They symbolize a sort of escapism, and this makes them into an object of more or less conscious nostalgia.²⁸ But our need to defend this ephemeral nostalgia first has to be awakened by something unusual. In the case of L'viv, activating this need and enhancing the perception of city inhabitants as well as integrating this unspectacular square into their mental space can be considered an achievement. This matters in particular for the younger generation, who are normally not the most enthusiastic of park visitors.

On the contrary, young people often see themselves as representatives of a counterculture,²⁹ preferring to spend time together in more disharmonious environments such as post-industrial spaces.³⁰ The disharmonious character of the St. George's Square dispute consequently played an im-

²⁵ Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man* (Boston: Beacon, 1964), 66.

²⁶ Wulf Tessin, *Ästhetik des Angenehmen* (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2008). Here, especially the chapter 'Einführung in die Rezeptionsästhetik', 12–33.

²⁷ Ibid., 84.

²⁸ Anna Chiesura, 'The Role of the Urban Parks for the Sustainable City', *Landscape and Urban Planning* 68, 1 (2004): 129–38.

²⁹ Gerhard Schultze, *Die Erlebnisgesellschaft: Kultursoziologie der Gegenwart* (Frankfurt am Main, New York: Campus, 1997).

³⁰ Tessin, *Ästhetik* (as in note 26), 77–85.

portant role in attracting the involvement of young people. It was provoked by the less than transparent competition procedures as well as, to a greater extent, by the desire on the part of the City Council radically to transform the location based on the winning design.

One impetus for the quick and large-scale response to the changes in the park was related to the presence of the nearby Polytechnic. The main library of L'viv Polytechnic is located directly on the square, which explains the strong presence of students and scientists among the protestors. The extensive planned destruction of the square to make way for a four-lane road would have resulted in a loss of recreational options for users of the university library.

The mobilization in this instance can therefore partly be understood as a defensive action against the reduction of the quality of life of this academic community. This reasoning is borne out by the various protest actions jointly organized by students and their teachers.³¹ The Polytechnic community could be called a kind of “trust network”,³² a group of people with similar ties and values capable of mobilizing its particular resources in ‘dangerous’ situations. In the case of St. George’s Square, this network did not develop primarily on the basis of family, ethnicity, or nation (although most of the protestors were young Ukrainians), but instead thanks to a knowledge-based pride in the city’s heritage. The participation of academic experts against the municipality in particular should be appreciated as a courageous act of resistance, since they directly or indirectly depend on cooperation with the municipal administration.

The municipality’s decision-making process was clearly perceived by academic experts in landscape conservation as an affront, as a lack of consideration of the essential issues, and hence as a kind of lack of appreciation of the general contribution of academic research. The German conflict theorist Axel Honneth has provided a theoretical model for this kind of interaction between ignored people and ignorant people.³³ According to him, what lies behind social conflicts and protests is not only aspirations to power or to material goods.

³¹ The organization of an international conference devoted to the oeuvre of Arnold Röhrling on 19 May 2016 (see note 2) can be regarded as an indirect result of the increased interest in green spaces in L'viv.

³² Charles Tilly, *Trust and Rule* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

³³ Axel Honneth, *Kampf um Anerkennung: Zur moralischen Grammatik sozialer Konflikte* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1992).

One of the basic reasons for such conflicts is also a lack of appreciation. He developed his theory based on the thesis that people generate self-acceptance only through reciprocal, intersubjective relations. They want to be seen not only as creatures with specific needs and want to be accepted not only as equals in society. They want to be appreciated as unique and important contributors as well.

The students involved in the dispute as ‘Save’ activists emphasized the unlawful procedures used by the municipal council on many of their banners. The banner photographed most frequently during protest actions at the site stated: “We are for the monument to Sheptyts’kyi and for the improvement of this historic square but we are against the unnecessary relocation of traffic and against the waste of municipal funds”. At the same time, this claim and other arguments of the ‘Save’ activists³⁴ were motivated not only by frustration about the square. Frustration about the dichotomy in power relations between those who already have power and those who wish to improve their opportunities for the future was an issue as well. We therefore recognize the typical matrix of a modern social conflict³⁵ and the reason why the activists found so many supporters outside academia as well.

Moreover, the opposition between the two sides in the dispute was characterized by another interesting contradiction. To use the words of Bourdieu, there is a “habitual” difference (or distinction) concerning aesthetic concepts about monuments in the public space. In their critique, the environmentally-conscious activists and protestors linked opaque procedures from Soviet times³⁶ with a somewhat negative view of the form the new memorial site would take. The “legacy of social realism” becomes visible again and again, writes Nataliia Kosmolins’ka, the art

³⁴ As found, for example, in the notice on the English language version of the Facebook page: “This page is to inform the international community in English that an ecological and cultural injustice is taking place in a small park in L’viv City in Ukraine”. See https://www.facebook.com/pg/SaveYurisPark/about/?ref=page_internal (last visited 25 April 2017, currently not available).

³⁵ Ralf Dahrendorf, *Der moderne soziale Konflikt: Essay zur Politik der Freiheit* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1992).

³⁶ In a long internet article criticizing the procedures of L’viv City Council in connection with St. George’s Square, we read: “it is a pity that, despite its ostensibly pro-European position and openness, L’viv City Council [is] afraid of transparently solving problems which have not been thoroughly analyzed. Quick decisions are made not because of laziness, but because of the desire to solve an issue to somebody’s benefit using old Soviet methods”. EPL, ‘St. George’ (see note 14).

critic and author of many publications on the history of L'viv and Galicia as well as editor-in-chief of the art magazine *AZ*.³⁷ Similar critical opinions voiced by intellectuals – including, among others, Taras Prokhas'ko – can be found on a website along with several documents relating to the various actions involved in the protest.³⁸

Moving up the scale of our considerations, we can comment as follows: the case of St. George's Square combines several features characteristic of the development of Eastern European towns and cities during the post-communist transformation period. Throughout Eastern and Central Europe, we see an explosion of investment in modernizing road infrastructure (partly fuelled by EU subsidies) due to residential and commercial suburbanization on the outskirts of cities.³⁹ Local politics is generally keen to support the modernization of road infrastructure because such investments deliver physical proof of its progress-oriented endeavours. Many of these – partly justifiable – investments are made too quickly and give rise to countless cases of corruption. Such mechanisms as well as various unlawful procedures are easy for journalists to recognize and to disseminate through social networks.⁴⁰ This can lead to social protest going far beyond a specific case and even critical of an entire approach to government. We should expect intense pressure on public green areas in all booming cities around the world, but it is only in totalitarian or semi-totalitarian countries that a lack of compromise can turn out to be explo-

³⁷ "L'viv has no luck with monuments ... since independence each new one is worse than the previous one. This is a traditional legacy of fifty years of socialist realism – in Ukraine there is no modern school of monumental sculpture, project proponents have no taste, and among those of us who manage urban public space, there is no understanding of its aesthetic and social role. But the stormy conflict which erupted in L'viv in March around the erection of a monument to Metropolitan Sheptyts'kyi showed that the city already has a socially active public ready to change the status quo". Open letter by Nataliia Kosmolins'ka from 23 March 2015, previously available in English on Facebook, still to be read in her blog in Ukrainian. See Nataliia Kosmolins'ka, 'Tubilei Sheptitskogo: test na modernost' ', *Levyi bereg*, 23 March 2015, available at https://lb.ua/blog/natalja_kosmolinska/299548_yubiley_sheptitskogo_test.html (last visited 24 April 2019).

³⁸ <http://savesquare.wixsite.com/savesquare/news> (last visited 24 April 2019).

³⁹ A good description of problems concerning remastering the post-socialist city is provided by F. E. Ian Hamilton, Kaliopa Dimitrovska Andrews, and Nataša Pichler Milanović, eds., *Transformation of Cities in Central and Eastern Europe: Towards Globalization* (Tokyo et al.: United Nations University Press, 2005). In particular the chapter 'Planning and Practices', 173–86.

⁴⁰ Marianne Kneuer and Saskia Richter, *Soziale Medien in Protestbewegungen: Neue Wege für Diskurs, Organisation und Empörung?* (Frankfurt am Main, New York: Campus, 2015).

sive (Istanbul, Gezi Park, 2013).⁴¹ Unfortunately, contemporary developments in Poland will provide countless examples of the extensive destruction of green areas in cities and beyond by developers. With this in mind, the case of L'viv presents a model of interaction which not only contributes to the development of social responsibility, but also demonstrates an ability to compromise.

Finally, the large-scale physical implementation of projects involving political symbols and narratives in city centres is characteristic of several countries undergoing political transformation. Traditional, majority churches in particular are very keen on retaining a presence in the public space. It will suffice to take a brief look at the Catholic Church in Poland which has erected countless traditionally-designed monuments to Pope John Paul II. This 'place-making' is, of course, a very old confessional strategy (as can be observed at all sites of pilgrimage since the Middle Ages, etc.). For churches in the countries of Eastern Europe, this is closely connected with compensating for their reduced importance during the long era of Socialism. The Greek Catholic Church generally stays in the shadow of the very successful and fast-growing Ukrainian Orthodox Church, which might explain its determination on the issue of St. George's Square. Its determination might also be understood in the context of the general increase in numbers of Orthodox churches and decrease in numbers of Catholic churches throughout Central and Eastern Europe.⁴²

To sum up: in the symbolic sphere alone, the dispute as a whole appears to present paradoxical phenomena mirroring the contradicting ambitions, wishes, and fears which motivate actors either to alter or to preserve a public space. On the one hand, there is the new design of a memorial location, which combines technocratic features with pride in the construction of a symbol of national history. This, however, seems to be possible only at the cost of destroying a historic park which is too neutral to be regarded as the bearer of the symbolic message of the Church. On the other hand, young and mostly well-educated people tried to defend this authentic green space because of their attachment to global

⁴¹ Lilo Schmitz, 'Die Gezi-Park-Proteste in Istanbul – vom Recht auf Stadt zum Recht auf einen liberalen Staat', *Sozialraum.de* 6, 1 (2014), available at <https://www.sozialraum.de/die-gezi-park-proteste-in-istanbul.php> (last visited 24 April 2019).

⁴² See Pew Research Center, 'Religious Belief and National Belonging in Central and Eastern Europe', 10 May 2017, available at <http://www.pewforum.org/2017/05/10/religious-belief-and-national-belonging-in-central-and-eastern-europe/> (last visited 24 April 2019).

visions of the future of cities, in which every green urban square is of inestimable value.

In conclusion, we have just examined how the historic structure in L'viv and a public dispute about it have contributed to an awareness of cultural difference among various social groups and between different generations. This has also created an important momentum with respect to the development of local civil society in the city.