

Buildings from the Socialist Past as part of a City's Brand Identity: The case of Warsaw

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How to cite:

Ochkovskaya, M. and Gerasimenko, V. (2018). Buildings from the Socialist Past as a part of a City's Brand Identity: The case of Warsaw. *Bulletin of Geography. Socio-economic Series*, 39(39), 113-127. DOI: <http://doi.org/10.2478/bog-2018-0008>.

Abstract. The aim of this paper is to investigate those buildings left over from Warsaw's socialist past as a part of the city's brand visual identity including their perception by foreign tourists and local citizens. Although Lisiak (2009) examined the destruction, removal and presence of these remnants from the socialist past in Central European cities, a comparative study of the perception of these architectural sites erected in Warsaw during socialist times has not been carried out specifically so far. To fill the gap, the authors concentrated research efforts on the following buildings: Palace of Culture and Science; the SMYK Store at Bracka 15/19; Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development at Wspólna 30; Office Building and Atrium at Wspólna 62; and the former headquarters of the Polish Communist Party at Nowy Świat 6/12. These buildings were built after the Second World War between the late 1940s and the first half of the 1950s. With the exception of the Palace of Culture and Science - which is one of the most notable symbols of Warsaw - these architectural sites are not on a priority list of the average tourist who does little or no planning for their trip. Nevertheless, these buildings are connected to the Polish People's Republic era and might attract different groups interested in this historical period and architecture. Apart from being potential tourist attractions, these buildings are being re-evaluated and restored to become integrated into the urban environment and more 'comfortable' for the local inhabitants. This paper gives some insights into the recognition and attractiveness of these architectural sites from the socialist past by those from Russia and the USA who have visited Warsaw as well as by Poles who know this city well. It is recommended that these results be taken into consideration by tourist agencies who deal with tours in Warsaw as well as institutions responsible for the city's image. The authors express the hope that this paper might be of interest for officials with public relations duties related to these architectural sites.

Article details:

Received: 23 January 2017
Revised: 18 October 2017
Accepted: 09 February 2018

Key words:

city brand,
visual identity,
edifices,
socialist past,
Warsaw.

Contents:

1. Theoretical background	114
1.1. Introduction	114
1.2. City brand and its composition	114
1.3. Visual identity of the city	115
2. Research methodology: buildings from the socialist past as a part of the identity of Warsaw ...	117
3. Findings	120
3.1. Perception of Warsaw	120
3.2. Perception of architectural sites from the socialist past	122
4. Conclusion	124
Notes	125
References	126

1. Theoretical background**1.1. Introduction**

The old and the new are imprinted into a city's identity. The socialist past experienced by Poland affected different areas, including a city's appearance. Although many post-socialist cities are searching for their contemporary identity (Murzyn-Kupisz, Gwosdz, 2011: 113) where for the most part there is no place for this controversial socialist past, some architectural sites reflecting those times contribute with their presence to the current city's image and perception. Moreover, a few might even be regarded as urban icons without emphasizing their ideological socialist background (Murzyn-Kupisz, Gwosdz, 2011: 123). Nowadays, these buildings are being re-evaluated and restored (Idiceanu-Mathe, Carjan, 2016: 1521). Their contemporary restoration allows them to become better integrated into the urban environment and used efficiently as business or multifunctional centers. Some buildings from the socialist past are able to deliver a distinctive and even memorable experience to tourists, especially for those who have a special interest in this subject and locals paying attention to the visual aesthetics expressed in different architectural forms. Although the highest and most famous edifice in Poland, the Palace of Culture and Science built in 1955 (a gift from the Soviet to the Polish people), has been provoking controversial feelings among Poles, it is introduced in all tourist guides as one of the most pivotal and "must visit" landmarks of the city of Warsaw. This architectural site, loved and hated si-

multaneously and passionately, goes far beyond being a symbol of Stalinism. It is an element of the city's identity visible from different parts of Warsaw. Apart from the Palace, there are other buildings which also make a contribution to the city's identity. The purpose of the research presented in this paper is to find out and compare the perception of several architectural sites, including the Palace of Culture and Science, whose history has originated from the socialist past, involving both tourists and local inhabitants.

1.2. City brand and its composition

Usually strong brands are memorable and their impression can remain for life. The general definition of a brand is a set of associations in consumers' minds. Baker defines a place brand as the totality of thoughts, feelings and expectations that people hold about a location (Baker, 2012: 27). In 1993 Kotler used a similar description as "the sum of beliefs, ideas and impressions that people have of a place" to determine its image (Kotler et al., 1993: 141). According to these definitions a brand and a place's image are synonymous. Inasmuch as branding in general is stated as the process of attaching a reputation to something or someone (Slade-Brooking, 2016: 15), place brands are made not only of identity claims but also from promotional tactics (Kavaratzis et al., 2015: 5).

Place branding deals with differentiating and forming its distinctive and competitive image. The Italian city of Verona has the distinctive identity of a romantic city thanks to Shakespeare who wrote

the tragedy “Romeo and Juliet” in 1597 about two young lovers who were living in the city. At present, Verona includes not only the idea of Romeo and Juliet but also the *Arena di Verona* Opera Festival which attracts a lot of tourists as well as locals. The city of St Petersburg which is the most European and cultural of Russian cities might be considered as an overarching place brand. The city is able to meet a variety of different cultural demands. Museums, art galleries, musical and dramatic theaters as well as palaces, not only dot the skyline but also form a culturally rich image. Moreover, knowing that some tourists coming to Russia are still seeking the footsteps of the remnants of communism, the city indicates its USSR history mainly in cafés or restaurants with the atmosphere and food of those times. A lot of cities in post-socialist countries (1) have visual remnants from their socialist past expressed in architectural sites. In this article, the terms “post-communism”, “post-Soviet”, “post-socialist” are used as synonyms for the group of countries that emerged after the collapse of the Soviet bloc (Grazuleviciute-Vileniske, Urbonas, 2014: 638). In Central and Eastern Europe, these remnants are nowadays treated mainly without any connection to their communist ideology, e.g. the building of the former headquarters of the Polish Communist Party (*Dom Partii*) in Warsaw does not currently demonstrate any sign from its past (Fig. 1). The building looks very contemporary with cozy

cafes in the courtyard and free outdoor seating for the public during warmer seasons.

The point of difference for positioning a city is based on its specific characteristics. Sometimes it is not easy or even possible to formulate a point of difference, especially, for capitals which are versatile and multifaceted. Moscow is the most dynamic city in Russia, with a lot of different opportunities. The idea of such a city might work for Russian citizens, but for tourists it is not of key importance. The distinguishing cultural heritage of Moscow attracts foreign tourists. Communist artefacts in former Soviet bloc cities can provoke interest among tourists from western countries where communism was never experienced. However, local citizens are not always excited that their home town is associated with communism and that its remnants are attractions for visitors.

1.3. Visual identity of the city

The identity of a city forms over a long time period. The Oxford dictionary defines identity as the characteristics determining who or what a person or thing is. A city’s identity absorbs a lot of different aspects including geographical characteristics, culture, architectural character, tradition, customs and lifestyle (Yaldız et al., 2014: 222). The city’s image as a general impression of what a destination repre-



Fig. 1. The view in front of the former headquarters of the Polish Communist Party and its courtyard
Source: Author, August 2017

sents to the public comes from its identity. The city's image or brand is based on its identity.

The uniqueness and distinctiveness of a place is subjective to those who live there and is relative to their experience. So it is important that the identities held by residents are taken into consideration for place branding (Kavaratzis et al., 2015: 66-67). The architectural sites built during communism in Soviet bloc countries might be negatively perceived by some citizens due to their disapproval of the past. Having said that there is always a group of professionals who will defend these buildings, as they were in the forefront architectural achievements. Moreover, outsiders can distinguish them and would like to explore for different reasons including professional architectural and historical interest. The People's House (Palace of Parliament) in Bucharest, commissioned in 1984 by Nicolae Ceaușescu, is more interesting for tourists than for residents, and this huge architectural site is one of the most popular sightseeing attractions. In October 2015, in a long queue for the People's House filled with mainly English speakers, a visitor from the United States waiting for the excursion commented that while standing in line he was already "experiencing communism and feeling its spirit". The architectural sites and other artefacts from this era are magnetic for those who have never experienced it in reality.

Regarding a sensory approach, encompassing thoughts and feelings about destinations through senses, a city's identity is comprised of its visual, aural, tactile, olfactory, and gustatory parts. Although cities provide a multi-sensory experience, in this research the authors concentrated on architectural sites as an important part of the visual identity.

Urban visual identity is complex and includes buildings, monuments, fountains, nature, parks, installations, a city's logo and emblem, and other pieces of visual art (Ochkovskaya, 2016). Furthermore, those living in a city are a very important visual indicator of the destination. The way they look or whether they smile (or not) contributes to its visual perception. Architectural artefacts form the character of a city and are able to make the place 'trendy' and contemporary, i.e. Singapore or medieval and fairy-like such as the small Czech town Cesky Krumlov.

Big cities, especially capitals, in Central and Eastern European countries reflect the shades of different time periods, including the socialist era. The architecture of the communist period reflected Soviet gigantism (Delanty, Jones, 2002) and gave the impression of being huge e.g. Academy of Science in Riga, TVP building in Łódź, or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Moscow (Fig. 2). Although this era is now regarded as rather controversial, it con-



Fig. 2. Pieces of Soviet architecture: A - Riga, Academy of Science in Latvia (built in 1961), B - Łódź, TVP building (built in 1955), C - Moscow, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (built in 1953)

Source: A - <http://www.panoramio.com>, B - <http://sikorworld.blox.pl>, C - <http://moscowvision.ru>

tributed to the visual identity of those places which experienced socialism.

Monumental form was very important in Stalin's high-rise buildings. Architecture became a propaganda tool and a way to achieve greatness through visual expression and style (Idiceanu-Mathe, Carjan, 2016: 1522). In 1956, Voyce, a historian of Russian art and architecture, wrote that form according to the Marxist materialistic artistic thesis "should be made to evoke aesthetic enjoyment; it should be used as a means for training the perceptive faculties of the masses, for arousing their enthusiasm, thus heightening their revolutionary fervor" (Voyce, 1956: 105). Socialist realism portrayed the positive, progressive side of socialist life in an objective form very often using the grotesque.

As a city's identity is built to some degree on memories, the presence of the past cannot be denied (Delanty, Jones, 2002). Although from an architectural point of view, these high-rise Socialist realism buildings from the 1950s have significance, emotionally they can cause negative feelings, reflecting attitudes to that historical period. Sometimes these 'Stalinist architectural giants' can cause a stunning effect on tourists coming from smaller cities or places where they have never experienced this type of architecture before. If that is the case, these buildings are able to give a special charm to a place in the eyes of visitors.

The architectural sites built in those times not only attract tourists, but still appear to be multi-functional buildings in contemporary use. The high-rise building of the Lomonosov Moscow State University includes a concert hall, a museum, administrative services, a library, several faculties, lecture halls, a student's dormitory, flats for professors, a swimming pool, a post office, a laundry, a hairdresser's salon, several canteens, shops, cafeterias and etc. This University building is one of the most famous landmarks in Moscow (Fig. 3).

Usually capitals are multi-faceted organisms encapsulating different historical periods. Due to globalization and the desire to be modern, the huge, gleaming skyscrapers have been erected in many cities in post-socialist countries. This type of architecture gives contemporaneity to a city. In our opinion, the mixture of architectural styles reflecting different historical periods demonstrates the deep

cultural and historical heritage combined with modernity (Fig. 4).

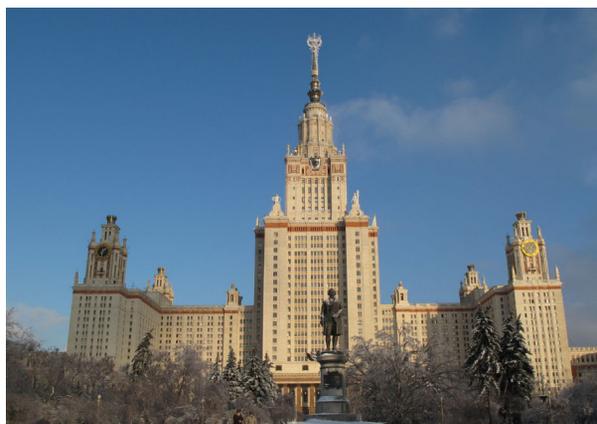


Fig. 3. Main building of the Lomonosov Moscow State University

Source: <http://www.msu.ru/tour/>



Fig. 4. The Palace of Culture and Science surrounded by the contemporary glassy buildings

Source: Author, July 2015

2. Research methodology: the buildings from the socialist past as a part of the identity of Warsaw

A capital represents the heritage of a country as well as its nation and its identity is very important to a national image (Lisiak, 2009). The aim of the research is to find out and compare the perception of several architectural sites in Warsaw whose history has originated from the socialist past among three different groups: Poles, Russians and Americans (2). For research purposes we chose some buildings constructed in the 1950s in Warsaw:

(A) Palace of Culture and Science (*Pałac Kultury i Nauki w Warszawie*, Defilad 1),

(B) SMYK Store (*Dom Towarowy Smyk*, Bracka 15/19),

(C) Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (*Ministerstwo Rolnictwa i Rozwoju Wsi*, Wspólna 30),

(D) Office Building ‘*Ufficio Primo*’, the former Government Presidium Office (Wspólna 62),

(E) Atrium in the Office Building (Wspólna 62),

(F) Banking and Financial Center, the former headquarters of the Polish Communist Party (*Centrum Bankowo-Finansowe, Dom Partii*, Nowy Świat 6/12).

The choice for these sites were determined by the following reasons: (a) the buildings are presented in the reputable Dorling Kindersley Travel Guide for Warsaw (Omilanowska, Majewski, 2006), which might bear witness to their significance and value for tourists, and (b) the authors’ own travel experiences aimed at exploring the architectural sites built during socialism.

The Palace of Culture and Science was built in 1955. The designer for this edifice was Lev Rudnev, the architect of the main building for the Lomonosov Moscow University. The Palace, built in the “Stalinist Gothic style” (Oleksiak, 2015) was presented as a gift from the Soviet Union to the people of Poland. This notable high-rise structure in Warsaw is a multifunctional center and includes theatres, museums, cinema, educational institutions, restaurants, cafés, a post office, a mall and even a beauty clinic (<http://www.pkin.pl/en/biura>). Lisiak wrote that “razing the Palace of Culture and Science has never been a serious option; instead, there have been numerous attempts to hide it among other tall buildings and, thus, degrade it from its role as a landmark...” (Lisiak, 2009). Nevertheless, according to information on the official site, the Palace is not only the tallest Polish monument and a living Museum of Socialist Realism, but the most renowned building in Poland (Fig. 5).

The old building of the SMYK Store as an example of modern style was constructed in 1952 and designed by Zbigniew Ihnatowicz and Jerzy Romanski. The building, made from ferroconcrete and glass was considered as the “the most cosmopolitan building in Poland” (Murawski, 2012: 154). During socialist times, SMYK had the reputation as

a meeting point for ‘decadent youth’ (Omilanowska, Majewski, 2006: 132). In 1975, the building was seriously damaged by fire and then subsequently reconstructed (Fig. 6). After the restoration, SMYK was criticized as the building had lost certain aesthetics expressed in the glass façade in 1950s-1960s (Murawski, 2012: 158). Now, this building has been under reconstruction since 2013 and is promising to be a modern retail and office complex, combining modernity and functionality (<https://www.officefinder.pl/news-reconstruction-of-smyk-department-store-will-start-in-2013.html>).

The monumental edifice of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development at Wspólna 30 was built from 1951-55 and designed by the Polish architects Jan Knothe, Stanisław Jankowski and Jerzy Jezierski. The building is distinctive with its high impressive colonnades and is considered as one of the famous monuments of socialist realism in Poland (Fig. 7).

The Government Presidium Office was built in 1952 and designed by the Polish architect Marek Leykam. The edifice was intended to be a symbol of communism. Nowadays, this building is used for offices and has the Italian name *Ufficio Primo*. The architect was inspired by the Florentine Palazzo of the early Renaissance period (<http://culture.pl/en/artist/marek-leykam>) (Fig. 8). The interior of the former Government Presidium Office is worthy of notice and deserves special attention. Inside the building there is a monumental, impressive vestibular rotunda decorated with galleries, all covered with a dome (Fig. 9). The scene of the New Year’s Ball from Wajda’s film “Man of Marble” was shot in this Atrium. Unfortunately, these days the interior of *Ufficio Primo* is not open for public sightseeing as a site of cultural heritage. In August 2017, the authors tried to investigate this building. We were allowed inside to look at the Atrium while accompanied by security but taking photos of the interior was not permitted. According to the authors’ subjective perception, the Atrium is more impressive and breathtaking than the building outside.

The building of the former headquarters of the Polish Communist Party was built in 1951. This site was designed by three Polish architects, the so-called “Warsaw tigers”: Waław Kłyszewski, Jerzy Mokrzyński and Eugeniusz Wierzbicki. Today, this building houses a banking and financial center (Fig.



Fig. 5. The Palace of Culture and Science
Source: Author, August 2017



Fig. 8. Office Building *Ufficio Primo* at Wspólna 62
Source: Author, August 2017



Fig. 6. Dom Handlowy SMYK (now under reconstruction)
Source: <http://www.fotografie.warszawa.pl/2014/dom-handlowy-smyk>



Fig. 9. Atrium in the Office building *Ufficio Primo*
Source: <http://warszawa.wyborcza.pl>



Fig. 7. Ministry of Agriculture in Warsaw at str. Wspólna 30
Source: Author, August 2017

10). After the reconstruction, the center gives an impression of a contemporary and people-friendly building without any footprint of communism except for the symbolic monument in front, made in the colors of the Polish flag and presented in the form of a red rock where on the surface white flowers grow and there are several small scarlet stones nearby. Probably this monument conveys the meaning that communism has passed away and a new life has come to replace it.

After 1989, when communism collapsed in Poland, a number of small buildings built at the end of the 1940s–50s were destroyed, for example, the post-war cinemas Kino Moskwa, Kino Praha and Kino Skarpa in Warsaw (Lisiak, 2009). As for the build-



Fig. 10. Former headquarters of the Polish Communist Party
 Source: Author, August 2017

ings chosen for this research, they were not razed and still exist.

An online survey was utilized as a research method in order to reach respondents from different places. The questionnaire, placed on *survio.com*, was designed to elicit respondents' perceptions of Warsaw, architectural edifices from socialist times and specifically to investigate perceptions of the main landmark, the Palace of Culture and Science. Relevant pictures of Warsaw and the buildings were included in the questionnaire. At the beginning of November 2016, the link was distributed among Polish, Russian and American respondents. There was a filter question for Russian and American respondents which asked whether they had travelled to Warsaw. For the analysis, we selected 100 relevant respondents from each group. The age interval of our respondents is 21-72. The Polish sample included Varsovians who were chosen intentionally, as they have better knowledge about architectural sites in the city. The Russian sample was comprised of Muscovites. The respondents from the USA made up the most diversified sample from a geographical point of view. The sample contained respondents from Chicago (33%), Washington D.C. (28%), New York (21%), San Francisco (7%), Philadelphia (7%), Chapel Hill (2%), and Ann Arbor (2%). 71% of respondents professionally specialize in Slavic studies, including Polish, while 29% are those who have Polish roots (3), and live in the USA now.

3. Findings

3.1. Perception of Warsaw

We started with an examination of participants' thoughts and feelings about the city of Warsaw. All respondents had been to Warsaw. To find out their perception of the city, we asked open-ended question about associations with Warsaw. The answers were analyzed and their meanings were divided into positive vs. tragic and contemporaneity vs. historical (Fig. 11A, B, C). Taking into account the subjectivity of this division, the tragic associations were related to events characterized by distress, sorrow and victims (e.g. Warsaw Uprising, Communist control). In the history-related area we placed associations about episodes that happened in the past. What was created then but which also still exist were placed in the area embracing both history and contemporaneity (e.g. Old City, Palace of Science and Culture, Catholic churches).

The Palace of Culture and Science as an association with Warsaw was the leading answer and mentioned by 72 Polish respondents. Only 17 Russian respondents mentioned this site and 47 American respondents associated this city with the Palace. Except for the Palace of Culture and Science as an association, other similar associations mentioned in 3 groups are the Łazienki Park, Warsaw Uprising (when the city was destroyed by Nazi during WWII in 1944), and *Stare Miasto* (Old City).

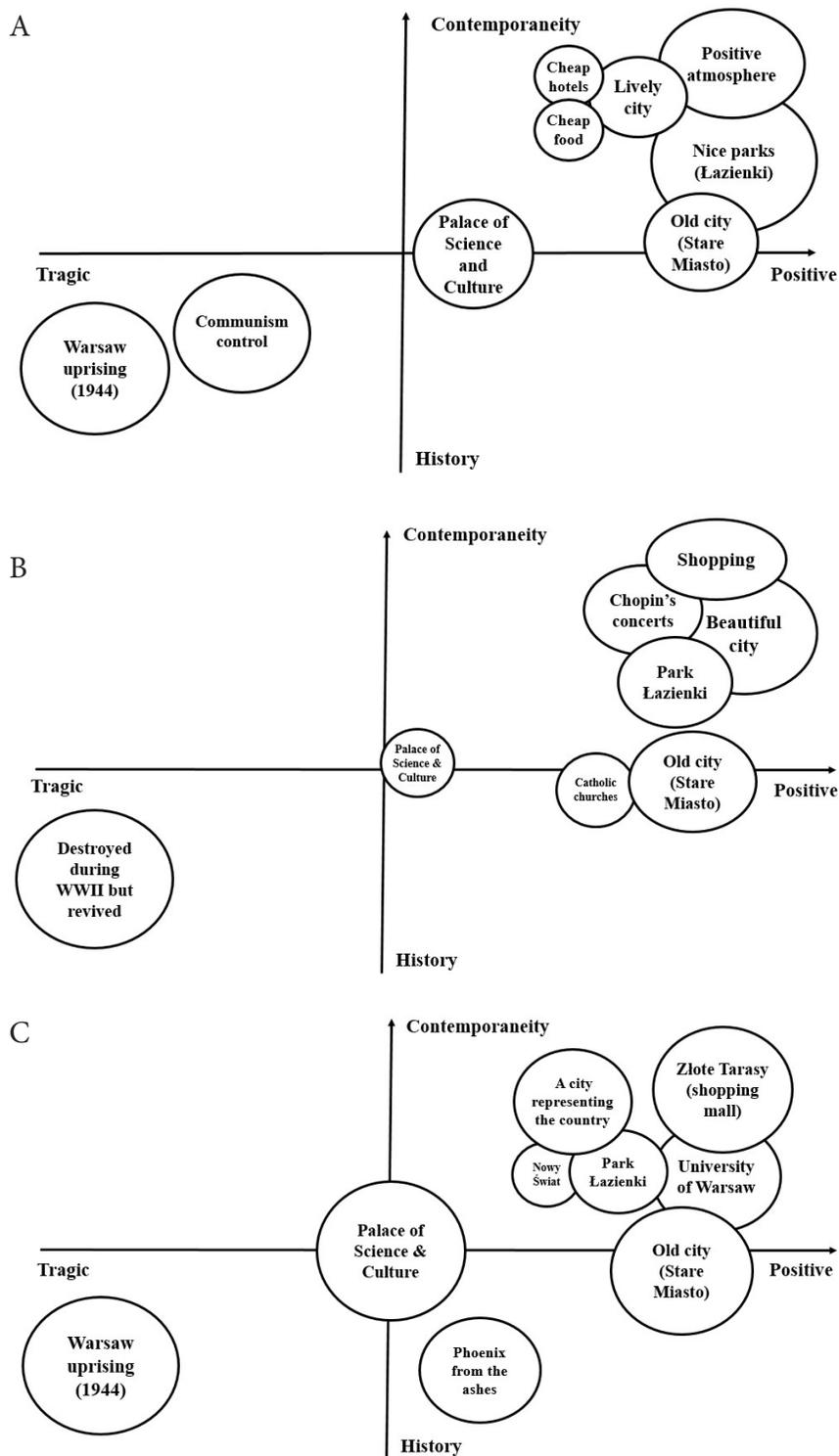


Fig. 11. A - Associations about Warsaw: the respondents from the USA; B - Associations about Warsaw: the Russian respondents; C - Associations about Warsaw: the Polish respondents

Source: Author's elaboration

Taking into account that “Poland’s post-socialist national identity formation is dominated by discourses centered on a sense of ‘Europeanness’ and a religious (Catholic) identity” (Young, Kaczmarek, 2008: 56), there might not be a place for the Palace of Science and Culture in the city’s identity. However, considering the answers of the Polish respondents, the Palace of Culture and Science matters for citizens and this building appears to be an important ingredient in Warsaw’s visual identity.

3.2. Perception of architectural sites from the socialist past

We started to study the perception of these sites by finding out their awareness among respondents. We provided pictures of these buildings and asked which of the architectural sites they knew.

All 300 respondents were aware of the Palace of Culture and Science. Second was the former headquarters of the Polish Communist Party (4), and third the old building of the SMYK Store - which is now under reconstruction (Fig. 12).

The respondents were then asked to estimate the perception of the beauty of these architectural sites by rating every building: 1 = very low, 2 = low, 3 = average, 4 = high, 5 = very high. Then in order to determine which buildings are perceived as more beautiful, the weighted averages for each site have been calculated (Fig. 13). The authors understand that the estimation of ‘beauty’ was mainly done by non-professionals who perceive it rather subjectively and emotionally. Taking into account that buildings serve different needs, including aesthetic satisfaction, it is important to understand the perception of architectural beauty by non-professionals.

For Russians and Americans, the most beautiful building was the Palace of Culture and Science. The Poles highly regarded the Atrium in the Office Building at Wspólna 62 as the most beautiful from their perception (4.4 points).

The Palace of Culture and Science ranks second amongst Polish respondents (4.1 points). The least beautiful from an American and Polish point of view was the building for the SMYK store. The respondents estimated its beauty after restoration from the fire in 1975 when the glass façade lost its splendor.

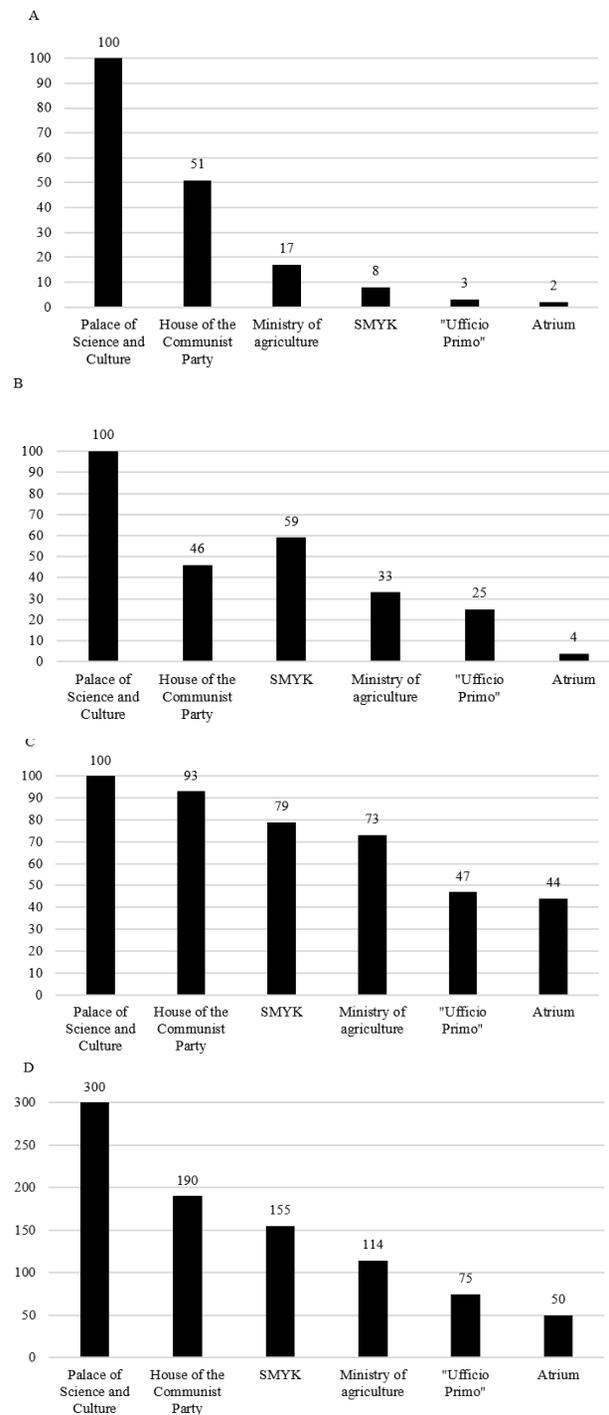


Fig. 12. Awareness of the buildings from the socialist past by the respondents: A - awareness of the buildings: the respondents from the USA; B - awareness of the buildings: the Russian respondents; C - awareness of the buildings: the Polish respondents; D – total awareness of the buildings by the all respondents

Explanation: Vertical axis is the number of respondents;
 Source: Author on the basis of the survey

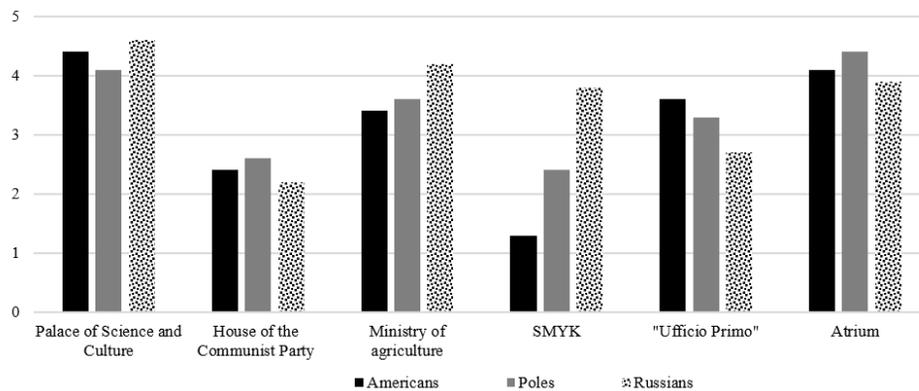


Fig. 13. The perception of buildings
 Source: Author on the basis of the survey

Probably after the current reconstruction, the fully updated building will be considered more aesthetically pleasing. For the Russian respondents, the least aesthetic was the former headquarters of the Polish Communist Party. The beauty of SMYK was rather highly regarded by Russians (3.8 points). This might be explained that European shopping was historically a highly desired thing for Russians and successful purchases give an additional charm to a place. These aesthetic judgements are rather subjective and from the perspective of potential and real visitors, not professional architects.

Knowing that the Palace of Culture and Science has been a subject of huge debate (Lisiak, 2009), we decided to study the perception of this site more thoroughly. We collected associations about the one of the most notorious architectural sites in Warsaw (Fig. 14).

The dominating association found in the answers of American respondents is an accent on *the big role of science and culture* as the building devoted to these activities is huge and is easily visible from the different parts of the city. One American respondent, a post-graduate student at the University of Washington even left a comment that he cannot imagine Warsaw without the Palace of Culture and Science.

There were some common answers given by Russian and Polish respondents such as their associations with Moscow and Russian-Polish friendship. The respondents in the three groups have associations connected with history as a reminder about communism and Stalinist past. It was not only the Soviet related past which is behind the building, but also the beauty of the architectural site which was indicated in all of the groups.

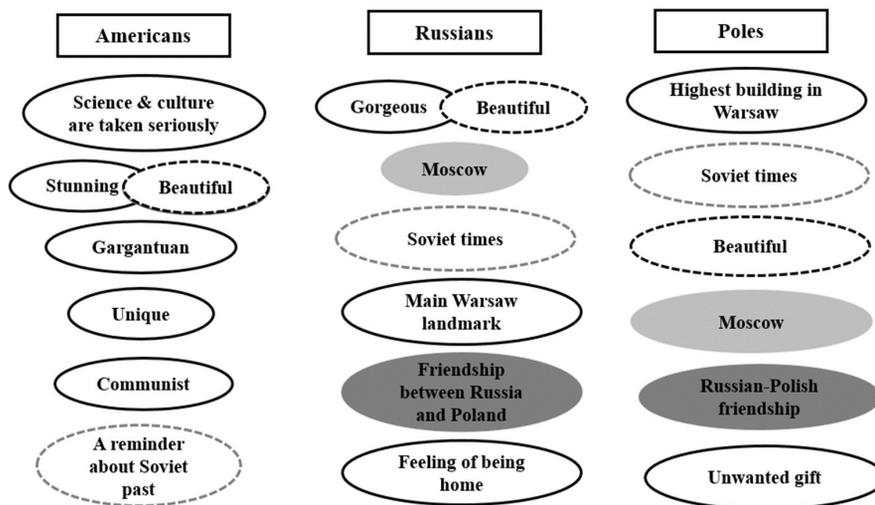


Fig. 14. Associations about the Palace of Culture and Science
 Source: Author on the basis of the survey

We asked respondents to gauge the emotions they feel looking at the Palace of Culture and Science as either negative, neutral or positive (Fig. 15).

The American respondents, according to their answers, feel mainly positive emotions while looking at the building. None of the American respondents indicated negative emotions. It might be explained that Americans have never experienced communism and focus their attention on the architecture. The answers from Poles were divided between negative (19 respondents), neutral (20 respondents) and positive (61 respondents). Negative emotions must be caused by associations with that period of history. Some people perceived it as a symbol of the Soviet intervention rather than the Soviet people's generous gift (Oleksiak, 2015). The Russian answers were divided between positive (56 respondents) and neutral emotions (43 respondents). The only 1 Russian respondent indicated the feeling of negative emotions. The architectural style of the Palace of Culture and Science is rather common for Russians, especially Muscovites. There are seven skyscrapers in Moscow designed in the same Stalinist style. Nowadays, Muscovites might not connect these architectural sites with negative aspects of Stalin's personality, they focus their attention on the visual images of the buildings and their practical usage. These skyscrapers are one of the key ingredients of Moscow's current visual identity. In Moscow, ordinary visitors are not allowed to see the interior of Stalin's high-rise buildings unless they work or live there, otherwise, no outsiders are permitted inside. Regarding the Palace in Warsaw, it

is for public use and open for everyone. Thereby, if 'outsiders' would like to explore the inside of Stalin's skyscrapers, they have to go to Warsaw. Openness and affordability differentiate the Palace of Culture and Science in Warsaw from its Muscovite counterparts and give it more international value.

Taking into account that Russian and American respondents are tourists who have already visited the city and will probably come again, we identified the top three Warsaw buildings (among the chosen sites) with their roots in Socialist past which they would like to see (Fig. 16).

A majority of the respondents from both groups wanted to see the Palace of Science and Culture and this again confirms the role of this building in the city's identity. The Atrium which is not for public use is also in the top 3. This is probably a potential argument for the owners of the building to think about making the Atrium open for the public, even if only for limited hours.

4. Conclusion

After the fall of communism, the cities in post-Socialist Central and Eastern Europe focused on the 'Europeanization' and 'Westernization' (Young, Kaczmarek, 2008). Warsaw's 'westernization' from the architectural point of view is expressed in new glassy skyscrapers around the Palace of Culture and Science. 'Europeanness' had made its mark on architecturally valuable sites built in old pre-socialist

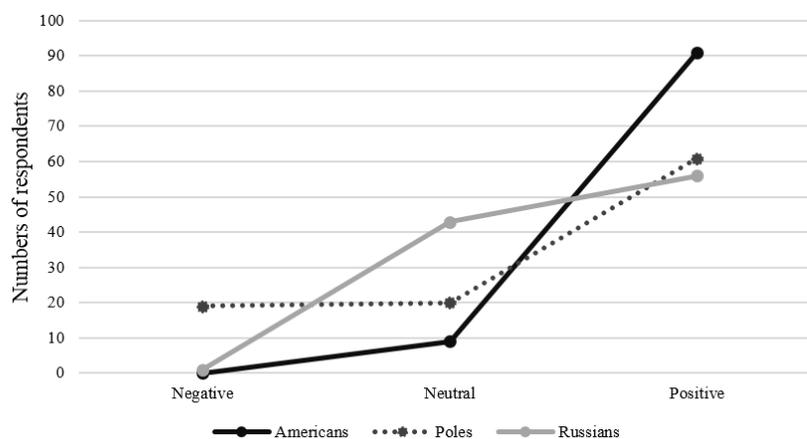


Fig. 15. Emotions experienced by looking at the Palace of Culture and Science
Source: Author on the basis of the survey

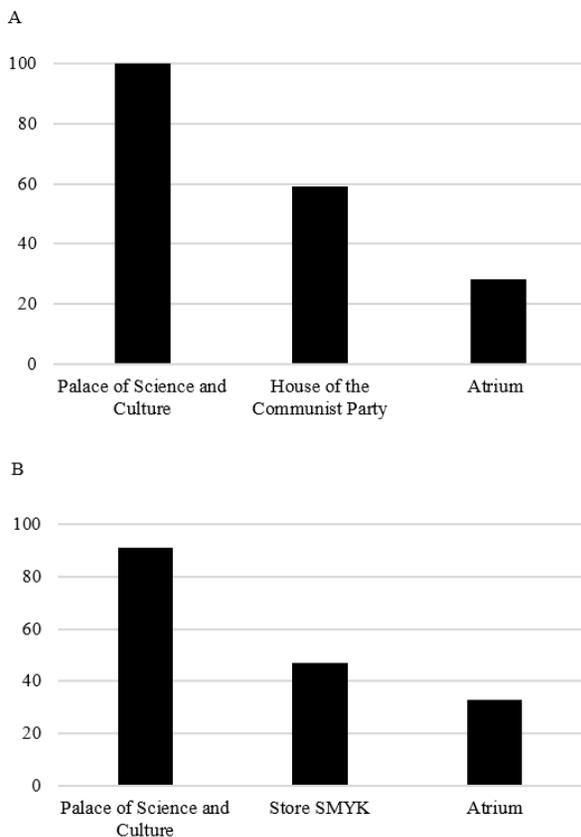


Fig. 16. Top 3 buildings from the Socialist past in Warsaw which (A) American and (B) Russian respondents would like to see

Explanation: Vertical axis is a number of respondents

Source: Author on the basis of the survey

times such as palaces, castles, abbeys and cathedrals. The huge Palace is now surrounded by the contemporary skyscrapers which give Warsaw the perception of a capital keeping up with the times.

Although the Palace of Culture and Science is a part of an unwanted past, it represents a piece of history which also differentiates this place and gives special value for tourists. Moreover, the Palace in Warsaw is virtually the only chance for those who would like to explore the inside of socialist realism skyscrapers because all similar sites in Moscow, including the main building of the Lomonosov Moscow University, are closed to outsiders. Nowadays, the Palace conveys messages which go far beyond Stalinism. Our study has demonstrated that this edifice represents the great role of science and culture in Warsaw's life. Being very notable and opulent in terms of visual identity, the Palace provokes a sort of emotional loyalty, as some visitors are even not

able to imagine a contemporary Warsaw without it. The Palace creates strong functional value and is really for the people's use: "like the famous Moscow metro, this was luxury for the masses" (Pyzik, 2015). "People tend to adopt a pragmatic attitude to the former landscapes of socialism and associate socialist buildings and public spaces more with their contemporary uses" (Young, Kaczmarek, 2008: 57).

This study gives some insights about the perceptions of several architectural sites which were created in socialist times. The results might be of interest for tourist agencies as it would allow them to offer thematic excursions devoted to architecture from the socialist past. Knowing the perceptions of different landmarks, especially one as famous and controversial as the Palace of Culture and Science, might be valuable for institutions which are responsible for the city's image, as architecture contributes considerably to place identity. The authors would recommend familiarizing the officials who are responsible for public relations in *Ufficio Primo* with the results about the Atrium's perception. Probably, this aesthetic heritage should be more available to the public. The authors express hope for the continuation of this research and coverage of more valuable buildings with roots in the past, not only in the capital but also in other Polish cities.

Notes

- (1) The countries which were a part of the Soviet bloc after WW2.
- (2) Respondents from the United States.
- (3) The grandparents or parents of 29% of the American respondents came from Poland.
- (4) Taking into account that the former headquarters of the Polish Communist Party used to have the unofficial name of *Dom Partii* (House of the Communist Party), this shorter unofficial version is also used here as a synonym for this building.

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Ministry of Science
and Higher Education
Republic of Poland

The proofreading of articles, positively reviewed and approved for publishing in the 'Bulletin of Geography. Socio-economic Series', was financed from the funds of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education earmarked for activities popularizing science, in line with Agreement No 509/P-DUN/2016.

